

ABSTRACT

Analogy, Causation, and Beauty in the Works of Lucy Hutchinson

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Lucy Hutchinson's translation of the ancient epic *De Rerum Natura* is remarkable in light of her firm commitments to Calvinist theology and the doctrine of Providence. David Norbrook and Jonathan Goldberg offer strikingly different explanations for the translation exercise. For instance, Norbrook argues that Hutchinson translates Lucretius in order that she might learn from the false images in Lucretius and make better ones in such works as *Order and Disorder* (Norbrook, "Margaret" 191). In contrast, Goldberg argues for compatibility between Lucretian atomism and Hutchinson's Christianity, seeing no contradiction or tension (Goldberg 286). I argue that neither critic accounts for the aesthetics of beauty in Hutchinson's poetry; both critics instead attribute an aesthetics of the sublime to Hutchinson. In making this argument, I show that Hutchinson's theory of causation has much in common with Reformed Scholasticism, whereby she is able to restore a metaphysics of formal and final cause. Hutchinson also revives the doctrine of the analogy of being, or *analogia entis*, in order to show that the formal cause of creation is visible as God's glory. After a discussion of her metaphysics and ontology, I then show that Hutchinson's poetry reflects a theological aesthetics of beauty and not the

aesthetics of the sublime. In the fourth chapter, I compare the typological accounts of Abraham found in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* with a view to virtue as the proper basis of authority. I conclude that the virtues of Hutchinson's Abraham invite individual participation in a way which is prevented by Hobbes. In my final chapter, I show that Hutchinson writes a hagiographical account of her husband in the *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Lucy Hutchinson's (1620-1681) incomplete and fragmentary autobiography begins:

The Almighty Author of all beings in his various providences, whereby he conducts the lives of men from the cradle to the tomb, exercises no less wisdom and goodness than he manifests power and greatness in their creation; but such is the stupidity of blind mortals that, instead of employing their studies in these admirable books of providence wherein God daily exhibits to us glorious characters of his love, kindness, wisdom, and justice, they ungratefully regard them not, and call the most wonderful operations of the great God the common accidents of human life [. . .] for in things great and extraordinary, some, perhaps will take notice of God's working who either forget or believe not that he takes as well a care and account of their smallest concernments, even the hairs of their heads.
(Hutchinson, *Life* 3)

Hutchinson aims to recollect "the general and particular providences" shown to her. Informing her exercise is a very particular and careful doctrine of providence, but thus far, the critical work on Hutchinson's writing gives little attention to the details of this doctrine. Sharon Seelig, for instance, notes that Hutchinson's autobiography is "related to a much larger project, that of placing her life in all of history" to show how she, her husband, her family, and, indeed, all of England are part of God's grand design (75, 77). Seelig, like other critics,¹ assumes that Hutchinson's providence is God's favor bestowed upon his chosen, or elect, people. Though this may have been a common way of defining providence in the seventeenth century, Hutchinson's works show a much more nuanced view of providence that has yet to be critically examined.

Lucy Hutchinson was born Lucy Apsley, daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, who was Lieutenant of the Tower under the reign of James and Charles I, and Lucy St. John, who was his third wife. In her autobiography, Hutchinson describes her parents' joy at having a daughter and their careful care of her as a young child (14). As she grew older, she was remarkably well-educated, and recalls, "When I was about seven years of age, I remember I had at one time eight tutors in several qualities, languages, music, dancing, writing and needlework, but my genius was quite averse from all but my book" (15). Her father wanted her to learn Latin, and she remarks, "I was so apt that I outstripped my brothers who were at school" (15-16).

Though she was born into a Royalist family, Lucy married John Hutchinson, a man with Republican convictions. The couple apparently enjoyed a mutually loving marriage and had eight children in the course of their married life, despite its upheavals. Colonel Hutchinson, a supporter of the "Good Old Cause," was a member of Parliament and a commissioner at the trial of Charles I's and "proceeded to sign the sentence [of death] against the King" (Hutchinson, *Memoirs* 235). During the Civil War, Colonel Hutchinson was put in charge of Nottingham Castle and Town, and Lucy stayed with him at the Castle. His republican convictions, however, led him to incur Cromwell's hostility for his opposition to the Protectorate. While Cromwell ruled, the Hutchinsons retreated to country life to their estate in Nottinghamshire, Owthorpe. After the Restoration, Colonel Hutchinson was arrested on vague charges of conspiracy and was held at Sandown Castle in Kent where he eventually died in September of 1664 without ever being brought to trial.² While her husband was imprisoned, Lucy Hutchinson stayed nearby and visited him daily. Though she was devastated by his death, she continued to

be a productive author. In the course of her life, she kept a notebook, produced two commonplace books, wrote a biography of her husband, began an autobiography, and made two significant translations: Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* and *Of Theology*, the latter being a doctrinal treatise by the Puritan divine, John Owen. She also wrote a theological work for her daughter, *On the Principles of Christian Religion*, and a biblical epic, *Order and Disorder*.³

Hutchinson's Works and Their Historical Context

Lucy Hutchinson has long been recognized for the narrative skill evident in her biographical account, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (1664-8?). The *Memoirs* are of particular value to scholars of the seventeenth century since Hutchinson writes as a woman, a Puritan, and a Republican whose husband died in prison during the Restoration for his support of the Good Old Cause. In particular, the tensions between her adherence to providence and the failures of the Republic contribute to the interest in her work. In the seventeenth century, competing accounts of providence were at play. In particular, Puritans were charged with over-reading "special providence" and which left them at a loss to explain reversals after the Restoration. As N. H. Keeble claims, "The events of 1659-1660 tempted her [Hutchinson] and them [defeated Puritans] to betray their Puritan allegiance, to doubt God's providential dealings with his elect nation [the Republic], and to despair [of God's favor]." In the context of such dramatic defeat, several Royalists, notably Abraham Cowley, also read the events of the restoration as God's providence in the form of divine justice and mercy (Keeble, "Introduction" xx). As a result, Royalists often characterized the Puritans as "criminals and murderers," and

Hutchinson's purpose in writing the *Memoirs* is to "honour" her husband's virtue against such injurious charges (*Memoirs* 16-17).

In addition to the *Memoirs*, Hutchinson's translation of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (1650s?) further complicates critical accounts of her view of providence, for the atomistic materialism of Lucretius was the target of several seventeenth-century divines who saw in atomism an exclusion of God's active Providence in creation. Critics such as Bishop William Beveridge advanced a teleological argument against atomism, claiming that chance atomic collisions undermine the teleological nature of Providence (Harrison, "Atomism" 30). In the hands of Thomas Hobbes, Epicurean materialism became the basis for a purely mechanist philosophy, which gave no place for considering final cause or purpose in nature, including human nature. Hobbes radicalized even Epicurean atomism, however, by rejecting the doctrine of the "atomic swerve" which allegedly made human freedom possible: for Hobbes, only sheer necessity was real (Harrison, "Atomists" 29). However, some writers found such atomism supportive of Christian theology. Reid Barbour explains that such writers posited:

That it is all the more likely that atoms would require divine aid in forming an orderly and beautiful world than it is that four elements [the model replaced by atomism] would require that aid; and that the microscopic duty of the mechanical workings of nature did nothing but reveal a supremely wise creator. (Barbour, "Between" 4)

The mixed reception of Lucretius among Hutchinson's contemporaries may explain her interest in translating the ancient epic but also raises a crucial question: how does Hutchinson respond to Lucretian atomism and its reputed threat to Providence in her later work, including *Memoirs*? In light of the philosophical and political challenges to

Providence, Hutchinson makes Providence the central theme of her third major work, *Order and Disorder*.

In *Order and Disorder*, Hutchinson wrote a response to Lucretius in the form of a biblical epic, specifically addressing the challenges to God's Providence implicit in his materialist doctrines. Until recently, *Order and Disorder* had been attributed to Hutchinson's brother, Sir Allen Apsley.⁴ However, the careful textual work of David Norbrook in "Lucy Hutchinson and *Order and Disorder*: The Manuscript Evidence" (2000) points to Hutchinson as the author. The first five cantos of the epic were published in 1679, and fifteen additional cantos were later discovered in manuscript and not published until 2001. Unfortunately, the manuscript poem is incomplete, breaking off mid-line in the story of Jacob and Laban. Nevertheless, Norbrook's work is a landmark achievement for the recovery of women's writing, as the epic provides a wealth of theological, philosophical and political commentary. In her preface, Hutchinson writes:

These meditations [on Genesis] 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 me to consider and *translate* the account of some old poets and philosophers give of the original of things (3, italics mine).

Turning to the book of Genesis, Hutchinson finds material to counter Lucretius, writing of a "stupendous Providence" that upholds "universal harmony" of "discording natures" (1.5-7). Whether she adequately describes this universal harmony or merely reveals "a deep longing for a coherent order in the universe" (Norbrook, "Introduction xxxii) has been a significant critical question.⁵ In this study, I closely examine *Order and Disorder* as the most complete synthesis of Hutchinson's theological, metaphysical, aesthetic, and

political reflections and show that in each of these three categories Hutchinson draws upon an account of causation which demonstrates that “stupendous Providence” does indeed uphold harmony and order and that providence can be seen in both God’s Creation and Redemption of the world.

Critical Context

The distinguished literary historian, David Norbrook is the leading Hutchinson critic. Norbrook associates her Republican politics with a poetics of the sublime. In the regicide of King Charles I, the Republicans challenged established authority; yet subsequent political divisions multiplied within the new Republican government regarding how to establish a government that would provide freedom from “old political, religious, and, perhaps, economic monopolies” (Norbrook, *Writing* 18). From a Royalist stand-point, the potentially beneficial divisions among the Republicans embodied mere chaos. But from a Republican point of view, according to Norbrook, the divisions led to a time of discovery and great creativity in the process of “learning the full nature of liberty in the course of working for it,” and the period thus witnessed “the emergence of a poetics of the sublime” (Norbrook, *Writing* 18). Norbrook points out that subsequent to Hutchinson, Edmund Burke likened beauty with courtly culture and the sublime with Republican rebellion. Norbrook here associates the beautiful with “traditional hierarchies,” and the sublime with “an openness of dialogue that can escape the distortions of social and political inequities” (Norbrook, *Writing* 19). While Norbrook’s account of Hutchinson’s poetics seems to fit the pattern described by Burke, he tends to overlook the significant place of beauty in her poetry.

On the basis of Hutchinson's commitment to a "most gracious ever active Providence, upholding, ordering and governing the whole Creation" (*DRN* 24-25), Norbrook concludes that Hutchinson resists the "dangerously open" cosmos associated with the Lucretian sublime. In addition, he likens Hutchinson to John Milton, seeing "a consistent opposition between the sterile harmony of courtly artifice and the more open, sublime *condordia discors* of divine creation" ("Milton" 46). Here, Norbrook's interest in *condordia discors*, or the ancient and renaissance commonplace that nature maintains a "discordant harmony," is foremost political: social orders seldom reflect the sublime order of the cosmos since they cannot sustain harmony among discordant ruling powers.⁶ Furthermore, Norbrook claims that Hutchinson criticizes the beauty of courtly poetic forms as sterile compared to the vital natural order. Such courtly poetics attempt to emulate the latter by "aim[ing] at a poetics which will come closer to the natural—and hence to God's sublime primal act of creation" ("Milton" 43). Here the "original freedom" that Norbrook associates with "God's sublime primal act of creation" ("Milton" 43)⁷ misses the deeper sense of freedom endorsed by Hutchinson—that God is already wholly self-sufficient within his triune Being and thus is free from ontological necessity. Likewise, Norbrook does not account for the place of beauty in creation other than as a vestige of a largely lost prelapsarian order (Norbrook, "Milton" 46). As I shall show, according to Hutchinson beauty is God's glory reflected in creation which persists in a postlapsarian world and informs her theology, philosophy, and poetry. In particular, Hutchinson argues that the divine love, revealed as God in Christ, not only creates the world but redeems it, opening the way for fallen humans to participate in God's glory.

With regard to atomism and theology, Reid Barbour claims that Hutchinson embarked on her translation of Lucretius before she “concluded that faith and science were irreconcilable” (Barbour, “Between” 5). He cites several reasons why theologians thought that atomism was compatible with Christian theology. First, the study of the microscopic atoms was thought to reveal the necessity of a divine order in creation: such a beautiful order in nature requires God’s providence (Barbour, “Between” 4). In addition, the Epicurean ethics, especially the prescriptions of tranquility in the face of violence, provided an alternative to the chaos of the Civil War (Barbour, “Between 6). While Barbour’s argument raises several suggestive topics for investigating Hutchinson’s engagement with Lucretius, his argument is limited in his own investigation by the fact that he writes prior (1994) to Norbrook’s attribution of *Order and Disorder* to Hutchinson (2000).

My argument will also impinge on Jonathan Goldberg’s immanent version of Hutchinson’s sublime, which he claims resolves the tension between her Christianity and Lucretian materialism. Against Barbour and Norbrook, Goldberg holds “that it would be worthwhile to suspend the notion that her later repudiations [of Lucretius] are built into her translation or ultimately determine its meaning” (280). Goldberg turns to one of several postmodern “narratives of the sublime,” accounting for the ontological contradictions between Hutchinson’s Christianity and materialism by dissolving being into unstable binaries:⁸ In this Lucretian/postmodern ontology, being is no longer an infinite analogical interval between creation and the Creator but a series of equivocal resemblances. What Goldberg fails to grasp is that, for Hutchinson, “creation’s contingent being” already depends upon an *irreducible difference* that is traversed in

God's triune being. As a result, Goldberg attributes an immanent version of the sublime to Hutchinson's descriptions of nature, equally expressible (or inexpressible) in the language of Christianity or Lucretian materialism.⁹ Whatever the merits of his analysis, Goldberg's account nevertheless makes Christian doctrine and Epicurean materialism convertible, a view that is not warranted by Hutchinson's explicit endorsement of the former and her sharp repudiation of the latter.

In addition to these three eminent Hutchinson critics, other critics adopt different *topoi* in their approach to Lucy Hutchinson. For instance, feminist scholars are interested in her as a relatively unknown woman writer to emerge from the shadows of the seventeenth century. Much of the criticism in this area focuses, understandably on the *Memoirs*. Due to her strong insistence upon submission to her husband, Hutchinson is not so charitably received by some feminist critics, though that trend has begun to reverse. For instance, Gloria Italiano (1978) names Hutchinson a "passionate prude" who is more interested in showing off her scholarship and vast historical knowledge than telling a coherent story of her husband's life. Other criticism focuses more specifically on the textual elements of Hutchinson's writing. Sandra Findley and Elaine Hobby (1980) note that Hutchinson constructs two different identities of herself in the *Memoirs*—the "she" is a dutiful wife while the "I" "stands outside of marriage and is not threatened by the disappearance of the *femme covert*. They also claim Hutchinson's interest in traditionally masculine pursuits make her a transgressor of the boundaries of femininity. Susan Cook (1993) offers helpful assessment of Hutchinson's purposes in writing *Memoirs*, noting the hagiographical elements of the work. Also, against previous claims the Hutchinson's conservative gender roles kept her from publishing her work,

Cook posits that Hutchinson kept her work from going into print in order to give herself confidence to discover “her individuality unfettered by normal authorial and sexual restrictions” (271). Cottegnies (2003) offers a fruitful comparison between Hutchinson and Cavendish, pointing out that Hutchinson is extremely careful in her adoption of literary motifs and particularly aware of the implications of those motifs. Against most previous scholarship linking Cavendish and Hutchinson, Cottegnies identifies Hutchinson as the more nuanced poet.¹⁰ While I do not specifically engage a gendered reading of Hutchinson, I do, in my third chapter, place her in conversation with Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, another noteworthy woman writer of the century. In my reading of Hutchinson and Cavendish, however, I focus upon their contrasting aesthetics. Also, the Epilogue explores the relationship of Hutchinson to her husband, which certainly has implications for feminist scholarship.

Finally, several theological works are integral to the formation of my argument. Most influential has been David Bentley Hart, who, in *The Beauty of the Infinite*, draws attention to the loss of beauty from theological vocabulary. His description of the analogy of being has been particularly helpful in understanding Hutchinson’s poetry. Hans Urs von Baltasar’s *The Glory of the Lord* helped provide some of the theological language associated with form and formal cause. Finally, Henning Graf Reventlow’s work, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, provided valuable insight into Hobbes’ typological reading of Abraham, which contrasts with that of Hutchinson.

Outline of Study

Hutchinson's work engages five different critical *topoi*: Epicurean atomism in the Seventeenth Century, Republican poetics of the sublime, the relationship of Hutchinson to her Royalist counterpart Margaret Cavendish, her Republican politics, and the status of the romance genre in her writing. In this study, I engage each of these *topoi*, breaking new ground in each area of Hutchinson scholarship by connecting *Order and Disorder* to the *Memoirs* and to Reformed Scholasticism. I adopt a three-fold strategy: in my first chapter, I survey seventeenth-century responses to a revival of Epicureanism and also mechanistic philosophies in order to give a proper context for Hutchinson's response in *Order and Disorder*. In the second chapter, I turn to a contemporary source favored by John Owen, the Reformed Scholastic Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676). In light of Voetius, I examine the implicit Scholastic causal framework in *Order and Disorder*. Significantly, I show that her Reformed Scholasticism opens the way for Hutchinson to nuance received English Calvinist theology as represented in the Westminster Confession.¹¹

In particular, the *Westminster Confession* maintains a tension between "God's eternal decree" and human freedom, and on this point, Hutchinson provides a more thorough account of the relationship between first and second causes. The third chapter of the *Confession* begins:

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. (12)

Although God ordains "whatever comes to pass," he is neither "the author of sin" nor compels the will of the creature. The *Confession* asserts both God's sovereignty and the "contingency of second causes" but offers no explanation for how they are compatible. Hutchinson addresses this paradox by defining human freedom as participation in divine freedom. For Hutchinson, God's freedom is expressed in creation as his glory and invites human participation.

Chapter three then draws out Hutchinson's description of beauty as a theological category and argues, contra Norbrook and Goldberg, that Hutchinson poetry reflects an aesthetics of the beautiful and not the sublime. By comparing Norbrook's and Goldberg's descriptions of Hutchinson to the poetry of her Royalist and Epicurean counterpart, Margaret Cavendish, I shall demonstrate that the aesthetics of the sublime that critics attribute to Hutchinson is actually better reflected in Cavendish's poetry. Highlighting the contrast between the two poets, I show that Hutchinson's aesthetics are indeed formed by a theological understanding of beauty, and the crucial doctrine that supports this richer understanding of beauty is the analogy of being, or *analogia entis*. Hutchinson clearly states a version of that *analogia* in the first canto of *Order and Disorder* (1.58-60), and her poetry subsequently demonstrates the primacy of the glory or beauty of God, as both his Providence and the true *telos* of all human endeavors. As I shall demonstrate, the aesthetic nuancing of her Calvinist theology, which is reflected in her poetry, expands the possible range of Protestant Poetics, much as R. V. Young does with the Metaphysical Poets in his *Doctrine and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Poetry*.

Chapter four then builds upon this view of Hutchinson's aesthetics and ties it to her politics. In this chapter, I contrast Hobbes with Hutchinson through their accounts of

Abraham, particularly their use of typology and the purposes of that typology. I show that the materialism of Hobbes's typology assumes a narrative of the sublime, whereby Abraham's covenant with God remains entirely secret. In contrast, Hutchinson's typological account of Abraham underscores his faithful trust in God to provide a sacrifice that fulfills the promises of the sacrificial system. Recognizing that God alone is the rightful sovereign over creation, Hutchinson advances an anti-monarchical view that does not imply a privileged choice of ruler.

Finally, the epilogue takes up the question of Hutchinson's attitude towards the genre of romance in the *Memoirs*. Several critics, especially N. H. Keeble, find the *Memoirs* to follow the conventions of romance, despite her protestations to the contrary. Romance, a Royalist genre, embodies a sublime ideal. So, if she does indeed employ it in *Memoirs*, then her theological and aesthetic project in *Order and Disorder* comes into question. In order to show the consistency between Hutchinson's theological and aesthetic commitments in both works, I draw out parallels between Hutchinson's descriptions of the virtuous saints of Genesis in *Order and Disorder* and her description of John Hutchinson in *Memoirs*. Thus, the account of her husband's life conforms to the genre of hagiography rather than romance. In this conclusion, I emphasize how my reading of *Order and Disorder* changes standard readings of Hutchinson's best-known, but perhaps least understood, work, *Memoirs*.

CHAPTER TWO

Lucy Hutchinson and the Reception of Epicurean Atomism in the Seventeenth Century

In a letter to her brother Lord Angelsey, Lucy Hutchinson tells of how she translated Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* into English while working in her children's schoolroom (Hutchinson, "Letter" 2v). Hugh de Quehen notes that this translation must have been undertaken sometime during the 1650's and was therefore most likely the first full English translation of the epic ("Translation" 10).¹² The study of Lucretius had been delayed during the Renaissance-era in England due to Epicurus' reputation for immorality and atheism (Harrison, "Atomism" 1). But by mid-century, Epicurean ideas had reached England through Frenchman Pierre Gassendi's influence on the Newcastle Circle, which included Thomas Hobbes and Margaret Cavendish (de Quehen, "Translation" 11). According to Charles Harrison, the fear of and hostility towards Epicurus after the mid-century re-introduction of atomist philosophy arose because the Epicurean system was perceived as a threat specifically to the Christian doctrine of providence ("Atomism" 23-24). Specifically, Harrison claims:

Both Democritus and Epicurus had denied divine purpose in the ordering of things and the mechanical scheme of Hobbes brought this issue into the forefront. With first and final cause ruled out, it made no difference whether the alternative was 'chance' or 'necessity; they were identically dangerous. The whole belief in Providence depends upon the relation of God to created things.¹³ (24)

This doctrine of Providence, or the "relation of God to created things," is the central thesis of Hutchinson's epic *Order and Disorder*, which she wrote subsequent to

translating Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*. On account of her translation of Lucretius, Hutchinson had direct access to the primary source of the seventeenth-century revival of atomism.

In order to give the reader a clear sense of the conversation to which Hutchinson contributed as she wrote her Genesis epic, *Order and Disorder*, this chapter provides the historical context surrounding the revival of atomism in the seventeenth century. Also, the historical context in this chapter paves the way for chapter two, which shows how Hutchinson's response to atomism was influenced by, although not limited to, Reformed Scholasticism.

Hutchinson and De Rerum Natura

At first, Lucy Hutchinson's complete translation of Lucretius' materialist epic, *De Rerum Natura*, seems out of place for a Puritan woman. In her dedicatory letter to "Arthur Earle of Anglesey" she claims that she "translated it only out of youthfull curiositie, to understand things I heard so much discourse of at second hand, but without the least inclination to propagate any of the wicked doctrines in it" (Hutchinson, "Letter" 2v).¹⁴ Indeed, the strongly atheistic epic contrasts sharply with her Puritan commitments. In the same letter, she explains her reasons for engaging the ancient atomist:

So farre yett we may *usefully* be permitted to consider the productions of degenerate nature [Lucretius/Epicurus'], as they represent to us the deplorable wretchednesse of all mankind, who are not translated from darknesse to light by supernaturall illumination, and *teach* us that their wisdome is folly, their most vertuous and pure morallity fowle defilement, their knowledge ignorance, their glorie shame, their renowne contemptible, their industry vaine, all their attainments cheates and delusions, their felicities unsubstantiall dreames and appartitions, and their lives only a varied scene of perpetuall woe and misery. (Hutchinson, "Letter" 3v, emphasis added)

In effect, Hutchinson defends her translation of *De Rerum Natura* as a useful examination of errors that resulted from the absence of “supernaturall illumination.” De Quehen notes that Lucretius’ epic would have offered “easier access to Epicureanism” and would therefore have attracted Hutchinson as a way of going directly to the source of materialist philosophies (“Translation” 11).¹⁵

Despite the obvious character of her objections to Lucretius, several of Hutchinson’s critics downplay her negative reaction to Lucretius, preferring to emphasize those instances where she makes positive use of his philosophy. For example, David Norbrook identifies those features of Lucretius that accord with the republican cause—Lucretius opposed royalist tendencies, he “had a primitivistic side” that opposes “courtly luxury,” and he was a “kindred spirit” with regard to “priestcraft and superstition” (Norbrook, “Margaret” 189). Norbrook thus sees her affinity for Lucretius as part of a current in republican politics and liberal historiography.¹⁶ Jonathan Goldberg, on the other hand, views Hutchinson as a materialist who maintains compatibility between Christianity and Epicureanism and who also prefigures postmodern concerns of constructed identity.¹⁷ Reid Barbour is less conclusive in his evaluation of Hutchinson. In the first of two articles, Barbour thinks that Hutchinson began her translation believing atomism to be a physics more consonant with her commitments to providence, since “it is all the more likely that atoms would require divine aid in forming an orderly and beautiful world than it is that four elements would require that aid” (Barbour, “Between” 4). Barbour believes her repudiation of Lucretius in her dedicatory letter is a sign of genuine repentance, such that “she offers the dedication as a prefatory gloss on how the poem should be read, namely in refutation of the poem’s own doctrine and by extension

those Restoration libertines who live without the regard for God or grace” (Barbour, “Between” 15). In his second article, Barbour argues that Hutchinson goes further than mere repudiation, making Lucretius an unwitting instrument of providence:

When Lucretius stresses the shameful error of those fictions invented by men who almost unconsciously posit their survival after death, Hutchinson turns the passage into a moment of unsought spiritual insight for the atheist dog who, imposed on by divinely given reason, is forced to admit his inkling ‘That something beyond humane life extends, / And part of them the mortall bound transcends’ (f. 70v)” (Barbour, “Lucy” 135-36).

According to Barbour, Hutchinson was attuned to the inconsistencies in Lucretius and, as Barbour notes, “cross-biased” his work against him. While Barbour comes closest to reflecting the spirit of Hutchinson’s remarks concerning the usefulness of Lucretius, I contend that each of these critics has omitted the greater part of the usefulness Hutchinson found in the materialist epic because they do not attend to her view of causation.

I argue that Hutchinson found that the philosophy of Lucretius, paraphrasing Epicurean materialism, eliminates the possibility of a true Christian philosophy, and she responded to Lucretius in her own philosophical epic, *Order and Disorder*. Epicurean and Christian philosophies differ on several accounts: notably, Epicureanism rejects the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* and describes the existence of natural phenomena entirely in a materialist idiom. This leads to a theory of causation that eliminates *formal and final* cause from the purview of metaphysics. Lucretius maintains that material and efficient causation are *necessary and sufficient* to explain the *form* or *nature* of natural phenomena and thus furnish the “true reasons” behind the operations of nature. However, Lucretius also admits certain limits to human knowledge of atomic motion—we cannot see the atoms or their self-moving powers. Aware that Lucretius cannot find out the “originall”

of things, Hutchinson criticizes his ascription of chance atomic collisions to the vicissitudes of nature. The groundlessness of Lucretius' own theory—his failure to provide a complete account of the existence of forms in nature—leads Hutchinson to formulate her own metaphysical commitments in the light of the Genesis account.

In first-century B.C., Lucretius wrote an epic to instruct the reader in Epicureanism, presumably addressed to Gaius Memmius. De Quehen comments on what Brown calls the “Epicurean evangelism” in the poem; “Lucretius was attempting a more direct approach to truth” and is an epic in the sense of “an encyclopaedic account of things” (de Quehen, “Translation” 8) The first of Lucretius' “principles” is that “*nihil posse creari de nihilo*” (1.156-157), or that nothing can be created from nothing, and in this assertion, he offers an ontology that contrasts sharply with the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. According to Lucretius, ignorance regarding the true causes of things, results in “mortall men restreind with dread” who assign the birth of creation to a “power devine”:

God never aniething of nothing made;
But soe are mortall men restreind with dread,
As seeing severall works in heaven and earth,
And ignorant of the cause that gives them birth,
They thinke a power devine brings forth those things;
But grant that nothing out of nothing springs,
Then we shall soone perceive how things are made
And whence they flow, without deviner ayd. (Lucretius, *DRN* 1.153-160)

The generation or coming into *being* of nature is attributed to God by those who are ignorant of the true causes, and importantly, they are motivated by fear or “dread.”¹⁸

According to Lucretius, the reason that “nothing out of nothing springs” is that the cause of a given being must be produced from a material antecedent. Only pre-existent things bring about or cause new things to exist. Lucretius sees the generative processes of

nature rely upon seeds, and, he writes, “If things were made of nothing, they would need/ Noe proper seeds, all things would all things breed” (Lucretius, *DRN* 1.161-2). Lucretius thus takes nature’s own regenerative processes to be normative since we cannot see things come into being any other way. Lucretius concludes:

If generative bodies were not in each kind,
How could a certeine mother be to all things assignd?
But since each species from its own seed grows
Only first bodies things to light expose,
Who take their being where their matter flows. (Lucretius *DRN* 1.169-173)

The cause of individual beings, as illustrated by nature, is the flow of matter in the reproduction of seeds and the kinds of things they produce. The “seeds” of nature, which Lucretius identifies with atoms, contain inward generative principles, and as a result, Lucretius eliminates the need for God-as-Creator.

