

Rhonda Dean Kyncl

Professor Su Fang Ng

English 5543

13 December 2006

“The Lord hath set his battles in array”:

The Apocalyptic Fervor of Lucy Hutchinson’s *Order and Disorder*

Scant work has been done in analyzing Lucy Hutchinson’s biblical epic poem *Order and Disorder*. Other than comparing it to Milton’s work of the same scope, scholars have been relatively silent on the rhetorical choices and themes Hutchinson makes in her writing on the book of Genesis. The few references made to Hutchinson’s work often acknowledge it as “prophetic” and style. This is a disservice both to Hutchinson and to the Hebrew prophets on whose model the analysis is generally based. Hutchinson’s work is not prophetic, it is apocalyptic, and analysis of *why* it is apocalyptic and *how* it is apocalyptic is necessary for a more in depth understanding of the work and a more unique perspective than has been taken previously. Of course, Hutchinson found herself in a particularly historio-political and historio-religious context that fueled her fervor. A devout Puritan, Hutchinson had express reasons for choosing the book of Genesis as her text, for choosing the Revelation God of the New Testament apocalypse as her model.

In his chapter “Milton, Hutchinson and the Republican Biblical Epic”, David Norbrook, while comparing Hutchinson’s poem with that of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, writes:

... on its publication in 1679 the poem may well have looked on bookstalls as if it were a promonarchist engagement in the escalating Exclusion Crisis. In fact, the

title carried a degree of grim irony, for Hutchinson was one of those who believed that if the Puritan revolution had turned the traditional order upside down, that was because it had previously been the wrong way up. (46)

The historical context in which the poem was written was rife with uncertainty. The Puritan reforms of the church were frighteningly near to being overturned by the return of a Catholic king, James II. A complex use of imagery is happening here and it can be likened to the Godly violence evidenced in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* as described in Richard Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood*. Helgerson argues that the Protestants of 16th and 17th century England did not oppose kingly rule; on the contrary, they saw the king as divinely appointed by God. The problem arose only when this king was not who the Puritans recognized as the rightful head of the church. Obviously, a Catholic king would not qualify in this scheme; consequently, the Puritans saw impending disaster with the imminent return of a Catholic to the throne. The Puritans had experienced this rightful kingly rule under Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth:

At such a time the godly experience no conflict in their loyalty. They can obey both the laws of their prince and the word of God without scruple. And at such a time there is no need for religiously motivated violence from either God or the state [...]
More often than not, particularly in England...princes have been "slaves and butchers" under the control of the papal Antichrist, and the godly have had no way to maintain their divided loyalty but through exile or martyrdom. (Helgerson 258)

Hutchinson allows for a third choice, a complete end of time through the Apocalyptic second coming of Jesus Christ, after which God would judge all humankind and visit his

wrath on those who were not redeemed. I will argue that Hutchinson writes specifically with this historical and political crisis in mind and heart, as she chooses Genesis as her focus for a proof text: the stories she highlights from this premier book of the Hebrew scripture exemplify the God she is explicating. Each ancient story: God's presence in Heaven, the Fall of humanity, Cain's murder of Abel, the Flood, and the destruction of Sodom, all show the almighty and all-powerful wrath of God in response to the wickedness of humanity represented in single individuals. Two things are common in Hutchinson's depiction of these ancient texts: first, man is inwardly and innately evil and consequently, commits acts of sin. Second, God responds in each case with judgment and vengeance. This judgment takes common forms in Hutchinson's writing through images including: fire, natural calamities, and ultimate destruction. Before she ever penned the epic, Hutchinson had decided what the signs of evil and wickedness were in her own day. Those who would experience God's wrath were those who thwarted the cause of Puritan reform. Evidence of her forthright opinion about the impending apocalypse is seen not only in the cantos of *Order and Disorder*, but also in her autobiography. Her community of faith was on the verge of defeat, and she awaited the ultimate end of things that would be set in motion when this defeat would be culminated with the ascension of a Catholic king.

