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Eve, Mary and Female Catholic Threat in John Dryden's *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man* (1677)

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This essay considers the early afterlife of Eve, one of John Milton's best-known characters. Although largely forgotten today, John Dryden's adaptation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man,* enjoyed significant print popularity in the seventeenth century. The abiding critical interpretation of Dryden's semi-opera is that it reframes Milton's poetics, politics, philosophy and theology either to provide cynical mockery of Milton or else to create a (poorly executed) Royalist heroic play. Dryden's peculiar depictions of Adam and Eve have received far less attention and yet, as I argue in this essay, the portrayal of Adam as effeminate and Eve as a powerful, manipulative female figure offer the clearest indication of the play's politics. I break from a critical tradition that has tended to polarise Milton and Dryden and instead read Dryden's characters in the context of contemporary, satirical, representations of Charles II, and attacks on what were deemed to be overly-influential female Catholic figures at court, such as Mary of Modena, who married James, Duke of York – the heir presumptive of Charles II – in 1673, and to whom Dryden's opera is dedicated.

Keywords: Milton, Dryden, gender, adaptation, Catholicism

The abiding critical interpretation of John Dryden's *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man* (1677) is that Dryden's adaptation evacuates John Milton's poetics, politics, philosophy, and theology and reframes *Paradise Lost* either as a cynical mockery of Milton or else as a (poorly executed) Royalist heroic play. For example, Diana Traviño Benet accuses Dryden of "cannibalizing the great Christian epic" (263); Anne Ferry calls it an "offensive vulgarization" (21); Lara Dodds states that it is in many ways "a deliberate challenge to Milton's poetic and political commitments" (2); Morris Freedman suggests that "the futility of the project overwhelmed" Dryden and prevented the opera from being staged, and

that the project helped Dryden to recognise the shortcomings of heroic verse (18); and Steven Zwicker calls it "trivializing, domesticating, even ridiculous or comic" (*Milton, Dryden, and the Politics of Literary Controversy* 54). Sharon Achinstein is slightly more sympathetic, considering the adaptation thoughtful rather than mocking, but still suggests that it "sets [Milton's] original straight, limits 'licence'" and "makes rational order triumphant" in an act of Royalist rewriting that is antithetical to Milton's principles (18). Though these readings sometimes acknowledge the contemporary popularity of Dryden's text, their desire to read Dryden in opposition to Milton – which is arguably shaped by the posthumous afterlives and political reputations of the two writers – has caused them to overlook the analogous criticism of key royal figures found in Dryden's opera.[1]

Negative appraisals of Dryden's opera often adopt the same tone once reserved for Restoration adaptations of William Shakespeare's plays, with Milton and Shakespeare's (now) better-known works revered and rewrites disparaged in ways that overlook the role adaptation often plays in the canonisation of individual texts and authors (Depledge, *Shakespeare's Rise to Cultural Prominence*,"Shakespeare for Sale;" Dobson). Although it is Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) which has stood the test of time and remained a household name, Dryden's semi-operatic adaptation was well known in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century and it played an important role in the afterlife of Milton's poem. *The State of Innocence* circulated widely in manuscript from around 1673,[2] and went through an impressive nine print editions between 1677 and the turn of the century. *Paradise Lost* went through six editions between 1667 and 1700 and, as the table below indicates, new editions of *Paradise Lost* were issued shortly after editions of *The State of Innocence*. *Paradise Lost* was first published in quarto format in 1667. The second edition of *Paradise Lost*, an octavo, was not published until seven years later, in 1674, and its appearance looks to have been influenced by manuscript circulation of *The State of Innocence*. Indeed, the 1674 edition makes reference to Dryden's adaptation in its paratextual materials; Marvell's poem, "On Paradise

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1 On Milton's authorial reputation and the afterlife of tyranny see David Loewenstein's chapter in this volume.

