

**The Iconography of Kingship: Masques, Antimasques and Pastorals**

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# The Iconography of Kingship: Masques, Antimasques and Pastorals

THOMAS BLACK

## Imagining Men and Kings

In the third part of his trilogy on the image-making of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English rulers, Kevin Sharpe argued that even after the fighting of Civil War broke out in 1642 'both sides had to claim the validating languages and symbols of kingship [i.e.] Scripture, law, [and] the scales of justice.'<sup>1</sup> As the war developed, and the subsequent Protectorate took shape, the office of what James VI had termed the 'little god,' was subjected to the democratising forces of repeated literary renegotiations.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the most important writers of the day struggled to reimagine and to produce powerful images of the state across a myriad of genres and mediums. Intrinsic bound to the debates about constitutional forms are fundamental conceptions of man and his relationships with his fellow men, with the natural world, and ultimately with God himself. In this sense the iconography of man is interwoven with that of the king or state. As the republican theorist James Harrington argued in his *System of Politics* (c. 1661), 'as the form of a man is the image of God, so the form of a government is the image of man.'<sup>3</sup> Some of Andrew Marvell's most powerful pastoral poetry presents man in a circumscribed pastoral place, a place free to contemplate his relation to the world. In *The Garden* Marvell imagines 'that happy garden-state / While man there walked without a mate,' under the leaves of grass his mind is free to 'Annihilat[e] all that's made / To a green thought in a green shade.'<sup>4</sup> Marvell's vision radically resituates man, placing him in liberated, solitary, and direct contact with a world of immanent objects and ideas unmediated by any prior authority. Others, such as Robert Filmer could invoke a similar Edenic solitude only to bolster a vision of hierarchical order predicated on monarchical power. He argues 'a natural freedom of mankind cannot be supposed without the denial of the creation of Adam,' as Adam in his solitude was 'the father, king, and lord.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> K. Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule, The Restoration and Revolution Monarchy, 1660-1714* (New Haven, CT., 2013) p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> King James VI of Scotland, *The Basilicon Doron of King James VI, Waldegrave 1603 Text*, (Ed. J. Craigie), 2 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1944), I, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> J. Harrington, 'A System of Politics' in J.G.A. Pocock (Ed.), *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 267-294, 273.

<sup>4</sup> A. Marvell, 'The Garden' in E. Donno (Ed.), *Complete Poems* (London, 2005), pp. 100-102, 57-58, 47-48.

<sup>5</sup> R. Filmer, 'Observations upon Aristotle's Politiques' in D. Wootton (Ed.), *Democracy and Divine Right* (London, 1986), pp. 110-120, 110.

## Masque and Antimasque – Iconographies of (Dis)order 1630-41

In his 'gift' to his heir, *Basilicon Doron*, James VI and I offered advice on how to rule, with meditations on the nature of kingship itself. James wrote:

A king is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazing lie doe beholde: and [...] the people who seeth but the outward part, will euer judge of the substance, by the circumstances, and according to outward appearance.<sup>6</sup>

The court masques produced during James's and his successor Charles I's reigns perhaps increased this sense of the staging of the monarch. Masques were a form of festive courtly entertainment that became regular fixtures at the Stuart court in England. Comprising music, dancing, scripted drama, elaborate choreography, and increasingly fabulous theatrical effects, the court masques were the most spectacular form of entertainment of the early seventeenth century. Accepting that the king was indeed to be judged on outward appearances, the masques were used to harness and mould these appearances into a substantial iconography of kingship. The masques enacted and represented the king's authority through a scripted evening of speech, dance, music, and spectacular theatrical effects irradiated with dense symbolism. Though primarily used to praise the monarch, the masque could also advise and, in so doing, offer oblique criticism of king or court.

The writers of the masques themselves often demonstrate an anxiety that their symbolic and iconographic programmes were so abstract or arcane as to be generally impenetrable, and feared that 'many in [...the] audience would be incapable of recognizing what was going on.'<sup>7</sup> Indeed accounts from audience members suggest responses ranging from boredom to Francis Bacon's outright dismissal of the entire genre as mere 'Toyes.'<sup>8</sup> The complex staging of kingship in the masques paradoxically exacerbates the problems of misinterpretation that James warns of in *Basilicon Doron*. James remained an aloof spectator of court masques and was anxious to maintain control of his texts and images. As he admitted in *Basilicon Doron*, he only published an authorised version of that particular text because an unauthorised text was printed, forcing him to:

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<sup>6</sup> James VI, *Basilicon Doron*, I, p.163.

<sup>7</sup> D. Lindley, 'Introduction', in D. Lindley (Ed.), *Court Masques: Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments 1605-1640* (Oxford, 1998), pp .ix-xvii, xi.

<sup>8</sup> F. Bacon, 'On Masques and Triumphs', in M. Kieman (Ed.), *The Oxford Francis Bacon*, 15 Vols., (Oxford, 2000), XV, p. 117.

publishe and spred the true copies thereof [and] by this preface, to cleare suche parts thereof, as in respect of the concised shortnesse of my style, may be misinterpreted therein.<sup>9</sup>

The royal text, and even the royal 'style', disseminated amongst the public, here becomes radically unstable, and James's official publication is an attempt to reinforce his and its authority through reiteration and a proliferation of prefatory material. Walter Ong argues that 'print encourages a sense of completion,' whereas 'manuscript culture had preserved a feeling for a book as [...] an occurrence in the course of conversation.'<sup>10</sup> James's intervention, though it was an attempt to stifle that conversation by harmonising interpretation with the univocality of the printed royal word, demonstrates the ultimate fluidity of even printed text. The Stuart masque – a form that marries the already unstable written word with a baffling array of visual imagery – though ostensibly a celebration of authority, could become a site of uncertainty and confusion.