Anticipating apocalypse is not unique, each generation experiences endings, chaos, and changes that cause those with religious perspective to see the events as the signs of the end of time, and Hutchinson's period was no different. Jonathan Kirsch's recent work *A History of the End of the World* spends over 300 pages talking about apocalyptic imagery and the tendency of each and every era in the history of man to interpret it as contemporary. Kirsch writes, "For people who lived their lives in the precarious world of medieval

Europe, a world that teetered between hope and despair, Revelation turned out to be an inspiring and even intoxicating text” (139). The promise of an escape from oppression, pain, and poverty was no doubt “intoxicating.” The late 1600s in England was a period that certainly exemplifies Kirsch’s description. The turbulence of the period was fodder for all manner of ideas about the end of the world. Hutchinson’s rhetoric, therefore, was not unusual in its pitch that life as it had been known was ending. What is unusual is the fevered pitch Hutchinson wrote in, predicting a violent end for all but those who had been redeemed in the Puritan sense of that concept.

The impetus of much of the apocalyptic thinking of this era originated in the 12th century with the writing of Joachim of Fiore, an Italian monk. His ideas about the end of days were handed down to disciples and scribes who spread them throughout Europe and England. Kirsch notes, “The maker of the apocalyptic revolution in medieval Europe was a visionary monk called Joachim of Fiore” (141). Joachim’s influence has been examined for much of history. In fact, Irena Backus, a Joachim scholar has done much of this work and in her volume *Reformation Readings of the Apocalypse*, she explains why the influence of Joachim was so decidedly felt in medieval times. Two features of his theology are of significance: first was his notion of a titanic struggle that would bring the faithful closer to their God; and second was his belief that an individual Antichrist would rise in Rome, who would endeavor to deceive the faithful (Backus xviii).

Joachim’s influence was also felt in other ways, though. Marjorie Reeves, a renowned Joachim scholar is more detailed in her examination of his influence. Reeves specifically explicates the influence of the monk in the 19th century, but her work is

applicable to the 17th century as well. She explains Joachim's conceptual framework of three great dispensations: the dispensation of the Father, which was chronicled in the Old Testament; the dispensation of the Son, which was described in the New Testament, and finally, the impending age of the Spirit. This 3rd dispensation will see the coming together of all promises and prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments, and the age of the Spirit will culminate in both testaments being proven and accomplished (Reeves & Gould 8). This culminating effect of the third status or age is explained in even greater detail in Henry Bett's work on Joachim. He explains Joachim's elaborate scheme to draw parallels between everything in the Old Testament with the figures and ideas of the New Testament (Bett 25).

It is in this Joachimian intersection of Old and New Testament that the apocalypse Hutchinson envisions occurs. She wrote in this milieu, and her biblical epic, *Order and Disorder*, is full of such apocalyptic fervor. She utilized this poem to "wash out all ugly wild impressions" of her earlier work on what she now viewed as heathen pursuits (Hutchinson Preface), but by choosing the book of Genesis as her focus and co-mingling this Old Testament, Hebrew perspective with a New Testament, Christological conceptual framework, Hutchinson effectively warns her readers of an inevitable and impending doom that is the result of the lack of confession exhibited by the Catholic masses. By using the Old Testament scriptures, she can show with authority and through historical proof that the result of not abiding by Puritan doctrine, the end of time is inevitable. If Hutchinson had limited her exposition to the work of Genesis alone, she would have found no foundation for doom and damnation. Certainly we do not see this violent perspective in Milton's

biblical epic. Indeed, the Hebrew scripture contains only rhetoric that calls the Israelites, the chosen nation to repentance. There is no threat of condemnation or heaven or hell; these are expressly New Testament concepts that require the binary of good and evil, Messiah and Antichrist. These elements are not part of the Hebrew context. Hutchinson's focus on Genesis would not provide any fodder for apocalypse, only a call for repentance to those within her community, the Puritans. This obviously was not her objective. By bringing the New Testament rhetoric of revelation into the context of the old, Hutchinson effectively creates an all-powerful, vengeful God that forsakes the mercy and compassion of a Christ, but gains the vengeance and wrath of a Hebrew Creator. The focus of her Old Testament verse is creation, the God of the beginning. By interpreting all of God's works in the creation and Genesis accounts with the God of the New Testament who comes to judge, she creates a contextual framework that allows her to put herself and the Puritan faithful into the place of ultimate authority.