Lucretius then argues that the principles inherent in atoms, which are the mechanistic causes of natural phenomena, either produce or dissolve forms. In Book 1, Lucretius describes how principles produce effects:

This then confirms, that which was sayd before
That the same principles, as they are joynd,
Moove, or are moovd, or have their place assign,
Divers effects produce. (Lucretius, *DRN* 1.914-17)

The immutable “principles,” or the causes that give rise to form, produce certain effects; either the principles lead to form or the dissolution of form. Lucretius thus attributes form and the decay of form to the “natures” of atoms:

Last when you see, things various forms disclose,
If you believe those shapes could not appeare,
Except the bodies of the matter were
With such like natures too indued, this way
Makes all the principles of things decay. (Lucretius, *DRN* 1. 922-26)

Thus, according to Lucretius, form arises out of the efficient and material causes inherent in the principles of atoms, and likewise, the same principles cause the decay of form (Lucretius, *DRN* 2:70-74). Most important to notice here, Lucretius reduces all explanation of individual things to atomic principles and motion, which are eternal (Lucretius, *DRN* 2.70, 117).

By his own admission, Lucretius acknowledges that his theory of atomic generation is incomplete because neither the forces that move atoms nor their violent collisions are directly visible to humans. Lucretius explains that forms arise and decay because atoms are constantly at war with one another. Lucretius describes the vicissitudes of atomic motion using a military metaphor to portray the motion of particles, which can be seen in sunbeams:

Armies of attoms sport in those bright beames,
And meeting in perpetual skirmishies,
Here joyne, there part, their motions never cease;
From whose vicissitudes we may comprize,
What motions the first bodies exercise,
In the unbounded world; thus small things may
Illustrate greate, and guide us in the way
Which to cleare knowledge leads; Againe when we
Those mooving attoms in the sunbeames see,
The perplext agitations there declare,
Such secret tumults in the matter are;
For these troopes smitte'n with undiscerned force
Are oft drive'n back, and often change their course,
Here mount, there sinke, on every side reverst,
All by th'impulsive matter thus disperst.
For principles first moove themselves, then those
Whose bodies fewest substances compose,
Who next them plac'd, their mooving power provokes,
By the impulsion of its secret strokes.
These moovd by them, moove the next rank, from whence
Motion proceeds, untill it meet our sence;
Which sees the attoms in the sunbeams strive,
But not the force, whence they that power derive. (*DRN* 2.115-37)

Though Lucretius maintains that the sunbeam illustrates “clear knowledge” of the warfare between atoms, much remains “undiscerned. We cannot see the self-moving forces contained within atoms, nor can we see the “secret tumults” of warring atoms within matter. Instead, Lucretius draws an analogy between the motion of visible particulates in sunlight and atoms. Since the particulates of sunlight do not behave exactly as atoms but only serve as an analogy, Lucretius necessarily leaves behind an invisible, insensible reserve, or an inaccessible body of knowledge concealed from the senses.¹⁹ Precisely this invisible and insensible reserve in Lucretius’ theory leads Hutchinson to find it so contrary to Christian teachings regarding causation, for it makes humans incapable of discerning divine purposes.

Hutchinson may have entertained doubts concerning Lucretius’ epic prior to her translation, but her dedicatory letter, written after its completion, makes clear her reasons for repudiating his materialist doctrine. Hutchinson, like many of her contemporaries, found Epicurean materialism to be entirely at odds with a Christian understanding of providence. In particular, she notes two axiomatic tenets of Epicureanism that run contrary to Christian teaching:

1. “[The Epicureans] think they treated more reverently of Gods, when they placd them above the cares and disturbances of humane affaires, and set them in an unperturbed rest and felicity”; thus
2. “leaving all things here, to Accident and Chance, deniing that determinate wise Councill and Order of things they could not dive into” (“Letter,” 3v).

Here, Hutchinson refers to the separate realm of the gods in Lucretius’ epic. Since Epicurus places the gods “above the cares and disturbances of humane affaires,” so that they may dwell in peace apart from the vicissitudes of the created order, he rules out providence from the beginning. For Epicurus, the peace of the gods is *securus*, which is

a “calme estate,” free from care, whose causes cannot be understood from a human perspective (Lucretius *DRN* 6.58-60). The existence of the gods is thus entirely opposed to the natural state of humans, whose hearts are *anxius*, or troubled, because they cannot be full of *ratio*, or natural reasons (Lucretius *DRN* 6.14-21). Only those like Lucretius who seek the rational causes of the material world can emulate the untroubled state of the sublime gods. However, the senses reveal only a cosmos governed by chance, which by definition omits rational order; so the Epicureans do not finally account for natural phenomena but merely produce reasons that quiet a troubled soul.

Hutchinson’s views of final and formal causes, which inform her description of providence, contrast with other seventeenth-century writers on this subject. In order to demonstrate the differences, I shall now turn to the work of Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, Ralph Cudworth, and Walter Charleton, who all share optimism about aspects of mechanistic physics. These figures and their respective theories of causation help to situate Hutchinson within the most significant philosophical debate of the Seventeenth Century.

Seventeenth-Century Responses to Lucretius

The most striking feature of Thomas Hobbes’s metaphysics is the central place of necessity with regard to the operations of nature. Although Hobbes is not an occasionalist, which directly links states of nature to the will of God, his metaphysics has some features in common with occasionalism. Like the occasionalist William of Ockham, Hobbes’ “metaphysics” rests on the assumption that only individuals are real. Ockham’s nominalism, which treats signs as being real in themselves but signifying only particulars, not universals, springs from his belief that abstract knowledge, drawn from

the senses, cannot give rise to universals.²⁰ In denying the existence of universals, Ockham arrives at skepticism with regard to metaphysical assertions. As Gilson remarks, “[For Ockham] Things are just what they are; Nature is performing its operations in an occult way, and the will of God is the ultimate cause of both its existence and its operations” (Gilson, *Unity* 59). While Hobbes denies the “occult” operations of nature, inverting Ockham’s skepticism by making the causes of all the operations of nature the interaction of bodies in motion, he shares an important presupposition with Ockham: things are necessarily what they are because God has willed them to be so. In *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes writes:

Every act of mans will, and every desire, and inclination proceedth from some cause, and that from another cause, which causes in a continuall chaine (whose first link in the hand of God the first of all causes) proceed from *necessity*.... And therefore God, that seeth, and disposeth all things, seeth also that the *liberty* of man in doing what he will, is accompanied with the *necessity* of doing that which God will, & no more, nor lesse. For though men may do many things, which God does not command, or is therefore Author of them; yet they can have no passion, nor appetite to any thing, of which appetite Gods will is not the cause. And did not his will assure the *necessity* of mans will, and consequently of all that on mans will dependeth, the *liberty* of men would be a contradiction, and impediment to the omnipotence and *liberty* of God. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 263)

Behind Hobbes’ account of liberty is an assumed equation of freedom with mere randomness, or a “continual chaine” of material causes. This equation assures that both human freedom and divine freedom are subject to necessity. Hobbes’ determinism bears an important resemblance to the nominalism of Ockham; for Hobbes and Ockham, only individuals exist and all such individuals are governed by the will of God. But in supplying an explanation of things through material and efficient causation, Hobbes gives an account for what remains “occult” in Ockham’s philosophy and thus avoids total

skepticism with regard to the operations of nature. Although such operations are mediated by mechanistic causes, Hobbes's metaphysics are entirely *necessary* and governed by God's will.

Other seventeenth-century thinkers objected to Hobbes' account, however, saying it was incomplete because mechanical motion is not intrinsic to physical bodies. In Hobbes' system, motion always acts from without and is not a property of bodies themselves. Kargon gives a brief description of the basic Hobbesian principles as summarized by Sir Charles Cavendish, who took issue with Hobbes' use of motion as an explanation:

In the first place, a movement in any body can be induced only by an external mover. '[N]othing moves by itself.' Secondly, the movement induced can only be stopped or diminished by the opposing motion of an external mover. Each body which acts as a mover is also moved. All change in nature results from movements of the invisible parts of bodies. 'The cause of all motion and all change is motion.' Even the cause of *rest* is motion. (Kargon, *Atomism* 56)

Cavendish here recognizes that Hobbes' theory of motion-as-cause yields no explanation of motion, but argues circularly that motion is the cause of motion. While Hobbes' system attempts a reductive explanation of observable phenomena, the principles of motion are assumed *a priori* and remain extrinsic to the physical bodies on which they operate. As a result, Hobbes fails to account for the *necessity* of motion as a causal phenomenon but merely assumes it.

Though Hobbes was not, strictly speaking,²¹ an atomist, the causal determinism and materialism of his system was close enough to the ancient atomists that he was associated with them. Hobbes clearly rejects everything that is not material. He claims that the idea of immaterial soul is not arrived at by "natural cogitation," for "though men

may put together words of contradictory signification, as ‘spirit’ or ‘incorporeal,’ yet they can never have the imagination of anything answering to them” (Hobbes, *Leviathan* XXII 53). Hobbes concludes that this contradiction of signification indicates that:

Men [who] that by their own meditation arrive to the acknowledgment of one infinite, omnipotent, and eternal God chose rather to confess He is incomprehensible and above their understanding than to define His nature by ‘spirit incorporeal,’ and then confess their definition to be unintelligible; or, if they give Him such a title, it is not ‘dogmatically’ with intention to make the divine nature understood, but ‘piously,’ to honour Him with attributes of significations as remote as they can from the grossness of bodies visible. (Hobbes *Leviathan* XXII, 53)

For Hobbes, the terms “spirit” and “incorporeal” fail to signify anything real; rather, they signify what is most remote from visible bodies. The nature of God is wholly beyond human reach, Hobbes seems to say. When pushed on the matter, however, he even makes God part of the universal mechanism. Unlike the nominalists before him, Hobbes attempted to explain away the “occult” qualities of nature and did so by reducing causes to physical motion. As Kargon notes, “Hobbes wished to be rid of the vague notion of incorporeal spirit as cause” (Kargon, *Atomism* 61). And the reason for Hobbes’ rejection of incorporeal spirit is clear enough: immaterial substance would be outside the mechanistic causes of the universe. For Hobbes, spirits are material things, and as Kargon points out, such materiality extends even to God:

Since Hobbes admitted that God is a substance, and that all substances are bodies, a simple syllogism would bring Hobbes to the position that even *God* is corporeal, a logical step, however, which he did not explicitly take for many years. (Kargon, *Atomism* 61)

The implications of Hobbes’ mechanism for God’s providence are of course devastating; in his system providence is wholly unintelligible, and humans assign causes to providence either by “fancy” or in obedience to the authority of others. He writes:

[M]an observeth how one event hath been produced by another, and remembereth in them antecedence and consequence; and, when he cannot assure himself of the true causes of things (for the causes of good and evil fortune for the most part are invisible), he supposes causes of them, either such as his own fancy suggesteth, or trusteth the authority of other men, such as he thinks to be his friends and wiser than himself. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* XXII, 52)

Only when the true causes, by which Hobbes means the mechanical and material causes, are not deemed sufficient to explain good or evil fortune will he suppose that some other cause, such as providence, operates in nature. The “will” of God that Hobbes refers to is not a formal or final cause but the first efficient and material cause in a chain of mechanical interactions.

Hobbes shared Lucretius’ belief that seeking out formal and final causes in nature amounts to a kind of superstition perpetuated by fear. For instance, Lucretius writes:

Whatever cause was hidden from their eies,
They’ascribd th’effect to ruling Deities.
Such as have learnt in what a calme estate
The Gods abide, even if they penetrate
Too farre into each cause, especially
Of th’ operations wee in heaven descry,
They will againe to superstition fall,
And the abandoned cruell Lords recall,
In whose power, wretched men, all things believe,
Not knowing what may, or what may not arrive,
What just bounds each thing hath, how strictly they
Within their limited prescriptions stay.
Thus wander they, guided by reasons blind[.] (*DRN* 6.54-68)

Hobbes’ reference to “old poets” in Chapter XII clearly refers to Lucretius, and his statement concerning natural causes is nearly identical:

This perpetual fear, always accompanying mankind in the ignorance of causes, as it were in the dark, must needs have for object something. And therefore, when there is nothing to be seen, there is nothing to accuse, either of their good or evil fortune, but some ‘power’ or agent ‘invisible’ in which sense perhaps it was that some of the old poets said that the gods were at first created by human fear; which spoken of the gods, that is to

say of the many gods of the Gentiles, is very true. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* XII 52-3)

Understandably, Hobbes' elimination of intelligible providence created a furor among seventeenth-century Christians, including Hutchinson, who had little difficulty in identifying his philosophy with the ancient atomists. Hence, although Hobbes may not have subscribed to the particulars of Epicurean atomism, he did follow the Epicurean attempt to reduce formal and final causes to material motion. In chapter four, I will show that the omission of such causes extends beyond the question of providence to political authority. Far from being a merely theoretical quibble, the implications of atomism reached to every part of life.

Another influential atomist of this period is René Descartes. Although Descartes seemed to reject the nominalist account of universals, the Frenchman is even closer to Ockham than Hobbes in certain respects. In his attempt to overcome the skepticism of medieval nominalism such as Ockham, Descartes located universals in the mind of the thinking subject; these universals took the form of immutable mathematical principles. The subjective nature of Cartesian universals, certified only by the rational mind, are closer in spirit to the nominalists than the metaphysical realists, for rationalism, after Descartes, bore "unmistakable traces of nominalism" in its separation of the universal from the particular (Dupré, *Enlightenment* 3). Dupré argues that rationalism increased the strain upon "the synthesis of the universal and the particular," which had first been challenged by nominalism (3). Regarding the way that rationalism and nominalism both challenged this synthesis, Dupré writes:

It may seem far-fetched to link modern rationalism to a medieval position with which it had so unambiguously broken. Did the rationalist concept of reason not imply a rejection of nominalist particularism and a return to

classical sources? In fact, the [modern] rationalist universal differed substantially from the ancient one. For Aristotle as well as for Plato, things owed their identity to a universal form that *included* all particular determinations. The Enlightenment concept of the universal, to the contrary, was a rational a priori void of any particular content, a category of thought imposed upon the real, rather than expressive of it. Its formalist character shows a surprising similarity with the universal names that, in nominalist philosophy, the mind imposes upon reality in order to gain purchase on a chaotic multiplicity. (Dupré 3)

Descartes' separation of the universals from particulars, the former belonging to the *res cogitans* and the latter to *res extensa*, bears similarity to the Ockhamist division of abstracted and intuitive knowledge since the two domains are causally distinct. As Gilson observes, "[Ockham] first reminded his readers that every intuition of a really existing thing was the joint effect of two separate causes: the thing itself and our knowledge of it" (Gilson *Unity* 63). For Ockham, as for Descartes, the causes of universals in the mind are not caused by particulars. Noting this similarity, Dupré argues that the metaphysical and epistemological forms of the two thinkers are alike: "the mind imposes [names] upon reality in order to gain a purchase on a chaotic multiplicity".

Significantly, Descartes' effort to overcome nominalist skepticism leads to a considerable alteration of the medieval theory of causation. In the metaphysics of the medieval realists, nature revealed the presence of divine power and causality in that the first cause of creation was an *act* of being to which nothing is prior. Gilson describes this difference between medieval and Cartesian causality:

[For Descartes] man exerts no causality save in so far as he is, and it is very true that since nothing is prior to being, we cannot pass beyond that point. But what is the meaning of the verb *to be*? When I say *I am*, my thought does not, as a rule, pass beyond the empirical apprehension of a fact given by internal observation. It was otherwise, however, in the eyes of the mediaeval thinkers. For them the verb *to be* was essentially an active verb signifying the very act of existing; to affirm their own actual existence was much more to them than to affirm their present existence, it

was an affirmation of the actuality, that is to say the very energy, by which their being existed. If, then, we would arrive at an exact understanding of the mediaeval conception of causality we must ascend to this very act of existence, for it is clear that if being is act, the causal act must necessarily be rooted in the very being of cause. (Gilson, *Spirit* 89)

For the medievals, God is present in creation as a first cause, which is the very act of being. For Descartes, God creates extended matter which becomes the basis for mathematical principles. In Descartes' famous *cogito, ergo sum*, thought precedes existence, and he thus arrives at a rational a priori as the proper *telos* of human understanding. Descartes rids matter of metaphysical form, or the act of being, since such a theory of matter cannot be reduced to mathematical principles. These two different accounts of what is real yield two divergent theories of causality. Medievals separated first and second cause as different species of act such that secondary causes or acts are rooted in the original act of being. For Descartes, God first created prime matter which is extended, and then differentiated kinds of motion within extended matter which operate according to certain mechanical causes. As we shall see, Hutchison's approach to causation was influenced by Reformed Scholasticism which attempted to preserve the crucial elements of medieval realism against such modern accounts of causation.

If we briefly consider the implications of Descartes' position, the meaning of Hutchinson's contrasting position will become apparent. The Cartesian view makes the *a priori* "laws of nature" the proper study of empirical science. In doing so, however, Descartes creates a dilemma concerning God's providence. For Descartes, divine power, which in medieval philosophy is the presence of God in creation as the act of being, is mediated through mechanical laws, but the immaterial God is both wholly present and wholly absent in the world by such laws. Gilson describes this dilemma as the "two

Descartes”: one “who would have been quite willing to dispense with God” and one “who wanted to ascribe all causality to God” (Gilson, *Unity* 164). Gilson says that Descartes never resolved this tension:

Descartes was quite willing to give everything to God in metaphysics, if that were necessary in order to have nothing but extension left in physics. As he himself had no use for physical energy of any kind in his purely mechanical physics, what Descartes needed in metaphysics was a monstrous and despotic God, whose proper function it would be to draw from matter all that was not bare and naked extension in space. The actual condition of such a world, in any given moment, would then require no other explanation than the creative and preserving power of a God who would make it be so; what such a world is now does not follow from what it was in the instant immediately preceding, nor is it a cause of what will be in the next one. (Gilson *Unity* 164)

Unlike Hobbes, Descartes wished to avoid making God material in his mechanical philosophy, and so his solution is to make the laws of mechanics concepts imposed by God on matter. Like Hobbesian motion, however, Cartesian causes are always external to matter and thus do not account for matter itself. As a result, the “other Descartes” makes God wholly absent from creation, so that matter itself is essentially formless for Descartes, existing only as extension.

Gilson’s “two Descartes” shows just how Descartes fails to account for God’s providence or governance of the world to a good end. It fails because “nature” for Descartes proscribes or limits God’s causal interaction with the world. Though the laws of nature are immutable, nature itself is mutable, and if the laws of nature alone account for natural mutability, then God can no longer actively direct nature to a final cause. Fallon notes that Descartes’ view of providence as God’s preservation of the universe is not truly orthodox: “This preservation is creation under another name, for an immutable God creates immutably; special intervention in the cosmos would point to a change in

God, who established the laws of nature at creation” (25). In support of this claim, Fallon cites Descartes’ writing on this subject in *The World*, written in 1629-1633 and published in 1664:

‘[I]t follows from necessity, from the mere fact that [God] continues to preserve [the world], that there must be many changes in its parts which cannot, it seems to me, properly be attributed to the action of God (because that action never changes), and which therefore I attribute to nature. The rules by which these changes take place I call the ‘laws of nature.’ (qtd. in Fallon 25)

Descartes’ view of matter, devoid of final and formal cause, results in immutable laws as the form of existence. Therefore, like the nominalists, Descartes separates form from particulars by separating immutability from the mutable, the universal from the particulars. Though this dualism allows Descartes to separate an immaterial God from the material world, it also leads him to a drastically constricted view of providence.

Descartes’ dualism was deeply influential in English atomism because his metaphysical account of the world apparently preserved both the explanatory power of atomism and the existence of immaterial substance, thus overcoming the “atheistic” doctrines of Hobbes and the ancient atomists. According to Fallon, Descartes created a “conceptual space” for God’s providence:

In maintaining the existence and mental activity of incorporeal substance while at the same time elaborating a mechanical model of causation in corporeal substance, Descartes was seen to be opening a conceptual space for God that many had feared had been closed, explicitly or implicitly, by the ancient and modern atomists and by Hobbes. (23)

However, in creating a conceptual space for God, Descartes sealed off any sensible qualities that reveal God in nature since the senses depend on *res extensa*, or extended things, and the immutable laws of nature depend on *res cogitans*, or thinking things. As David C. Schindler observes:

For Descartes, [...], everything qualitative (i.e. expressive of meaning) in sense experience must simply be set aside as *subjective* [...]. What is left is nondescript “stuff,” bereft of any nature and reduced to its measurable dimensionality, perceivable by the mind alone.... Lacking an imagination, Descartes reduces the real to a pure mathematical abstraction, which neither he nor anyone else will ever encounter. (Schindler 533)

Descartes does not properly give an account of nature since the mind, and not nature itself, is the source of natural laws. From the standpoint of the human subject, thinking is all that is prior to existence and can be known to exist. For this reason, Schindler concludes, “Arguably, Descartes finally resolves the haunting problem of knowing whether the world exists in the *Meditations* simply by eliminating the world” (Schindler 533).

Although Descartes’ philosophy leads to a constricted view of providence, several of his contemporaries found his mind-body dualism particularly attractive in defending orthodox Christian doctrines of providence and the immortality of the soul against the atomism of Lucretius and the mechanism of Hobbes. On the one hand, such interested parties desired to maintain the explanatory power of mechanical causation, and on the other, they wanted to purify mechanism of its atheistic associations. An example of concern with the first issue appears in the writing of Walter Charleton, a close friend of Hobbes and a member of the Newcastle Circle. Charleton attempts to save Hobbesian mechanism by recourse to Cartesian dualism. On the other hand, Ralph Cudworth eschews Hobbesian mechanism in favor of Cartesian mechanism, but unlike Charleton, Cudworth recognizes that Descartes’ metaphysics removes formal and final cause from the natural order. Through a dualist interpretation of Plato, Cudworth attempts to join final cause to nature by redrawing the lines of Cartesian dualism. Unlike Descartes’, Cudworth’s theory restores a metaphysical dimension to material and efficient cause,

which he terms “plastic nature”. Especially in the case of Charleton, such attempts to purge atomism of its atheistic content took hold in the development of English atomism. During the controversy between the Cambridge Platonists and Hobbes in the 1650's, Hutchinson undertook her translation of *DRN*, in what de Quehen calls an attempt to get at the source of the debate (de Quehen "Introduction" 11). As we shall see, Hutchinson's metaphysics expressed in *Order and Disorder* goes beyond such attempts at accommodation.²²

Charleton wrote in response to Cambridge Platonist Henry More, who issued an influential critique of Epicurean atomism in his *Antidote against Atheism* (1653) two years after the appearance of Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651). More claimed that the senses alone cannot account for the motion of matter, which limit an exclusively atomist account of motion. More takes the incompleteness of the account as a signal, for the properties of necessity and eternity, which are insensible, are nevertheless attributed by the atomists to atoms:

For I demand of you then, sith you professe your selves to believe nothing but Sense, how could Sense ever help you to that Truth you acknowledged last, viz. *That that which exists without the help of another is necessary and eternall?* For Necessity and Eternity are no Sensible Qualities and therefore are not the Objects of any Sense; and I have already very plentifully proved, that there is other Knowledge and perception in the Soul besides that of Sense. Wherefore it is very unreasonable, when as we have other Faculties of Knowledge besides the Senses, that we should consult with the Senses alone about matters of Knowledge, and exclude those Faculties that penetrate beyond Sense. A thing that profess'd Atheists themselves will not doe when they are in the humor of Philosophising; for their Principle of Atomes is a business that does not fall under Sense, as Lucretius at large confesses. (More 24)

More seizes upon the incompleteness of the account of atomic motion given by Lucretius—atoms cannot be sensed. The Epicurean claim of necessity and eternity turn

out, as More has it, to support an immaterial perception of the Soul, and so the Epicureans unwittingly give credence to a substance other than atoms. Inverting the atomists' account, More argues against the corporeality of the soul, instead making the incorporeal soul the seat of "spontaneous motion" (More 32). More thus opposes the Epicurean doctrine of *sua sponte* (DRN 2.1092), or that atoms are moved of themselves.²³

Just one year after More's critique, Walter Charleton published a response to him in his *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana* (1654), in which he borrows from Descartes in order to answer the charges of atheism leveled at Hobbes, his friend and fellow member of the Newcastle circle.²⁴ Charleton maintained the centrality of motion which he took from Hobbes' physics by drawing from Descartes. Charleton also attempted to preserve an account of Providence and the immortality of the soul. In the *Physiologia*, he lists several ways in which Christianity corrects Epicurean error:

The Positions [of Epicurus] to be exploded are (1) *That Atoms were Eternally existent in the infinite space*, (2) *that their Motive Faculty was eternally inherent in them, and not derived by impression from any External Principle*, (3) *that their congenial Gravity affects no Centre*, (4) *that their Declinatory motion from a perpendicular is connatural to them with that of perpendicular descent, from Gravity*. Those which we may with good advantage substitute in their stead, are (1) *That Atoms were produced ex nihilo, or created by God, as the sufficient Materials of the World, in that part of Eternity, which seemed opportune to his infinite Wisdom*; (2) *that, at their Creation, God invigorated or impregnated them with an Internal Energy, or Faculty Motive, which may be conceived the First Cause of all Natural Actions, or Motions*, (for they are indistinguishable) *performed in the World*; (3) *that their gravity cannot subsist without a Centre*; (4) *that their internal Motive Virtue necessitates their perpetual Commotion among themselves, from the moment of its infusion, to the expiration of Natures lease*. (Charleton *Physiologia* 126)

Charleton thus answers More's critique by purging atomism of eternity and necessity, giving over atoms and atomic motion to God. In depriving nature of autonomy, Charleton leaves open the possibility that God directs nature towards a final cause

(providence), yet Charleton leaves aside the content of final cause, i.e. whether the purpose of creation is good, bad, or indifferent.

The reason Charleton leaves final cause aside is that nature cannot confirm final causes because nature always remains finite. In his earlier work, *The darknes of atheism dispelled by the light of nature* (1652), Charleton remarks: “[W]e immediately discovered, that the direct way to a full and durable *Solution* of them all, was onely to advertise men in the generall, that they ought to speculate their own Mindes, as *Finite Substances*, and the *Supreme Essence*, as an *Infinite*, and therefore *Incomprehensible* one (“An Advertisement to the Reader”). Since God is “infinite substance,” he remains entirely incomprehensible to finite substance. We then must confess, Charleton claims, those “*Defects and Impediments*, which rendered us insufficient to the worthy *Administrations* of a *Provi[de]nce* so difficult, so sublime, so sacred, so diffusive” (“Advertisement”). Final cause may exist, but nothing in finite nature, including the rational mind, can understand it. Rather, Charleton relies on the bare assertion of “Two *Cardinal Attributes*, the *Creation* of the Universe, and the constant *Conservation* and *Moderation* of the same, by his *Providence*” (“Advertisement”). Such attribution leaves the formal and final causes of creation hidden with God, reducing human understanding of providence to a formless and thus featureless category.

Like Descartes, Charleton posits subjective rationalism, or the speculation our “own Mindes,” but unlike Descartes, Charleton seems confused about the ontic status of thought. Charleton seems to follow Hobbes in making “Mindes [...] *Finite Substances*,” but in the same work, his portrait of the mind is closer to Descartes.’ Regarding what he calls “Naturall Theology,” Charleton suggests that questions of God’s existence and the

immateriality of the soul are perhaps better left to philosophers rather than “Divines.” He explains his reasons for leaving these two questions to philosophers:

For, though to us whose *Mindes* are deeply imbued with the sacred tincture of *Christianisme*, it sufficeth to assume upon the evidence of meer *Faith*, that God is, and that the Human Soule, being constituted superior to Corruptibility, doth eternally survive the Funerall of the Body: yet, assuredly can the meer *Natural* man persisting in the state of *Infidelity*, never be adduced to embrace either any *Religion*, or any *Moral Virtue*, unlesse both those *Propositions* fundamentall be first evicted to him by *Reason Apodictal*, desumed from the infallible *Criterion*, the *Light of Nature*; from whose Judicature there can be no appeal. (Charleton, “An Advertisement to the Reader”).

Here Charleton claims that “the meer Natural man” cannot embrace any religious or moral virtue unless the questions of God’s existence and the immateriality of the soul are proved by the infallible “Light of Nature.” Thus, he maintains an exclusively natural and rational theology, even if the content of thought is finite. Either Charleton is paradoxical or ambivalent in his theory of the human mind. Upon closer inspection, Charleton appears ambivalent, for in the realm of physics, Charleton adheres a limited view of reason, and in ethics, unlimited.²⁵

Since finite nature cannot express true causes of the infinite substance, Charleton’s philosophy quite naturally arrives at skeptical doubt as a heuristic principle. Reason itself may be “apodictical,” but the content of reason itself remains finite. He admits his own “declared scepticism” At the end of the *Physologia*:

In the meantime, I conjure you, by your own Humanity, to remember and testifie, that in this my Conversation with you, you have found me so far from being Magisterial in any of the Opinions I praesented; that considering my own Humor of Indifferency, and constant Dubiosity [. . .] it hath somewhat of wonder in it, that I ever proposed them to Others: nor indeed, can any thing solve that wonder, but my Hope thereby secretly to undermine that lofty Confidence of yonger Heads, in the Certitude of Positions and Axioms Physiological; and by my declared Scepticism even in such Notions, as my self have laboured to assert, by the firmest

Grounds, and Strongest Inducements of Belief, to reduce them to the safer level of *Quo magis quaerimus, magis dubitamus* [What we greatly seek, we greatly doubt]. (Charleton, *Physiologia* “Conclusion”).