The masques of Charles's reign subtly shifted emphasis away from the Jacobean focus on the unitary monarch as the fountainhead of virtue and grace, to an idealised, Neoplatonic iconography of love. This love was epitomised not in Charles's elevated solitude but in his relationship with Queen Henrietta Maria. The queen and, for the first time, the king appeared in several masques themselves and, in so doing, broke down the final barriers between court and performance. Their active participation suggests a fuller recognition and endorsement of the iconography of the masques themselves. Indeed Stephen Orgel argues that Charles became so involved in their production that he 'was not merely being entertained by his masques; the form was an extension of the royal mind.'<sup>11</sup>

Describing the masques of Ben Jonson, Orgel argues that 'every masque concluded by merging spectator with masque, in effect transforming the courtly audience into the idealized world of the poet's vision.'<sup>12</sup> In the Caroline masques a significant but subtly different structural blurring of boundaries emerges. William Davenant's *The Temple of Love* (1634) casts Henrietta Maria as 'Indamora', a symbolic representation of divine love, who is travelling towards Britain to restore and reveal its temple but who is blocked by the antimasque of the magi. Masques increasingly included 'antimasques', where a group of disruptive agents had to be banished from or integrated into the masque proper. After

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<sup>9</sup> James VI, *Basilicon Doron*, I, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> W. J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London, 1993), pp. 132, 125.

<sup>11</sup> S. Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA., 1975), p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> S. Orgel, 'Introduction', in S. Orgel (Ed.), *The Complete Masques*, (New Haven, CT., 1969), pp. 1-39, 2.

dispelling the antimasque of the lecherous Magi she steps through the proscenium arch: 'the Queen being seated under the State by the King, the scene was changed into the true Temple of Chaste love.'<sup>13</sup> Here the movement of the masque departs from the Jonsonian model described above. Indamora, the idealised figure of chaste love, leaves the masque to sit 'under' the king in a sign of decorous obedience and submission and, through this chaste and properly ordered love emanating from the state, the masque world is transformed and the true symbolic climax achieved. After this metamorphosis the masque moves beyond a mere symbolic tableau and dramatizes the revelation of the ideal through staging the meeting and courting of two chaste lovers. Sunesis and Thelma ('which intimate the Understanding and the Will')<sup>14</sup> enter the temple and sing a brief courtship duet:

Sunesis: Come melt thy soul in mine, that when unite,

We may become one virtuous appetite.

[...]

Both: When perfect Will, and strengthened Reason meet,

Then Love's created to endure.<sup>15</sup>

Their dialogue elucidates the crux of the masque's aesthetic. Love, presented as a 'virtuous appetite', is valorised as the force that reveals and impels us towards the other virtues. The 'perfect will' and 'strengthened reason' that form the basis of pure love are intended as more than just an abstract concept, they are a pattern for personal *and* public life. As Sharpe has argued, the Caroline masques celebrate love not as carnal pleasure but [...] a Platonic union of souls that represented the victory of higher reason over appetite. Platonic love was an ideal form of government because it led not to forceful regimen but to self-regulation.<sup>16</sup>

Though chastity was a prime feature of the love celebrated in Caroline masques, it found its greatest expression not in a virginity such that 'She that has [it] is clad in complete steel',<sup>17</sup> but in the marriage bed. Contemporaries such as Edward Hyde, the first Earl of Clarendon, understood and engaged with this royal program of self-presentation,

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<sup>13</sup> W. Davenant, *The Temple of Love, The Dramatic Works of Sir William D'Avenant*, (Eds. J. Maidment and W. H. Logan), 5 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1872), I, pp. 281-316, 302.

<sup>14</sup> Davenant, *Temple of Love*, p. 287.

<sup>15</sup> Davenant, *Temple of Love*, p. 303.

<sup>16</sup> K. Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven, CT., 2010), p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> J. Milton, *Comus, Complete English Poems*, (Ed. Gordon Campbell) (London, 1992), pp. 57-91, 421.

proclaiming that 'they were the true idea of conjugal affection, in the age in which they lived.'<sup>18</sup> The Magi of *The Temple of Love* complain of Indamora and her followers that 'They raise strange doctrines, and new sects of Love: / [...] and practice generation not / Of bodies but of souls.'<sup>19</sup> However, one of the central features of Caroline imagery was the fecundity of Charles and Henrietta Maria's union. Their chaste love did not just regenerate their own souls but through it they became the virtuous soul of the nation. Their marriage also engendered both new bodies and new souls in their children, and we are told that their line will 'in their off-spring never cease, / Till time's too old to last an hour.'<sup>20</sup> These images of exemplary marriage are further explored in Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) where we are told by Mercury that:

Your [Charles and Henrietta Maria's] exemplar life  
Hath not alone transfused a zealous heat  
Of imitation through your virtuous court,  
By whose bright blaze your palace is become  
The envied pattern of this underworld,  
But the aspiring flame hath kindled heaven.<sup>21</sup>

Here the love of Charles and Maria has triumphed to transform not just the court but even the Olympian pantheon. Jove, we are told, has declared an end to sexual license among the gods and the

Lawgiver himself in his own person observes his decrees so  
punctually; who, besides, to eternize the memory of that great  
example of matrimonial union which he derives from hence, hath  
on his bedchamber door and ceiling, fretted with stars, in capital  
letters engraven the inscription of CARLOMARIA.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> E. Hyde, *Selections from Clarendon*, (Ed. G. Huehns) (London, 1953), p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Davenant, *Temple of Love*, p. 292-293.

<sup>20</sup> Davenant, *Temple of Love*, p. 304.

<sup>21</sup> T. Carew, *Coelum Britannicum, Court Masques*, pp. 166-193, 52-57.