This perspective of the end of days is evident from the outset of Hutchinson's poem. In the initial canto of the work, Hutchinson introduces the end of time through her vivid imagery of the beginning of time: of God in Heaven. The paradox of this positioning of heaven as the beginning of the end is interesting and purposefully chosen. Hutchinson doesn't introduce heaven as only a source of God or as his residence above the earth, rather she uses the image of heaven as an arrow pointing to the end of time. This is evident through her descriptions of heaven as recorded in Revelation:

Here is the throne of th'universal King,

To which the suppliant world addresses bring.

Here next him doth his Son in triumph sit,

Waiting till all his foes lie at his feet. (Canto 1, Lines 199-202)

While Hutchinson couches these lines in her description of Paradise and places them in the beginning of her poem where she begins her description of the Paradise where Adam and Eve first are placed, she sets them directly in the rhetoric of the end of time, when God will come back with his Son to judge the living and the dead, and when the foes of both will be ultimately defeated and “lie at his feet.” The rhetoric, while located within the beginning of time, is clearly designed to bring to mind the end of time. This perspective effectively silences the friendship of God with man, the relationship of a God who walked in the “cool of the day” with the first man and woman (Genesis 3:8). Hutchinson instead uses this rhetoric of heaven to remind the reader of God’s ultimate victory, in true apocalyptic form, she decries the reader’s sinful state and the world’s ultimate end in light of the glory of God:

For God, who made this blessed place to be

The habitation of his sanctity,

Admitting nothing to it that is vile,

Nothing that can corrupt or can defile, [...]

Nor are his gates e’er shut by night or day;

His only dread keeps all foes far away. (Canto 1, Lines 241-244, 247-248)

Hutchinson deliberately chooses to place God in Heaven, not as one who desires a relationship with a human creature, but as the judge of all end times, the ultimate authority over all. This rhetorical choice allows her to separate God from the sinner, the “foe”, cutting off the idea of any redeeming relationship.

Hutchinson shows evidence of this desire to locate God as ultimate judge, even in

the light of the peaceful paradise of England in her autobiography as well. She writes in her autobiography, “The land was then att peace, if that quietnesse may be call’d a peace which was rather like the calme and smooth surface of the sea, whose darke womb is already impregnated of a horrid tempest” (Hutchinson *Fragment* 279). Later in the fragment, she goes further writing, “God im comparison with other countries hath made this as a paradice, so, to compleate the parallel, the serpent hath in all times bene busy to seduce, and not unsuccessfull, ever stirring up opposers to the infant truths of Christ” (Hutchinson *Fragment* 281). Even as she describes her beloved England as a veritable paradise, she establishes the presence of the “serpent” or Satan who is at work. The work that he is doing is politically charged. He is working against the Puritan establishment of Protestantism from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom. He is working in and through the popish Catholics.

The God of the original author’s Genesis is not this judge, the God of Revelation is. She needs the Hebrew God, the caller of the chosen nation, since her theology is dependent on this favor. On the other hand, she needs the New Testament God as the ultimate judge. She must have both perspectives to pull off the complicated rhetorical move of explicating the book of Genesis and informing sinners of their doomed status in the world to come. The Old Testament holds none of this in its own rhetoric. Kirsch notes, “The Hebrew prophets do not seem to know or care much about Satan, and they embrace the simple if also harsh idea that everything, good *or* bad, begins and ends with God” (27). Even the serpent of the Genesis account is not given the status of embodied evil that Hutchinson needs. Satan of the Old Testament is in the Hebrew “an accuser”, a prosecuting attorney who not only has access to Heaven but who also has access to God and his court (Kirsch

29). Hutchinson wants nothing to do with this Old Testament Satan. She needs the Satan of Revelation, the all-evil Satan. For historian Christopher Hill the reason for the stark choice is clear, “The protestant abolition of Purgatory left an eternity of bliss or an eternity of torment as the only alternatives facing each individual” (*The World Turned Upside Down* 126). As a Puritan, Hutchinson saw the world in stark black and white: those who followed God through the reformed movement and those who chose the idolatry of Catholicism. Her God and her Satan were creations of this polarizing lens.