2 A circa 1673 circulation date is indicated by the fact that the text was likely intended to celebrate the marriage feast of James Duke of York and Mary of Modena in late 1673 (see Gabel 188). A late 1673 or early 1674 composition date is also corroborated by the fact that the opera was entered into the Stationers' Register by Henry Herringman on 17th April 1674.

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Lost," which prefaces the edition, mocks "Town-Bayes" for tagging verses with rhyming bells, a clear reference to Dryden's nickname and, perhaps, to the now infamous meeting between Dryden and Milton in which Milton is said to have given Dryden leave to "tagge his verses" (Aubrey 7). The same poetic voice fears that "some less skilful hand" would "change [*Paradise Lost*] in Scenes, and show it in a Play," thus implying awareness (and criticism) of Dryden's adaptation. The third edition of *Paradise Lost* (1678) appeared within twelve months of *The State of Innocence's* first print edition. As Emma Depledge has argued, the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost* – a folio edition which is widely believed to have helped secure the poem's canonical status – might have been published by Jacob Tonson (and Richard Bentley) as a "consolation prize" when he was unable to obtain the rights in copy to publish *The State of Innocence* ("Repackaging Milton" 50). The 1691 and 1695 editions of *Paradise Lost* likewise followed hot on the heels of new editions of *The State of Innocence*. Thus, Dryden's adaptation prompted paratextual engagement in one edition of *Paradise Lost* and may well have inspired stationers to invest in new editions of Milton's poem.

Table 1: Circulation and Publication Dates of *Paradise Lost* and *The State of Innocence*

1667 1st edition of *Paradise Lost*
c.1673 Manuscript of Dryden's *The State of Innocence* in circulation
1674 2nd edition of *Paradise Lost*, featuring paratextual allusions to *The State of Innocence*
1677 1st edition of *The State of Innocence*
1678 2nd edition of *The State of Innocence* 3rd edition of *Paradise Lost*
1684 3rd and 4th editions of *The State of Innocence*
1688 4th edition of *Paradise Lost* (folio)
1690 5th edition of *The State of Innocence*

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1691 5th edition of *Paradise Lost*
1692 6th edition of *The State of Innocence*
1695 7th and 8th edition of *The State of Innocence* 6th edition of *Paradise Lost*
"1684" 9th edition of *The State of Innocence*, with a false date, but must date from later than 1695 (Hamilton 163)

Dryden's decision to adapt Milton's poem and thereby participate in the discourse that Alan Roper has described as "the politics of Paradise" was carefully orchestrated (110). Seventeenth-century Royalists, most famously Sir Robert Filmer in his *Patriarcha: or the natural power of kings* (published 1680, but circulated in manuscript much earlier), seized on the character of Adam to argue that divine monarchy and patriarchal power descended directly from the Adamic line (B8r–B8v), but Republicans fiercely rejected this assertion (Almond 107–109). Readers of *The State of Innocence* would have been aware of the political analogue of Adam and the institution of the monarchy and they might have expected Dryden – as Poet Laureate (from 1668) and Historiographer-Royal (from 1670) – to exploit these links to voice support for the reigning monarch and his extended family, but this was not the case.

Dryden's version of Adam does not defend Adamic authority and patriarchal rights. For Matthew Augustine, Dryden's weak, lustful, and ineffectual Adam reflects a pessimism about the stability of monarchy under an effeminate monarch like Charles II (239). Indeed, effeminacy – in the seventeenth-century sense of being governed by women (Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 9) – was something Charles II, and the Stuarts more generally, were frequently accused of in the period. The ideological notion of kingship, as Paul Hammond explains, was travestied by the physical existence of the debauched King (123–124), and Charles's public, sexualised body was the topic of a number of satirical poems (Weil). Augustine is correct to relate Dryden's Adam – who "resigns his boasted sovereignty" to Eve (C3r) – with critiques of the King. Indeed, I would echo Augustine's argument – a necessary antidote to the critical tradition which considers Dryden at odds with Milton – that we should consider Dryden's decision to adapt Milton's work not as a repudiation of Milton

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and an evacuation of his politics but instead as an "interpellation of Milton's oppositional view of Stuart monarchy" (239).