<sup>22</sup> Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, pp. 244-248.

The fusion of Charles and Henrietta Maria into one being at once recalls the Platonic conceit that human beings were once joined in double bodies.<sup>23</sup> Simultaneously, the fusion forms a significant part of Charles's presentation of his own rule inasmuch as 'from the moment his wife landed on English soil, [he] made his marriage a very public expression of his rule.'<sup>24</sup> The key emphasis of Charles's self-presentation through the masques is consistently not on himself as an isolated and elevated monarch, but as a husband and father to his wife and children as well as the state. The nation was repeatedly figured as an affective family in early modern discourse. James referred to the monarch as the '*communis parens*'<sup>25</sup> or common parent of the people, and the Caroline masques form the most extensive exploration of the aesthetics of a government figured as a loving family.

The discourse of government as family was acknowledged by Hyde who noted – with reservations – that:

The king's affection to the queen was of a very extraordinary alloy; a composition of conscience, and love, and generosity, and gratitude, and all the noble affection which raise the passion to the greatest height; insomuch as he saw with her eyes, and determined by her judgement.<sup>26</sup>

This passage demonstrates a realisation of masque imagery in politics but Hyde concludes that 'it was not good for either of them.'<sup>27</sup> The masques themselves contain dissenting and destabilising voices. *Coelum Britannicum*, one of the most complex and ambitious masques, contains eight antimasques and, in the speeches of Momus, sustained and uneasy satire. The antimasques of *Coelum* are somewhat unique in that they are not banished or reconciled by the revelation of the ideal. Instead Momus – a stock Olympian figure of mockery, but also strongly associated with criticism of tyranny – engages in dramatic dialogue with them; assessing and rebuffing each antimasque in prose laced with sarcasm and lewd jokes. He summons them with a heraldic formula, mockingly occupying a regal linguistic space and displacing the patterned pentameters of the Olympian's chosen herald, Mercury. With his sneering declaration of: 'Oyez, Oyez, Oyez, [...] after mature deliberation and long debate, held first in our / own inscrutable bosom and afterwards communicated with our / Privy Council, seemed meet to our omnipotency [etc.]'<sup>28</sup> Momus usurps a particular ceremonial language of the court and destabilises the decorous process of regal address

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<sup>23</sup> Plato, *Symposium*, (Trans. A. Nehamas & P. Woodruff) in J. M. Cooper (Ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis, IN., 1997), pp. 457-505, 189e.

<sup>24</sup> Sharpe, *Image Wars*, p. 233.

<sup>25</sup> James VI, *Basilicon Doron*, I, p. 115.

<sup>26</sup> Hyde, *Selections*, p. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Hyde, *Selections*, p. 100.

<sup>28</sup> Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, pp. 385-403.

and reply between Mercury and the royal spectators, and indeed disrupts the entire Jovian mission to Britain. The masque, despite its production at the centre of court is not univocal, and Momus refuses to be contained by the normal structures of the masque; he arrives uninvited, and, unprompted, he leaves before the final resolution: 'I came in bluntly without knocking, and nobody / bid me welcome, so I'll depart as abruptly without taking leave, / and bid nobody farewell.'<sup>29</sup>

The transformation or banishment of the antimasque by the simple revelation of the ideal does not function uncontested in either the masque or the world of politics. Davenant's *Salmacida Spolia* (1640) was the last masque performed before the outbreak of Civil War and registers significant tensions both within court and within the very structure of the masque itself. In *Salmacida Spolia* the scene of the antimasque is Britain itself where a Fury whips the surrounding seas into a rage. We are greeted with 'a horrid scene [...] of storm and tempest. No / glimpse of the sun was seen, as if darkness confusion, and deformity had / possessed the world and driven light to heaven.'<sup>30</sup> The Fury incites the winds to blow 'Until you raise the seas so high / That waves may hang like tears in the sun's eye.'<sup>31</sup> The sun here is clearly Charles, whose position is both panoptic and all-illuminating, and, crucially blinded by the events of 1640. Charles is not called upon or indeed capable of dispelling the storms of sea or state. Instead the antimasque in some senses resolves itself, an expression perhaps of hope rather than confidence. Davenant's masque represents a final fossilisation of the form in the face of mounting factional tensions. The cracks in the iconographic façade are revealed in the very stasis of the symbolic structure deployed. The antimasque proper of the Furies departs before the arrival of the forces of good, allowing none of the interaction between them that made *Coelum Britannicum* so dynamic. There follow twenty entries and departures of comic antimasques which, like the Furies, absent themselves before the re-emergence of the ideal. The closing scene sees the king ascend the mountain of honour and the queen descend to meet him from the heavens. The lovers, united and centre stage, are greeted with this encomium:

So musical as to all ears  
  
Doth seem the music of the spheres,  
  
Are you unto each other still,

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<sup>29</sup> Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, pp. 789-791.

<sup>30</sup> Davenant, *Salmacida Spolia, Court Masques*, pp. 200-213, 93-95.

<sup>31</sup> Davenant, *Salmacida Spolia*, pp. 105-106.

Turning your thoughts to either's will.

All that are harsh, all that are rude,

Are by your harmony subdued;

Yet so into obedience wrought

As if not forced to it but taught.<sup>32</sup>

The emphasis is still on the didactic icon of the king and queen's love, and the capacity for that love to transform chaos, but the retreat from a dramatized engagement and resolution to a series of disjointed tableaux signifies the growing anxiety in the ability of the king's image to reconcile division.