Hutchinson’s apocalyptic perspective is proven in these rhetorical choices to be above all an example of this Puritanical perspective. In fact, the apocalyptic focus is much like the Puritan preaching of the day. Hutchinson’s epic resembles a fiery sermon more than any other rhetorical device. Most Puritans of the period believed that the work of Reformation in the church had not proceeded far enough. They longed for a truly experiential religion that disallowed any bishop to act as liaison before God on behalf of a holy people. Their work focused on a personal and intimate knowledge of the Bible and a rejection of the Church of England and its ideology. Since they were the true followers of God, they considered themselves the true Body of Christ and longed to purify the church through their knowledge of scripture and their societal influence. The Puritans saw themselves as the chosen people of God, aligning their own sect with the Old Testament nation of Israel. David Martin writes in his essay “Religion and Public Values: A Catholic-Protestant Contrast”:

In Protestant societies there is less chance to touch and handle the physical presence of godhead and the numerous power emitted by the community itself. The sacraments of Protestant nationality are more verbal as well as more Old Testament.

[...] England [...] has conceived of herself as a New Israel, with political destiny under the aegis of divine warning, adjuration, and promise. [...] eloquent with a deistic confidence in the guiding hand of Providence exercised over the fortunes of the nation. (316)

Puritan work goes hand-in-hand with this idea. If they were equal to the Old Testament nation of Israel, then they were actively watching for God's hand to save them. They saw the hand of God in all of history, and although they had been defeated in the middle years of the 1600s and had not seen the purification in the church that they would have liked, they still sought God's providential hand. Indeed, it was a "human propensity" of the era, an era of total religious domination, to see all events as the hand of God, whether they be good or bad (Worden 58).

This notion of Puritans as chosen fits into the idea of nationhood and community described elsewhere in the history of this period. In apocalyptic rhetoric, the idea of "the nation" is inextricably caught up in the notion of "the chosen". But of course, not all members of the nation submit to the behavioral code of the chosen. Consequently, the chosen deploy a rhetoric of apocalypse that defines their own community and establishes it as God's blessed – the other must be damned who are outside this enclave. The idea of chosen-ness as a precursor to the concept of nation is well-documented in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, where Anderson describes "seeds of territorialization of faiths which foreshadow[s] the language of many nationalists" (17). He continues, "Christendom assumed its universal form through a myriad of specificities and particularities: this relief, that window, this sermon, that tale, this morality play, that relic" (23). Their rhetoric become a "sacred language" (15) that held the religious

community together and excluded others outside that community. This was furthered by the concept of the Messiah. Anderson again explains, “Messianic time, a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present” (24). Hutchinson used this concept to deploy an apocalyptic rhetoric that singled out her Puritan community as the chosen and the Catholic nation (if truly led by a Catholic king in James II) as those outside of it and those who would therefore be condemned to eternal punishment.

Hutchinson demonstrates this emphasis in the fourth and fifth cantos, where she describes the fall of humanity and the expulsion from Paradise also in the terms of apocalyptic judgment. Interestingly, Hutchinson notes early in the work that she will limit herself to an exposition of the text as it appears in Genesis, that she will not attempt to expound things we do not know (Canto 1, Lines 41-42) but that is exactly what she does in her metaphorical view of the fall. Here she explicates the text in a light that can only come from her own experience of God or perhaps her own interpretation of God’s purpose and intent. As Adam and Eve flee into the shadows from God’s all-seeing eye, Hutchinson describes what may be God’s response to the actions of sinners:

Lightnings and tempests might speak forth his ire;
For at the day of universal doom
The great Judge shall in flaming vengeance come,
An all-consuming fire shall go before, [...]
And turn the paradises we admire
Into an ever-boiling lake of fire. (Canto 4, Lines 306-309, 321-322)

The creation account in Genesis holds no account of such a violent response from God. And we have no record of any earthly effects of his banishment of Adam and Eve. But in

Hutchinson's story, the sin of Adam and Eve is on the conscience of all humankind, and every sin committed by humans that weighs on their consciences, is reason for God to bring forth judgment. Of course, this judgment ultimately ends with human sinners thrown into the "lake of fire" as described in Revelation 19:20. Hutchinson uses this verse pointedly here, drawing a distinct parallel between the sin of humans and its direct link to the influence of a Satan:

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (KJV, Rev. 19:20)

As a Puritan, Hutchinson would have had complete control of the biblical references she made. Puritan preaching and teaching centered on correctly handling the Word of God and utilizing it consistently. She would have been well aware of the burden of this verse and its implications: that humankind is directly accountable for all sin, there is no plea of ignorance. And she directly aligns this purposeful notion of sin with the deceit of false prophets, the mark of the beast, and idolatry. The punishment fits the crime, being thrown "alive" into an ever-burning fire. The image is stark and horrifying, and it is purposely used by Hutchinson to remind those she believes are sinful of the recompense they will receive for their crimes of sin. And Puritans would clearly understand that false prophets are those who hail from other doctrines, who have set themselves up as religious leaders, but who fail to meet the Puritan, Protestant standard.