In the realm of physics, Charleton stops short of Descartes’ “rational monism,” perhaps genuinely concerned about the limits of physical explanations of natural phenomena.

Though doubt can lead to greater certainty, no conclusion of physics is truly secure.

Against such a skeptical view, Ralph Cudworth sought to restore moral content to God’s providence in his compendious *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), which is roughly contemporaneous with Hutchinson’s *Order and Disorder* but attempts to save atomism by introducing incorporeal substance. Cudworth provides a brief account of his book’s thesis:

For to Seek out God here, is nothing else, but to Seek a Participation of his Image, or the Recovery of that Nature and Life of his, which we have been Alienated from. And these Three Things, namely, That all things do not Float without a Head and Governour; but there is an Omnipotent Understanding Being Presiding over all: That this God, hath an Essential Goodness and Justice, and That the Differences of Good and Evil Morall, Honest and Dishonest are not by meer Will and Law onely but by Nature; and consequently, That the Deity cannot Act, Influence, and Necessitate men, to such things as are in their Own Nature, Evil; and Lastly, That Necessity is not Intrinsicall to the Nature of every thing; But that men have such a Liberty, or Power over their own Actions, as may render them Accountable for the same, and Blame-worthy when they doe Amis; and consequently, That there is a Justice Distributive of Rewards and Punishments, running through the World. (Cudworth *True* “Preface”)

Unlike Charleton, for whom no participation in God is possible because divine infallibility is utterly cut off from finite creation, Cudworth views human nature as a composite material and immaterial substance. For Cudworth, the goodness of God, or his just administrations of the natural order, requires that he be omnipotent over nature, but such omnipotence does not compel human action. Rather, participation in the goodness

of God means the ability to act apart from the causal necessity of nature and thus be accountable for such actions.

As was typical of seventeenth-century objections to the religious implications of the ancient atomists, Cudworth uses his response to these atomists to attack the mechanism of the Hobbesian system (Harrison “Atomism” 44). Like fellow-Platonist Henry More, Cudworth objects to the determinism of Hobbesian mechanism and the implications of such determinism for human responsibility. Hobbes’ definition of freedom is indeed narrow. In the *Leviathan*, Hobbes defines freedom simply as unimpeded motion:

LIBERTY, or freedom, signifieth properly the absence of opposition (by opposition, I mean external impediments of motion); and may be applied no less to irrational and inanimate creatures than to rational. For whatsoever is so tied, or environed, as it cannot move but within a certain space, which space is determined by the opposition of some external body, we say it hath not liberty to go further. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* XXI 107)

Human freedom does not have its source in the will but in the physical arrangement of the universe: if an impediment to motion is removed, then a subject is properly free. Not surprisingly, many critics of Hobbes found little reason to believe that this kind of freedom could support human responsibility. Aiming at philosophies such as Hobbes’, Cudworth argues against “Fatale Necessity,” claiming that it “tak[es] away all *Guilt* and *Blame*, *Punishments* and *Rewards*, and plainly render[s] a *Day of Judgment*, Ridiculous” (Cudworth, *True* “Preface”).

Cudworth does not, however, deny that causal necessity is present in nature; rather, he objects to such necessity being the totality of natural causes. While the atheistic atomists “hold the material necessity of all things without a Deity” (Cudworth,

True 4), such that the human will is negated and responsibility rendered unintelligible,

Cudworth also claims:

[Y]et, as we vindicate to God the glory of all good, so we do not quite banish the notion of fate neither, nor take away all necessity; which in a like manner, the complaints of those persons, at all times a numerous class, who bitterly repined at being neglected and despised by the gods, to whom notwithstanding they most devoutly sued for protection, might readily be silenced. For who could justly be angry with Esculapius for not expelling a fever, if he could be hindered from doing so by the fates?
(Cudworth, *True* 9)

Esculapius cannot be blamed for failing to cure a fever which has natural causes,

Cudworth reasons, and so part of the contingency of human action must rest with natural necessity, or the material and efficient causes that operate in nature. For this reason,

Cudworth insists upon a dualist ontology: the universe is comprised of contingency and necessity, which is not only compatible with human freedom but with benevolent providence:

But the hypothesis that we shall recommend, as most agreeable to truth, of a *πρόνοια ἰλάσμιος*, "placable providence," of a Deity essentially good, presiding over all, will avoid all extremes, asserting to God the glory of good, and freeing him from the blame of evil; and leaving a certain proportionate contemperation and commixture of contingency and necessity both together in the world; as nature requires a mixture of motion and rest, without either of which there could be no generation.
(Cudworth, *True* 10)

The "extremes" to which Cudworth refers are a total natural necessity or total contingency of nature upon God's will, for either God would be blamed for evil or would cease to be an omnipotent God. In other words, God himself would be subject to natural necessity. Some necessity must be permissible in Cudworth's cosmos, but such necessity is limited by the contingency of human and divine action issuing from incorporeal substance.

While atomism that implies total causal necessity is false, according to Cudworth, “true atomism” in his account has the opposite effect of implying incorporeal substance.²⁶ “The second advantage,” Cudworth remarks, “which this atomical physiology seems to have, is this, that it prepares an easy and clear way for the demonstration of incorporeal substances, by settling a distinct notion of body” (Cudworth, *True* 87). Once a “distinct notion of body” is established, Cudworth believes that the only available metaphysics that makes sense of benevolent Providence and human liberty is that of incorporeal substance.²⁷

Cudworth also finds Descartes’ dualism adaptable to his own substance dualism but not after a certain degree of censuring. “The Cartesian hypothesis”, according to Cudworth, “plainly supposeth incorporeal substance,” or the “thinking substance” of the Cartesian mind, yet Cudworth objects to the relationship between the divine mind and material substance being reduced to bare efficient cause of motion (Cudworth *True* 95). In a critique of Descartes, Cudworth spells out the implications of Cartesian metaphysics: Cartesian philosophy rejects of “all *Plastic Nature*” from the “Primitive Moschical [i.e. Mosaical] Atomology,”²⁸ and instead “derives the whole System of the Corporeal Universe from the *Necessary Motion of Matter* [. . .] without the Guidance or Direction of an *Understanding Nature*” (*True* 275). According to Cudworth, the Cartesian conception of the mind greatly reduces the explanatory power of the whole system:

[T]hough it boast of Salving all the *Corporeal Phaenomena*, by mere *Fortuitous Mechanism*, and without any *Final* or *Mental Causality*, yet it gives no Accompt at all of that which is the Grandest of *all Phaenomena*, the τó εὖ και καλώς, *The Orderly Regularity and Harmony of the Mundane System*. The Occasion of which Miscarriage hath been already intimated, namely from the acknowledging only *Two Heads* of Being, *Extended* and *Cogitative*, and making the *Essence of Cogitation* to consist in *Express Consciousness*; from whence it follows, that there could be no

Plastick Nature, and therefore either all things must be done by *Fortuitous Mechanism*, or else God himself be brought Immediately upon the Stage for the salving of all *Phaenomena*. Which Latter Absurdity, our Philosopher being over careful to avoid, cast himself upon the Former, the banishing of all *Final* and *Mental Causality* quite out of the World, and acknowledging no other Philosophick Causes, beside *Material* and *Mechanical*. (Cudworth, *True* 275-6)

As he draws out the implications of this mistake in assigning cause, Cudworth hits upon several problems for Cartesian metaphysics with regard to Providence and human liberty. By reducing God's role in creation to "Material and Mechanical" causes, Descartes excludes any "Final and Mental causality" from consideration and thus cuts off the wise and benevolent will of God toward his creatures. Furthermore, by excluding final cause, Descartes makes the "*Regular Frame and Harmony of the Universe*" unintelligible and thereby excludes "the grand Argument" for the existence of God. Cudworth points out an even more damning likeness between the metaphysics of Descartes and the atheistic atomists: Descartes seems to make "Matter *Necessarily Existent*, and *Essentially Infinite* and *Eternal*."²⁹ When assigned to matter, these attributes, which for the Christian Platonist Cudworth belong to incorporeal substance, threaten to undo the boundaries that separate the necessary and contingent, the corporeal and incorporeal. Human liberty, in Cudworth's system, requires that natural necessity be bounded so that the human subject may rule over such necessity (Cudworth *True* 220). If natural necessity is infinite and eternal, human freedom and God's providence are ruled out.

Despite these strong censures, Cudworth believes that Descartes is not an atheist nor ever intended such a conclusion since he believes in incorporeal substance. Directly after his censures, Cudworth writes:

Notwithstanding all which, we cannot entertain that uncharitable opinion of him, that he really designed atheism, the fundamental principles of his

philosophy being such, as that no atheistic structure can possibly be built upon them. But shortly after this Cartesian restitution of the primitive atomology, that acknowledged incorporeal substance, we have had our Leucippus and Democritus too, who also revived and brought again upon the stage that other atheistic atomology, that makes αρχας των ατόμους, “senseless and lifeless atoms to be the only principles of all things in the universe”: thereby necessarily excluding, besides incorporeal substance and immortality of souls, a deity and natural morality; as also making all actions and events materially and mechanically necessary. (Cudworth, *True* 276)

Cudworth claims that those who come to the conclusion that Descartes is an atheist are too much influenced by the philosophy of “our Leucippus and Democritus,” or the corporealists such as Hobbes.³⁰ Cudworth credits Descartes with reviving true atomism, or the “Moschical Atomology,” but blames the revival of ancient atheistic atomism for obscuring and distorting what is true of Descartes’ hypothesis.

Whatever may have been true of Descartes’ belief in God, his metaphysics are liable to the charge of atheism because they lack an account of final cause. But Cudworth offers a correction by way of positing a “plastic nature.” If nature is reduced to mechanical (efficient) and material causes only, then either the order of nature comes about “fortuitously” without guidance, or God miraculously executes everything in nature immediately (Cudworth, *True* 218). To the former consequence, Cudworth argues that “it is utterly unconceivable and impossible, that such infinite regularity and artificialness, as is every where throughout the world, should constantly result out of the fortuitous motion of matter” (Cudworth, *True* 220). To the latter consequence, Cudworth argues:

Moreover, it seems not so agreeable to reason neither, that nature, as a distinct thing from the Deity, should be quite superseded or made to signify nothing, God himself doing all things immediately and miraculously; from whence it would follow also, that they are all done either forcibly and violently, or else artificially only, and none of them by any inward principle of their own. (Cudworth, *True* 223)

In light of his original thesis, Cudworth believes that this radical occasionalism, which reduces the regular motions of nature to “meer Will and Law” empties nature of its significance—of its power to reveal independently the goodness of God. In order to avoid the dilemma, Cudworth argues for the concept of a “plastic nature,” which being under God:

as an inferior and subordinate instrument, doth drudgingly execute that part of his providence, which consists in the regular and orderly motion of matter; yet so as that there is also, besides this, higher providence to be acknowledged, which, presiding over it, doth often supply the defects of it, and sometimes overrule it; forasmuch as this plastic nature cannot act electively, nor with discretion. (Cudworth, *True* 224).

The necessary causes in nature thus account for the “regular and orderly motion of matter,” yet at any time, God may overrule the necessary order to bring about his purposes.

While Cudworth’s revision of Descartes demonstrates the need for a more complete account of Providence, his own account leaves several important questions unanswered. Cudworth defines God’s freedom *against* natural necessity, such that immaterial substance is negatively defined as that which is not necessitated. In this theoretical framework, Cudworth argues that God may rule over natural necessity, but God does not necessitate human action in the process. What then does nature signify? Cudworth avoids making God’s will wholly determinative of natural causes because he understands that nature signifies a particular order, but what order does the “plastic nature” signify? The answer is entirely ambiguous because nature operates according to two separate laws: the necessary laws of causal interaction and the laws of God’s providential intervention. Like several of his contemporaries, Cudworth insists upon the goodness of God’s administration of nature, but he cannot provide an account of God’s

goodness from nature itself. As a result, Cudworth can only resort to an axiomatic assertion of God's goodness—that God is indeed Good.

Even though Cudworth's account of nature proved ambiguous, he rightly identifies the negation of the goodness of God and human and divine freedom in Epicurus and his followers. For instance, Lucretius presumed meaningful human freedom and so insisted that the *atomorum clinamen*, or atomic swerve, breaks causal necessity and thereby makes human freedom possible; yet such freedom does yield human responsibility.³¹ Lucretius defines freedom as actions which are not necessitated by a chain of causal laws:

Soe then we must confesse, that in the seeds
There is another cause, which motion breeds.
Besides the touch and weight from whence doth grow
This innate power in us, because we know,
That out of noe cause noe effect can flow. (2.283-87)

The seeds, or atoms, break the causal chain by their *clinamen*, which in turn gives humans an “innate power” to resist necessity. While causation does not bind the atoms, human freedom still operates within a frame of necessary cause and effect. Cudworth thus claims that atomic swerve cannot properly found freedom:

Forasmuch as when Epicurus Derived Liberty of Will in men, meerly from
that Motion of Sensles Atoms Declining Uncertainly from the
Perpendicular; it is Evident, that according to him, Volition itself must be
really Local Motion. As indeed in the Democritick Fate, and Material
Necessity of all things, it is Implied, That Humane Cogitations are but
Mechanism and Motion. (Cudworth *True Preface*)

Even though Lucretius breaks the causal chain necessity for atoms, he fails to provide an adequate account for human volition that leads to responsibility. If volition is merely “Local Motion” and not motion that begins by and in the will of the subject, human action is reduced to a “Democritick Fate and Material Necessity.” The workings of the

mind, here thought to be what separates humans from mechanical necessity, are reducible to mechanical motion.

As I have shown in this chapter, several seventeenth-century thinkers—most notably René Descartes—attempted to accommodate the New Philosophy of mathematics and physics to the doctrine of Providence. All, however, encounter theological and philosophical difficulties connected with the material and efficient causation, which either lead to the determinism of Hobbes or the dualisms of Descartes and Cudworth. As I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, Hutchinson shows the New Philosophy to be a Trojan Horse, undermining the causal framework that allows for a traditional account of Providence.

CHAPTER TWO

Hutchinson's Response to Epicurean Atomism

As we noted in the previous chapter, before the mid-seventeenth century, Epicurus had long been viewed with suspicion. Harrison summarizes the general objection to Epicureanism neatly: “it had denied Providence and had therefore denied God” (Harrison, “Atomism” 26). In this chapter, I shall describe Hutchinson's objection to atomism as a denial of God's providence and show that she draws on contemporary arguments from Reformed Scholasticism to give an alternative account of causation. Furthermore, I shall demonstrate that her theory of causation provides a more robust account of the Aristotelian formal cause by appealing to God's glory as the visible form of creation.

During the seventeenth century, Scientists such as Robert Boyle, increasingly began to recognize the usefulness of Epicurean atomism in its application to physics.³² Hugh de Quehen notes that atomism was increasingly attractive as an explanation of “observed phenomena” despite the fact that it went along with an implied denial of creation and the indifference of the gods (“Translation” 12). Like the ancient Epicureans, seventeenth-century revivalists of Epicurean atomism were attracted to the powers of natural reason for explaining natural phenomena. With the revival of atomism came the possibility of explaining natural phenomena in more certain ways. As Stephen Fallon points out:

People could observe the effects of physical collision on the bowling green or the firing range—what if the invisible substratum operated in the

same way? If so, then the laws of physics promised to be rationalizable and calculable. Moreover, the atomist theory was not empirically falsifiable—by definition, the atoms were too small to be seen. This combination of factors made atomism nearly irresistible to scientists. (Fallon 20-21)

As a theory of physics, atomism promised a great deal of explanatory power without multiplying assumptions. If atomic theory rests on one basic assumption—that the behavior of atoms is analogous to the motion of observable bodies—then it cannot be further reduced. Theoretically robust and not empirically falsifiable, atomism seemed to promise the best hope for epistemological certainty concerning the operations of the created order.³³

However attractive atomism seemed as a scientific theory, the autonomy of nature presumed by Epicurus could not be ignored, for it clearly denied divine agency. With the publication of *Philosophiae Epicuri syntagma* (1649), Frenchman Pierre Gassendi began an effort to harmonize atomism with the Christian doctrine of Creation by making God the First Cause of atomic motion. Robert Kargon notes, “Whereas the ancient atomic hypothesis posited the inherency of motion in matter, thus removing God as a necessary efficient agent, Gassendi maintained that God was required to impress motion upon the atoms. As the source of motion, God was restored to atomic philosophy” (Kargon 184). Gassendi’s argument for the *necessity* of God as the First Cause of atomic motion rests on a univocal ontology; God is the First Cause of motion by virtue of being the origin of mechanical causes that govern natural phenomena. By univocal ontology I mean that when Gassendi speaks of “God” and “creation” as both existing, or “being,” even though the former causes the latter, Gassendi applies the term “being” to both realities “univocally,” that is, with the same meaning exactly, rather than analogically. In short,

by imagining God as imparting motion to atoms in a mechanistic fashion, Gassendi risks reducing God either to a thing “encompassed by the category of “being,” or as utterly unrelated to “being.” As a consequence, once the atoms are set in motion, God no longer directly moderates the events of creation. As Fallon observes, “The providential plan, he [Gassendi] suggested, is wrapped up in God’s initial imparting of motions to the newly created atoms” (Fallon 43). The resulting picture of providence renders God both wholly present in nature as a clockwork design and wholly absent in all other ways.

Hutchinson meets such attempts to accommodate Epicureanism with severe criticism, claiming that such a strategy resulted in a distortion of Scriptural revelation. Hutchinson is keenly aware that certain scientists who warmly received Gassendi’s work, notably Englishmen Thomas Hobbes and Walter Charleton, attempted to make Christianity and Epicureanism compatible by restoring some sense of Providence to atomism. However, she argues that all such efforts result in doctrinal error:

For all the Heresies that are sprung up in Christian religion, are but the severall foolish and impious inventions of the old contemplative Heathen revivd, and brought forth in new dresses, while men wreck their witts, striving to wrest and pervert the sacred Scriptures from their genuine meaning, to complie with the false and foolish opinions of men. Some of them indeed acknowledge Providence, A devine Originall and Regiment of all things, an internall Law, which oblieges us to eternall Punishment if wee transgresse it, and shall be rewarded with present peace of conscience, and future Blessednes if wee obey it; But though they have generall notions, wanting a revelation and guide to lead them into a true and distinct knowledge, of the Nature of God, of the Originall and Remedie of Sin, of the Spring and nature of Blessednes, they set up their vaine imaginations in the roome of God, and devize superstitions foolish services to avert his wrath, and propitiate his favour, suitable to their devized God. (Hutchinson, “Letter” 3v)

These scientists concerned with the theological implications of atomism, according to Hutchinson, seek “a true and distinct knowledge,” but their attempts to accommodate

Epicurus to Christ, even if they retain some notion of providence, result in a distortion of Christian doctrine.³⁴ The clockwork nature, which operates entirely by mechanistic principles available only to “narrow reason,” bore no resemblance to the God revealed in Scripture, who is the “Originall and Remedie of Sin.” Hutchinson argues that although the atomists claimed a more certain knowledge of creation, they do so only by prioritizing Epicurus over God.

Hutchinson does not see reason as something in opposition to special revelation; instead, I argue that she regards special revelation corrects and guides reason. In this chapter, I will turn my attention to Hutchinson’s attitudes towards Lucretius as they are expressed in her explanation of her motives for writing *Order and Disorder* and in the epic poem itself, where she defends Christian providence against not only the Epicureans of her age but also the Stoics.³⁵ Her attitude toward philosophies stemming from the ancient Greeks is largely negative, but her response to these philosophies reveals that she is not anti-philosophical. Rather, Hutchinson sees Christian revelation, contained in Scriptures, as a corrective to theology based on “narrow reason”:

And this effect I found; for comparing that revelation God gives of himself and his operations in his Word with what the wisest of mankind, who only walked in the dim light of corrupted nature and defective traditions, could with all their industry trace out or invent; I found it so transcendently excelling all that was human, so much above our narrow reason, and yet so agreeable to it being rectified, that I disdained the wisdom of fools so much admire themselves for. (Hutchinson, *Order* 3)

This passage, taken from the preface to *Order and Disorder*, aims squarely at Lucretius by identifying “narrow reason” with “dim light,” effectively turning on its head the Epicurean claim of the power of natural reason for attaining certain knowledge. Such

limited human reason cannot arrive at the true “originall of things,” but reason corrected by Scriptures could.

In particular, Hutchinson finds that the reduction of natural reason to finding out mechanical causes cannot account for the true “originall” of things, or God’s providential creation of the world. Hutchinson recognizes that the very feature of Epicureanism that was so attractive was also at the root of its rejection of divine providence. In Lucretius, the rational mind’s ability to discern the causes behind natural mysteries prevents humans from assigning such causes to providence:

Cetera quae fieri in terris caeloque tuentur
Mortales, pauidis cum pendent mentibus saepe
Et faciunt animos humilis formidine dioum
Depressoque premunt ad terram, propterea quod
Ignorantia causarum conferre deorum
Cogit ad imperium res et concedere regnum.
[Then terror, mortalls anxious bosoms, filld
Who strange events in heaven and earth behelld
Which made them, humbly prostrate, fall before
The mighty Gods, and their feard powers adore,
Ignorant what the naturall reasons were,
They made the Gods to governe each affaire.
Whatever cause was hidden from their eies,
They’ ascribd th’ effect to ruling Deities.] (*DRN* 6.50-7)

Lucretius maintains that those who attribute natural causes to the gods are merely ignorant of the true *causarum*, which Hutchinson translates as “naturall reasons.” In the margin of her translation, Hutchinson remarks, “with the usuall Atheisme he seekes to fortifie his friend, against any impression of the terror of God that might arise from thunders or any wondrous worke of God in heaven or earth” (129 v). Lucretius’ *ratio* (*DRN* 6.41) is thus a mask for his “Atheisme,” which assigns the first cause of material generation and motion to atoms without any true account of atomic motion. Lucretius’ *ratio* only treats natural phenomena as effects of unseen *productive causes*,³⁶ excluding

the possibility that God himself creates the world and guides its motion. Hutchinson does not believe that the fear associated with irreducible causes, or the “wondrous worke of God,” should be excluded *a priori*. Instead, she views natural reason within limits, providing only a “dim light” to the understanding. In her letter to Lord Anglesey, she summarizes her reasons for condemning Lucretian “arrogant ignorance”:

Wherein this poet makes true religion to consist, and not in superstitious ceremonies, which he makes to have had their originall from the vaine dread of men, imputing those events to the wrath of Gods, which proceeded from naturall Causes whereof they were ignorant, and therefore sings high applause to his owne wisdom, for having explored such deepe misteries of Nature, though even these discoveries of his are so silly, foolish and false, that nothing but his Lunacy can extenuate the crime of his arrogant ignorance. (Hutchinson, “Letter” 4r)

According to Hutchinson, Lucretius’ rationalism leads him to conclude with Epicurus that the world operates on the irrational principle of the “foppish casuall dance of atomes” and not the “Soveraigne Wisdom of God” (“Letter” 4r). In short, Hutchinson thoroughly condemns the mode of reasoning that allows one to arrive at chance atomic collisions as a kind of first cause.

Not only is Hutchinson opposed to ontologies that maintain “chance” as a first cause, she also opposes ontologies that deny God’s providence through causal necessity. The result of confining God’s will by causal necessity is equally problematic as an account of Providence. In her “Letter to Lord Anglesey” she writes:

I must say I am not much better satisfied with the other fardle of Philosophers [than Lucretius], who in some pulpitts are quoted with devine epithetes. They that make the incorruptible God part of a corruptible world, and chaine up his absolute freedom of will to a fatall Necessity . . . All these, and all the other poore deluded instructors of the Gentiles, are guilty of no lesse impiety, ignorance and folly then this Lunatick, who not able to dive into the true Originall and Cause of Beings and Accidents, admires them who devizd this Casuall, Irrational dance of Atomes. (Hutchinson, “Letter” 3r)

Doctrines of necessity and chance thus both eliminate divine agency—God is subject to either random collisions or binding laws of physics—yet in both cases the root misunderstanding of such philosophies arises from the reduction of divine causation to the material and efficient “productive causes.”³⁷ In defending the “true Originall and Cause of Beings and Accidents,” Hutchinson introduces the traditional four-fold causes of Aristotle.³⁸ Those who identify God only as the efficient cause of material creation fail to grasp that he also gives being or form to created things, which is different from mere accidental qualities. As I shall later demonstrate, Hutchinson’s restoration of the formal and final cause in her account of providence in *Order and Disorder* allows her to bring causation in line with her theology.

Like the God of St. Paul’s address on Mars Hill, Hutchinson’s God is “unknown” to the Epicureans and Stoics. At bottom, Hutchinson objects to the way that reducing all reality to efficient and material causation leads to viewing Nature as independent of God’s governance aimed at a good purpose. By granting nature autonomy, such philosophies constrain God’s freedom and remove God as first and final cause of creation by limiting human reason to the apprehension of efficient and material causes. Such accounts reduce divine freedom to randomness since such causes are always external, and thus binding upon or identical to God. For this reason, Hutchinson claims that such philosophies either “make the incorruptible God part of a corruptible world, and chaine up his absolute freedom of will to a fatall Necessity” or they “make nature, which only is the Order God hath sett in his workes to be God himselfe” (“Letter” 3r). As a corrective to this theoretical error, Hutchison turns to the narrative of Genesis, whereby she reintroduces God as the first and final cause of all creation.

In her critique of Epicureanism, Hutchinson implicates all reductive materialist philosophies, such as René Descartes'. Like Epicurus, Descartes shares a “narrow reason” and “fatal Necessity” based on the physics of causal necessity. Hutchinson was not alone in her critique, for another Calvinist, Dutchman Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676) mounted a sustained attack against Descartes and reductive theories of causation. Voetius is particularly important to the discussion of Hutchinson’s work for two reasons: First, Voetius advocated a return to Scholastic theories of causation as the only way to reconcile Scriptural revelation with natural physics, and second, he was favored by the Westminster divine and associate of Hutchinson, John Owen (Norbrook *Introduction* xxiii).³⁹ Although Norbrook notes Owen’s connection to Hutchinson, Norbrook does not connect Voetius to Owen—in effect, no one has considered Voetius as a context for Hutchinson. This is how the present chapter breaks new ground in the study of Hutchinson. In order to appreciate the ways in which Hutchinson’s treatment of causation in her poetry reflects the tenets of Reformed Scholasticism, I shall examine more closely Descartes’ critique of Scholasticism and the response of Voetius. I will then show how Hutchinson’s Genesis epic surpasses Voetius’ attempt to reconcile Scriptural revelation with an atomist account of causation.

Descartes’ Critique of Scholasticism

Descartes’ skepticism of Scholastic thought begins with a severe censure of those who maintain the supreme importance of the Earth in God’s creation. The first mistake humans make, according to Descartes, is that they believe all things are made for their benefit:

It is a common habit of men to suppose that they are the dearest of God's creatures, and that all things are therefore made for their benefit. They think that their own dwelling place, the Earth, is of supreme importance, that it contains everything that exists, and that for its sake everything was created. But what do we know of what God may have created outside the Earth, on the stars and so on? (Descartes, "Conversation with Burman" 168)

Descartes claims that since the Earth is but a single item among the vast cosmos, humans have no reason to suppose that the Earth is of supreme importance; they cannot presume that God creates the universe to serve the ends of those who dwell on Earth.

Because the world is not of supreme importance, Descartes advocates epistemic humility with regard to the purposes of God or the final cause of creation. In his *Principles*, Descartes rules out the possibility of finding God's final causes for creation from "natural things":

Likewise, finally, we will not seek reasons of natural things from the end which God or nature proposed to himself in their creation (i.e., final causes), for we ought not to presume so far as to think that we are sharers in the counsels of Deity[.] (Descartes *Principles* 205-06)

In a single deft stroke, Descartes' skepticism about knowledge of God's purposes in creation denies access to two kinds of final causes.⁴⁰ The first kind of final cause belongs to the perfection of form, or the *telos* of the form inherent in all created things. This teleological perfection is borrowed from Aristotle by the Scholastics. The second sort of final cause, or *finis*, is a perfection that corresponds to "the achievement of God's aims with the universe" (van Ruler, *Crisis* 91). Thomas Aquinas gives a description of the two *fines* in his *Summa Theologiae*, question 73, article 1:

I answer that, The perfection of a thing is twofold, the first perfection and the second perfection. The 'first' perfection is that according to which a thing is substantially perfect, and this perfection is the form of the whole; which form results from the whole having its parts complete. But the 'second' perfection is the end, which is either an operation, as the end of

the harpist is to play the harp; or something that is attained by an operation, as the end of the builder is the house that he makes by building. But the first perfection is the cause of the second, because the form is the principle of operation. Now the final perfection, which is the end of the whole universe, is the perfect beatitude of the Saints at the consummation of the world; and the first perfection is the completeness of the universe at its first founding, and this is what is ascribed to the seventh day.