## The Antimasque of Civil War

Abraham Cowley's *Civil War* attempts to bring the gravity of epic to the events it chronicles, but it is also informed by elements of a significantly different genre, the Caroline masque. The image of Charles that Cowley develops is imbued with the language of the masques' encomiums, and even the Carlomarian strand persists. After the indecisive battle of Edgehill (1642), here presented as resounding royalist victory, the poet asks: 'Could this white *day* a gift more gratefull bring? / O yes! It brought blest *Mary* to the *King*.' The king and queen are reunited at:

*Keinton* the Place that Fortune did approve,  
To bee the noblest *Scene* of *War* and *Love*.  
Through the glad vale ten thousand *Cupids* fled,  
And chac'ed the wandring *Spirits* of *Rebells* dead.  
Still the lowd sent of *powder* did they feare,  
And scattterd *Easterne Smells* through all the Aire.  
Looke, happy *Mount*, looke well for this is *shee*,  
That toyld and travaild for thy *victory*.<sup>33</sup>

Carlomaria and the cupids perform a masque-like transformation of the antimasque of Edgehill battlefield into a lover's glade. Unlike the most successful masques though, this masque fails to incorporate and domesticate the forces of antimasque; instead it only succeeds in displacing them. The final couplet reminds us too of the very real political toils of

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<sup>32</sup> Davenant, *Salmacida Spolia*, pp. 421-428.

<sup>33</sup> A. Cowley, *Civil War*, (Ed. A. Pritchard) (Toronto, 1973), 1, pp. 491-492, 495-502.

Henrietta Maria in securing continental arms and aid for her husband, a factor that would become a key point of attack for the king's opponents and part of a strategy for displaying both his uxorious weakness and his Machiavellian plotting. With the outbreak of civil war, the icon of a loving and fruitful royal couple and a government patterned on the Platonic ideal of love can be seen to have ultimately failed in reconciling or even containing the forces of the antimasque.

For royalist poets the civil war constituted a fundamental break in the fabric of society. The ordered hierarchy of the world – that both created and was imagined by the masque – was ruptured. This fracture can be seen, like Inigo Jones's great stage device the turning *machina versatilis*, to discover a world of Furies and disorder 'Beneath the silent Chambers of the Earth'<sup>34</sup> and behind the idyllic vision of the British polity. In Cowley's poem, as in *Salmacida Spolia*, Britain itself becomes the theatre of antimasque. The tumults are figured as a storm ravaging the country:

from the *North* we find  
A *Tempest* conjur'd up without a *Wind*.  
So soone the *North* her Kindnesse did repent,  
First the *Peace maker*, and next *War* she sent.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed the storms and upheavals are such that they disjoint the country from itself, firstly Scotland from England and then 'Ireland which now most basely we begin, / To labour more to loose, then Hee [Henry II] to win.'<sup>36</sup> The English too are enmeshed in this civil uncoupling as the 'high borne *Welch*' give the 'the barbarous *Cyclop[ean]*'<sup>37</sup> rebels of Birmingham a proverbial 'Welsh correction.'<sup>38</sup> The fracture of British history – a history of incorporation, unification, conquest, and rebellion – visibly splits open across the war-torn British landscape.<sup>39</sup> The spectre of self-destruction recalls the aphorism of the then recently translated and popular, Henri, Duc de Rohan: '*England is a mightie Animal, which can never dye except it kill itself.*'<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 2, p. 365.

<sup>35</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 1, pp. 193-96.

<sup>36</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 1, pp. 19-20.

<sup>37</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 2, pp. 76-77.

<sup>38</sup> W. Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, (Ed. T.W. Craik) (London, 1995), 5.1, p. 78.

<sup>39</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History*, 47/5 (1975), pp. 601-621, 609-10.

<sup>40</sup> H. Duc de Rohan, *A Treatise of the Interest of the Princes and States of Christendom*, (Trans. H. Hunt) (Paris, 1640), p. 35.

The typology of the great flood is enlisted to further emphasise the epic and biblical proportions of the civic carnage:

Thus like a *Deluge War* came roaring forth,  
The bending *West* orewhelm'd, and riseing *North*.  
A *Deluge* there; and high red *Tides* the while  
Oreflowd all parts of *Albions* bleeding *Ile*<sup>41</sup>

In *Civil War*, more powerfully than in any of the court masques, the forces of chaos and disorder threaten the good and just rule of the king. Against the roll-call of natural disasters and civil-blood-letting the panegyric to the Thames establishes a vision of the proper ordering of the nation's natural environment now obscured by strife:

Good, reverend *Thames*, the best belov'd of all  
Those Noble *floods* that meete at *Neptunes* Hall,  
*Londons* proud Towers which thy faire head adorne  
Move not thy *glorie* now (but *grief* and *scorne*).  
Thou griev'st to see the *white-nam'd pallace* shine,  
Without the Beames of its owne *Lord* and *Thine*.  
Thy *Lord*, who is to all as good and free  
As thow, Kind *Flood*, to thine owne Banks canst bee.<sup>42</sup>

In this passage it becomes clear that Charles exists in harmony with a landscape that he 'adornes' and rules, and in return is crowned and glorified. The imagery of Charles as a refulgent king of light and whiteness is consistent throughout the poem and with earlier masques, but it should be emphasised that Charles is notable in the poem largely for his silence and absence. Writing in a situation of ongoing conflict, Cowley was still awaiting the final Caroline victory that would re-order the British state – something which never happened.

*Civil War* presents a procession of antimasques but history refused their resolution. Cowley stages a demonic 'parlament' chaired by the '*Stygian Tyrant*,' and, in place of the conventional epic catalogue of the armies, he portrays a pageant of grotesque sectaries and rebels.<sup>43</sup> In an image imbued with the destruction of the old monarchical order, the puritans are described thus: 'Gods Image stamp't on Monarchs they deface; / And 'bove the Throne their thundring Pulpits place,' and the Anabaptists are reduced to the 'dismall Hær'esy of

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<sup>41</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 2, pp. 1-4.