Hutchinson's work as preacher closely resembles the call of the prophet, and her

writing has been called prophetic by others. The prophet has been defined at this time centrally as one who rightly interprets the scripture. And certainly the revelation of John in the New Testament was a book crying for interpretation. Esther Gilman Richey writes of this distinction of 17th century prophetic voices in her work *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance*. She introduces the concept of prophecy by using the definitions of Bishop Griffith Williams and his 1629 publication *The True Church*. According to Richey, Williams articulated the earmarks of a prophet. The one that came to be the standard of the 17th generation, as far as Williams was concerned, was one who was a “worthy interpreter of holy scriptures”, particularly the “obscurest and hardest” parts of Scripture. Gilman goes on to say that the politically-charged readings of Revelation and Daniel begin from this impetus (2-3).

But is Hutchinson taking on the role of prophet or of preacher? The dichotomy between the two has been investigated since the Hebrew prophets often set themselves against the ritualistic keepers of tradition in the ancient scriptures. Ahad Ha’am, a well-known figure in the history of this debate in Judaism wrote one of the best known essays on this oppositional relationship in the late 1800s. He argues that the priest is the keeper of the institution, while the prophet is passionate about only one thing, the one perfect idea he has received from the voice of God. The prophet lives and dies for the this idea, no matter what the voice asks of him or calls him to do or say, he is alive only in his obedience to that voice (Ahad Ha’am 130). The priest on the other hand is the keeper of the flame, the holder of the tradition. His sustenance is not from God alone, but from the congregation he serves. The priest arrives on the scene after the idea has taken hold (Ahad Ha’am 131).

And his livelihood depends not on a connection to the Almighty but on the stability of the current ritual. Maintaining the status quo is his calling. The prophet is speaking to this very congregation the priest is endeavoring to maintain. The prophet is calling the faithful to return to follow God. The prophet shows very little concern for those who oppress Israel, for those who work against her. He is concerned with the mutiny and disobedience within. His rhetoric is for those within the camp who are not following Elohim and are consequently bringing the entire people to suffer under the oppression of God-allowed enemies.

Other perspectives of the prophet are informative here to crystallize the notion that Hutchinson's work was not prophetic, but rather apocalyptic in nature. Abraham Heschel, respected rabbi and author describes the Hebrew prophet in passionate detail in his book *The Prophets*. For the purpose of my argument, the most informing description is Heschel's idea of "divine pathos" active within each member of the early prophetic genealogy (Heschel 29). The prophets of the Old Testament exhibited a life that was not focused on judgment alone, but rather lives of "divine love, and disappointment, mercy and indignation" (Heschel 29). Their calls for judgment were for those to whom they belonged, their communities. They were members of the tribes and communities they were calling to repentance. They did not stand on the outside looking in, and in fact, they had little concern for those outside their communities. They exhibited a "constant care and concern" for their communities (Heschel 356), and while their message began with aggressive calls to repentance, it ended with inspired words of hope (Heschel 14). This is not the work of Lucy Hutchinson.

Hutchinson fails the test of the prophets. Her rhetoric, while fiery, is not prophetic.

She does not have a new word from God for the chosen people. On the contrary, she sees her own kind as the chosen people: the Puritans are the keepers of the faith and the truth. She is not calling her own congregation to repentance, as the prophet in Ahad Ha'am's, traditionally Jewish scheme does, she is calling for judgment on others. This is not the employment of prophetic rhetoric, it is the employment of apocalyptic rhetoric. It is expressly written for those who will be called into judgment for their failure to follow the one true God, according to the Puritans that is. Hutchinson has no words for her own chosen people, she has words only for those who have spoken against them, who have not joined them, who have persecuted them. The crisis of the 17th century was one of biblical proportions in Hutchinson's mind, and she demonstrates the utter despair she and her Puritan contemporaries were facing as they contemplated the return to power of a Papist. Historian Christopher Hill remarks in his work *The Experience of Defeat* that:

I was disappointed not to be able to find any woman who left adequate evidence of her experience of defeat [...] Lucy Hutchinson should have been a candidate, but in her *Memoirs* of her husband she is far too concerned to cover up the Colonel's weaknesses to allow her own views to come through. (21)

On the contrary, I believe Hutchinson clearly leaves evidence of her "experience of defeat", perhaps not in the memoirs of her husband, but certainly in her biblical epic. She responds with the religious fervor of a Puritan preacher, calling for God's wrath on the unjust as her only outlet. The only context in which she could put the defeat was a religious one. And biblically, the response must be that God will never be defeated; therefore, the righteous have only lost this battle, the ultimate war is soon to be won in the apocalyptic end of the

age.

This apocalyptic, rather than prophetic designation is again exhibited in the sixth canto of the epic. Here Hutchinson has just described the fateful story of Cain killing Abel and the subsequent mark on Cain as he goes into his own land and father his own children. There would seem to be some redemption in the biblical Genesis account of Cain, who becomes the father of Enoch, one who is commended in the Hebrew scripture for his faithfulness to God; so much so, that he is taken from earth without ever facing the reality of death. But Hutchinson turns even this redemptive account to one of sure judgment on those who fail to be faithful:

The Lord hath set his battles in array
And with ten thousand of his saints will come
To execute on sinners his just doom.
No one vile deed, no one vile sinner shall
His inquisition 'scape, who takes in all
The most concealed sins; black deeds of night
That even now are naked in his sight
Then shall be set before the sinner's eyes. (Canto 7, Lines 576-583)

Hutchinson reads these ancient stories in the light of a judgmental perspective. Her rhetoric is not prophetic, a voice that would call the faithful to return to their first love; instead, she makes a decidedly apocalyptic turn, decrying sinners and condemning them to judgment. The move from the prophetic conceptual framework directly to the apocalyptic, according to definitions that scholars of the period and of biblical exegesis points out is extremely important. Hutchinson's writing is clearly apocalyptic, rather than eschatological in nature.

Bernard McGinn's work in *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* is particularly informative for this distinction. McGinn's description of the apocalyptic is founded on the work of D.S. Russell, a theologian who has written extensively on the method and message and intertestamental links of the apocalyptic. McGinn summarizes Russell's five distinct traits or characteristics of the apocalyptic, traits that clearly distinguish the apocalyptic from the purely eschatological. As McGinn notes, every Christian view of history is in some way eschatological, for it sees the Bible as revealing the truth about history, the present, and the future. This does not necessarily mean that the view or perspective is apocalyptic, however. One can see God as active in history and present times without seeing the current age as the end of all time. McGinn uses Russell's five points to distinguish the purely apocalyptic from the eschatological. First, the apocalyptic sees all of history through a deterministic lens, everything is moving toward the end and everything is acting together to bring about an end. Second, the apocalyptic view centers on the contest between good and evil forces, highlighting heavenly and hellish beings as active agents in the fight. Third, the end of time is inevitable and will be followed necessarily by a transcendent era. Fourth, a Messiah will actively participate in the destruction of evil forces and in the coming age as a king or ruler of the new world. And finally, the apocalyptic view, one that Russell calls "the most characteristic doctrine of Jewish apocalyptic" (McGinn 8) is the expectation of life after death and the inclusion of a last judgment. Hutchinson's rhetoric meets all of these requirements. She sets God up as a judge first and foremost, or last and foremost more importantly.

This focus on the Fall and the creation as a model for God's judgment throughout

history is well-documented in the 17th century. Christopher Hill, prominent historian of the period, in his work *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution*, writes:

For the conservative, the man in possession, the Fall was something which could not be undone. It had permanently affected human nature. To attempt to ignore the sinfulness of man was to fly in the face of fact. He saw evil as something internal, lurking in the heart of every man, not as an external product of society. (126)

Truly, this is how Hutchinson describes the evil of man as it is first demonstrated in Paradise, and how it is clearly correlated with the man of her own day. But she makes a calculated choice to marry this inbred and inevitable presence of sin to the signs of the end of time in her own day. The country needed reform, a national religion based on the Puritan ideal. The idea that the government could be ruled by a Catholic king was the ultimate sign of the end. This was sinful, that she knew; but more than that, she knew that the entire country would be judged by a God who demanded a purity that she believed would only come to pass when the Puritan faith was returned to national dominance from the monarchy.