In light of Aquinas' description, the two kinds of *fines* are related: God creates individuals with certain forms that tend toward particular *telos*, but the same individuals also serve a larger end in human and divine history. The first kinds of perfection are thus contingent on the second. Descartes' skepticism about knowledge of the second perfections is at least in part warranted, since human history has not completed its course. However, in banishing the first sort of perfection, Descartes effectively removes formal cause from consideration. Without some understanding of the *telos* of a given object, formal cause can no longer account for the object since the formal cause describes the activity of the substance as *it is directed towards an end*. The interrelation of formal and final cause shows that Descartes dispenses with both when he denies access to final causes.

Having dispensed with formal and final cause, Descartes restricts the domain of human inquiry into the operations of nature to efficient cause. In the next lines of the *Principles*, Descartes writes:

[B]ut, considering him [God] as the efficient cause of all things, let us endeavour to discover by the natural light which he has planted in us, applied to those of his attributes of which he has been willing we should have some knowledge, what must be concluded regarding those effects we perceive by our senses; bearing in mind, however, what has been already said, that we must only confide in this natural light so long as nothing contrary to its dictates is revealed by God himself. (Descartes, *Principles* 206)

For Descartes, efficient causes form the single nexus between human and divine causality—the only shared attributes of God and humans. The warrant for Descartes’ theory of causation stems from the fact that the senses only reveal physical properties of nature. This connection between the senses and reason restricts reason to a “natural light,” which runs counter to the Scholastic idea of the light of God’s Being. Here, Descartes endeavors to dispense with Scholastic ideas because his physics must remain uncomplicated by Scholastic causes,⁴¹ that is, Descartes can only construct a robust physical theory of nature if his physics can form a closed and total account of nature.

However, Descartes was aware that his physics might only offer a coherent account of nature—one among any number of possible theories—and for this reason, he hypostatizes the mathematical laws of physics on the basis of God’s goodness. In his *Principles*, Descartes argues:

God is supremely good and in no way a deceiver, and hence [...] the faculty that He gave us for distinguishing truth from falsehood cannot lead us into error, so long as we are using it properly and thereby perceiving something distinctly. Mathematical demonstrations have this kind of certainty, as does the knowledge that material things exist; and the same goes for all evident reasoning about material things. (qtd. in van Ruler 217)

Since God creates humans with an innate faculty to derive “mathematical demonstrations” from their knowledge of material reality, and God in his Goodness does not aim to deceive humans, Descartes concludes that such mathematical demonstrations *must* be certain. Descartes’ argument from metaphysical certainty succeeds only on the basis of taking God’s Goodness as axiomatic. Once Descartes secures the certainty of mathematical demonstrations, he creates a physics built entirely on efficient causes.

As a result, Descartes sees experiential knowledge as serving only to confirm the *a priori* deduction of mathematical laws. In his *Discourse of Method*, Descartes states:

[W]hen I descended to more particular things, I encountered such a variety that I did not think the human mind could possibly distinguish the forms or species of bodies that are on Earth from an infinity of others that might be there if it had been God's will to put them there. Consequently I thought the only way of making these bodies useful to us was to progress to the causes by way of the effects and to make use of many special observations. (Descartes, *Discourse* 64)

Descartes' argument seems only to warrant a pragmatic theory of causes, but the "use" here refers only to the confirmation of mathematical laws. Later on, Descartes clarifies his stance on experiential knowledge:

For as experience makes most of these effects quite certain, the causes from which I deduce them serve not so much to prove them as to explain them; indeed, quite on the contrary, it is the causes which are proved by the effect. (Descartes, *Discourse* 76 (qtd. in van Ruler 210))

Experience of nature, as it turns out, proves nothing because it is always the effect of an unseen cause. Instead, nature can only confirm what is already proved *a priori* from mathematical deduction. Van Ruler summarizes Descartes' epistemology thus: "For Descartes, the difference between the two routes [*a priori* and *a posteriori*] is one of order and of sequence only. *A priori* deduction starts with ultimate causes, *a posteriori* theories go the other way, starting from effects" (van Ruler, *Crisis* 230). Once Descartes has defined his metaphysics and epistemology in line with his mathematical, deductive theories of causation, the universe operates with clockwork precision.

Reformed Scholasticism: Voetius' Response to Cartesian Materialism

Like many of his contemporaries, the reformed Dutch theologian Gisbertus Voetius viewed Descartes' New Philosophy as a threat to Scriptural accounts of God's

providence. In particular, Voetius worried that a world governed entirely by mechanical causes failed to account for God's providence, i.e. give an explanation of providence which preserved both formal and final cause. As van Ruler remarks, "At the heart of Voetius' criticisms of the New Philosophy lies the conviction that the mechanical viewpoint cannot account for the causal relations between God and Creation" (van Ruler, *Crisis* 305). Although Descartes affirms that God created the world towards an end, or final cause, humans have no access to the final cause through either their senses or intellect. Descartes thus makes material and efficient causes the only nexus between human experience and God's governance of the world. As I shall argue, Voetius found Descartes' objections to Scholasticism unwarranted. Furthermore, Voetius argues that the elimination of formal cause ultimately undermines the notion of *concurrence*, which is God's co-operation with the secondary causes of creation. Finally, only a return to the four Aristotelian causes, according to Voetius, can truly account for God's operations in nature as is revealed in Holy Scripture. As we shall see, Hutchinson's view is distinguished by both of these things: an appeal to secondary causes, and recourse to formal and final causes, over and above material and efficient cause.

The first of the two major objections that Voetius brings against Descartes is that mechanistic causation, which takes mathematical principles as a governing rule, ultimately leads to a dissolution of form. Voetius claims that Descartes' theory reduces everything to physical properties:

[We] merely aim to describe the [theory] which has suddenly emerged and in which it is held that everything derives from quantity, shape, position or situation, motion [and] rest, and that all secrets of Nature can be perfectly explained and demonstrated by them—which we deny. (qtd. in van Ruler, *Crisis* 263)

If all properties of material things may be reduced to a physical description, then Nature has no form apart from the mathematical laws that belong to the domain of physics.

Form is particularly important to Voetius since humans differentiate various objects according to their inherent forms. If all material objects are reduced to the same physical properties, the differences between objects are merely a matter of accidental qualities, that is, the differences between objects are not substantial and thus not proper to their being. As Voetius remarks:

There is some first root and first conception of every entity, e.g. of humanity, horseness, etc., which constitutes a thing in its proper being and distinguishes it essentially from others. This, however, is not matter, since this is common [to every object alike]; nor accidents, because these cannot compose or constitute a substance, and give it its being. It is therefore what we call form, idea, essential nature, actuality of the perfect, or nature *par excellence*, since it actuates and informs matter and constitutes a compound being with it. (qtd in van Ruler, *Crisis* 242).

Voetius objects to Descartes on the grounds that humans differentiate various objects according to the form or “essential nature” which belongs to each created thing.

Furthermore, the form is not material, since all objects share materiality alike. As a result, Voetius concludes, “That all created substances, even man himself [...] are beings by accident, collections, aggregates, not, however, single essences or natures by themselves” (qtd. in van Ruler, *Crisis* 264).

A second consequence of Descartes’ mathematicization of nature is that the undergirding principles of nature remain hidden from the senses. In his *Principles*, Descartes asserts:

And although in men it is to some degree a perfection to be capable of perceiving by means of the senses, nevertheless since in every sense there is passivity which indicates dependency, we must conclude that God is in no manner possessed of senses, and that he only understands and wills, not, however, like us, by acts in any way distinct, but always by an

act that is one, identical, and the simplest possible, understands, wills, and operates all, that is, all things that in reality exist. (Descartes, *Principles* 203)

According to Descartes, God acts in a way that is beyond human senses, such that his actions are distinct from humans. The supposed disanalogy between the acts of God and creation allows Descartes to proscribe human knowledge of divine action, limiting the role of the senses and experiential knowledge. As outlined in the previous section, Descartes thus includes experiential knowledge of nature in his system only insofar as it confirms the mathematical, *a priori* causes. Van Ruler comments, “Invoking mechanical analogies to visualise processes that are hidden from the senses, Cartesian physics dispenses with attributing other qualities to material objects than ‘mathematical’ ones” (van Ruler, *Crisis* 247). This hidden quality of the mathematical causes rules out any other qualities because it is a totality, or, a closed system which is independent of sense data.

Indeed, any number of other “hidden” principles of nature could replace mathematics and be equally total in scope, replacing divine providence. Voetius lists several alternative accounts already given by poets and philosophers:

Either Stoic fate, or the two vessels of Homer’s Rhapsody, or the Pythagorean συστοιχειώσεις as discussed in Plutarch’s book on the opinions [of the philosophers], or the atoms of Epicurus, or the movement of atoms in a slanting direction, when [their motion] swerves over a minimal distance, [a solution] which, according to Cicero’s *De Facto*, Epicurus concocted in order to save the freedom of the will as being exempt from the perpendicular weight and impact or motion of atoms. (qtd. in van Ruler, *Crisis* 289)

In offering these various theories, Voetius directly challenges the metaphysical certainty of Descartes’ mathematics. The principles of mathematics, which are seen only as they manifest certain effects, may have great explanatory power, but Voetius likens these

principles to any number of explanatory models of nature. The reason for Voetius' objection becomes even clearer in light of his Scholastic doctrines of primary and secondary causes.

For Voetius, the mechanical causes described by Descartes belong to secondary causes, which are inferior to the First Cause. When describing secondary causes, "Voetius uses the Greek term συναίτιος," as van Ruler notes, "which occurs in Plato, *Timaeus* 46^c7 and 76^d7, in the sense of "being an auxiliary cause of" (van Ruler, *Crisis* note 64, 281). As a result, for Voetius, "[T]he relation between the two types of causes [primary and secondary] concurring to produce a certain effect is one of subordination" (van Ruler, *Crisis* 281). In subordinating the mechanical causes to the First Cause, Voetius undermines Descartes' metaphysical argument for certainty, for while mathematical causes explain certain physical principles, these principles are merely accessories to the Prime Cause, who is God.

The second major objection of Voetius to the New Philosophy is the denial of human agency within divine concurrence, which is a second consequence of Descartes' mechanical philosophy. Concurrence is the cooperation of God, the First Cause, with the second causes of his creation.⁴² If nature merely cooperates with God's will according to the mathematical, mechanical causes of Descartes, then humans no longer are the center of action, merely acted on by external forces. Van Ruler describes Voetius' objection to Descartes in this way; "If God conserves all being from every moment to the next, what place is there for individual causation? (van Ruler, *Crisis* 267) Voetius concludes that Descartes' theory renders human activity entirely passive (van Ruler *Crisis* 304) and that "the idea of concurrence is thus restricted to a philosophy in which individual sources of

action are accepted. This is exactly what Aristotelianism had to offer: an ontology of individual natures which are at the same time individual centres of activity” (van Ruler, *Crisis* 300). The individual forms, which account for the being of individuals and thus preserve the active role of humans, are the only way in which Voetius can account for a divine concurrence that is truly cooperative. Voetius thus insists that Aristotelian causes must be restored in order to preserve a scriptural account of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.⁴³

Not only does Aristotelian philosophy preserve individual centers of activity, it prevents an occult explanation of natural change. As has already been shown, Descartes’ philosophy leads to a kind of occasionalism, whereby God alone is active in nature. In addition, Cartesian materialism leads to an occult explanation of changes in nature, insofar as the causes of motion are external to individuals. Van Ruler comments:

The God of Christianity allows natural causes to operate in submissive concurrence to the action of the Supreme Being. Given the postulate that natural change should be explained by the ascription of action to causal powers responsible for the change, the Aristotelian philosophy was, in Scholastic eyes,⁴⁴ seen as the middle course between the occasionalism that introduced a God without an active Nature (a Prime Cause without secondary causes), and the materialist view of any independent Nature, the operations of which would remain inexplicable if it were not for animistic or other types of external motors which alternative philosophies would introduce. (van Ruler, *Crisis* 299)

While the laws of mathematics serve to explain the interactions between physical bodies, they cannot account for the source of motion. Since individuals are no longer centers of motion, the materialists must find some other external source. Voetius finds this aspect of materialism contrary to the Scriptural claim that “The relation between God and man is that God, through his providence, carries out His decree and that in doing so, He uses man as [His] means and instrument” (qtd. in van Ruler, *Crisis* 300).⁴⁵

Voetius is an important figure in the Reformed response to Cartesianism, and, as I will show, serves as a model for Hutchinson's recourse to the Aristotelian four causes in her exposition of the doctrine of God's providence in *Order and Disorder*. However, Hutchinson does not simply adapt Voetius' arguments to poetry; she offers a significant addition. While Voetius successfully defends a return to Aristotelian formal cause, his theology shares an important theoretical difficulty with Descartes'. When describing God's will to sustain life, Voetius writes, "For if God should think it fit to provide effects for the preservation of life, He will provide them by means of the intermediaries He Himself prescribed; if not, then will He do what is good in His eyes" (qtd. in van Ruler, *Crisis* 279-80). While Voetius provides a way for humans to be centers of action, his interpretation of God's sovereignty hides tends to emphasize providence as a final cause, but not as a formal cause. Voetius treats God's will as axiomatically good, and although human agents can participate in his will, they cannot know the goodness of God apart from Scriptural revelation.

Hutchinson and Beauty

In many ways surpassing her Reformed contemporaries, Hutchinson broadens the scope of formal cause in several crucial ways. Like Voetius, she challenges the mechanistic causation of Descartes, returning to a model based on the Aristotelian causes. However, Voetius defends the formal cause mostly on philosophical grounds, seeing that the forms serve the important epistemological function of differentiating individuals and that they allow such individuals to be centers of action. In effect, Voetius merely corrects a theoretical error in the New Philosophy of Descartes which runs counter to the teaching of Scripture. In *Order and Disorder*, Hutchinson defends formal causes on more

explicitly theological grounds—she does not merely uproot a theoretical error so much as give a positive account of Christian ontology and metaphysics based on Scripture and Christian tradition. As I shall demonstrate, Hutchinson identifies the *formal cause* with God’s infinite, triune Being—not just an essential quality.⁴⁶ While Hutchinson acknowledges that God ordains the regular events of finite creation by “second” (2.125) or “mediate” (2.121) causes, she also states that God “is not tied to those means he ordains” (2.126). This distinction is important for Hutchinson in that she prevents the sort of reduction of causes espoused by Descartes, for the totality of Descartes’ physics depends upon a world entirely governed by the measurable effects of a closed system of material and efficient causes.

Like Voetius, Hutchinson objects to the Epicurean *clinamen* of atoms as a basis for human freedom and responsibility, but her counterargument first addresses the denial of God’s divine justice. Hutchinson remarks that the Epicureans, “den[y] that determinate and wise Councell and Order of things they could not dive into, and deriding Heaven and Hell, Eternal Rewards and Punishments, as fictions in the whole, because the instances of them in particular were so ridiculous” (Hutchinson, “Letter” 4r). For Hutchinson, human responsibility is negated by the Epicureans because they first deny “Eternal Rewards and Punishments,” or God’s judgment of human action; yet such considerations are only secondary to the denial of providence, or “that determinate and wise Councell and Order of things.” Here Hutchinson uses the term “determinate” not as signifying merely an efficient and material causal relationship between God and creation, as is the case for Descartes and Hobbes. Rather, God’s providence is determinate in its particularity, as revealed in the narrative of Scripture.

For Hutchinson, God's freedom is established by the perfection of his being, which lacking nothing, allows God to create the world freely. God is already wholly sufficient to himself because of the *perichoresis* of his triune being, or as Hutchinson puts it, he is the "Pure, perfect, self-supplying essence" (1.104). In a crucial moment of her opening canto, directly following her description of the Trinity, Hutchinson writes:

[God] from eternity himself supplied,
And had no need of anything beside,
Nor any other cause that did him move
To make a world but his extensive love,
Itself delighting to communicate,
Its glory in the creatures to dilate. (1.129-134)

Hutchinson has in mind a much larger view of divine freedom than absence of necessary antecedent causes. No necessity compels God because he is not another "thing" in the chain of mechanistic causality. God is infinitely free in that he needs nothing; rather, all creation comes from God and is thus contingent upon his Being. In his infinite freedom, God is moved to create the world by his "extensive love," that *kenosis* or self-outpouring which is already reflected in his triune being. The "effect" of God's creation is not the product of some other cause but is identical to the cause—by supplying himself in the act of creation, God dilates his glory in creatures.

While God supplies himself in creation, Hutchinson avoids making the world an emanation of his being. Hutchinson makes this point by returning to images of self-sufficiency:

No streams can shrink the self-supplying spring,
No retributions can more fullness bring
To the eternal fountain which doth run
In sacred circles, ends where it begun (1.145-8)

The “self-supplying spring” represents the divine life within the immanent Trinity, already sufficient to itself, which cannot be reduced or increased by creation, here figured as streams and retributions. For Hutchinson, God does not need his cosmos in order to be God; rather, his freedom is his self-sufficiency.

Though he is ontically different from creation, Hutchinson’s God is never alien to it, since, from a creaturely standpoint, God’s excellence may be seen in imperfect, human “powers and virtues”. Hutchinson writes:

While [humans] are led by their own excellence
T’admire the first, pure, high Intelligence;
By all the powers and virtues which they have,
To that Omnipotence who those powers gave;
By all their glories and their joys to his
Who is the fountain of all joy and bliss;
By all their wants and imbecilities
To the full magazine of rich supplies,
Where Power, Love, Justice, and Mercy shine
In their still-fixéd heights and ne’er decline. (1.137-44)

God’s “Power, Love, Justice and Mercy . . . ne’er decline” not because God does not give them to creation but because his own virtues and powers are not reduced in the act of giving. Though Hutchinson concedes that human “powers and virtues” are marred by the Fall, here expressed as “wants and imbecilities,” creation still reveals God as the Creator.

For Hutchinson, the doctrine of the knowledge of God involves a measure of paradox. On the one hand, God’s essence cannot be reduced to rational explanation, as Hutchinson writes:

God, the great *Elohim*, to say no more,
Whose sacred name we rather must adore
Than venture to explain; for he alone
Dwells in himself, and to himself is known[.] (1.45-8)

While God's name, or essence, cannot be explained, it nevertheless enables worship. Here, *prima facie*, Hutchinson seems to urge her reader to adore or worship an unknowable God, but she qualifies her claim by adding these lines:

His essence wrapped up in mysterious clouds
While he himself in dazzling glory shrouds.
And so even that by which we have our sight
His covering is: *He clothes himself with light.* (1.49-52)

In her paraphrase of 1 Timothy 6.16 and Psalms 104.2, Hutchinson thus articulates the paradox which is inherent to creaturely knowledge of God; we may not look directly on God's light, which is his glory or being, yet we see all by such light. Hutchinson is at once concerned that creaturely knowledge of God be distinct from God's self-knowledge and that God not be so alien to his creation as to admit no knowledge of Him.

The key point here is that Hutchinson's doctrine of the knowledge of God turns to analogy as the proper expression of God's infinite uncreated Being in finite creation. Hutchinson asserts that the reason we cannot know God as he knows himself is that we cannot "stretch frail human thought unto the height/ Of the great God, *immense and infinite*" (1.57-8, italics mine). And while human reason cannot venture to explain God by virtue of his infinite being, she adds, God "contain[s] all things in himself alone, / Being at once in all, contained in none"⁴⁷ (1.59-60).⁴⁷ In these lines, Hutchinson articulates the central doctrine which allows creaturely knowledge of God: the analogy of being or *analogia entis*.⁴⁸ For Hutchinson, created humans cannot reach up to an utterly transcendent God, but God, by virtue of his triune being, has always already traversed the infinite distance between the Father and the Son which is greater than and encompasses the difference between God and creation. He is able to be at once "in all," in that his

glory is reflected in creation's very being, even though God's being is infinitely more beautiful.⁴⁹

According to Hutchinson, we know God's providence in creation by analogy, for the invisible being of God, his *shekinah* glory, is already expressed analogically in the visible being of creation. In the lines following her description of God's being she adds:

Yet as a hidden spring appears in streams,
The sun is seen in its reflected beams,
Whose high-embodied glory is too bright,
Too strong an object for weak mortal sight;
So in God's visible productions we
What is invisible in some sort see;
While we, considering each created thing,
Are led up to an uncreated spring. (1.61-68)

The "high-embodied glory" of God's resplendent Being proves too much for a finite creature to comprehend, but turning towards the created order, Hutchinson sees the reflections of God's glory as visible beauty. The analogy of being thus allows her to view all creation analogically, for God's works always and everywhere demonstrate his glory.

The analogy also transforms Hutchinson's theory of causation since the first Cause of creation is God himself in the form of his own Being, visible in his works. As stated above, Hutchinson criticizes the Epicureans for not finding out the "true Originall and Cause of Beings and Accidents." If the Creator is this "true Originall and Cause of Beings and Accidents," then Cause can no longer be thought of in purely rational categories abstracted from nature; material and efficient cause do not proceed merely from extended matter in motion.⁵⁰ The Cause which accounts for creation is not merely productive of effect, for cause and effect are always already analogous when speaking of the Creator and his creation. Hutchinson thus criticizes Lucretius for not admitting the

poverty of his *ratio*—Lucretius too must appeal to analogy to account for the natural world. Lucretius praises the glory of Epicurus, “Whose lipps did all unveyled truths impart,” (Lucretius, *DRN* 6.6) yet his *causae* served only to mask the true glory of God revealed analogously in creation.

In short, Hutchinson defines the Christian account of “form” as God’s glory made visible in the beauty of creation. In this way, she supplies an important aesthetic dimension missing from the theological accounts of Descartes, Cudworth, and Voetius. Each of these 17th century philosophers treat God’s Goodness as axiomatic, arguing either from Scripture or deductive logic. In particular, they describe God’s Goodness entirely in volitional terms—for Descartes, God does not deceive, for Cudworth, and for Voetius, God acts according to his own good pleasure. In each case, the formal cause of God’s will remains hidden from view, which is a consequence of omitting aesthetic considerations. In her account of Beauty, Hutchinson anticipates the problem of making God’s will hidden and so turns to analogy as a source of restoring formal and final cause to her account of creation. In this way, Hutchinson’s justification of formal and final cause goes beyond the merely abstract, theoretical justification offered by Voetius.

CHAPTER THREE

Theological Aesthetics in the Poetry of Lucy Hutchinson

While the previous chapter examines Hutchinson's relationship to *De Rerum Natura* and Epicurean atomism from the standpoint of metaphysics, this chapter explores the equally important question of what possible aesthetic attraction Lucretius' poetry might have held for Hutchinson. Just as Hutchinson's metaphysics has evoked radically different explanations from David Norbrook, Reid Barbour and Jonathan Goldberg, so too her aesthetic concerns have informed their analyses in contrasting ways. While their analyses hit upon important truths concerning Hutchinson's poetry, their accounts of beauty in Hutchinson's poetry are incomplete, since for Hutchinson, beauty is God's Glory made visible as the formal cause of creation, or the "glories" of nature. In this chapter, my examination of the theological dimensions of beauty in Hutchinson's poetry yields a reading of her epic poem, *Order and Disorder*, that goes beyond the binaries of previous treatments.

According to Norbrook, Hutchinson translated Lucretius in order that she might learn from the false images in Lucretius and make better ones (Norbrook, "Margaret" 191). Barbour claims that Hutchinson was ambivalent towards Lucretius, sometimes finding his poetry useful, but often scolding him for his "atheistical" philosophy (Barbour, "Lucy" 135). Against these positions, Goldberg argues for compatibility between Lucretian atomism and Hutchinson's Christianity, seeing no contradiction or tension as Barbour or Norbrook do (Goldberg 286). The root cause for Norbrook's

misreading of Hutchinson, Goldberg claims, is that images always falsify truth such that “the image is a site for the discernment of truth that by definition cannot reside in the image” (Goldberg 280). Although Goldberg’s cogent argument reveals a certain aesthetic and metaphysical problem in Norbrook’s account, he resolves the tension by assuming that Hutchinson is favorably disposed to Lucretian materialism. Goldberg then proceeds to prove his point by reading Hutchinson’s poetry through Lucretian assumptions. Rather than adopt this potentially circular approach, I contend that Goldberg’s description of Hutchinson’s poetics comes much closer to Hutchinson’s royalist and Epicurean counterpart, Margaret Cavendish, and that the differences between Cavendish’s and Hutchinson’s descriptions of the cause of being demonstrates Hutchinson’s radically different aesthetic. Cavendish’s poetry suggests that form is merely the shape of material objects, which makes form a product of unseen, mechanical causes. In reducing form or “shape” to the effect of unseen causes, figured as “motion,” she does not account the true *cause* of form (formal cause) in such a way that it can be known through the senses. As a result, Cavendish’s poetry reflects a sublime aesthetic. For Hutchinson, “formal cause” does not merely refer to the physical arrangement of matter or a thing’s “shape.” Rather, Hutchinson uses formal cause not to simply describe the shape of a thing but to refer to the universal idea that gives rise to and inheres in created things, that is, formal cause, for Hutchinson, is “an essential creative quality” (*OED*). For Hutchinson, beauty is the visible form of creation, and by analogy, form reveals God’s Being as the true formal cause. Importantly, Hutchinson does not view form merely as a product of unseen, necessary causes, but as her poetry demonstrates, beauty opens the way to analogy between creation and the Creator.

In grounding Lucy Hutchinson's poetics, David Norbrook turns to her metaphysics, which he claims she derives from her Calvinist theology. He states, "It is very important for Hutchinson that 'Whatever doth to mortal men befall / Not casual is' (5.676-7), that God 'orders all our human accidents' (8.404, cf. 12-295-6)" (Norbrook, "Introduction" xxxii). The clearest example of this boundless divine will which orders all of the accidents is the doctrine of double-predestination, which Norbrook claims is central to Hutchinson's theology (Norbrook, *Introduction* xxxii). Her Calvinist sensibilities about providence thus lead her to avoid the "dangerously open" cosmos associated with the Lucretian sublime (Norbrook, "Milton" 44). In short, Norbrook argues that Hutchinson's "fixed" God of "utter certainty" obviates "contemporary philosophy, where the absence of a governing divine principle left a Nature reduced either to a blindly regular mechanism or to sheer randomness" (Norbrook, *Introduction* xxxiv, xxxii).

At the same time, Norbrook argues that God's boundlessness in the act of creation suggests a sublime openness that transcends the limits of finite human existence. For Norbrook, Hutchinson's theology expresses considerable tension with regard to God's interaction with his creation. Regarding Hutchinson's understanding of God Norbrook claims, "[God] is both fixed and boundless, offering at once a sublime openness and an utter certainty" (Norbrook, *Introduction* xxxiv). This sublimity is an effect of God's "primal freedom," exercised in the creation of the world (Norbrook, "Milton" 49). Furthermore, as fallen creatures, we no longer have access to the "*concordia discors* of divine creation," or an original sublime proportion between nature and God (Norbrook, "Milton" 46). Thus, regarding Hutchinson's theology, Norbrook concludes, "If the

natural world still reveals some of that primal order and beauty, after the Fall it has become much harder to sustain the sublime proportion” (Norbrook, “Milton” 46).

Norbrook explicitly associates sublimity with the sublime openness of creation, but fails to draw the crucial distinctions between finitude and fallenness as sources of sublimity. Finitude is simply a characteristic of beings who are limited in any number of ways by their place within time and space, whereas fallenness is a characteristic of beings who have lost their original ability to fulfill the purposes for which they exist. Both might equally account for Norbrook’s definition of the sublime as that which “lies just beyond the available means of understanding” (Norbrook, *Writing* 18-19), but unlike fallenness, finitude cannot carry with it moral blame—the creature is not at fault for being finite. Only by appreciating the goodness of finite creation can the original goodness of the Creator be appreciated; subsequently, that goodness must be seen as the beauty of creation if one is to avoid confusing fallenness with the limitations of finitude. Thus, Norbrook’s definition of the sublime and its source in Hutchinson’s poetry is at odds with her insistence upon the goodness of the Creator and the beauty of creation.

Despite his failure to account for a source of the sublime, Norbrook rightly sees that Hutchinson distrusts Lucretian causation because it undermines God’s providential ordering of creation. As shown in the previous chapter, Lucretius opposes sovereign intervention in the natural order since his gods remain untroubled by the cares of the world.⁵¹ Hutchinson rebukes such limitations on God’s providence, but she also finds fault with Lucretius in his condescending attitude towards anyone who believes that God governs natural causes.

In light of Hutchinson's comments, Jonathan Goldberg surprisingly interprets Hutchinson as making her Christianity convertible with Epicureanism. He responds to the way that Norbrook interprets Hutchinson's ontology as dualistic, as well as questioning its implications for Hutchinson's epistemology. In particular, Goldberg challenges Norbrook's assumption that Hutchinson translates Lucretius in order to "scrutinize false images and learn to make true ones." In a dualist framework, the image always falsifies—in what Goldberg calls "transcendental settlement"—since every image is an equivocal representation or a shadow of some reality that the image is not. Norbrook's statement thus leads to incoherence, since "the image is a site for the discernment of a truth that by definition cannot reside in the image" (280). Goldberg thus argues "that it would be worthwhile to suspend the notion that her later repudiations [of Lucretius] are built into her translation or ultimately determine its meaning" (Goldberg 280). Instead of a Platonist reading, Goldberg sees Hutchinson borrowing the doctrine of the "material unseen" from Lucretius. Goldberg writes, "Rather than parse a distinction between true and false [images] that would be akin to the distinction of spirit and matter, transcendental settlement versus ongoing contradiction, reason versus the senses, these doctrinal lines take the evidence of the senses as evidence of what constitutes the sensible" (Goldberg 281). Goldberg in turn incorporates one of several postmodern "narratives of the sublime" to account for the ontological contradictions between Hutchinson's Christianity and materialism, dissolving being into unstable binaries⁵²:

Rather than assume contradiction [between Lucretius' atomism and Hutchinson's Christianity], whether sustained or overcome, there might be a different kind of relationship between the two supposedly opposing systems that operate in these accounts: open/closed; republican/royalist; humanist/Christian; puritan/pagan; male/female, for example, and Lucretius—Hutchinson's Lucretius—might give terms for a different way

of considering difference. As Gilles Deleuze summarizes Lucretian thinking in *The Logic of Sense*: '[T]he Nature of things is coordination and disjunction. Neither identity nor contradiction, it is a matter of resemblances and differences, compositions and decompositions' (280).