<sup>42</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 1, pp. 333-340.

<sup>43</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 2, pp. 504-507.

wild Muncers crew, / Hether twelve hundred stout Mechanicks drew.<sup>44</sup> 'Mechanic' is a term that has masque pedigree and was used in Jonson's *Loves Welcome at Bolsover* to describe the antimasquers following Vitruvius. John Denham also deployed the word in a similar denouncement of the plebeian nature of the commonwealthsmen in his 'Prologue to his Majesty':

This spacious Land their Theater became,  
And they *Grave Counsellors*, and *Lords* in Name;  
Which these Mechanicks Personate so ill.<sup>45</sup>

In Cowley the satire is dynamic and energetic, if embattled and bitter; Carlomaria are conspicuous by their absence. After his defeat at Naseby (1645) some of Charles's personal correspondence was captured and subsequently published by the Parliamentarians. It is striking that absence is the first charge the publishers lay against Charles:

a prince seduced out of his proper sphear; one that has left the seat in which he ought, and hath bound himself to sit, to sit (as the psalmist speaks) in the *Chair of the scornfull*, and to the ruine (almost) of three kingdoms.<sup>46</sup>

The publishing of his letters marked a new phase in the representation of the Charles, and further highlights the instability of interpreting royal texts. Those who published it highlighted Henrietta Maria's attempts to bring in foreign arms and troops, and the king's dialogue with the Irish confederates as proof of his betrayal of the law, parliament, and people. The letters to Henrietta Maria are themselves framed with the everyday tokens of the love and affection that had been so idealised in the rarefied setting of the court masque. Paradoxically – and wholly against the publishers' intentions – the minutiae of state, of family news, of the conferring of titles, and the daily business that makes up the bulk of the letters lose a certain focus between preambles such as 'Dear heart, I wrote to thee yesterday [...] the subject of it was only kindnesse to thee; which, I assure thee shall ever be visible in all my actions,' and conclusions such as 'I have now no more to say, but praying for and impatiently expecting of good news from thee, I rest eternally thine.'<sup>47</sup> The conceit of the masques that imagine the 'polity as affective family' is unconsciously realised in the letters between husband and wife, and the icon of Charles as a monarch patterned on familial love and devotion was both

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<sup>44</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 3, pp. 61-62, 87-88.

<sup>45</sup> J. Denham, 'The Prologue to His Majesty' in T. H. Banks JR (Ed.), *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, (New Haven, CT., 1928), pp. 94-5, 95.

<sup>46</sup> *The Kings Cabinet Opened* (London, 1645), p. i.

<sup>47</sup> Charles I, *Kings Cabinet*, p. 3, p. 4.

fractured and revived by his enemies.<sup>48</sup> The publication of his private correspondence perhaps shattered the esoteric and mystical display of ideal kingship developed by the masques, but it displayed ‘a man, a husband, flawed but human, with whom other mortals could empathize.’<sup>49</sup>

## Royalist Topographies of Order and Disorder

Intimately related to the world of masque and antimasque, order and disorder, are the topographical and pastoral spaces evoked by royalists and regicides alike. Harmony and order can be celebrated in apostrophes to the natural environment, but pastoral is a double-edged genre, one that offers retreat from the fallen world of state politics, but also constructs a space to think with and refract that chaos across a rural landscape or garden. Written in 1642, John Denham’s *Cooper’s Hill* explores a specifically royal space and history, but, within the circumscribed limits of Windsor and its environs, the civic turmoil of the day intrudes and is to some extent integrated. As John M. Wallace argues ‘The view from a hill afforded him the needed distance to see all the problems of the crown and the capital in perspective.’<sup>50</sup>

The poet hails ‘*Windsor* [...] (where *Mars* with *Venus* dwells. / Beauty with strength) above the valley swells.’<sup>51</sup> Though proclaiming Windsor the seat of Mars and Venus continued some of the Carlomarian strands from the court masques, it was, by 1642, problematic. Not only had the king fled London in January 1642, but the irony of choosing the famous adulterers Mars and Venus as symbols of the scrupulously chaste royal couple ironically undermines Denham’s image. The poem offers a vision of a particularly regal topography, in the words of William Rockett ‘the places in the landscape of “Cooper’s Hill” – St Paul’s Cathedral, Windsor Castle, Chertsey Abbey, and Runnymede – are creatures of sovereignty.’<sup>52</sup> In a way that echoes the court masques, these ‘sovereign’ spaces are integrated with a wider world of spiritual and mythological significance. Carew describes the scene at the close of *Coelum Britannicum* as showing:

*In the firmament [...] a troop of fifteen stars,*

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<sup>48</sup> K. Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London, 2013), p. 211.

<sup>49</sup> Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule*, p. 160.

<sup>50</sup> J. M. Wallace, ‘Cooper’s Hill: The Manifesto of Parliamentary Royalism, 1641’, *ELH*, 41/4 (1974), pp. 494-540, 497.

<sup>51</sup> Denham, ‘Cooper’s Hill’ in *The Poetical Works*, pp. 63-89, 39-40.

<sup>52</sup> W. Rockett, ‘“Courts make not Kings, but Kings the Court”: “Cooper’s Hill” and the Constitutional Crisis of 1642’, *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, 17/1 (1993), pp. 1-14, 1.