In the seventh canto of the epic, we see evidence of this final judgment focus in Hutchinson's description of the flood story. Again, the biblical account of the flood is written with far less horror and violence than Hutchinson's account. The biblical account of the actual deluge is told in just five short verses beginning with Genesis 7:19:

And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that [were] under the whole heaven, were covered. [...] Fifteen cubits upward did the

waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, [...] All in whose nostrils [was] the breath of life, of all that [was] in the dry [land], died. [...] And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days. (KJV, Genesis 7:19-24)

The contrasting view Hutchinson gives is perhaps the most direct evidence of her apocalyptic fervor to this point in the epic. She devotes a full 112 lines to the storm and casts it in the vocabulary of the end of time. She describes the rain in these lines variously as a “whirling, cloud-engendering fire” (Canto 7, Line 407), the Heavens as “violently pour[ing] their waters down” (Ln. 421), and as “the world’s solid walls like ice did melt/ When they the heats of divine vengeance felt” (Ln. 425-426). Hutchinson also vividly depicts humankind as recipients of this drama. The biblical account gives coverage of humankind early in the story and briefly, giving God’s reason for acting in one verse, “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually” (KJV, Genesis 6:5). Furthermore, the biblical account gives no description of humankind’s response to the flood waters, other than the brief description above, which states only that everything thing with breath was destroyed by the waters. Hutchinson uses a great deal more detail and fervor to describe the end of life. She again depends on an apocalyptic view of this event and its relationship to a future judgment of similar sinners that will occur when God returns as judge. Her descriptions include visions of humankind’s response as convulsing in tears by not being able “that burning wrath allay” in line 429, as “terror struck” in line 442, “yawning graves” in line 447, and finally as having cried out to Heaven for deliverance “But only Hell and

Death rolled in their eyes” in line 470. Hutchinson’s rhetoric here is violent and focused on the sinners God has destroyed because of their wickedness. She is unrelenting in her portrayal of God’s wrath and the very human toll that is taken because of it. And just in case the reader misses her application of this judgment to the impending judgment on English subjects, she makes the connection for them, writing in lines 521-524, “Though God awhile do raging pride permit/Till his just judgement be fulfilled by it,/Yet violent empires but a small time last/And having climbed their heights, decline as fast.” Her implications are clear, the contemporary world in which she wrote, a world that allowed its kings to ascend in the line of the Roman Antichrist, would be destroyed just as in the days of Noah due to this ultimate wickedness.

The “divine vengeance” Hutchinson introduces in the flood account is once again called forth in her final apocalyptic verse in her account of God’s judgment on Sodom.

Here in the 13th canto of her epic, Hutchinson repeats for the final time her condemnation of her own generation outside Puritan religion. She saves her most violent apocalyptic rhetoric for this final comparison: the city of Sodom with the sinners who resist repentance in her own day, and whose government has aligned itself with Antichrist. The destruction of the immoral city can not stand alone in Hutchinson’s terms, it must be compared with the Antichristian, Papist evil of her own day. She immediately implies that the fire from Heaven will burn sinners of the current age just as it did in ancient times:

Men cannot from their golden fetters ‘scape
Till they coy souls endure a holy rape
Which to himself the Lord by violence draws

Even as they enter hell's extended jaws. (Canto 13, Lines 109-112)

Here again, Hutchinson does not allow the biblical account to suffice, she adds to the story her own apocalyptic emphasis. The biblical basis for this story is found in Genesis chapter 19, verses 14-15. These scant two verses give a vastly less horrific description, "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." That's it, two verses that tell of God's destruction certainly, but not in the detail and graphic violence Hutchinson uses. Hutchinson uses images from scripture again, this time from the plagues of Exodus. In her account, all Heaven breaks loose, the plagues and calamities of fire, rage, famine, thunder, pestilence, drought, whirlwinds, hail, frosts, frogs, monsters, wild beasts, and scorpions, all held by "Divine Vengeance" in heaven, according to Hutchinson, are released on the sinful city of Sodom (Canto 13, Lines 187-200). This is the ultimate battle and the full outpouring of heaven's wrath. The sin is so awful, so tragic, so shocking, that God must unleash all his firepower, literally, all of the plagues and violence stored in heaven. There is no prophetic call for repentance here, there is only retribution. This is the ultimate outcome of Hutchinson's epic: total, fiery destruction.