Goldberg claims that this materialist framework allows for Hutchinson's Christianity and supposed Epicurean atomism to be convertible with one another. He then concludes:

If something like this is the doctrinal framework for the presentation of the image, the image is thereby distanced from some of the ways in which a platonizing Christianity might be assumed to pair image and truth, even as something akin to the Christian difference between First Cause and second causes, central to Hutchinson's religious prose and to *Order and Disorder*, is maintained. It is not the case that the image falsifies, or that it must be seen through to something else which cannot be seen because it is ontologically different. (Goldberg 282).

Goldberg's analysis is partially correct, for Hutchinson does not believe that images are merely inferior copies of sublime, inaccessible ideas. However, as I shall demonstrate, the analogous relationship between the visible image and the Creator shows that images participate in an infinitely greater reality. For Hutchinson, analogy prevents the neat separation of immanence and transcendence, which is assumed by both Goldberg and Norbrook.

While Goldberg seems to offer a different account—"a different way of considering difference"—he shares an important assumption with Norbrook, for if the nature of things is "resemblances and differences, compositions and decompositions," then, as David Hart says, "the doctrine of ontological univocity is simultaneously one of absolute ontic equivocity" (Hart 61). What this means is that the Deleuzian immanent sublime, which Goldberg attributes to Hutchinson, aims at describing the existence or "being" of things in a univocal, unambiguous manner. However, this account of reality contains not one account of being but two, for being is in a constant state of flux between

“compositions and decompositions.” Seeing the similarity between Lucretius and Deleuze on this point, Goldberg then applies Lucretian-Deleuzian thinking to Hutchinson. She supposedly thinks “difference” differently than supposed by Norbrook, aiming at a doctrine of “ontological univocity.” Since Hart rightly identifies such “univocity” as “ontic equivocity,” I conclude that Goldberg argues for yet another dualistic Hutchinsonian ontology. Goldberg’s argument differs from Norbrook’s since he renders Hutchinson’s ontology in exclusively immanent terms, but the same theoretical problem persists: the causes of the being of creation are utterly hidden from human sense and understanding. As a result, both critics attribute to Hutchinson’s poetry an aesthetic which aims at emulating the sublime being of nature; Norbrook argues that she emulates the sublime openness of God’s limitless power, while Goldberg sees her emulating sublime the vitality of an ongoing immanent flux.

Margaret Cavendish’s Aesthetics

In order to test Norbrook’s and Goldberg’s conclusions regarding Hutchinson’s poetry, I will compare her to another seventeenth-century poet who dealt with some similar themes and issues in her poetry. Norbrook points out many similarities between Cavendish’s and Hutchinson’s lives, suggesting that the two influenced one another through opposing political models. Norbrook observes “an important dialectic” (Norbrook “Margaret” 182) between the Hobbesian royalism of Cavendish and the republicanism of Hutchinson, which will be examined more closely in the following chapter. In evaluating the dialectic between the two women, Norbrook argues that “Lucretius in fact offered a unique common ground between Cavendish and Hutchinson” because he appealed to Cavendish as a “poet of scientific truth” and to Hutchinson as

“the last major classical poet who had not yet been translated into English” (Norbrook “Margaret” 188). Furthermore, each woman had a political interest in Lucretius since he “opposed political activism,” which appealed to Cavendish, and opposed the “royalist tendencies in Roman culture,” which appealed to Hutchinson. As part of this dialectic, I argue that the similarity of themes in Cavendish’s *Poems and Fancies* (1653) and Hutchinson’s *Order and Disorder* suggests not only an opposition between the metaphysics of the two women but also aesthetics. In particular, Cavendish favors a theory of sublime causation and corresponding aesthetics while Hutchinson elaborates a theologically-informed theory of causation and aesthetics. For Cavendish, the sublime causes of the created world can be described only by analogy to what is entirely unseen and thus unknown, but for Hutchinson, analogy between the Creator and creation reveals in part the true cause of creation and allows for creaturely participation in that cause. As a result, the two women arrive at very different understandings of poetic image and truth. In response to Goldberg, I suggest that the problem of falsifying images, while always for Hutchinson a possibility in a fallen world, is, for Cavendish, not merely possible but necessary according to her poetics of the sublime.

Like Hutchinson, Cavendish’s poem narrates the creation of the world, but Cavendish does so without reference to God. In the opening poem of *Poems and Fancies*, entitled “Nature calls a Councell, which was *Motion, Figure, matter, and Life*, to advise about making the World,” nature alone is responsible for the creation of the world:

WHen *Nature* first this World she did create,
She cal'd a Counsell how the same might make;
Motion was first, who had a subtle wit,
And then came *Life*, and *Forme*, and *Matter* fit.
First *Nature* spake, my *Friends* if we agree,
We can, and may do a fine *worke*, said she,

Make some things to adore us, worship give,
Which now we only to our selves do live. (1-8)

Nature is personified in her poetry, but more importantly, so are all of the physical principles responsible for bringing the world into being. As a result, Cavendish's narrative takes on a mythological quality in the sense that she purports to anthropomorphize physical causes. Nature works with nothing more than physical principles to cause the world, but the motive of creation is to make a "fine *worke*" whereby "some things to adore us, worship give". For Cavendish, anthropomorphizing motion, form, and matter introduces personal agency to what otherwise would be random. Importantly, Cavendish implicitly draws an analogy from human experience of agency to mechanistic causes, assigning agency through the only means she knows, which is human action. At that the same time, Cavendish elevates the hypostatized principles to the status of gods: not only do they create the world, but they also seek adoration and worship. In no other way does Cavendish bridge the distance between the workings nature and "Nature"—her mythological account thus reveals nothing of the formal cause that gives rise to being. Instead, Cavendish maintains a natural theology which blurs the distinction between creation and Creator.⁵³

One particular difficulty for Cavendish is that her poetry reveals a dialectical tension between atoms and the effects of motion on atoms. Specifically, she claims that all things have solely materialistic causes, but then uses imagery which implies that something more than matter is involved. In "A World made by Atomes," Cavendish writes:

SMall *Atomes* of themselves a *World* may make,
As being subtle, and of every shape:
And as they dance about, fit places finde,

Such *Formes* as best agree, make every kinde.
For when we build a house of Bricke, and Stone,
We lay them even, every one by one:
And when we finde a gap that's big, or small,
We seeke out Stones, to fit that place withall.
For when not fit, too big, or little be,
They fall away, and cannot stay we see.
So *Atomes*, as they dance, finde places fit,
They there remaine, lye close, and fast will sticke.
Those that unfit, the rest that rove about,
Do never leave, untill they thrust them out.
Thus by their severall *Motions*, and their *Formes*,
As severall work-men serve each others turnes. (1-16)

In the first two lines, Cavendish sounds out the twin themes of autonomy and sublimity. Atoms make a world of “themselves,” without extrinsic help (autonomous), and yet they are “subtle,” or beyond human sense perception (sublime). Cavendish asserts that these atoms “dance about” and make forms of “every kinde,” and then explains this process in a simile comparing the atoms to stone masons. Her simile reveals a central problem with explaining natural phenomena solely by mechanical causation—she describes atoms as capable of constituting form without reference to a preexistent model, yet the very simile itself implies a necessity for just such a model. In building a house, the mason does not arbitrarily build any shape but shapes the building according to a form whose purpose is to house. According to Cavendish’s simile, atoms by chance make form, which for the mason is the communication of form executed by intention and ordering of parts according to a model. In the last couplet of the poem, Cavendish expresses the tension between chance creation of atoms and human agency imposing form on matter; “atoms by chance, may a *New World* create: / Or else predestinated to worke my *Fate*.” Though she claims that atoms are wholly random in creating a world, human agents are nevertheless capable of imposing form on matter. Furthermore, the example of the

mason suggests that human action is volitional, which implies through the analogy that atoms too are volitional.

Perhaps by “worke my *Fate*,” Cavendish thinks of herself as merely another fated mechanism in a long chain of mechanical causes. In her poem, “*All things are govern’d by Atomes*,” Cavendish strikes a clearly Hobbesian note, reducing all agency to atomic motion:

THus *Life* and *Death*, and *young* and *old*,
Are, as the severall *Atomes* hold.
So *Wit*, and *Vnderstanding* in the *Braine*,
Are as the severall *Atomes* reigne:
And *Dispositions* good, or ill,
Are as the severall *Atomes* still.
And every *Passion* which doth rise,
Is as the severall *Atomes* lies.
Thus *Sickness*, *Health*, and *Peace*, and *War*;
Are alwaies as the severall *Atomes* are. (1-10)

Cavendish not only subordinates human agency to atomic motion, she reduces life, understanding, disposition, and passion—all typically thought of as contributing to human volition—to atomic states. The radical nature of her claim can hardly be missed: humans can no longer be held responsible for the moral dispositions that guide their actions.

In this context, form is always an effect of mechanical motion, and thus Cavendish does away with formal cause whether Platonic or Aristotelian. In the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition, the formal cause gives rise to existence or the “being” of things, e.g. the builder of a house has an idea or form of the house in mind before building it. By reducing form to the immanent “shape” or “arrangement” of matter, Cavendish makes form an effect of unseen causes. In other words, Cavendish redefines form so that it cannot be a cause, i.e form cannot account for the cause of a thing’s

existence. Furthermore, if form is a mere arrangement of matter, it is not communicable. Several of her poems illustrate that form is merely the shape or figure taken on by material objects as a result of motion. In the first of these poems, “*Motion makes Atomes a Bawd for Figure,*” Cavendish writes:

DID not wild *Motion* with his subtle wit,
Make *Atomes* as his *Bawd*, new *Formes* to get.
They still would constant be in one *Figure*,
And as they place themselves, would last for ever.
But *Motion* she perswades new *Formes* to make,
Motion doth in *Change* great pleasure take.
And makes all *Atomes* run from place to place
That *Figures young* he might have to imbrace.
For some short time, she will make much of *one*,
But afterwards away from *them* will run.
And thus are most things in the World undone,
And by her *Change*, do *young ones* take *old's* roome.
But 'tis butt like unto a *Batch of Bread*,
The *Floure* is the same of such a *Seed*.
But *Motion she* a *Figure* new mould, bak'd,
Because that *She* might have a new hot *Cake*. (1-16)

For Cavendish, “figure” is merely the accidental shape or particular arrangement of atoms in motion and does not communicate anything about the formal *cause* that gives rise to the figure. “Motion” is merely a name given to the agent of mechanical causes which give rise to form as figure. Cavendish’s description of motion is largely chaotic, violent, and sexual; motion does not aim at a final cause but “doth in *Change* great pleasure take.” The only intelligible and sensible end toward which motion aims is the making and undoing of material forms, and her binaries of matter and form and creation and dissolution are much like the Deleuzean sublime as proposed by Goldberg in his description of Hutchinson’s poetics.⁵⁴

The pairing of image and truth is ambiguous throughout Cavendish’s poetry, as she alternates between ontic equivocality and univocity. As we have seen in “A World

made by Atomes” and “*All things are govern'd by Atomes,*” Cavendish accounts for nature wholly by the physical arrangement of atoms, but her push for ontic univocity by reduction to atomic arrangements leads to ontic equivocality since the figure or shape that atoms take is governed by “subtle” motion. The senses thus cannot account for nature other than as an effect of an imperceptible cause. In the “*Motion and Figure,*” which directly follows “*Motion makes Atomes a Bawd for Figure,*” Cavendish attempts to recover ontic univocity in a kind of triune materialism:

*A Figure Sphoericall, the Motion's so,
 Streight Figures in a darting Motion go:
 As severall Figures in small Atomes bee,
 So severall Motions are, if we could see.
 If Atomes joyne, meet in another Forme,
 Then Motion alters as the Figures turne.
 For if the Bodies weighty are, and great,
 Then Motion's slow, and goes upon lesse feet.
 Out of a Shuttle-cocke a feather pull,
 And flying strike it, as when it was full;
 The Motion alters which belongs to that,
 Although the Motion of the hand do not.
 Yet Motion, Matter, can new Figures find,
 And the Substantiall Figures turne and wind.
 Thus severall Figures, severall Motions take,
 And severall Motions, severall Figures make.
 But Figure, Matter, Motion, all is one,
 Can never separate, nor be alone. (1-18)*

In one of Cavendish’s most fanciful poetic fits, she offers a highly speculative physics in which she guesses at material and efficient causes in a closed and invisible atomic system. As the poem progresses, Cavendish repeatedly tries to render matter, motion, and figure in a state of mutual dependency, but they fail to hold together because she cannot give a univocal account motion. In the first two lines, Cavendish refers to motion in the singular, causing some figures to be spherical and others straight, but in line 3, she refers to motion in the plural, indicating that motion is not one but several different things

when manifest in atomic states. In line 6, Cavendish makes motion contingent upon changing figures, and in lines 7 and 8, she makes motion subject to the weight of atoms. All of her claims would make sense “if we could see [atoms]” (line 4), but they are imperceptible, and so she can only hypothesize about motion. Despite her equivocal account of motion, Cavendish concludes the poem by asserting material monism; “But *Figure, Matter, Motion*, all is one,/ Can never separate, nor be alone”(lines 17-18) From her description, it is unclear as to what is the agent or cause—atoms, motions, or figures—or whether the three, as coincident effects, are truly one.

Cavendish rules out the possibility of knowing whether God’s providence, administered entirely through atomic motion, is good. In her poem “Of the *Subtlety of Motion*,” Cavendish introduces theology into her physicalist theory only to obscure the workings of divine agency:

COuld we the severall *Motions of Life* know,
 The Subtle windings, and the waies they go:
 We should adore *God* more, and not dispute,
 How they are done, but that great *God* can doe't.
 But we with *Ignorance* about do run,
 To know the *Ends*, and how they first begun.
 Spending that *Life*, which *Natures* God did give
 Us to adore him, and his wonders with,
 With fruitlesse, vaine, impossible pursuites,
 In *Schooles, Lectures*, and quarrelling *Disputes*.
 But never give him thanks that did us make,
 Proudly, as petty *Gods*, ourselves do take. (1-12)

“Subtlety” is a frequently used word in Cavendish’s poetry, indicating that the cause of motion lies beyond sense perception. In Cavendish’s mechanistic theory, only the efficient and material causes of atoms-in-motion exist, and like Hobbes, she makes God the first cause in a chain of such causes. Since she cannot know how God orders creation toward a final cause or “the *Ends*, and how they first begun,” she cannot render the full

praise due him.⁵⁵ Instead, God is to be worshipped alone for the power he has over motion, which is perceived by the senses only as an effect. Though she asserts that “We should adore God more,” nothing in her metaphysics supports the statement—the formal and final causes are hidden from view behind the “subtle” or sublime causes of motion. Here, the skepticism about causes bears directly on the question of God’s Providence, which leads to the same kind of skepticism witnessed in Lucretius.⁵⁶ Since Cavendish cannot offer a univocal account of the material and efficient causes of nature, she can make no inferences about the ends of nature—she cannot offer praise to God because her metaphysics excludes the possibility of knowing that God’s purposes are good.

What is more, the ontological problem that undergirds sublimity is a nominalism rooted in ontic violence, which destabilizes language in such a way that her attempt to pair “image” and “truth” cannot be sustained. No form is stable since motion itself is a chaotic force that disrupts communication. Cavendish’s epistemological limits are rooted in her metaphysics, which separates things and signs from an analogical index by depriving the senses of any particular knowledge that could traverse the distance between creation and its origin. As she attempts to offer a univocal account of a world comprised only of atoms-in-motion, Cavendish confronts the problem of ontic violence that makes forms inherently unstable. In her poem “A *warr* with *Atomes*,” Cavendish explicitly describes the way in which form is the result of ontic violence:

Some factious *Atomes* will agree, combine,
They strive some *form'd Body* to unjoyne.
The *Round* beate out the *Sharpe*: the *Long*
The *Flat* do fight withall, thus all go wrong.
Those which make *Motion Generall* in their war,
By his direction they much stronger are. (1-6)

The Lucretian echoes of Cavendish's poem are unmistakable, for in Book 2 of *DRN*, Lucretius uses the same martial metaphors to describe atomic motion:

Armies of attoms sport in those bright beames,
And meeting in perpetuall skirmishes,
Here joyne, there part, their motions never cease;
From whose vicissitudes we may comprize,
What motions the first bodies exercise,
In the unbounded world. (2.115-20)

In both passages, atoms collide with one another, causing forms to join and dissolve.

Form is thus an effect of ontic violence where neither creation nor destruction of form has priority.⁵⁷ Motion alone is the supreme observable reality, but only as an effect.

Without form, motion does not order the world according to any possibly intelligible end.

For Cavendish, images or "fancies" are the result of atomic motion within the brain, and words cannot adequately capture such images. Lyn Bennett describes Cavendish's account of her struggle to write quickly enough to keep up with these images:

In 'A True Relation of my Birth, Breeding and Life' (1656), Cavendish suggests that the process of expressing thought is not a straightforward one. Rather than delineating a unidirectional transition from thought to work, Cavendish describes a process in which writing and thinking are reciprocally enabling: 'when some of those thoughts are sent out in words,' she remarks, 'they give the rest more liberty to place themselves in a more methodical order: marching more regularly with my pen on the ground of white paper.' Writing is not, however, as easy as her opening comment indicates. As she goes on to explain, "my letters seem rather as a ragged rout than a well armed body. For the brain being quicker in creating than the hand in writing or the memory in retaining, many fancies are lost, by reason they oft-times outrun the pen. Where I, to keep speed in the race, write so fast as I stay not so long to write my letters plain: insomuch as some have taken my handwriting for some strange character.' (Bennett 15)

For Cavendish, the writing process is simply trying to capture thoughts or fancies invented in the brain by local motion. Since motion operates at a different rate in the

brain as it does in the act of writing, imagining and writing are at odds with one another. The struggle for perfect correspondence between images in the mind and words on the page is familiar to any writer, yet for Cavendish, the only measure by which the images are truly rendered is the physical shape or figure. The task of pairing image and truth could be possible in her system only if she claimed to understand the workings of motion, but as has already been shown, motion in her account is entirely sublime.

Since Cavendish so closely resembles Lucretius with regard to her metaphysics, her poetry mirrors the inherent ontic instability of composition and decomposition that Goldberg uses to describe Hutchinson's poetry. However, the criticism leveled by Goldberg at Norbrook—that for Hutchinson, images always falsify—applies most accurately not to Hutchinson but to the sublime aesthetics that inform Cavendish's physicalist account of nature. For Cavendish, images can only be simulacra since the form, which Cavendish reduces to shape, of the image communicates nothing of the formal cause of its being. Images thus “falsify” since they hide the true formal cause of the original.

Lucy Hutchinson's Aesthetics

If Hutchinson's poetics are much like Cavendish's, then she might arrive at the same sort of ambiguity and skepticism about Providence, but Hutchinson instead makes Providence the theme of her epic, *Order and Disorder*. While much of God's purpose in creation remains hidden from view, Hutchinson maintains that God bridges the infinite distance between himself and creation in the Form of his Glory revealed in Christ. In so far as Hutchinson sees the Form in creation as Beauty, she understands formal cause as the communication of God's love or a superabundant outpouring of himself. Form thus

is not an accident of mechanical causes for Hutchinson, as it is for Cavendish, and because the Form is sensible as Beauty, Hutchinson views analogy as capable of communicating that Form between God and his creation. In that praise and love of God's glory is also the final cause of creation, his Providence is both seen and may be participated in by humanity. For this reason, Hutchinson makes the praise of God's infinite glory her aesthetic aim.

For Hutchinson motion and cause are intimately related, but cause refers to more than a sublime force that is only experienced as an effect. Hutchinson portrays God as both the first and final Cause of creation:

While we considering each created thing,
Are led up to an uncreated spring,
And by gradations of successive Time,
At last unto Eternity do climb,
As we in tracks of second causes tread
Unto the first uncaused cause are led;
And know, while we perpetual motion see
There must a first self-moving Power be,
To whom all the inferior motions tend,
In whom they are begun, and where they end.
This First eternal Cause, th' Original
Of Being, Life, and Motion, GOD we call;
In whom all Wisdome, Goodness, Glory, Might,
Whatever can himself or us delight
Unite, centring in his Perfection,
Whose Nature can admit but only One:
Divided Sovereignty makes neither great,
Wanting what's shar'd to make the sum complete. (1.67-84)

For Hutchinson, the difference between first and second causes cannot be reduced to a first cause in a chain of mechanical causes. Working within a far richer concept of causation, Hutchinson views the first cause of creation as God himself. Furthermore, Hutchinson indicates that “we in tracks of second causes tread,/ Unto the first uncaused cause are led,” maintaining that the First Cause is not entirely sublime or hidden but seen.

God is the eternal, infinite Cause and is “th’original/ Of being, life, and motion,” in whom we see and delight in the transcendental perfections of “wisdom, glory, [and] might”. The logic Hutchinson uses to move from the created order to God is that outlined in the previous chapter. Because God is already, in himself infinite, he always already (within himself) crosses the infinite distance between himself and creation. This divine infinitude makes possible and legitimate human analogical predication about God. As the creature looks upon the created order, he or she may see the glory of God reflected in such a way that evokes desire for the Creator and for participation in the divine life of the Trinity.

Within God’s triune Being, Hutchinson sees original motion which is so closely connected with cause of creation but not merely as a product. In the Trinity, the difference between the Father and Son and Holy Spirit is always maintained, “so that what/ One person is, the other is not that” (1.88). Although the three persons of the Trinity are different, they are perfectly given to one another in eternal peace, or as Hutchinson writes, “Each doth himself and all the rest possess/ In undisturbed joy and blessedness” (1.93-4). The Son is the “substantial Word/ And Wisdom” who proceeds from the Father, and “The ever-blessed Spirit ...eternally proceed[s] from both” (1.99-102), i.e. they are communicating form. In summary, she writes, “These three distinctly thus in one divine,/ Pure, perfect self-supplying essence shine” (1.103-4). The motion towards which all creation tends is not merely the first in an endless series of mechanical causes but is the perfection of unity amid difference in God’s triune Being. God alone is perfect and without need of anything, and creation reflects that perfection in a finite, imperfect way—that Glory which begins in the life of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Directly after describing God's triune Being, Hutchinson argues that the final cause of creation is the worship and love of God. In her account, Hutchinson adheres closely to Scripture, making sure to safeguard her descriptions of Trinitarian action against charges of "fancy."⁵⁸ Each of the members of the Trinity has a different role in the creation of the world, but the works of each are cooperative and never instrumental. The Father offers "sacred counsels" which are "produced by the Son" but "Not as th' instrument, but joynt actor, who/ Joy'd to fulfill the counsels which he knew" (1.110-18). Similarly, of the Holy Spirit she writes, "By the concurrent Spirit all parts were/ Fitly dispos'd, distinguisht, rendred fair,/ In such harmonious and wise order set,/ As universal Beauty did compleat" (1.119-22). In her portrayal, Hutchinson confronts the problem of writing about the immanent Trinity from a finite perspective.⁵⁹ As a contingent, temporal creature, Hutchinson relies on revelation to support what is mysterious to human comprehension:

This most mysterious Triple Unitie,
 In Essence One, and in subsistence Three,
 Was that great *Elohim*, who first design'd,
 Then made the Worlds, that Angels and Mankind
 Him in his rich out-goings might adore,
 And celebrate his praise for evermore. (1.105-27)

Although her account of divine creation is incomplete from a finite perspective, she nevertheless maintains that the final cause of creation, which is the adoration and praise of God, is visible to the creature in the "rich out-goings" of God's work.

In Hutchinson's account of Creation, the triune, personal God communicates the glory of his Being which is the love out-poured between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The single "cause" that brings about the world is God's love:

Who from Eternity himself supplied,
And had no need of any thing beside,
Nor any other cause that did him move
To make a World, but his extensive Love,
It self delighting to communicate;
Its Glory in the creatures to dilate. (1.129-34)

Hutchinson notes that this “extensive Love,”⁶⁰ which is the communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the sole cause of creation. Properly speaking, God is also uncaused because, as she indicates in line 130, God has “no need.” When God creates the world, he communicates his own Being or self (lines 129 and 133), which is also his Glory.⁶¹ The Creator thus communicates his Form in creation, not as a product or effect of some sublime cause, but as the true, visible form of created being. For this reason, Hutchinson continues:

While they are led by their own excellence
T' admire the first, pure, high Intelligence,
By all the Powers and vertues which they have,
To that Omnipotence who those Powers gave;
By all their glories and their joys to his,
Who is the fountain of all joy and bliss;
By all their wants and imbecillities,
To the full magazine of rich supplies,
Where Power, Love, Justice, and Mercy shine
In their still fixed heights, and ne're decline. (1.135-44)

All that the creatures have, their “glories,” are partial reflections of God’s perfect glory. Because divine glory communicates form to creation, the perception of beauty in creation allows the perception of divine glory. The image which all creation bears is that of the Creator and is true, good, and beautiful. While the image does not falsify, it cannot comprehend the infinitely more beautiful Being of God. Because of God’s infinite Being, Hutchinson maintains that all creation can participate in his being without reducing it:

No streams can shrink the self-supplying spring,
No retributions can more fulness bring
To the eternal fountain, which doth run
In sacred circles, ends where it begun,
And thence with inexhausted life and force
Begins again a new, yet the same course
It instituted in Times infant birth,
When the Creator first made *Heaven and Earth*. (1.145-52)

All creation flows from God, but because his infinite Being is “the eternal fountain,” creation neither reduces nor adds to his Being or reduces the life and force of the love that is in the divine life.

Importantly, Hutchinson describes beauty not as an abstraction but as the visible form God gives to his creation. In her description of the beauty of the human face, Lucy Hutchinson writes:

Besides the colours and the features, we
Admire their just and perfect symmetry,
Whose ravishing resultance is that air
That graces all, and is not anywhere
Whereof we cannot well say what it is,
Yet beauty’s chiefest excellence lies in this;
Which mocks the painters in their best designs,
And is not held by their exactest lines. (3.115-119)

While Hutchinson admires the face’s “just and perfect symmetry” and the cheeks “white and red,” she acknowledges that such abstract qualities of line and color cannot account for the “ravishing ... air” or beauty of the face. For Hutchinson such beauty resists formal definition since she cannot say *what* it is that makes the face beautiful, i.e. the form is not an abstract idea which can be defined independently of the face. A merely physicalist or idealist definition of form would sever the beauty of the object from its analogical relationship to God. Since beauty is analogical, the glory of creation never contains the fullness of God’s Glory or Being, but is contained by it. If form is not an

abstraction but the image of God in creation, then by analogy creation participates in the infinitely more beautiful Glory of God. For Hutchinson, Creation's beauty is therefore an "image" of the divine that does not merely falsify, as Cavendish would maintain.

Rather than appealing to perpetual ontic violence, Hutchinson argues that Providence brings harmony out of discord in a fallen world. The theme of her epic is Providence, which fills the opening lines of the first canto:

MY ravisht soul, a pious ardour fires,
To sing those mystick wonders it admires,
Contemplating the Rise of every thing
That, with Times birth, flow'd from th' eternal spring:
And the no less stupendious Providence
By which discording Natures ever since
Have kept up universal Harmonie;
While in one joynt obedience all agree,
Performing that to which they were design'd
With ready inclination; But Mankind
Alone rebels against his Makers will,
Which tho' opposing he must yet fulfill.
And so that wise Power, who each crooked stream
Most rightly guides, becomes the glorious theam
Of endless admiration, while we see,
Whatever mortals vain endeavours be,
They must be broken who with Power contend,
And cannot frustrate their Creators End,
Whose Wisdom, Goodness, Might and Glory shines
In guiding mens unto his own designs. (1.1-20)

As a Calvinist, Hutchinson faces the difficulty of asserting the goodness of God's will without ground. If God's providential will is entirely arbitrary as Norbrook suggests in the doctrine of double predestination, then God's purposes remain entirely hidden from creation and the creature is left without seeing or knowing that God's will is good. If, however, God brings harmony out of discord because of the original ontic peace within his own Being, Hutchinson can maintain that God's good and beautiful purposes are always already at work. In her emphasis upon the aesthetic dimension of truth,

Hutchinson's Calvinism goes beyond Calvin himself, who tends to reduce God's participation in the world to ethical categories.