*expressing the stellifying of our British heroes; but one more great and eminent than the rest, which was over his head, figured his Majesty. And in the lower part was seen afar off the prospect of Windsor Castle, the famous seat of the most honourable Order of the Garter.*<sup>53</sup>

This vista shows the British constellations, the king, and Windsor in harmonious perspective, locating regality in a supernatural hierarchy, a 'golden chain' that reaches down to the very stones of Windsor. *Cooper's Hill* performs a similar conceit in describing the Thames as it skirts the hill:

This scene had some bold Greek, or Brittish Bard  
Beheld of old, what stories had we heard,  
Of Fairies, Satyrs, and the Nymphs their Dames,  
Their feasts, their revels, & their amorous flames:  
'Tis still the same, although their aery shape  
All but a quick Poetick sight escape.<sup>54</sup>

The royal grounds are peopled with the demi-gods of classical mythology and amongst them moves a herd of deer: 'that noble herd / On whose sublime and shady fronts is rear'd / Natures great Master-piece.'<sup>55</sup> The king is capable of stepping into this world of half-fantasy to hunt the stag. The hunting of the stag, a traditionally regal pursuit, confirms Charles' position at the head of the hierarchy of nature, and the stag – itself a monarch of the valley beasts:

disdains to die  
By common hands; but if he can descry  
Some nobler foes approach, to him he calls,  
And begs his Fate, and then contented falls.  
So when the King a mortal shaft lets fly  
From his unerring hand, then glad to dy,

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<sup>53</sup> Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, pp. 1010-1014.

<sup>54</sup> Denham, 'Cooper's Hill', pp. 229-234.

<sup>55</sup> Denham, 'Cooper's Hill', pp. 237-239.

Proud of the wound, to it resigns his blood,

And stains the Crystal with a purple flood.<sup>56</sup>

The symbolic slaying of a king by a king takes on prophetic resonances in the uneasy situation of 1642, and its position in the wider structure of the poem encourages us to read the hunt in the context of an evaluation of sovereignty and kingship. Immediately after the king's 'mortal shaft' looses a royal purple 'flood' from the Stag, comes a meditation on the Magna Carta and the proper relations between king and subjects. The poet exclaims that:

Here was that Charter seal'd, wherein the Crown

All marks of Arbitrary power lays down:

Tyrant and slave, those names of hate and fear,

The happier stile of King and Subject bear:

Happy, when both to the same Centre move,

When Kings give liberty, and Subjects love.<sup>57</sup>

When the poem was written king and subject were patently not moving to the same 'centre', indeed Charles expected 'love' and increasing factions among his subjects 'liberty.'

Denham's is a moderate voice, a royalist, but one perhaps sympathetic to those opposing so-called arbitrary government. However, he goes on to chastise the commons who take advantage of the king's liberality: 'The Subjects arm'd, the more their Princes gave, / Th' advantage only took the more to crave. / Till Kings by giving, give themselves away.'<sup>58</sup> This insistence on the king's fault consisting simply in excessive generosity was to become a royalist trope and is echoed throughout the arch-monarchical text *Eikon Basilike*. There Charles explains his decision to call the Long Parliament in saying 'I hoped, by my freedom and their moderation, to prevent all misunderstandings.'<sup>59</sup> Continuing the imagery of the stag hunt, *Cooper's Hill* depicts a sovereign wounding itself and paints in the stark, almost Machiavellian, words of 'tyrant', 'slave', 'arbitrary power', and 'advantage' a very real and immediate struggle for the position and meaning of the king. The language, abstracts him entirely from the poetic fantasy of the sprite inhabited riverbank. The confluence of kingly liberality and the grasping of subjects is resolved in the poem into an image of unbridled

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<sup>56</sup> Denham, 'Cooper's Hill', pp. 237-239.

<sup>57</sup> Denham, 'Cooper's Hill', pp. 329-334.

<sup>58</sup> Denham, 'Cooper's Hill', pp. 337-339.

<sup>59</sup> *Eikon Basilike*, (Ed. P. A. Knachel) (New York, 1966), p. 3.

force. A river in spate, and partially dammed, to 'a Deluge swells: / Stronger, and fiercer by restraint he roars, / And knows no bound, but makes his power his shores.'<sup>60</sup>

The 'deluge' of *Cooper's Hill*, echoed in Cowley, forms a powerful royalist trope that was revisited even in regal pronouncements. In 'The King's Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Parliament' the British polity is imagined as a river that has absorbed the three constitutional tributaries of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy. This gives to the kingdom:

the conveniences of all three, without the inconveniences of any one, as long as the balance hangs even between the three estates, and they run jointly on in their proper channel (begetting verdure and fertility in the meadows on both sides) and the overflowing of either on either side raise no deluge or inundation.<sup>61</sup>

In *Civil War* the fertility engendered by this balance is destroyed. The poems presents a loss of control of the natural environment and the inversion of order depicted ultimately in Charles's loss of the navy: 'The Sea they [the rebels] subject next to their Commands, / The Sea that Crownes our *Kinges*, and all their *Lands*.'<sup>62</sup> Although the rebels temporally control the lands and shipping, Charles's authority is confirmed by the sea, and he will eventually reassert it over the landscape to reinstitute the proper realignment of power. The centrality of the sea to the strength of the British monarchy is a poetic trope with a heritage in masques such as *The Masque of Blackness* and reaches its apogee in John of Gaunt's famous speech – elicited by another moment of civil crisis – in which Britain is described as:

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,

[...]

This precious stone set in the silver sea,

Which serves it in the office of a wall,

Or as a moat defensive to a house.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Denham, 'Cooper's Hill', pp. 356-358.

<sup>61</sup> 'The King's Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Parliament, 18 June 1642', in J.P. Kenyon (Ed.), *The Stuart Constitution, 1603-1688*, (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 21-23, 21.

<sup>62</sup> Cowley, *Civil War*, 1, pp. 165-167.

<sup>63</sup> W. Shakespeare, 'Richard the Second', in P. Alexander (Ed.), *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, (London, 1991), pp. 446-479, 2.1, pp. 40-48.