There were signs of such apocalyptic vengeance in Hutchinson's earlier work, particularly in biography she wrote of her late husband, Colonel John Hutchinson. Significantly, Hutchinson gives us what turns out to be a precursor of her work in *Order and Disorder* in the way she describes her husband, his work, and his motivation. She describes the doctrine of the Church of England as "carnall and Antichristian" (35). In

addition, she describes her husband as a Moses figure, as one who has lead his family toward but only been given a glimpse of the Promised Land (Keeble 231). These early seeds of dependence on the Old Testament and of an opinionated and judgmental state with regard to the Antichrist, lay the groundwork for her subsequent apocalyptic fervor. This flame burns within Hutchinson from the late 1660s when she writes the biography of her husband until the time when she pens *Order and Disorder*. The flame has become a full-blown apocalyptic fire by that point. Of course, by that point the entire country had been plunged into a political moment of complete uncertainty. The Puritans arguably found themselves on the losing end of the reformation battle. While the date of Hutchinson's writing is not firm, it occurred during this period of chaos and change. And Hutchinson and the rest of the Puritan community could only imagine the repercussions if James II did become king.

In her own autobiography, only a fragment of which remains, Hutchinson again previews her love of England comparing it to the garden of Genesis writing, "God in comparison with other countries hath made this as a paradise" (Hutchinson *Fragment* 281). Her apocalyptic ideas are grounded here in her appointment of England as paradise and the Puritans as God's chosen people. She sets up the Church of England as Satan as well, "there were none left to oppose the name of Christ with open hostility, then the subtile serpent putt off his owne horrid appearance, and comes out in a Christian dresse" (Hutchinson *Fragment* 281). She will make the violent turn in *Order and Disorder* to call forth utter destruction for what she sees as the Satanic forces at work through the religion of the monarchy.

The apocalyptic fervor of the poem and Hutchinson's response to the Exclusion

Crisis and the religious and political crises of the period is evident even in the last cantos of the poem, where the apocalyptic fervor seems to quiet into a hush. But even here we see the remnants of Hutchinson's Puritanical thought and her absolute bifurcated vision of the English world. For even in these last cantos, where the biblical epic slows to the annotation of the biblical chapters describing the lineage of Abraham, Hutchinson continually points to the inevitability of death and to the faithfulness of God to judge right and wrong. In Canto 16, the last lines foretell of this inevitability of death, "In dust, the period of frail humans' grace./The certain goal of every splendid race:/For neither honour, wealth, nor power, can save/The destined victims from th'unpitying grave" (Lines 339-343). In Canto 17, lines 280-298 warn humankind against hoping for too much, that there will never be a perfect state of being on this earth, that's an impossible wish. Tides rise and fall, she says, and we must bear it all. In Canto 19, she again points to the cost of disobedience. Lines 21-25 read, "There are no terrors where the soul is pure,/But wicked greatness no watch can secure:/Still waking horror on the guilty waits,/With torturing conscience and her Hell-born mates/Despair, Suspicion, Dread, and dismal Woe." These closing cantos are more philosophical in tone and more related to the everyday activity that is occurring as Abraham's nation is extended through generations. Hutchinson seems to be reflecting on life, reflecting on actions and behaviors as if looking back over her own generations and her own nation. The biblical text of course gives her no other apocalyptic opportunities in the final chapters of the book of Genesis. But perhaps her own consciousness as well was resigned to the inevitability of judgment she had already described.

Hutchinson's use of apocalyptic rhetoric served a clear purpose in *Order and Disorder*, the calling to judgment of those who dared defy the Puritan faith and its

practices. The conflux of influences and history played a central role in bringing her to the use of this rhetoric. She lived in a time of perhaps the greatest upheaval in the history of the world; she wrote as a Protestant who was so convinced of her faith that she renounced her earlier life and work as purely heathen (Hutchinson Preface). She used the apocalypse of the New Testament, paired it with a God of the Old Testament, and achieved a complex rhetorical position that authoritatively compared the wickedness of biblical proportions to the descent she saw in her own country. Resembling the fiery sermons she heard in her own congregation, she decried what she saw as an entire nation gone awry with an impending return to compromising and ungodly rule. Her biblical epic became the vehicle for an authoritative and early deployment of activist rhetoric.

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