Unlike Cavendish, Hutchinson pairs image and truth by the analogy that always already exists between God and creation. In Cavendish, the difference between image and truth lies in the difference between motion as a hidden or sublime cause and its observed effects. For Hutchinson, the original difference between image and the true Cause of creation is the difference between creation and Creator, which God always already traverses in his infinite Being. In one sense, this difference prevents ontic univocity since Hutchinson avers that humans cannot know God as he knows himself:

God, the great *Elohim*, to say no more,
Whose sacred Name we rather must adore
Than venture to explain; for He alone
Dwells in himself, and to himself is known (1.45-8).

Nevertheless, Hutchinson does not lapse into skepticism, since there is an analogy between God and creation, made possible by the analogy of being. Hutchinson continues:

God, Immense, and Infinite,
Containing all things in himself alone,
Being at once in all, contain'd in none. (1.58-60)

Importantly, God traverses the infinite difference between himself and creation without reducing that difference—without becoming identical to finite creation. As a result, Hutchinson can and does speak analogously of beauty in creation; the beauty of the finite world always already participates in the infinite Beauty of God's Being, for the infinite difference between Father and Son crossed by the Holy Spirit precedes creation.

For these reasons, I argue that Hutchinson makes Beauty, understood as God's glory, and not the sublime her poetic aim. Canto 3 contains the clearest expression of

Hutchinson's poetics, which she patterns after the work of the Father and the Son. First, she describes God's rest on the seventh day of creation:

God, a perpetual Act, sloth cannot bless.
He ceast not from his own celestial joy,
Which doth himself perpetually employ
In contemplation of himself, and those
Most excellent works, wherein himself he shows;
He only ceast from making lower things,
By which, as steps, the mounting soul he brings
To th' upmost height, and having finisht these
Himself did in his own productions please,
Full satisfied in their perfection,
Rested from what he had compleatly done[.] (3.538-548)

Hutchinson then turns to human creation, which bears an analogical relationship to God's act of Creation:

And [God] made his pattern our instruction,
That we, as far as finite creatures may
Trace him that's infinite, should in our way
Rest as our Father did, work as he wrought,
Nor cease till we have to perfection brought
Whatever to his glory we intend,
Still making ours, the same which was his end
As his works in commands begin, and have
Conclusion in the blessings which he gave,
So must his Word [Christ] give being to all ours. (3.538-558)

In this account, God looks upon his own creation and sees himself reflected in its glory and is satisfied in its perfection. Based on her understanding of God's creation of the world, Hutchinson adopts a pattern for her poetry. As a finite creature she does not confuse herself with the infinite God, but she sees creatures as able to trace out the pattern "in our way." By making her end or final cause the same as God's, which is his glory, Hutchinson maintains that images can finally be true and beautiful. Even humanly made images in poetry can thus reflect the glory of God. And since all creation finds its

being in God's Word, who is Christ, then words may bear the image or communicate God's glory.

Hutchinson's poetic practice demonstrates an approach to the relation between image and truth that contrasts sharply with Cavendish. Although Hutchinson maintains that human art, including her own poetry, is inferior to the works of God, her use of emblems reveals that human images can formally and finally be true when they lead the reader to God as the Creator.

At several points in her epic, Hutchinson describes "emblems," which are images that serve to instruct the reader (3.458). In particular, emblems help Hutchinson to show the reader God's works or Providence in the world. They are of special importance because they are concrete images that reflect the formal and final cause of creation and so disclose divine reality in a way not possible for Cavendish. In the first two cantos, which amplify Genesis 1:1-24, Hutchinson twice mentions emblems. For instance, in her description of the first day of creation, Hutchinson uses battle imagery to describe the separation of light from darkness. Day is described as rising out of Chaos and "envious Night," which initiates an oppositional relationship when she "her black mists hurled" (1.318-319). The morning, however, "did her shadows chase / With restored beauty and triumphant force" (1.320-321). Hutchinson then concludes this image of the day and night in perpetual battle: "An emblem of that everlasting feud / 'Twixt sons of light and darkness still pursued" (1.321-322). In this example, Hutchinson describes a concrete reality which then draws the reader towards truth; in this case, she uses battle imagery, "hurled" and "triumphant force," to draw the reader's attention to the emblem of day and night which teaches of the "everlasting feud" between "sons of light and darkness."

In Canto 2, which narrates days two through six of creation, an extended example of an emblem and the way it forms Hutchinson's poetic practice occurs early in the canto. Hutchinson describes the third day of creation; on this day, the dry land is separated from water and vegetation is made to grow upon dry land. She prefaces the emblem of nature's glory with a description of the beauty and practical benefits of vegetation:

Earth's fair green robe vi'd with the azure skies,
Her proud Woods near the flaming Towers did rife.
The valleys Trees, though less in breadth and height,
Yet hung with various fruit, as much delight.
Beneath these little shrubs and bushes sprung
With fair flowers cloth'd, and with rich berries hung,
Whose more delightful fruits seem'd to upbraid
The tall trees yielding only barren shade.
Then sprouted grass and herbs and plants,
Prepared to feed the earth's inhabitants,
To glad their nostrils and delight their eyes,
Revive their spirits, cure their maladies. (2.86-89)

In this preface, Hutchinson describes the concrete realities of plants which both delight the senses and are meant "to feed" the future creatures of the earth. She then begins to amplify the various ways that "earth's inhabitants" might be fed: nostrils will be gladdened, eyes delighted, spirits revived, and illnesses cured. All of these are concrete examples of the purposes of vegetation. However, Hutchinson uses these purposes of vegetation to explain what can be learned from vegetation:

But th' understanding too, while we may read
In every leaf, lectures of Providence,
Eternal wisdom, love, omnipotence;
Which th' eye that sees not with hell's mists is blind,
That which regards not is of brutish kind.
The various colours, figures, powers of these
Are their Creator's growing witnesses;
Their glories emblems are wherein we see
How frail our human lives and beauties be[.] (2.90-98)

Here, Hutchinson alerts the reader to emblematic significance of the glories of the leaves, showing that the physical realities reflect the divine reality of God's Providence.⁶² The leaves, which is a synecdoche for all of nature, "lectures of Providence, eternal wisdom, love, omnipotence" to those who have the eyes to see it. Importantly, the emblem links the concrete reality of vegetation to the eternal Truth of God, revealing in part the formal and final causes of creation.⁶³ Specifically, "[t]he various colours, figures, [and] powers [to grow, provide nourishments, etc.]" of the leaves offers an analogous representation of God's "Eternal wisdom, love, [and] omnipotence." In that these names of God are also the formal and final cause of creation,⁶⁴ Hutchinson's emblem describes the glory of creation by employing the analogy that already exists between God, Glory, and creation.

In order to show that God's glory is the true form of creation, Hutchinson argues that his creation is more beautiful than and qualitatively different from human art. In the following lines, she draws out this difference:

Even like those flowers which at the sunrise spread
Their gaudy leaves, and are at evening dead,
Yet while they in their native lustre shine,
The eastern monarchs are not half so fine.
In richer robes God clothes the dirty soil
Than men can purchase by their sin and toil.
Then rather fields than painted courts admire,
Yet seeing both, think both must feed the fire:
Only God's works have roots and seeds, from whence
They spring again in grace and excellence,
But men's have none: like hasty lightning they
Flash out, and so forever pass away (2.99-110)

The glories of emblems instruct in various ways. They show the frailty of human life and beauty (98); the momentary beauty of all created things (99-100); creation's superior beauty to the best that human art can produce (101-102); God's provision, which is better than all human creation (103-104); both God's creation and human creations will come to

an end (105-106); God's creation contains within it "roots and seeds" that allow for renewal and new life (107-108); and human works cannot give life (109-110).⁶⁵

Although all of creation is finite, God's works are analogous to his Being: they are more delightful and praiseworthy than the best works of human artists, but in that they can regenerate and sustain life, they are a reflection of his providence and the formal cause of creation, God's Being. That they have "roots and seeds" is arguably an oblique reference to Lucretius, who also describes atoms as "seeds." For Lucretius, however, the only qualities of atoms are matter and motion—they thus cannot account for life or the source of all motion. For Hutchinson, the powers of the vegetation to live and grow depend on God's own triune Being, which gives being to the plants.

This passage on the revelatory power of each leaf is an excellent example of how Hutchinson's poetic practice is formed by her use of emblems. She begins with one emblem; in this case, she refers to vegetation in general, and leaves specifically. She then shows how the "glories" of that physical object are emblems that reveal truths about the Creator and the creation and the relationship between them. Significantly, this approach reflects her theological commitments that give rise to her philosophical theory of causation.

In this respect, the fact that Hutchinson places a discourse on "second causes" directly after the above emblem is central to her intention; the passage helps to further clarify what the emblem teaches. In a note to one of these passages, Norbrook remarks "An emphasis on 'second causes' was characteristic of thinkers with a secular tendency who minimized God's direct intervention in history" (*Order 23*). Margaret Cavendish and other members of the Newcastle Circle are just the kind of thinkers who minimize

God's intervention in history by limiting causation to the mechanistic interaction of physical bodies, for God cannot operate directly in a closed, mechanical system. What Norbrook misses, however, is that the discussion of secondary immediately follows the passage on the leaf emblem; Hutchinson's implicit but clearly evident point is that the emblem supplies the account of formal cause that is missing from those accounts which are limited to secondary causes. Hutchinson first claims that the work of the fourth day of creation, when the sun, moon, and stars are brought into being, demonstrates an important relationship between God and second causes. She writes:

Thrice had the day to gloomy night resigned,
And thrice victorious o'er the darkness shined,
Before the mediate cause of it, the sun
Or any star had their creation,
For with th'Omnipotent it is all one
To cause the day without, or by the sun.
God in the world by second causes reigns,
But is not tied to those means he ordains. (2.119-126)

Hutchinson refers to a common objection to the order of creation: how is it that there have been three days already without a sun or moon? Here, Hutchinson critiques Cavendish and like-minded materialists who maintain that the material world alone accounts for all causes. She insists that God works by second causes in creation but he is not confined to second causes. Since God is the Creator of mediate causes, such as the sun, he can act independently of the material world. Hutchinson thus criticizes those materialist accounts of nature that would limit divine action to secondary causes.

Hutchinson then shows that the efficient and material causes of creation must be reconsidered as part of a greater whole. She describes the light from sun as a mediate cause, but even as a mediate cause, it is directly tied to God's active providence:

The Sun whom th' *Hebrews* Gods great servant call,
Plac'd in the middle Orb, as Lord of all,
Is in a radiant flaming chariot whirl'd,
And dayly carried round about the world
By the first Movers force, who in that race
Scatters his light and heat in every place,
Yet not at once. (2.139-46)

Here, the material and efficient causes of the sun's light can be traced back to God himself. Hutchinson refers to God as the "first Mover" who sets the sun in its place, but the sun does not act autonomously. The sun is instead "God's great servant," being "dayly carried round about the world/ By the first Movers force." Unlike Cavendish, Hutchinson views motion as guided by God himself, and the physical causes of motion are not merely sublime but reveal God's providence. The sun thus bears the same "grace and excellence" or form that Hutchinson sees in vegetation.

Hutchinson's poetic use of emblems thus demonstrates her understanding of causation. Since formal cause is revealed by analogy, Hutchinson is able to draw instruction from concrete reality, which reveals God's "Eternal wisdom, love, omnipotence." The second causes thus are dependent on First Cause, who gives being to all of creation. Creation does not exist apart from God's Being but is always already contained within it. Unlike Cavendish, for whom reality is merely atoms in motion with no greater meaning and second causes necessarily obscure absolutely the First Cause, Hutchinson uses her poetic form to make images that truly reveal God as the formal and final cause of creation.

As I have shown, the emblems of Hutchinson's poetry correspond to God's revelation of glory in creation. In the next chapter, I shall examine her use of typology. Emblems and types both reflect the analogical relationship between God and creation, but

types point forward to the fulfillment of promises made by God as he covenants with his people. Importantly, Hutchinson maintains a close connection between the two kinds of images since they both reflect the gift of God in Christ, but they differ in that emblems reveal God's work in the act of Creation while types represent God's Redemption of a fallen world.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lucy Hutchinson's Politics of Ontic Peace

While the previous chapter focused on Lucy Hutchinson's theology and poetics, this chapter shows how *Order and Disorder* connects her theology and politics. The pattern of the last chapter, in which I show that Hutchinson's aesthetics are informed by analogy and beauty understood as the glory of God's infinite Being, continues, in this chapter, to appear in her politics. I contend here that Hutchinson implicitly targets another member of the Newcastle Circle, Thomas Hobbes. Like Margaret Cavendish, Hobbes's thought was deeply informed by Epicurean atomism, and nowhere is this more evident than in his influential political theory. In this chapter, I argue that, like Cavendish's poetics, Hobbes's politics are informed by an aesthetics of the sublime, which appear in his metaphysical assumptions and his typological reading of the figure of Abraham. By comparing Hobbes's reading of Abraham with Hutchinson's in Canto 15 of *Order and Disorder*, I show that Hutchinson critiques Hobbesian royalism through her alternate account of the typological significance of Abraham. In particular, I claim that Hutchinson interprets the sacrificial system reflected in the narrative of Abraham and Isaac and in Israel's worship of God as typological, both pointing forward to Christ's sacrifice of self-giving to the Father. By overcoming the violence of sacrifice by a greater sacrifice of love from an infinite source, Christ shows the redemptive path to true peace with the Father in fallen creation. Unlike Hobbes, Hutchinson's typology reflects the pattern of promise and fulfillment and treats the law and the sacrificial system as

types. The sacrificial system, though seeming to support Hobbes's view that nature is violent, shows instead, in Hutchinson's reading, the way to peace; it reveals God's triune Being and disrupts the power of Hobbes's sovereign and allows the freedom of all humans to participate in God's glory. In this way, Hutchinson's theological poetics gives rise to a mode of biblical exegesis that underwrites her contrasting account of political sovereignty.

As I will show that for Hutchinson, in contrast to Hobbes, a "covenant" involves more than the keeping of the law. In a covenant, God promises to bless Abraham and so introduces a contingency that cannot be captured in strictly legal language. Hutchinson sees the law and the sacrificial system as a promise fulfilled by Christ's perfect sacrifice. The typological pattern of promise and fulfillment thus makes the covenant particular (determinate) and intelligible without eliminating human freedom. Instead, the covenant opens the way for God to reveal himself in Christ and thereby makes the law contingent on Christ.

Several critics engage, at least briefly, Hutchinson's politics. For instance, N. H. Keeble writes, "For all her republican radicalism, Lucy Hutchinson's sexual politics remain entirely conservative" (Keeble, "Introduction" xxv). Keeble's observation captures the apparently paradoxical nature of Hutchinson's political beliefs—in national politics, she opposes human hierarchies, even to the point of regicide, and in the politics of the home, she adheres to a strict hierarchy, placing herself secondary to her husband. Likewise, Norbrook maintains that there is "a discrepancy between human and divine orders" (Norbrook, "Introduction" xxxvii). He claims that Hutchinson's God is a mysterious and remote figure whose strange commands, such as that Abraham sacrifice

Isaac, show that his “order may cut violently across the dynastic order of succession and primogeniture” (Norbrook, “Introduction” xli). The claims of Keeble and Norbrook suggest that Hutchinson’s thinking about politics is bifurcated along arbitrary lines, evoking sublime aesthetics. In contrast to these accounts, I shall connect Hutchinson’s politics to the aesthetics of beauty.⁶⁶

Abraham and the Politics of Hobbes’ Sovereign

For Thomas Hobbes, peace is merely the absence of conflict, which is the warring disposition that is intrinsic to human nature. Of the natural state of humans, Hobbes writes:

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. For WARRE, consisteth not in Battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of *Time*, is to be considered in the nature of Warre; as it is in the nature of Weather. For as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a showre or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many dayes together: So the nature of War, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 62)

Without a power to contravene the violent state of human nature, humans are disposed to fight against one another. Hobbes goes on to define “peace” in an entirely negative way; peace is merely the time when there is “assurance” against the “known disposition” of humans. In the time of war, humans “live without security,” and Hobbes, in his most well-known lines, concludes that life is “solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes *Leviathan* 62).

On the basis of his claim that human life is necessarily violent, Hobbes goes on to justify the need for a social contract. This view of human nature, however, is rooted in Hobbes' ontology. As Phillip Donnelly explains:

Beginning with the premise that all reality consists of matter and the motion of matter, Hobbes deduces that all human judgments concerning "good" or evil" per se are reducible to "desire" or "aversion" respectively, both of which arise from such material motions. Likewise, Hobbes defines "reason" as "nothing but *Reckoning* (that is, Adding and Subtracting [sic])" (32). He further deduces that given such a combination of desires and aversions in a "state of nature," humans must necessarily and naturally be in a state of war against one another (86-89). (Donnelly, *Milton's* 11)

The reduction of "good" and "evil" to "desire" and "aversion" is the essence of Hobbes' egoistic psychology. As a consequence, human desires and aversions cannot be judged according to independent moral standards. In this context, Hobbes replaces moral obligation with competing desires, which leads to conflict or a lack of "peace" as described by Hobbes. Obligation thus arises in an entirely self-referential way, whereby the highest "good" is the desire for self-preservation. As Donnelly notes, "The social contract—or the covenant constituting any civil power—is accordingly the only means by which humans are able to escape their natural condition in which life is otherwise 'solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short' (89)" (Donnelly, *Milton's* 11).

The pattern Donnelly describes serves to explain Hobbes' negative definition of liberty as "absence of externall Impediments." For Hobbes, humans share a "right of nature," which "is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own Judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to be the

aptest means thereunto” (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 64). Importantly, Hobbes defines “liberty” without recourse to any objective moral or teleological consideration:

By LIBERTY, is understood, according to the proper signification of the word, the absence of externall Impediments: which Impediments, may oft take away part of a mans power to do what hee would; but cannot hinder him from using the power left him, according as his judgement, and reason shall dictate to him. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 64)

According to Hobbes, liberty consists of the absence of limits on one’s power to exercise one’s will. In turn, liberty must be surrendered in order to guarantee peace, which Hobbes describes as a “second law” that follows from the first:

That a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself. (Hobbes *Leviathan* 64)

The second law in turn becomes justification for the sovereign, who acts as the lawgiver that limits the liberty of the subjects in order to establish a peace, i.e. the absence of violence.

In chapter 26, Hobbes describes the origins of the sovereign’s power over his subjects by employing a typological reading of the figure of Abraham. He turns to Scripture for “Examples” and “Testimonies” to clarify his claims:

The Covenant God made with *Abraham* (in a Supernaturall manner) was thus, *This is the Covenant which thou shalt observe between Me and Thee and thy Seed after thee.* *Abrahams* Seed had not this revelation, nor were yet in being; yet they are a party to the Covenant, and bound to obey what *Abraham* should declare to them for Gods Law; which they could not be, but in vertue of the obedience they owed to their Parents; who (if they be Subject to no other earthly power, as here in the case of *Abraham*) have Sovereign power over their children, and servants. Againe, where God saith to *Abraham*, *In thee shall all Nations of the earth be blessed: For I know thou wilt command thy children, and thy house after thee to keep the way of the Lord, and to observe Righteousnesse and Judgement,* it is manifest, the obedience of his Family, who had no Revelation, depended

on their former obligation to obey their Sovereign. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 149)

The covenant that God establishes with Abraham is of a “Supernaturall manner,” the formal cause of which is entirely hidden from view of the children of Israel. The covenant merely establishes Abraham as the law-giver who alone commands the children of Israel in order “to keep the way of the Lord.” Furthermore, the typological pattern established by Abraham’s covenant does not include participation in the covenant by the children of Israel; rather, they depend entirely on an “obligation to obey their Sovereign.”

Hobbes then expands the role of Abraham to include the civil governance.

Spelling out the full nature of the covenant, Hobbes shifts his language to a legal-political idiom, rendering “covenant” and “contract” synonymous:

In this Contract of God with Abraham, wee may observe three points of important consequence in the government of Gods people. First, that at the making of this Covenant, God spake onely to Abraham; and therefore contracted not with any of his family, or seed, otherwise then as their wills (which make the essence of all Covenants) were before the Contract involved in the will of Abraham; who was therefore supposed to have had a lawfull power, to make them perform all that he covenanted for them. According whereunto (*Gen. 18. 18, 19.*) God saith, *All the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him, For I know him that he will command his children and his houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* From whence may be concluded this first point, that they to whom God hath not spoken immediately, are to receive the positive commandements of God, from their Sovereign; as the family and seed of Abraham did from Abraham their Father, and Lord, and Civill Sovereign. And consequently in every Common-wealth, they who have no supernaturall Revelation to the contrary, ought to obey the laws of their own Sovereign, in the externall acts and profession of Religion. As for the inward *thought*, and *beleef* of men, which humane Governours can take no notice of, (for God onely knoweth the heart) they are not voluntary, nor the effect of the laws, but of the unrevealed will, and of the power of God; and consequently fall not under obligation. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 249-50)

Hobbes uses Abraham as a type to unify the roles of religious and civil authority under a

single head. The covenant, which Abraham enters into with God, is now a contract based entirely on law. As such, Hobbes makes the will of God in human history only intelligible through civil law. As a civil leader, Abraham's responsibility to God remains hidden from view, and the law is but an effect of an unseen cause. Like his fellow member of the Newcastle Circle, Margaret Cavendish, Hobbes' adopts an aesthetics of the sublime, shown in his description of Abraham and the law. Although God knows Abraham's heart, none of his followers can see that Abraham's laws reflect God's goodness since the law is only a product of God's opaque, arbitrary will. The law acts as a veil between God and his people, and as a mediator Abraham alone has access to God. Without any other revelation of God's will beyond the law, strict obedience to Abraham's dictates are equated with fulfilling the hidden will or purposes of God.

Hobbes thus implicitly advances an agenda against Separatists⁶⁷ by precluding any direct human participation in God's governance of creation. In his consolidation of authority under Abraham and all future sovereigns, Hobbes rules out any participation in God's covenant by the sovereign's subjects:

From whence proceedeth another point; that it was not unlawfull for Abraham, when any of his Subjects should pretend Private Vision, or Spirit, or other Revelation from God, for the countenancing of any doctrine which Abraham should forbid, or when they followed, or adhered to any such pretender, to punish them; and consequently that it is lawfull now for the Sovereign to punish any man that shall oppose his Private Spirit against the Laws: For hee hath the same place in the Commonwealth, that Abraham had in his own Family. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 250)

Hobbes precludes "Private Vision" from having any public authority because all civil and religious authority proceeds from the sovereign. God reveals himself directly to Abraham alone, for any direct revelation to one of Abraham's subjects would decentralize his authority.

Lastly, Hobbes extends his typological reading of Abraham to the interpretation of Scripture.⁶⁸ Although God reveals himself in the words communicated to the prophets, the words require interpretation, and Hobbes again consolidates all authority in Abraham:

There ariseth also from the same, a third point; that as none but Abraham in his family, so none but the Sovereign in a Christian Common-wealth, can take notice what is, or what is not the Word of God. For God spake onely to Abraham; and it was he onely, that was able to know what God said, and to interpret the same to his family: And therefore also, they that have the place of Abraham in a Common-wealth, are the onely Interpreters of what God hath spoken. (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 250)

In this passage, Hobbes makes an explicit connection between Abraham and the “Sovereign in a Christian Common-wealth.” Hobbes implies that the covenant established with Abraham by God thus remains unchanged even with the Advent of Christ. In order to maintain this continuity, Hobbes interprets Christ’s mission on earth as an endorsement of the old covenant. Hobbes argues that Christ does not give “new laws” but teaches humans “to observe those we are subject to” (322). The laws humans are subject to include “the laws of Nature and the laws of our severall Sovereigns,” and even in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ does not teach anything new but “onely expounded” on “the laws of Moses,” one of those “severall Soveragins” (322). He concludes:

The Laws of God therefore are none but the Laws of Nature, whereof the principall is, that we should not violate our Faith, that is, a commandement to obey our Civill Sovereigns, which wee constituted over us, by mutuall pact one with another. And this Law of God, that commandeth Obedience to the Law Civill, commandeth by consequence Obedience to all the Precepts of the Bible; which (as I have proved in the precedent Chapter) is there onely Law, where the Civill Sovereign hath made it so; and in other places but Counsell; which a man at his own perill, may without injustice refuse to obey. (Hobbes *Leviathan* 322).

In reaffirming the old covenant, Hobbes's Christ reduces the intelligible content of the Hebrew law to the laws of nature alone. Even faith is a law of nature, and the content of the faith is expressed entirely in obedience to the sovereign. Hobbes thus effects a theology that is underwritten by his political system, wherein the sovereign's laws express the will of God as interpreted from Scripture. As Reventlow notes, "Faith cannot be contradicted even by the decision of the sovereign, the role of which is rather to produce a functional, external uniformity which contributes to peace" (Reventlow *Authority* 205). In this way, for Hobbes, Abraham is an anti-type of Christ only insofar as both anticipate the sovereign ruler of the Christian commonwealth—obedience to whom is the sum of all natural and biblical law.

Hutchinson's Abraham as the Faithful Leader of Israel

Hutchinson also offers a portrayal of Abraham, and in her account, peace is different from Hobbes "functional, external uniformity." The opening lines of Canto 15 sound a political note that runs contrary to Hobbes' view of the absolute authority of the sovereign. Paraphrasing Genesis 20:14-18, Hutchinson portrays Abraham as making a covenant with Abimelech that limits the authority of the king. Hutchinson writes:

The king, solicitous to assure his throne,
Visits the blessed patriarch and contracts
A league with him, that not by hostile acts
Nor secret practices each should invade
The other's right, and that this covenant, made
By them, their next successors should include,
And to their generations be renewed.
Beersheba hence received its name, for there
They did with solemn rites this covenant swear. (15.1-14)

Hutchinson's anti-Hobbesian message is implicit; the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech ensures that no "hostile acts" or "secret practices" by the king can "invade"

the right of Abraham as a leader of his descendants. Furthermore, Hutchinson believes that “their next successor should include, / And to their generations be renewed” and so opposes Hobbes’s typology, which would make all future kings after Abraham divine heirs of absolute authority. Neither the political leaders nor the leaders of the descendants of Abraham, which Hutchinson associates with the Church, have absolute authority, which belongs to God alone. Each generation of leaders must therefore renew the covenant which gives proper freedom to pursue proper ends.

In this Canto, Hutchinson offers an account of Abraham that challenges the readings of Abraham presented by Hobbes and like-minded royalists. Hutchinson objects to Hobbes’ typological account of Abraham, for in that account Abraham acts as an intermediary between God and his elect in a way that hides the formal and final causes of his rule behind the veil of the sublime. As we have noted in previous chapters, unlike Hobbes, Hutchinson maintains that the formal causes of creation communicate God’s glory. Since the formal causes also reveal the *telos* of creation, which again is God’s glory, humans can order their desires toward the same end. In this way, Hutchinson provides an account of moral, teleological order which is absent in Hobbes. Hobbes drops these formal and final causes from consideration by reducing moral categories to desire and aversion, which are formless because they are produced by unseen causes. For this reason, Hobbes omits an account of virtue in his discourse on Abraham. Rather, Hobbes reduces all virtue to keeping faith to covenants, which for all descendents of Abraham means obeying Abraham as absolute ruler.

In her own account of Abraham, Hutchinson thus shows that Abraham’s virtues of faith, hope, and love reflect an economy of peace which originates in the gift of God’s

triune Being. In particular, Hutchinson shows that Abraham participates in the same divine love that creates and redeems the world. Implicit in her discourse on the sacrificial system is a critique of the political order of Hobbesian royalists, who perceive peace to be merely a stay in violence or momentary stability. Significantly, Hobbes does not treat the sacrificial system in his discussion of Abraham, for he does not consider the law as part of a larger typological pattern of promise and fulfillment; in her discussion of Abraham, Hutchinson uses the sacrificial system to demonstrate that God, in his infinite love, overcomes the original ontic violence assumed by Hobbes in his political theory. Her political views are founded on an assumption that peace originates in God's being and is communicated to creation.