Naturally for a maritime nation, water imagery provides a fertile strain for imagining and representing the power of the king. Whilst Cowley's and Denham's poems from the 1640s utilise the language of floods and inundations and depict the loss of royal authority and naval control, poetry written after the Restoration connects with and reverses these images. After 1660 Cowley and Edmund Waller both published ekphrastic poems on Henrietta Maria's rebuilding of Somerset House. The significance of these poetic and architectural restorations is further emphasised if we recall that Somerset House was the main theatre used for staging the court masques before the Civil War and was used as the site of Charles's execution. Cowley's 'On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House' is written in the voice of the palace itself, and meditates on the Civil Wars' local effects on the building. The house complains:

In all my rooms and galleries, I found  
The richest figures torn, and all around  
Dismembered statues of great Heroes lay;  
Such Naseby's field seemed on the fatal day.<sup>64</sup>

The poem adopts an inward perspective to read the misfortunes of a particular place into a wider matrix of parallel events, but the situation of the house on the banks of the Thames allows the restored palace to look outwards once again. Throughout the poem the river is referred to affectionately and possessively as 'my Thames', 'imperial river', and 'fair River.'<sup>65</sup> Control of the river is explicitly linked with the authority of the restored monarch as the house looks across the water 'Tow'rds the white palace where that King does reign / Who lays his laws and bridges o'er the main.'<sup>66</sup> Laws are flung across an unruly nation like bridges across the power of a river which 'does roar and foam and rage' but in the face of majesty 'recomposes straight and calms his face.'<sup>67</sup> The authority of the monarch (installed in the very seats that Charles I had shamefacedly quit), partially undoes the damage that had 'dismembered' the palace's statues and the icon of kingly power at the battle of Naseby. Waller's poem on the same subject also emphasises the harmony realised by the Queen Mother's restoration of the palace:

This, by the Queen herself designed,

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<sup>64</sup> Cowley, A., 'On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House', in J. Griffin (Ed.), *Selected Poems of Abraham Cowley, Edmund Waller and John Oldham*, (Harmondsworth, 1998), pp. 29-31, 7-10.

<sup>65</sup> Cowley, 'On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House', pp. 69, 88, 93.

<sup>66</sup> Cowley, 'On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House', pp. 77-78.

<sup>67</sup> Cowley, 'On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House', pp. 73, 74.

Gives us a pattern of her mind;  
The state and order does proclaim  
The genius of that royal dame,  
Each part with just proportion graced,  
And all to such advantage placed  
That the fair view her window yields,  
The town, the river, and the fields.<sup>68</sup>

Palace, city, river, and countryside are integrated in the royal vision – afforded by the elevated perspective from the windows of Somerset House – into a harmonious whole. Cowley's poem concludes with a vision of the Thames' waters and the king's fleets pouring out through the world's oceans: 'Thy mighty Master's sovereign fleet, / Which now triumphant o'er the main does ride, / The terror of all lands, the ocean's pride.'<sup>69</sup> This exultant vision banishes the nightmares of the Civil War which were grounded for Cowley in images of London's betrayal, of the loss of control over the sea and navy, and ultimately the destabilisation of the English landscape itself which could conceal a hellish foundry of corrupting metals and demonic plots. It is a recurring image of the masques that 'the opening of the earth is troped as an inherently dangerous process, since it is associated with both antimasque as well as masque elements,' yet it also represents access to a realm of 'mineral wealth.'<sup>70</sup> The material world is realigned by the return of the Stuarts; the dangers of opening the earth are set aside in Cowley's topographical poem which indulges in a vision of global empire and trade buoyed on the waters of the Thames: 'The peaceful mother on mild Thames does build, / With her son's fabrics the rough sea is fill'd.'<sup>71</sup>

## After a Republic – a New Age and a New History

When Cromwell finally refused the offer of a crown he stated that:

Truly the providence of God has laid this title aside providentially. *De facto* it is laid aside [...] it has been the issue of a great deliberation as ever was in a

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<sup>68</sup> Edmund Waller, 'Upon her Majesty's New Buildings at Somerset House', *Selected Poems of Abraham Cowley, Edmund Waller and John Oldham*, pp. 82-83, 31-38.

<sup>69</sup> Cowley, 'On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House', pp. 100-102.

<sup>70</sup> P. Berry & J. E. Archer, 'Reinventing the Matter of Britain: Undermining the State in Jacobean Masques' in D.J. Baker & W. Maley (Eds.), *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 119-134, pp. 128 ; 129.

<sup>71</sup> Cowley, 'On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House', pp. 107-108.

nation. It has been the issue of ten or twelve year's civil war, wherein much blood has been shed [...] And God has seemed providentially not only to strike at the family but at the name.<sup>72</sup>

He lays emphasis on the lead and the paper bullets that had been fired in resolving the issue and the finality of that deliberation. The consequences of this radical discourse were far reaching; so much so that Lawrence Stone claims the American revolutionaries 'invoked the same ideals hammered out in the fires of England's revolutionary century.'<sup>73</sup> Events soon belied Cromwell, and the rapid collapse of the Protectorate after his death opened the door for the restoration not just of the family, but of the name of king in Charles II. The preceding decades had profoundly affected British conceptions of the citizen, and the monarchy. Though Charles re-established a centralized monarchy the iconography of kingship may be seen to have changed, at least in part. A substantial body of poetry, prose, and drama formed a discourse that reformulated or contested the fundamental images of monarchy. Charles's return was hailed by Katherine Philips in terms directly appropriated from the apocalyptic Puritan typologies that posited the Protectorate as the New Jerusalem. Overlaying England with the history of Israel, she presents the nation as 'Old Jacob' and Charles as 'Joseph that was preserved to restore / Their lives, who would have taken his before.'<sup>74</sup> Masques, central to the self-presentation of Charles I, were not rehabilitated at the new court, though poets such as Waller and Cowley could still envisage the monarch sitting at the head of an ordered universe. The playhouses were reopened, and the symbolism was noted by supporters such as Denham: 'They that would have no *KING*, would have no Play: / The *Laurel* and the *Crown* together went.'<sup>75</sup> For Denham the Restoration constituted a reordering of the public sphere in accord with the civil graces of art and majesty. Most of the texts looked at here have been in some way 'elite' productions, generally aimed at a small audience of nobles – in the case of the masques – or a small poetry-reading public in the case of Denham and Waller, and Cowley's *Civil War* went unfinished and unpublished in his lifetime. However, Denham's note on the reopening of the playhouses conveys a positive sense of the accessible and more widely felt socio-cultural consequences of the return of the monarchy. John Dryden's 'Astraea Redux' hailed in Virgilian strains the return of the monarchy as the rebirth of a golden age of justice, but admitted that the interregnum had

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<sup>72</sup> O. Cromwell, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, (Ed. W. C. Abbott), 4 Vols. (Cambridge, MA., 1947), IV, p. 470

<sup>73</sup> L. Stone, 'The Results of the English Revolutions' in J.G.A Pocock (Ed.), *Three British Revolution: 1641, 1688, 1776*, (Princeton, IN., 1980), pp. 23-108, p. 99

<sup>74</sup> K. Philips, 'On the numerous accesse of the English to waite upon the King in Holland', in P. Thomas (Ed.) *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips The Matchless Orinda*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, 1990), I, pp. 70-71, 21 ; 23-24.

<sup>75</sup> Denham, 'The Prologue to His Majesty', p. 94.

traumatised both the nation and the new king. The young king had suffered the violence of revolution:

*Charles* his too too active age,  
Which govern'd by the wild distemper'd rage  
Of some black Star infecting all the Skies,  
Made him at his own cost like *Adam* wise.<sup>76</sup>

Charles's and the nation's experience of exile made them wise, but after the pattern of Adam who acquired the knowledge of good and evil with the consequences of pain and death. However the whiteness of clemency and mercy were imagined to resolve all public wounds; Charles's reign was figured as 'times whiter Series [...] begun / Which in soft Centuries shall smoothly run.'<sup>77</sup> However traumatic the decades of civil war and regicide had been, they had also opened up new discourses that could not be entirely silenced by appeals to a new *Pax Carolus*.

Despite the decision not to revive court masques (and it must have been a conscious decision) their iconography remained largely viable in early Restoration poetry and Dryden's vision of a new golden age implicitly posits that the masque imagery of kingship would continue to shape England's future. However, aside from the masques and the sacral imagery of kingship, another ideological legacy survived the Restoration and was wielded by John Milton to undercut and erode the legitimacy of the regal icon. John Milton's *History of Britain* (1670) was begun circa 1649 as a Livian project to uncover the glorious remains of England's past – located firmly in an imagined Saxon commonwealth – but his critical reading of the sources revealed a history of kin-slaying, treachery, adultery, rape, and usurpation; a history of continuous falls with little respite. For Milton the ancient Britons and the Saxons were 'Progenitors not to be glori'd in.'<sup>78</sup> Milton's images of amoral authority undercut monarchical claims of 'virtuous appetite' or of a reordering of the nation's moral life. Instead English history tells the story of a people so degraded by imperial, episcopal, and monarchical abuse that whenever they gained freedom they 'shr[a]nk more wretchedly under the burden of their own libertie, than [...] under a foren yoke.'<sup>79</sup> For Milton this is clearly

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<sup>76</sup> J. Dryden, 'Astraea Redux' in J. Kinsley (Ed.), *The Poems of John Dryden*, 4 Vols. (London, 1958), I, pp. 16-24, 110-113.

<sup>77</sup> Dryden, 'Astraea Redux', pp. 292-293.

<sup>78</sup> J. Milton, *The History of Britain* in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, (Ed. D. M. Wolfe et al.), 8 Vols. (New Haven, CT., 1971), V, Part 1, p. 61.

<sup>79</sup> Milton, *History of Britain*, p. 131.

history with a contemporary and prophetic edge – indeed Willy Maley terms it a ‘Trojan Horse bequeathed to the imperial monarchy.’<sup>80</sup> The *History of Britain*, for all its gloomy content, is a hopeful book. It is a late synthesis of Renaissance Humanism, and it calls for those ‘who can judiciously read’ to uncover its radical truths.<sup>81</sup> Milton calls for a new image and history of man, as the histories of kings (and therefore their futures also) are no more worthy of recounting than ‘Wars of Kites, or Crows, flocking and fighting in the Air.’<sup>82</sup>

As I have argued above, the Caroline court masques had developed and performed a highly sacralised and ideologically coherent iconography of kingship, and furthermore these images and tropes were utilised in Royalist pastoral, topographical, and even epic poetry. This iconography primarily centred on the moral purity of the monarch which found its purest expression in fruitful marriage, and was deemed to be a force capable of reordering the nation into harmonious union. Finally, the work of poets such as Milton and Dryden demonstrates the possible trajectories for engagement with this iconography after the Restoration of the monarchy.

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<sup>80</sup> W. Maley, ‘The Canon: *The History of Britain*. By John Milton’, *Times Higher Education* (28. 01. 2010) < <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/books/the-canon-the-history-of-britain-by-john-milton/410131.article> > (Accessed: 18/10/17).

<sup>81</sup> Milton, *History of Britain*, p. 129. See also Maley, ‘The Canon: *The History of Britain*. By John Milton’.

<sup>82</sup> Milton, *History of Britain*, p. 249.

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