Abraham's Faith as Knowledge of God's Glory in Creation

Hutchinson begins her account of Abraham by placing the final cause, or Abraham's worship of God, first. She shows that from the beginning of the episode Abraham understands the final cause of sacrifice: the offering of praise is the proper kind of sacrifice because it participates in the love expressed in God's Being, witnessed as his Beauty or Glory. After Hutchinson describes Abraham's response to the covenant between himself and Abimelech to respect one another's right, she recounts how Abraham plants a grove of trees near Beersheba, where the covenant was made. This act of worship celebrates God's provision of peace for himself and his descendants, but more importantly, it celebrates God's omnipotence:

Near this Abram planted a grove, and paid
His vows to God beneath that sacred shade;
Though while the saints lived in their pilgrimage,
No stately temples in that infant age
Were for the worship of the great God raised

But men in woods and fields their maker praised;
 Yet near whatever spring or shady oak
 Devout assemblies did the Lord invoke,
 That place holy esteem from thence obtained
 And was no more with common use profaned.
 But what first decently was set apart,
 Men after to an idol did convert,
 And did the Almighty's monarchy deride,
 Making peculiar deities preside
 O'er every lake and spring and greater flood,
 The valleys, mountains, and each shady wood. (15.15-30)

The movement of this passage is from Abraham's offering of thanksgiving to a perversion of that offering. Later worshippers are described as replacing "the Almighty's monarchy" with "peculiar deities" particular to different natural phenomena. Hutchinson calls these worshippers "poor weak and silly mortals" (15.31) who do not understand that God is not bounded by the earth or even the heavens and "his presence over the whole world extends / And he to every single heart descends" (15.41-42). But, by his rightly directed sacrifice of praise, Abraham shows that he understands the divine love which is the formal and final cause of the world created by God, and indeed of himself.⁶⁹

Since God's glory is reflected in creation, Hutchinson reaffirms the analogy of being immediately following Abraham's offering of praise to God. Abraham's correct understanding of God's glory depends upon the *analogia entis*; accordingly, Hutchinson refers to the logic of analogy before recounting Abraham's response to God's command to sacrifice Isaac:

Poor weak and silly mortals, who conceived
 Too foolishly of God while they believed
 That this divinity could be confined
 To any of those places they assigned,
 When even Heaven, which doth this globe embrace,
 Cannot hold him who yet fills every place,

Still present in the earth, the sea, the air,
Not bounded, nor excluded anywhere. (15.31-8)

The claim that God is he “who yet fills every place” but is “Not bounded, nor excluded anywhere” parallels the earlier reference to God as “Being at once in all, contained in none” (1.60). The placement of this commentary before Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac shows that Abraham already understood God’s glory in the created order and thereby witnessed the formal cause of creation—God’s love expressed by analogy in his infinite Being. This knowledge, which is the form and substance of Abraham’s faith, allows Hutchinson to compare the doctrine of Creation with Redemption, or God’s sacrificial offering in Christ. As her discourse shows, the same faith that Abraham witnesses in creation is the faith that leads him to believe in God’s promise to fulfill the law and the sacrificial system in Christ.

Abraham’s Faith as Knowledge

Abraham’s obedience to the law of God in Hutchinson’s account does not treat the law as merely a product of unseen causes—a decree from God that hides the purposes of the law. Unlike Hobbes’s account, which reduces Abraham’s faith to mere obedience to God’s command, the faith of Hutchinson’s Abraham aims at God’s glory, which is revealed as the pattern of redemption.

Prior to her treatment of the story of Abraham and Isaac, Hutchinson reminds the reader that God’s omnipresence extends to all humans. Immediately following her restatement of the analogy of being, Hutchinson reminds the reader of the political implications of the analogy:

He in kings’ courts and great assemblies dwells,
In private houses, and obscured cells.

His presence over the whole world extends,
And he to every single heart descends. (15.31-42)

Hutchinson's anti-Royalist rhetoric sharpens to a point. In contrast to Hobbes' view of the sovereign alone meeting with God, God is present "in kings' courts and great assemblies" and "in private houses, and obscured cells." As God's appointed leader, Abraham worships and serves God as the proper sovereign, and so from Hutchinson's perspective, what counts is Abraham's faithful response to the reality of God's sovereignty. Since God "to every single heart descends," kings and subjects alike, all are answerable to a greater Authority. Unlike the sovereign of Hobbes, the same test applies to both king and subject—the king is responsible before God by the virtue of the heart and not a secret agreement.

Abraham's virtuous dependence on God thus is not secretive but open before all, and he in turn becomes an example of gracious participation in God's economy that is open to all. In the next lines Hutchinson writes:

And such a pattern is presented here,
While God again to Abraham did appear
Saying, 'Take now Isaac, thine only son,
And offer him for a burnt oblation
Upon that mountain I shall lead thee to.' (15:57-61)

Hutchinson echoes the same "pattern" (3.549) by which "we, as far as finite creatures may/ Trace him that's infinite" (3.550-51) in Canto 3. Wherever the word "pattern" occurs in her text, Hutchinson has in mind something more than a mere example. She, in fact, uses it as a synonym for the way she elsewhere uses "type" to indicate not merely moral virtue to emulate, but a gracious participation in divine love, most fully shown in Christ, who is figured here as a "burnt oblation." In Canto 3, the pattern refers to creation, but here Canto 15, it refers to promised death and resurrection of Christ.

Abraham's faithful obedience, like his worship, reflects the final cause of all creation, which Hutchinson describes in Canto 3:

So should we all our actions regulate,
Which Heaven, both first and last, should terminate,
And in whatever circle else they run,
There seek their pattern, and derive from thence
Their whole direction and their influence. (3.564-69)

Abraham's faithfulness reflects his belief that his actions are not chance events but are dependent on God, who is sovereign over all earthly events.

Abraham's Faith as Hope in God's Promise

Hutchinson acknowledges that the violence inherent in the act of sacrifice suggests that God commands violence. She says that Abraham is horrified by God's demand that he take Isaac and offer him as a "burnt oblation," but his faith "prevailed and bred a prompt obedience" (15.60, 66). She asserts, however, that obedience to God transforms "the style of things," for "what barbarous cruelty would this have been, / If God's command had not from impious sin / Changed it into highest piety" (15.137-139). When he takes his son up the mountain and prepares to end "so dear a life" (15.130), then "Abraham's faith [is] sufficiently tried" and an angel stays his hand and says, "I know by this that thou dost fear the Lord. / This act thy faith shall to the world accord" (15.154, 163-164). At first, the faith described by Hutchinson appears to accord with the faith described by Hobbes: an obedience to authority which conceals the formal and final cause of God's commands. The command given by God to Abraham is apparently arbitrary, having no visible or rational justification, but the remainder of Hutchinson's discourse differentiates her doctrine of faith. She demonstrates that the law expressed in the sacrificial system is itself a type. For Hutchinson, this type is a promise which is

fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection and points to a greater law—the law of love expressed in God's triune Being. In Hutchinson's account of Abraham, the same love that creates the world, revealed in the *anologia entis*, also redeems the world and allows for Abraham to participate in God's sovereign rule which is expressed in his providential care.⁷⁰

For this reason, Hutchinson's second major discourse in Canto 15, which appears to support a dualistic Neo-Platonic ontology, instead supports an analogical relationship between God and creation. As Norbrook and others have noted, Hutchinson's language often bears the markings of Neo-Platonic dualism, and her second discourse in the Abraham-Isaac story has been mistaken for bald neo-Platonism:

Abraham here represents the devout mind,
And the two servants which he left behind
Earthly affections, human reason be.
These, when souls climb the hill of piety,
By faith led up to God, must even so
As they, be left with the dull ass below;
For worldly cares retard her nimble flight,
And fleshly reasons blind her piercing sight
While they converse with earth and earthly things
And hang like clogs upon her soaring wings,
Which once shook off, the soul at liberty
Is swiftly carried up to God on high,
And there upon his holy altar pays
Her pure oblations of spiritual praise. (15.95-110)

If this passage is isolated from the treatment of analogy in this canto, Hutchinson's allegorical reading of Abraham's ascent could be taken to imply a total opposition between "earth and earthly things" and "pure oblations of spiritual praise." In this case, the created order seems to be an inferior reality that must be transcended by negation. However, the "pure oblations," which refer to the self-outpouring in God's Being, is returned without negation. By analogy, the difference between the created order and

God is maintained even while creation expresses the glory of God. As a result, the figure of ascent to God does not follow a dualistic ontology. Here, Hutchinson echoes the same pattern seen in Canto 1:

While we, considering each created thing,
Are led up to an uncreated spring,
And by gradations of successive time
At last unto Eternity do climb. (1.68-71)

Hutchinson maintains a distinction between the finite creation and the infinite reality of God, but the former is rightly considered only when it leads to an ascent to the latter. In this way, Hutchinson guards against the idolizing of the created order by insisting that though creation is not God, it does truly reveal the Creator. Likewise, the Creator is not hidden behind a veil of sublimity but is indeed revealed analogically by the glory in creation (emblems) and redemption history (typology).

Hutchinson's God also expresses himself through the law, which reveals his goodness, but in that the law is a type, its meaning is not yet fully revealed in Christ. Unlike Hobbes's Abraham, the faith of Hutchinson's Abraham is not simply obedience to the law, but contains within it a promise. Hutchinson writes:

O how religion changes styles of things,
Making the same act diverse as it springs
From man's own nature, or obedience
To God's command to murder innocence.
To have an unrelenting father kill
His only son, guiltless of every ill:
If God's command had not from impious sin
Changed it into the highest piety
Which can in any mortal bosom be. (15.131-140)

The passage seems to support the Hobbesian view of the law: Abraham cannot know that the law is good, only that it is from God and that the reason or the cause for the law is hidden from view. Since God's command can negate and oppose the law, it appears that

the law is but a product of a sublime, hidden cause. However, as Hutchinson continues, she reveals that the change in the law prefigures Christ's redemptive work:

For not to quit that natural tenderness
Which the kind hearts of fondest sires possess,
But whilst it is in fullest strength and height
To conquer it with faith's prevailing might,
And, where the precepts of the Lord enjoin,
The dearest pledges of our love resign,
Is such a pattern of victorious grace
As scarce can find belief in mortal race.
Yet those whose spirits fleshly bounds transcend
Yield all, while they on God alone depend,
Nor lose by what to him they freely give,
But with advantage that or better things receive. (15.141-152)

Though the law of God is transformed in this passage, the change in the law is neither arbitrary nor by chance. Abraham is required to give up his son out of a love which is greater than "natural tenderness," which forms "a pattern of victorious grace," or the love shown in Christ who overcomes the finite boundary of death by resurrection. By his dependence on God, who is perfectly sufficient in his Being, Abraham can "freely give" his son as an offering to God, knowing by faith which is the knowledge of God's glory that God can supply what is lost. In her description, Hutchinson alludes to Hebrews 11:17-19, which states:

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Hutchinson concludes that Abraham's faithfulness is rewarded by a figure which points to an "advantage" and "better things"—namely the sacrifice of Christ that redeems a fallen world.

At the conclusion of her discourse on Abraham, Hutchinson describes the typological (as distinct from emblematic) significance of the narrative in terms of God's love shown in Christ. In this passage, Hutchinson makes clear that the typological connection between Abraham and the Father and Isaac and the Son is not merely an external form:

For Abraham, thus resigning his dear son,
His only heir, to death, presents that love
Which did the great eternal Father move
To give his only son for lost mankind
That by his death they might redemption find.
As Isaac, the designed offering,
The wood which should consume himself did bring
Up to the place appointed for his death,
So Christ was after led sweating beneath
The burden of that cross on which he died,
And God's severest justice satisfied. (15. 231-40)

Hutchinson says that Abraham offers Isaac up with the same love that the God the Father offers Christ; Isaac becomes a type to which Christ is the fulfillment. In Christ the world is made and redeemed, and the law and sacrificial system are at last seen as types of the love of God. As David Hart notes:

As opposed then, to the blood-steeped sacrifices that so delight the gods of the pagan world (3.14), the sacrifice Christians offer is one merely of love (10.5). For Christian thought, the pattern of sin, endlessly repeated, is to take creation not as a gift but as a violence—either the violence of order or the violence of chaos—an aboriginal strife that must be governed; for to take violence as inescapable is to make of violence a moral and a civic duty. This is the sacrificial logic that theology is called upon to reject: the commerce of the totality, which is overcome by the infinite gesture of Christ's sacrifice. (Hart *Beauty* 346)

Hutchinson's contrasting interpretation of Abraham replaces the "aboriginal strife" of Hobbes's political system with the original peace of divine love, both in the act of creation and redemption.

The Political Implications of the Promise

Through her treatment of the typological meaning of the sacrificial system Hutchinson draws out the political implications for the nation of Israel, tying their faith in God's promise to a glorious order. Abraham names mount Moriah, "Jehovah-jireh," which Hutchinson translates "upon God's hill/ It shall be seen" (15.173-4). The mountain later becomes the site of Solomon's temple, which Hutchinson describes as a place where:

God oft appeared, invoked with zealous prayer.
There Israel's devout congregations joined,
The Jewish Church in her full splendour shined;
There princes sacred fires with whole herds fed;
Thither poor men their single offerings led,
And while the sacrifices in flames consumed
The darkened air with incense was perfumed.
This, one of the world's wonders held,
All glorious structures in that age excelled. (15.178-86)

The "devout congregations" of Israel made their sacrificial offerings of praise to God. As long as Israel remembered the promise of God to Abraham in the form of their worship, they reflected the glory of God because God dwelled with them. As Hart observes, the sacrifices of Israel were only "dangerously similar" to those of their pagan counterparts, whose sacrifices aim "to sustain the totality of cosmic order" through violence. Instead of following this pagan pattern of sacrifice, Israel offers a "sacrifice of praise—which means, [...] an entire life offered back to God, in accordance with his justice" (Hart *Beauty* 353). According to Hutchinson, those Israelites that remained faithful to the true

form of sacrifice, which was fulfilled in the coming messiah, were free from political oppression, becoming one of the “world’s wonders.”

David Norbrook contends that Hutchinson’s theology removes God from earthly politics. I contend, however, that for Hutchinson when Israel forgets the true form of worship, treating created things as idols, they lose her political freedom, and become subject to the violence of a fallen order. In the next lines, Hutchinson ties the destruction of the temple and loss of political freedom with a forgetfulness of God’s presence:

But when forgetful Israel more relied
Upon the place than him who sanctified
That sacred seat, and coming thither, stained
With their foul sins the house of God prophaned,
He left the place he did inhabit late
And did the dwelling-people’s offerings hate;
Against them sent the Babylonish powers,
Who without mercy razed fair Zion’s towers,
And in the city licensed furious rage
Which spared no sort of men, no sex nor age.
Down every channel ran a mixed flood,
With streams of royal and common blood.
The princes were with vulgar prisoners chained,
Lords with their slaves one servitude sustained. (15.184-200)

The destruction of the temple⁷¹ occurs, according to Hutchinson, specifically because Israel forgets God’s presence. The offerings are no longer pleasing to God because they no longer are an offering of praise; that is, they deny the priority of divine gift, thereby making sacrifices a system of exchange rooted in a finite totality. Israel thus reverts to a pagan order, which is a failure to believe in God’s crossing all finite boundaries, both in his acts of creating and sustaining the world. Once the temple is destroyed, all of Israel, regardless of political class, loses its political freedom in servitude to Nebuchadnezzar.

As this passage illustrates, Hutchinson believes that human freedom depends on God and that true freedom is participation in God’s visible glory. Since for her the

absence of God leads to the destruction of Israel and the loss of freedom Norbrook equates Hutchinson's view of human freedom with the emulation of God's "primal freedom" (Norbrook *Milton* 49), or his "sublime openness" (Norbrook, *Introduction* xxxiv). But this fails to allow for her emphasis upon the conditional quality of the loss of freedom that Hutchinson describes. According to Norbrook, "The parallels between civil and heavenly polities, it must be said, are much less marked in Hutchinson than in Milton because of her reluctance to speculate about heavenly order: in her poem God remains a remote figure" (Norbrook *Milton* 49). Norbrook's assessment would, of course, place Hutchinson close to Hobbes, since for Hobbes, the absence of God's direct command over creation necessitates an earthly sovereign. According to Hutchinson, God alone is necessary and lacks nothing within his triune Being—all human freedom thus depends upon the freedom of God. Only by true participation in God's glory, and not mere emulation, does Israel discover true freedom.

For Hutchinson, freedom is contained within the very form of God's Being, which is original peace. Human peace thus discovers the same source as human freedom—the out-pouring love that moves God to create and redeem the world. In Canto 15, Hutchinson shows that the pattern of redemption, and the "love/ Which did the great eternal Father move," (15.231-2) is present in Abraham's faithful obedience in "resigning his dear son" (15.230). What Abraham and Isaac typify is the glorious order of peace restored in Christ's death and resurrection. Unlike Hobbes's account of peace, which is a momentary stay in violence, the peace of Christ overcomes all violence, which is prefigured in the sacrificial system.⁷² The crucifixion of Christ, which is the violent

response to the message of Christ's peace, and his subsequent resurrection reveal the one true, original order of creation. As Hart argues:

The God who proceeds as he will, who crosses boundaries and respects no order—law, commerce, empire, class, nations, dominions, markets, death—except the order of love (the only infinite order), is a Word that disrupts the narratives that sustain the world as a reserve, a controlled expenditure, and a recuperation of power. (Hart *Beauty* 353)

The law cannot by itself produce enduring, peaceful order, but the original order of God's love can. Recognizing the failure of the monarchy to bring about peace, Hutchinson shows that true peace comes from the work of Christ:

By these stripes only mortal wounds are healed,
In this rock is the spring of life revealed.
The ceremonies of the Law, which led
All to this end, were here consummated. (15.257-60)

Hutchinson's poetry echoes the text of Isaiah 53:5, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (*KJV*). For Hutchinson, true peace comes by way of Christ, who bears the violence of the sacrificial system and in his death and resurrection overcomes all violent political orders. Perhaps in these lines, Hutchinson recognizes that the failure of the monarchy and the Protectorate to produce enduring peace rested on a presupposed ontic violence. For this reason, she returns to the ontic peace of Christ to remind herself and her readers of the reality of divine love that preexists all violent orders.

CHAPTER FIVE

Epilogue: Lucy Hutchinson's *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*

In the Preface to *Order and Disorder*, Lucy Hutchinson worries about abuses of the imagination that attend the exercise of fancy and the writing of Romance. She writes:

I know I am obnoxious to the censures of two sorts of people: First, those that understand and love the elegancies of Poems, They will find nothing of fancy in it; no elevations of stile, no charms of language, which I confess are gifts I have not, nor desire not in this occasion; for I would rather breath forth grace cordially than words artificially. I have not studied to utter any thing that I have not really taken in. And I acknowledge all the language I have, is much too narrow to express the least of those wonders my soul hath been ravisht with in the contemplation of God and his Works. Had I had a fancy, I durst not have exercis'd 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[.] (“Preface” 5)

Her worry about “turning Scripture into a Romance” in part reflects her concern about falsifying the events of Scripture, that is breathing forth “words artificially” as products of the subjective imagination, rather than placing herself under the authority of God’s Word. She may have implicitly directed these comments against her royalist peer, Abraham Cowley, whose incomplete biblical epic *Davideis, a Sacred Poem of the Troubles of David* retells the story of David in the form of a romance.⁷³ By contrast, Hutchinson wants to write only that which she has “taken in,” and this desire proceeds from her belief that Scripture reveals truth. Against the simply subjective imagination, Hutchinson believes that there are true images “of God and his Works” visible in creation, despite the difficulty she may experience in using language to express “the wonders [her] soul hath been ravisht with in contemplation.”

After clarifying that she does not attempt to turn Scripture into a Romance, Hutchinson notes that a “second sort of people [. . .] think Scripture profaned by being descanted on in numbers,” and she reminds these objectors that much of Scripture is already in verse and “we are commanded to exercise our spiritual mirth in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (“Preface” 5). She admits that even if her verse were “weakly composed,” it is nevertheless:

[A] consenting testimony with the whole Church, to the mighty and glorious truths of God [. . .] and how imperfect soever the hand be that copies it out, Truth loses not its perfection and the plainest as well as the elegant, the elegant as well as the plain, make up a harmony of confession and celebration of that all-creating, all-sustaining God, to whom be all honor and glory for ever and ever. (“Preface” 5)

This passage, which concludes the Preface, foregrounds Hutchinson’s aesthetic project in her biblical epic. The product of the imagination is not what is most significant to her; her poetic aim is participation in “the glorious truths of God.” Hence, not only is Hutchinson averse to fancy which turns “Scripture into a Romance,” but she is also averse to those who fail to see the beauty of truth.

Many critics however have noted the overtones of the Romance genre in Hutchinson’s best-known work, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (1664-1668?).⁷⁴ In study we have traced Hutchinson’s metaphysical, aesthetic, and political commitments as they are expressed in *Order and Disorder*; however, that poem was not attributed to her until 2000. As a result much of the scholarship on Hutchinson focuses on *Memoirs*. In light of her proscriptions against the use of fancy and romance, the charge leveled by N. H. Keeble that she does in fact write a romance in *Memoirs* could be damaging to her theological and aesthetic project in *Order and Disorder*. Keeble

notes an ambivalent attitude of several Puritans, including John Milton, towards romance.

In particular, he mentions Hutchinson's *Memoirs* as an example:

For one last example [of an ambivalent attitude toward romance] we may turn to Lucy Hutchinson, the widow of the regicide Colonel John Hutchinson. She distinguishes her *Memoirs* of her husband from romance, and 'passes 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'. These are things 'to be forgotten, as the vanities of youth.' And yet romance conventions organize her account of her courtship, John Hutchinson falling in love with her reputation and fainting at the (false) news she is married before ever he has met her; and her description of him would grace the hero of any Renaissance romance. (Keeble, *Literary* 155).

Although Keeble's comments are written before ?, when David Norbrook attributed to Hutchinson *Order and Disorder*, which contains her most thorough repudiation of romance, he nevertheless finds a certain ambivalent stance towards romance in Hutchinson's description of her husband and their courtship. I argue however that the kinds of virtues that Lucy Hutchinson describes in John are quite different than the sorts typically found in royalist poetry of romantic interest. Precisely this difference regarding virtues and how they are obtained highlights the aesthetic differences between Hutchinson's work and royalists like Cowley, and is the means by which Hutchinson explores the relationship between beauty and truth in *Memoirs*. Once we see the continuity between Hutchinson's theological and aesthetic commitments (with all their political overtones) in *Order and Disorder* and *Memoirs*, we can properly understand *Memoirs* as hagiographical literature and further underscore Hutchinson's aesthetic priorities as they are informed by her theology.

Several scholars have noticed that Hutchinson's *Memoirs* bear some resemblance to hagiography. For instance, Susan Cook claims that Hutchinson's purpose is "to paint

Colonel John as a hero,” and, to accomplish this purpose, she must rewrite “the type of myth that canonized Charles I, [and write] instead a hagiography of her own husband” (274). Cook does not try to resolve the tension between the varying purposes of writing a hero’s life and saint’s life, for she argues that *Memoirs* “has no single characteristic style. It is at the same time a virtual hagiography, military and political history and theological comment” (272). In the most general sense, hagiography shares an important feature with romance, since both genres celebrate the virtues of exemplary individuals. However, the differences between the genres quickly appear on closer inspection—romance celebrates virtues that center in the power of the individual, while hagiography sees the virtues of the saint coming from God. Line Cottagnies, who recognizes more fully how Hutchinson’s writing is formed by her theology, claims that Hutchinson “endeavors to present [her husband] as a Puritan saint” and *Memoirs* “borrows on the structure of a saint’s life from fall to redemption” (127). Neither Cook nor Cottagnies, however, offers an account of the virtues Hutchinson assigns to John. As a result, their claims regarding the hagiographical nature of *Memoirs* remain vague. I contend that there is a direct connection between *Memoirs* as hagiographical literature Hutchinson’s theological aesthetics.

The connection between the hagiographic nature of *Memoirs* and Hutchinson’s politics is most apparent. In part, Hutchinson writes hagiography because romance is already a form closely associated with the aesthetics of the court and monarchical virtues.

As Victoria Kahn notes:

In the 1630’s and 1640s, both critics and supporters of the crown saw romance as a particularly royalist genre. This was in part because it was the genre favored by court patronage: Charles I was known for his love of chivalric romance, as Queen Henrietta Maria was for her love of pastoral

romance. Romance was also perceived to be the genre of royal behavior. (Kahn 139)

As a republican, Hutchinson repeatedly criticizes the aesthetics of the court, as she demonstrates in these lines from *Order and Disorder*:

Scorn Princes your embroider'd Canopies,
And painted roofs, the poor whom you despise
With far more ravishing delight are fed,
While various clouds sayl o're th' unhoued head,
And their heav'd eyes with nobler scenes present
Than your Poetick Courtiers can invent. (2.21-26)

Hutchinson suggests that the aesthetic priorities of the court miss true nobility, which is more readily found in the poor. Her juxtaposition of the supposedly noble with true nobility, more readily found in the least powerful, implies a severe critique of the courtly aesthetics and virtues. True beauty is not the opulence of the “embroider’d Canopies,” nor is virtue the quest of the heroic individual to gain power and fame.

Here, Hutchinson’s theological commitments are of utmost importance. She believes that “gentle virtues” must be baptized in Christ in order to become truly noble, washed in the “royal blood” of Christ, who is the true fountain of all virtue. In the *Memoirs*, John’s virtues, as she describes them, must be baptized along with all fallen men:

Therefore in the head of all his [John’s] virtues I shall set that which was the head and spring of them all, his Christianity — for this alone is the true royal blood that runs, through the whole body of virtue, and every pretender to that glorious family, who hath no tincture of it, is an impostor and a spurious brat. This is that sacred fountain which baptizeth all the gentle virtues that so immortalize the names of Cicero, Plutarch, Seneca, and all the old philosophers; herein they are regenerated, and take a new name and nature. Dug up in the wilderness of nature, and dipped in this living spring, they are planted and nourished in the paradise of God. By Christianity I intend that universal habit of grace which is wrought in a soul by the regenerating Spirit of God, whereby the whole creature is

resigned up into the divine will and love, and all its actions designed to the obedience and glory of its Maker. (21)

The natural philosophers of old, whose truths were “dug up in the wilderness of nature,” must, like John Hutchinson, be regenerated by the gift of grace which comes by the “Spirit of God.” Virtue only becomes true, good, and beautiful if “the whole creature is resigned up into the divine will and love, and all its actions designed to the obedience and glory of its Maker.” Here, Hutchinson reiterates the importance of the formal and final cause of human actions, which is God’s glory.

In the *Memoirs*, Hutchinson is able to see her husband as a fallen, sinful man and yet a *saint*, whose virtue mirrors Christ’s. Here, Hutchinson’s description of John has little in common with romance:

If, therefore, while I had a happy enjoyment of him and communication of his gifts and graces during his abode in the flesh, I did not look so far beyond the creature as I ought, delighting more than I ought to have done in the mirror that reflected the Creator’s excellence, which I should have always admired in its own fountain, I desire not to pursue that sin, but, while I celebrate the glories of a saint, that I and any for whom I desire to commemorate to you, though one of the best of men, was yet but a man, a son of Adam, an inheritor of his corrupted nature, subject to all the sins and miseries that attend it, which is necessary to be considered, that we may the more magnify the riches of God’s grace and admirable power, whereby he raised that wretched fallen nature and changed it into such a blessed image of his own glory, making it to enjoy so sweet a communion with himself and to bear so clear a testimony of his grace and truth and holiness before this erring age. (17)

This passage links John’s virtue with the gift of grace with Christ’s death and resurrection and not the achievement of a heroic individual. Although John is a fallen, sinful man, he is raised by Christ, and so may participate in the life of Christ by the power of the “Spirit of God.” Importantly, the only glory due John is not the vainglorious, self-aggrandizing fame of the romantic hero but the glory of God, who is the fountain of all glory. In this

hagiographical account, Hutchinson sees Christ reflected in her husband—not as an inaccessible, sublime ideal for which he strives—but as a revelatory image that is given. Here, John is a “mirror” that *communicates* the form of Christ, or the “gifts and graces” of God. As a true, good, and beautiful image of God, John is a saint and a testimony to the power of God. She thus describes the *Memoirs* ultimately as an account of God’s glory, worked out in her and her husband’s life:

What shall I write of him is but a copy of [him]. The original of all excellence is God him[self] and God alone, whose glory was first transcribed [in] the humanity of Christ and [in] that copy left us fair in the written Word, wherein this pious soul exercised himself day and night as the rule of his practice. (17)

Hutchinson recalls that John turned to the Word of God as he sought to participate in the life of Christ. She thus offers her hagiographical account of her husband’s life as the corrective to the incomplete mythical accounts of secular romance whose heroes seek to bring glory to themselves.⁷⁵ As Hans Urs von Balthasar notes, “the self-revelation of God, who is absolute Being, can only be the fulfillment of man’s entire philosophical-mythological questioning as well. As such it is an answer to men’s questions which comes to us in God’s revealing Word” (von Balthasar, *Glory* 145). Hutchinson recognizes that in romance there is a legitimate longing; the hero longs for glory and fulfillment of the quest. But Hutchinson’s hagiographical account of her husband shows that the true object of that desire is the glory of God.

The similarities between the *Memoirs* and *Order and Disorder* are unmistakable since Hutchinson shows her husband participating in the same formal and final causes as the faithful saints whose lives she narrates in *Order and Disorder*. Hutchinson rejects the aesthetics of “Romance” primarily because virtue centers on the individual hero, whose

great actions terminate in self-aggrandizing glory. By making the individual the center of virtue, romance measures such virtue as effects of sublime causes. Unlike romance, the hagiographical account offered by Hutchinson draws a connection between John's virtue and the gift of grace. By offering Christ as the source of her husband's virtue, Hutchinson shows that he participates in divine glory through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The same logic which operates in her account of Abraham in *Order and Disorder* is enacted in her account of John in the *Memoirs*, for both saints give themselves in worship to "the divine will and love," and their actions participate in "the obedience and glory of [their] Maker" (21).

NOTES

¹ Short observations often belie this assumption. See, for instance, N.H. Keeble's observation, "The events of 1659-60 tempted her, and them [defeated Puritans], to betray their Puritan allegiance, to doubt God's providential dealings with his elect nation, and to despair" ("Introduction" xx). See also David Norbrook's comment, "she writes with an unshakable faith in a God whose transcendence can question any secular power [. . .] History is a drama of salvation and damnation in which those who gain power and glory in the short term may very well be those marked for the deepest damnation" ("Introduction" xxxvii).

² John Hutchinson was detained because of "suspicion of complicity" with the Derwentdale Plot. Since no evidence came against him, he was never charged. Nevertheless, he remained captive until he died apparently as a direct result of the severe conditions of the prison (Keeble, "Introduction" xix).

³ Hutchinson's biographical details are covered helpfully by several critics in the course of their arguments. See Susan Cook's "'The Story I most particularly intend': the narrative style of Lucy Hutchinson"; Sharon Seelig's chapter on Lucy Hutchinson in *Autobiography and Gender in Early Modern Literature*; David Norbrook's preface to *Order and Disorder*, "Order and Disorder: The Poem and its Contents"; Norbrook's article, "Lucy Hutchinson's 'Elegies' and the Situation of the Republican Woman Writer"; Line Cottegnie's "The Garden and the Tower"; Robert Mayer's "Lucy Hutchinson: A Life of Writing"; Elizabeth Braund's "Mrs. Hutchinson and Her Teaching."

⁴ The attribution was originally made by Anthony Wood in his *Fasti Oxonienses*. Apsley never wavered in his allegiance to the king and was Catholic, and so Norbrook writes, "*Order and Disorder* is radically Puritan in spirit and a highly unlikely poem for such a man to have written" ("Manuscript" 266).

⁵ Both David Norbrook and Reid Barbour find her epic antithetical to Lucretius, but critic Jonathan Goldberg maintains that Hutchinson is faithful to both her Christianity and Lucretian materialism ("Matter" 280).

⁶ Norbrook cites Lucan on the Roman trimvirate of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus as a classical example of instability (*Writing* 27).

⁷ Furthermore, Norbrook's account of the Hutchinsonian sublime is in reference to God's transcendence—she is certain of that God is both "fixed and boundless" and never tries to unify these opposing ideas. Rather, her politics find it useful that the antinomy holds.

⁸ Here, and throughout this study, I owe this terminology to David Hart. See pages 44 and 62 of *The Beauty of the Infinite*.

⁹ David Hart explains Deleuze's (and Goldberg's) mistaken understanding of analogy: "If the analogical is merely a discourse of attributive resemblance, it leaves behind a divine reserve, an unexpressed transcendence, and each actual analogy simply identifies abstract properties that may be ascribed to God and creatures alike" (Hart 62).

¹⁰ Cottegnies writes, "The attempted erasure of the self can be interpreted in this context as an ideological gesture aiming at transmuting an individual's story (that of John the Martyr) into a universal, exemplary history of a rebellion against the ungodly for the Glory of the Lord" (141)

¹¹ Norbrook takes a straightforward interpretation of Hutchinson's theology. He claims, "First of all, there can be no doubt of the poem's (*Order and Disorder*) rigid adherence to orthodox Calvinist theology" (Norbrook, "Milton" 50). I argue that Norbrook's interpretation of her theology fails to account for Hutchinson's important aesthetic nuances. While much of her theology mirrors contemporary English Calvinism, the points of departure are significant.

¹² The first published translation, by Creech, was not published until 1682.

¹³ Harrison adds this clarification from Bishop Pearson: "Est enim Deus, ut ante probavimus, prima causa, et ultimus finis rerum omnium; et per ipsum et propter ipsum facta sunt omnia" (Pearson qtd. in Harrison, "Atomism" 27).

¹⁴ De Quehen shows that her translation was reasonably accurate and deals with the difficulties of the text (de Quehen, "Ease" 293).

¹⁵ Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius are the most notable of the ancient atomists in the West. Only fragments of the first three philosophers exist, but the major tenets of Epicurus are preserved in Lucretius' *DRN*. Consequently, the revival of Epicureanism in the Seventeenth Century came by way of Lucretius. In summary, the atomists taught that the world is comprised entirely of indivisible "atoms," which is matter extended in a void. The materialist doctrines are influential throughout Lucretius' philosophy and theology.

¹⁶ See David Norbrook, "Milton, Hutchinson, and the Republican Biblical Epic" and "Margaret Cavendish and Lucy Hutchinson," 181. In terms of metaphysics, Norbrook takes Hutchinson's repudiation of Lucretius to be genuine, claiming, "She turned firmly against Lucretian cosmology to a traditional Christian one, rejecting 'the foppish causall dance of atoms' for God's 'most gracious, ever active Providence, upholding, ordering and governing the whole Creation'" (Norbrook, "Milton" 44-45).

¹⁷ See Jonathan Goldberg, “Lucy Hutchinson Writing Matter,” 295-8. On this point, Norbrook is entirely at odds with Goldberg. Norbrook claims, “Lucy Hutchinson seems to epitomize everything postmodernism rejects: insistence on a fixed, immutable identity, a passionate will to truth, rejection of the body in the name of the spirit, a commitment to grand historical narratives and to transcendent standards of social justice” (Norbrook “Margaret” 181-2).

¹⁸ As we shall see, Lucretius himself is also motivated by dread, or the elimination of it, in seeking true causes.

¹⁹ Since the senses cannot account for natural phenomena, Lucretius’ makes the avoidance of fear and not a total explanation the *telos* of his epistemology.

²⁰ As Etienne Gilson notes, “intuition alone enables us [according to Ockham] to perceive the existence of non-existent things [universals]” (Gilson *Unity* 56).

²¹ For instance, Hobbes disallows the “atomic swerve” of Lucretius for the reason that it comprises the totality of his mechanistic theory.

²² Hutchinson refutes an absolute ontological discontinuity between finite and infinite substances—an assumption imbedded in Cartesian epistemology. As David Hart claims, Descartes’ epistemology leads to a negative description of God’s infinity:

True, Descartes himself never intended to seal thought up within an inescapable interiority; he even “discovered” a thought of the infinite that must, he concluded, have been placed in him by God, given its absolute irreconcilability with all finite experience; but in this very discontinuity between empirical knowledge and the concept of the infinite, as he construed them, he gave eloquent expression to the prejudice, by his time quite pervasive, that immanent and transcendent truth are dialectically rather than analogically related, as the former embraces a world of substances that exhaust their meaning in their very finitude while the latter can arrive among these substances only as a self-announcing paradox. God’s infinity, in such a scheme, is not truly the infinite—other than every finite thing by being “not other,” not another thing, but the possibility and “place” of all things—but merely the negation of finitude, the contrary instance that is nowhere found in my finite cognitions. The thought of the infinite was, from this point on, destined to serve the language of negative determination or subjective autonomy; not only is the infinite beyond seeing, it is without analogous mediation in the seen; no *via eminentiae* can lead from the “what it is” of experience to the “that it is” that gives being to beings and allows them to be seen and thought. (Hart 136)

The implications of “the infinite beyond seeing” for providence were profound, for starting with a Cartesian metaphysics, providence could only be described as another

abstract concept removed from every-day experience. Without the language of analogy, which is predicated on a mediation of infinite and finite substance, such defenders of providence could not describe “what providence is” but merely arrive at the conclusion “that providence is”—that God gives being to the beings of creation. As will be shown, Hutchinson’s use of analogy in *Order and Disorder* complicates the Cartesian distinctions between finite and infinite “substances”.

²³ We can observe More’s dualist tendencies in his criticism, in that his binaries of corporeal versus incorporeal, and sense versus soul imply two separate spheres of perception. More’s incorporeal substance accounts for the remainder of atomism, creating the possibility of a total system that *includes* a mechanistic theory of causation. More reasons from the starting point of atomism and thus makes God a necessary inference from the existence of incorporeal properties (More *Antidote* 1.XI).

²⁴ See Kargon, “Charleton” 185 for a summary of this work.

²⁵ In *The harmony of natural and positive divine laws* (1682), Charleton explains that:

The *Divine*, that which hath been ordain’d and declar’d by Divine Oracles, committed to writing the Holy Bible. And this, as well as the Natural, deserves to be acknowledged to be *Jus Gentium Universale, seu omnium Commune*. Because all the Laws of Nature, are the Laws of God Himself; because his Positive or Written Laws are no other but Sanctions or Explications of His Unwritten or Natural: and because whatsoever is *Obligatory* in either Natural or Divine Universal Right, either from the Nature of the thing it self, or rather from the aucturity of the Author of Nature, is by all men held to be immutable. (Charleton *Harmony* 3).

²⁶ Earlier atomists, among whom Cudworth names the Genesis patriarch Moses, did not “make up an entire philosophy out of atomology” (Cudworth *True* 90) but saw the physics of atoms working within a philosophy that includes the metaphysics of incorporeal substance. Cudworth thus claims:

We have now clearly proved these two things; first, that the physiology of the ancients, before not only Aristotle and Plato, but also Democritus and Leucippus, was atomical or mechanical. Secondly, that as there is no inconsistency between the atomical physiology and theology, but indeed a natural cognation; so the ancient Atomists before Democritus were neither Atheists nor Corporealists, but held the incorporeity and immortality of the souls, together with a Deity distinct from the corporeal world. (Cudworth *True* 90-1)

²⁷ Furthermore, Cudworth makes true atomism an ally with his platonic dualism. While Cudworth faults Plato for his “mutilation and interpolation of the old Moschical

philosophy [atomology],” he nevertheless argues that Plato arrives at a proper metaphysics (Cudworth *True* 93). As we can see from this passage, Cudworth adopted a dualistic reading of Plato’s *Timæus*:

But because it may probably be here demanded, What Account it was then possible for *Plato* to give, of the Original of Evils, so as not to impute them to God himself, if he neither derived them from ὕλη ἀποτος, *Unqualified Matter* (which *Plutarch* has plainly proved to be absurd) nor yet from a ψυχη ἀνας, an *Irrational and Maleficent Soul of the World or Demon*, Self-existent from Eternity; we shall therefore hereunto briefly reply: That though that Philosopher derived not the Original of Evils, from *Unqualified Matter*, nor from a *Wicked Soul or Demon Unmade*, yet did he not therefore impute them to God neither, but as it seemeth, to the *Necessity of Imperfect Beings*. For as *Timæus Locrus* had before *Plato* determined, that the World was made by *God and Necessity*, so does *Plato* himself accordingly declare in his *Timæus*. (Cudworth *True* 220)

²⁸ Harrison clarifies Cudworth’s connection between ancient atomism and Moses. Cudworth “accepts the vague tradition that atomism derives from a Phoenician Moschus” (45). Cudworth identifies Moschus with Moses; for him “atomism is then a Mosaic doctrine, with something of the divine authority of the Ten Commandments” (45).

²⁹ Cudworth begins his first chapter with a description of the markings of false, atheistic atomism:

THEY that hold the necessity of all human actions and events do it upon one or other of these two grounds; either because they suppose, that necessity is inwardly essential to all agents whatsoever, and that contingent liberty is πραγμα ανυπόστατον, a thing impossible or contradictory, which can have no existence any where in nature; the sense-of which was thus expressed by the Epicurean poet :

Quod res quæque Necessum

Intestium habeat cunctis in rebus agendis, &c.

‘That every thing naturally labours under an intestine necessity’: or else, because though they admit contingent liberty not only as a thing possible, but also as that which is actually existent in the Deity, yet they conceive all things to be so determined by the will and decrees of this Deity, as that they are thereby made necessary to us. The former of these two opinions, that contingent liberty is πραγμα ανυπόστατον, such a thing as can have no existence in nature, may be maintained upon two different grounds ; either from such a hypothesis as this, That the universe is nothing else but body and local motion; and nothing moving itself, the action of every agent is determined by some other agent without it ; and therefore that υλικη ανάγκη, material and mechanical necessity must needs reign over all things ; or else, though cogitative beings be supposed to have a certain

principle of activity within themselves, yet that there can be no contingency in their actions, because all volitions are determined by a necessary antecedent understanding. (Cudworth *True* 3)

³⁰ Commentator John Harrison notes that Cudworth here refers to “Hobbes and his friends,” who “confine the whole universe of existence to bodies, rejecting every thing incorporeal” (n. 7, 276).

³¹ Without the *clinamen atomorum*, or the swerve of atoms, Lucretius argues that humans would be reduced to mere automata:

denique si semper motus connectitur omnis
et tere exoritur *semper* nouus ordine certo,
nec declinando faciunt primordia motus
principium quoddam quod fati foedera rumpat—
ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur—
libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,
unde est haec, inquam, fatis avulsa voluntas
per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluptas
declinamus item motus nec tempore certo
nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens? (2.251-60)
[Lastly if motions are together tied,
If certeine order their successions guide,
If noe declension of first bodies can
Produce new principles, to breake the chaine
Of destinie, which linking causes brings
Fatall necessitie on humane things,
Whence have the creatures freedome then to doe
Whatever their owne pleasure prompts them to?
Whence comes their free and fate-resisting-will
For neither tied to place nor time, we still
Varie our motions as we change our mind,
And surely here the will is unconfin'd;
And the sole author of each humane deed
From whence the bodies of motion must proceed.]

³² Harrison argues that it was Boyle, not Hobbes, who was the true reviver of “the physics of Epicurus,” which he used “in his eagerness to discredit scholastic natural philosophy”; although he maintained a Christian view of causation: “he conceived of God as the first cause of things, and relegated atomic motion to the rôle of a second cause” (Harrison, “Atomism” 3).

³³ Robert Kargon notes that to guard against the atheism of atomism, Boyle adopted “a healthy skepticism regarding any system” (Kargon, “Charleton” 188). Louis Bredvold adds: “[the Members of the Royal Society’s] most subtle and persistent

difficulty was to explain to the public the differences between Hobbists and the members of the Royal Society; to explain how it was possible for Christian scientists to accept the new philosophy of motion and yet escape an atheistic materialism” (58). Bredvold also points out that Boyle and other Royal Society members had to somehow defend themselves against the charge that in their science they were “cultivating a philosophy which led to atheism in others” (60). He argues the members of the Royal Society “adopted ... a critique of the very science they were promoting, a critique which varied all the way from timidity in generalization to philosophical skepticism” (60-61). It should be noted that many of those who adapted atomism to the new science dealt with the atheism of Epicurus’ system by placing limits on its explanatory power.

³⁴ One such effect of incorporating Epicurus into Christian doctrine, perhaps something Hutchinson tried herself, leads to an allegorization of Scripture. Hutchinson claims that such are guilty of:

Inventing such fables of their Elizium and Hell, and the joyes and tortures of those places, as made this Author and others turne them into allegories, ... deriding Heaven and Hell, Eternall Rewards and Punishments, as fictions in the whole, because the instances of them in particular were so ridiculous, as seem'd rather stories invented to frighten children, then to perswade reasonable men. (Hutchinson, “Letter” 3v)

Hutchinson’s words “this Author” are ambiguous, but her criticism is clear enough. The claim that Epicurus is more reasonable about heaven and hell than Scripture leads to the invention of fables, not a “distinct and true knowledge.”

³⁵ Hutchinson categorizes the Epicurean Lucretius alongside “the fardle of other philosophers” stating:

They that make the incorruptible God part of a corruptible world, & chaine vp his absolute freedome of will to a fatall Necessity; That make nature, which only is the Order God hath sett in his workes, to be God himselfe, That feigne a God liable to Passion, impotence and mutability, & not exempt from the vilest lusts; That belieue a multiplicitie of Gods, adore the Sun & Moone and all the Host of Heaven, and band their severall deities in faction one against another; All these, and all the other poore deluded instructors of the Gentiles, are guilty of no lesse impiety, ignorance & folly then this Lunatick, who not able to diue into the true Originall & Cause of Beings & Accidents, admires them who devizd this Casuall, Irrational dance of Attomes. (Hutchinson, “Letter” 3r)

All of the “poore deluded instructors of the Gentiles” deny Providence by either constraining the will of God to necessity or chance. The Stoics, who subscribe to a “fatall necessity,” are thus no better than the Epicureans, who make Providence susceptible to the chance collision of atoms.

³⁶ Although I am applying the idea of productive cause to the Epicureans, I credit idea for this concept of causation to D. C. Schindler in “Truth and the Christian Imagination: The Reformation of Causality and the Iconoclasm of spirit,” pg. 534. While Schindler describes productive causes in the work of Galileo, the same theory of causation is apparent in Lucretius.

³⁷ As Harrison notes, necessity and chance were of equal concern for defenders of providence:

Both Democritus and Epicurus had denied divine purpose in the ordering of things, and the mechanical scheme of Hobbes brought the issue to the forefront. With first and final causes ruled out, it made no difference whether the alternative was “chance” or “necessity”; they were identically dangerous. The whole belief in Providence depends upon the relation of God to created things. (Harrison, “Ancient” 27)

³⁸ In his *Physics II*, Aristotle describes the nature of causation:

Plainly, then, these are the causes, and this is how many there are. They are four, and the student of nature should know about them all, and it will be his method, when stating on account of what, to get back to them all: the matter, the form, the thing which effects the change [efficient], and what the thing is for [final]. (Aristotle, *Physics II* 7, 198^a 24-27)

³⁹ Owen cites Voetius as an important authority in his *Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text*, pg. 372.

⁴⁰ The ambiguity regarding ends no doubt contributed to the confusion in interpreting Descartes’ statement. As van Ruler notes:

The Scholastic identification of different levels of final explanation [as in Aquinas’ *telos* and *finis*]—and the Renaissance preoccupation with the benignly and well-ordered design of the Universe—obscured the fact that more than one concept of “final causes” was at stake. Final explanations referring to God’s Goodness and Wisdom and man’s central place in the Universe were one type. Descartes however used the sceptical critique on such knowledge claims in order to exclude any type of final explanation. (van Ruler, *Crisis* 142)

⁴¹ Van Ruler remarks, “The sceptical critique served him in a very different way, namely to clear himself of the Aristotelian set of causal determinants and their Scholastic derivatives such as real qualities and the substantial form” (van Ruler, *Crisis* 142).

⁴² Van Ruler notes, “In Scholastic philosophy, the term *concursum* may refer to any form of co-operation.... Co-operation of some sort was generally what a “concurrency” of causes came down to” (van Ruler, *Crisis* 278-79).

⁴³ Although God appoints the time of death, according to Voetius, humans are not freed from responsibility. He states, that this fact of appointed death does not mean:

That [man] must rest, or look after his life in a more careless way, or neglect intermediaries (*media*), but [on the contrary, that he must] do what he is able to according to the prescription of the divine will. (quoted in van Ruler *Crisis* 279)

⁴⁴ The Scholastic modifications to Aristotle turn out to be quite important, since in the Scholastic account, the formal cause is what begins action. Van Ruler describes the difference in this way:

Aristotle explained movement teleologically by drawing attention to the end or completion of a process, which is to be identified with the achievement of form. It is based on an analysis of the—empirically observable—factors which have to be taken into account in attempting to describe natural processes. We may describe the resulting picture of natural motion which Aristotle gives in terms of a perfection. It is a perfection *to* the form, explaining natural motion in terms of the actualisation of something potential. This picture however, differs radically from the Scholastic idea, which ascribes to the (substantial) form a causal efficacy by which it generates the process itself as an internal motor of action. Natural processes are thereby aimed at a perfection not *to* the form, but *by* the form—the form being the initiator of motion within natural objects. Natural change is, accordingly, explained by referring to the substantial form as the internal cause, or internal motor of the process. (van Ruler, *Crisis* 69)

At first, the difference may seem too subtle to be important, but the Scholastic argument brings Aristotle in line with Christian dogma, since God creates the form or being of nature.

⁴⁵ Van Ruler sums up Voetius’ philosophy in this way:

Voetius’ theology, which in this aspect is straightforwardly Thomistic, is a theology requiring a philosophical basis that at once vindicates the total sovereignty of God and the individual efficacy of secondary causes. It is not mechanistic, since it accepts individual forms. But neither is it animistic. Indeed, it is rather the mechanical theories that are in danger of having to accept spiritual or mystical external motors of natural change. (van Ruler *Crisis* 310).

⁴⁶ In other words, the analogy between God's Being and creation allows the form to communicate God's glory.

⁴⁷ Hutchinson echoes this description of the *analogia entis* in her *On the Principles of the Christian Religion*:

But by what the Lord hath bene pleas'd to reveale to us in his word, where he condescends to speake according to our capacities, by those things that are visible to the eies of our bodies or minds, wee are enabled to have some darke, distant prospect of those things that are in God, even his eternall power and being, which wee call his Essence, which because wee are not able to conceive by one act of faith, therefore the Lord hath manifested it to us by divers attributes, which are only that one pure Essence diversely apprehended of us, as it is diversely made known to us. (Hutchinson, *Principles* 16)

⁴⁸ While Hutchinson never explicitly states how the analogy works, she describes the trinitarian logic of the analogy elsewhere. In canto 1 she writes of the Trinity, "There's no inferior, nor no later there,/ All coternal, all coequal, are./ And yet this parity order admits:/ The Father first eternally begets,/ Within himself, his son, substantial Word/ And Wisdom as his second, and their third/ The ever-blessed Spirit is which doth/ Alike eternally proceed from both" (1.95-102).

⁴⁹ I am indebted to David Hart for his explanation of the *analogia entis* in his book, *The Beauty of the Infinite*, (241-49).

⁵⁰ Hutchinson does not deny that second causes exist or even operate regularly. Rather she objects to the idea that second causes alone can account for Providence. Hutchinson insists that "God in the world by second causes reigns,/ But is not tied to those means he ordains" (2.125-6).

⁵¹ In her marginal notes Hutchinson reserves her first censure of Lucretius for his doctrine which seals the gods off from nature by nature's sheer abundance and apparent autonomy. Lucretius writes:

Quae bene cognita si teneas, Natura uidetur
libera continuo, dominis priuata superbis,
ipsa sua per se sponte omnia dis agere experts.
nam pro sancta deum tranquilla pectoral pace,
quae placidum degunt aeuom uitamque serenam,
quis regere inmensi summam, quis habere profundi
indu manu ualidas potis est moderanter habemas? (2.1090-6)
[Nature, if this you rightly understand,
Will thus appear free from the proud command
Of soveraigne power, who of her owne accord

Doth all things act, subjected to no lord.
 The Gods doe in eternall calmnesse rest
 Their holy lives with quiet pleasures blest.
 What power allmightie, sitting at the helme
 Can guide the reins of such a boundlesse realme?
 What God can turne heavens orbes, and feed those fires
 With the thick vapors fruitfull earth expires?
 Whose presence can at once fill every place?]

Hutchinson's translation captures the sense of his argument but not all of the force. In the beginning of line 2.1093, *ipsa sua per se sponte*, Lucretius compresses repeated pronominal references to nature, emphasizing the utter autonomy from divine interference. Similarly, Lucretius underscores the limits of the gods to reign over nature with a rapid succession of the interrogative pronouns, *quae...quis...quis*, in lines 2.1094-5. Hutchinson responds "Horribly impious" in the margin of her translation. While certain contemporaries and precursors of Hutchinson favor the self-sufficiency of the Lucretian gods, such self-sufficiency comes at a price—Lucretius makes the gods utterly sublime by sealing them off from the natural order and thus makes them irrelevant to human life. Hutchinson prevents a divided sovereignty "Divided Sovereignty makes neither great," (1.83) in *Order and Disorder*.

⁵² I owe this terminology to David Hart (*Beauty* 44, 62).

⁵³ For Hutchinson, the failure to recognize this distinction is to treat nature idolatrously (see *Order and Disorder* 15.28-30)

⁵⁴ See page 72.

⁵⁵ Her claims about final cause would have led certain contemporaries, including Hutchinson, to charge her with denying providence altogether. In light of her opening poem, "Nature calls a Councell, which was *Motion, Figure, matter, and Life*, to advise about making the World," Cavendish's theology bears resemblance to Gnosticism where Nature acts as a kind of Demiurge.

⁵⁶ In her argument regarding the relationship of Lucretius to Cavendish, Emma Rees notes that in the *DRN*, Lucretius hopes to enable his reader to learn to stand aloof from and undisturbed by the fruitless search for purpose (Rees, 4).

⁵⁷ Ontic violence is a common theme throughout Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*. For instance, in "Atomes and Motion fall out," Cavendish writes:

When *Motion*, and all *Atomes* disagree,
Thunder in Skies, and sicknesse in *Men* bee.
Earthquakes, and *Windes* which make disorder great,
 Tis when that *Motion* all the *Atomes* beate.

In this confusion a horrid noise they make,
For *Motion* will not let them their right places take.
Like frightened *Flocks of Sheepe* together run,
Thus *Motion* like a *Wolfe* doth worry them.

⁵⁸ In the Preface, Hutchinson worries about censorship from her republican and Puritan peers who look skeptically upon versifying Scripture. Hutchinson particularly worries about the distortions of truth that might come from using Scripture for ulterior ends. Against these charges, Hutchinson maintains that truth as it is revealed in God's works and Scripture is her objective, and citing Scriptural passages in her margins forms one of her key rhetorical devices to safeguard her project.

⁵⁹ Here, the "immanent Trinity" refers to God as he is in himself, which is contrasted with the "economic Trinity," or God's participation in creation.

⁶⁰ The author of 1 John 4:8 writes, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." One of the names of God is love, which is not merely an attribute but who he is in his Being.

⁶¹ In the margin of her text, Hutchinson cites Acts 17:24, which reads "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands". Hutchinson emphasizes that creation is not an emanation of God's being but the communication of his love.

⁶² In the margin she cites Psalm 90:5-6, which reads: Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. Here, Hutchinson implies that Scripture teaches how to read the book of nature.

⁶³ In lines 93 and 94, Hutchinson makes an implicit critique of the materialist doctrine. Those who cannot view nature in an emblematic way are blinded by "hell's mists" and are of a "brutish kind". The poetry of Cavendish lacks just the sort of aesthetic dimension that Hutchinson goes on to describe. As already shown in Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*, nature cannot reveal the formal causes of Creation, which Hutchinson identifies with God's Being and Glory.

⁶⁴ As explained in Chapters 2 and 4, the love of God is expressed in his triune Being and is his Form.

⁶⁵ In the space of these eleven lines, she alludes to Job 14:2, Isaiah 40:6-8, Matthew 6:28-30, James 1:10-11, Job 14:7-8; I Corinthians 3:15, which serve to draw out the instructive power of the emblem.

⁶⁶ Reid Barbour suggests that after the Civil War, Hutchinson sought "tranquility in the face of adversity" and that certain republicans were drawn to "the Epicurean ethical

ideal... [of] virtuous pacifism” (Barbour, “Between” 6-7). Also, Line Cottegnies connects Hutchinson’s *topos* of the tower to the peace reflected in the Psalms, but she does not explore this idea in depth and does not tie such peace to Hutchinson’s theology (Cottegnies, 139-40). In my argument, I shall show that, for Hutchinson, peace originates in God’s Being.

⁶⁷ The Separatists advocated a break from the authority of the Church of England, rejecting authority beyond the individual congregation.

⁶⁸ As Reventlow observes, Hobbes shares the view of many of his contemporaries: “the Bible as the criterion of the rules of life, required by God, in accordance with which the moral conduct of Christians has to be shaped” (Reventlow *Authority* 205).

⁶⁹ Importantly, this passage does not imply that God’s boundlessness hides him completely behind the veil of the sublime. David Norbrook tends to see the “fixity” of the royalist monarch as opposed to the “open” sublime power of God (Norbrook *Milton* 48). While he correctly sees that Hutchinson criticizes the *form* of monarchical government, Norbrook wrongly concludes that God’s government of the world is expressed as a formless sublime. By “formless,” I merely mean that God’s glory, which is his visible form in Creation, is absent.

⁷⁰ Significantly, the sacrificial system is a type of Christ in a way that differs from the sacrifice of Isaac. Just as Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, the angel stops and offers these words in Hutchinson’s account:

Abraham, forbear
To hurt the child. In that thou didst not spare
Thine only son whom I required of thee,
But freely hast resigned him up to me,
I know by this that thou dost fear the Lord. (15.159-63)

Hutchinson views the sacrifice of animals as one type, which points forward to the anti-type Christ who comes to do away with an old order. In the case of Abraham, the sacrifice is already the right form and so in a positive manner points forward to God’s freely offering Christ.

⁷¹ As David Norbrook notes, this passage refers to the destruction of the temple at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings 25 (Norbrook *Order* 198).

⁷² As Hart observes, “the cross is the response of political power to Christ’s self-oblation” (Hart *Beauty* 354).

⁷³ I thank Phillip Donnelly for pointing out that the implied reference to Cowley.

⁷⁴ Mention several of the critics who recognize the influence of romance.

⁷⁵ *Davideis* provides an example of a biblical epic that exalts virtues that contrast with those that Hutchinson portrays in *Memoirs* . In this poem based upon David's ascent to the throne, Abraham Cowley depicts the virtues that were prioritized by the royalists. In a conversation between Jonathan and David in Book 2, Cowley portrays Jonathan as voicing the virtues of his friend:

Thou has so prov'd thy Virtues, that they're known
To all good men, more than to each his *own*.
Who lives in Israel, that can doubtful be
Of thy great actions? For he lives by *Thee*.
Such is thy *Valour*, and thy vast *success*,
That all things but thy *Loyalty* are less. (287-288)

Jonathan lists David's virtues as the qualities surrounding his great deeds of valor and his military success. Later, he draws David's attention to his glorious reputation that began with the slaying of Goliath, and implies that his father is a tyrant and therefore fears anyone else who is powerful (288-289). Though Cowley notes that David is the rightful king due to his anointing, this passage highlights the priority placed upon David's virtues of valor and military success, which signal him as worthy of the throne.

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