The opera's political cynicism may also help to explain the print success enjoyed by *The State of Innocence*. Dryden's departure from the more orthodox royalist representation of Adam can be in part explained by the fact that satirical, tongue-in-cheek plays which contained thinly veiled criticisms of political figures were far more popular in the 1670s than the bombastic Royalist heroic works of the 1660s (Owen, "Restoration Drama and Politics"), and Dryden was no stranger to courting both popularity and controversy. In this paper I will offer further evidence for reading *The State of Innocence* as veiled criticism of the Stuart court by focusing less on Adam's effeminacy and more on Dryden's representation of Eve as a powerful female figure who manipulates weak men. These tropes were associated with the dangers of Catholic women in the period and, most specifically in the 1670s, with James Duke of York's new Catholic bride, Mary of Modena. I contend that Dryden's dedication to Mary, its material representation on the title pages of the editions, as well the parallels he makes between his dedicatee and the depiction of Eve, participate in and reflect contemporary anti-Catholic rhetoric to offer a veiled warning to the Stuart monarchy – that the consequences of their choice of female bedfellows may result in an irreversible fall.

1 Politics and "Popery" in 1673 and 1677

The dates of *The State of Innocence's* appearance in manuscript and its first print edition – c.1673 and 1677 respectively – both coincide with moments of heightened anti-Catholic feeling. By 1673 it was becoming increasingly clear that James, Duke of York – whose Catholicism was widely suspected and then confirmed by the Test Act issued that year – would succeed his brother as king, as Charles II and his wife, Catherine of Braganza, had yet to produce a legitimate heir.[3] Anti-Catholic sentiment reached its height by the late 1670s and early 1680s, with the publication of Andrew Marvell's *An Account of Popery and Arbitrary Government* (1677), the explosion of printed tracts about a (fabricated) Popish Plot in

[3] The 1673 Test Act required anyone occupying any civil, military or religious office to take the oath of supremacy and allegiance and to deny the Catholic belief in transubstantiation, effectively forcing all Catholics out of public office. See Douglas C. Sparks (2016) for further discussion.

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1678, and subsequent calls to ban James from the succession (the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-1681).[4]

The threat of a return to Catholic rule loomed large and Adam's declaration that he is "A barren sex, and single, of no use; / But full of forms which I can ne'r produce" will likely have invited comparison with the monarch's childless marriage (*State of Innocence* C1r). Charles II did 'produce' illegitimate offspring, but this was of little use in terms of the succession, and his excessive virility led to attacks on his wife, who was frequently accused of being 'barren.'[5] Concern over the succession underscored the pivotal importance of women and maternity in politics, and perhaps heightened the tension and suspicion around James's second marriage. James and Mary's union in the same year as the Test Act compounded the public and Parliament's fears surrounding Catholic ascendency. The match was virulently contested by Parliament on the basis that a foreign, Catholic princess would pose a significant threat to the stability of the monarchy and the religion within the three kingdoms, and Charles II was forced to prorogue parliament and dismiss his Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Shaftesbury to prevent their interference in the proceedings (Hallé 35–40).

Many feared that the state of Rome and the Pope himself were plotting to gain control of England through this match, and fears of the Pope's involvement were not entirely unfounded. Mary, initially resistant to marriage and intending to become a nun, only acquiesced due to the intervention of the Pope, who wrote to convince her that her marriage would be of service to the Catholic church by "preparing for us, in the Kingdom of England an ample harvest of joy" (Hallé 21). In this sense, the fears of Parliament and the public are reflected in the Pope's hopes: the alliance was suspected on both sides of being capable of advancing the counter-Reformation in England. News of this marriage and Mary's arrival were greeted not with parades and street parties, but instead with the revival, for the first time since the reign of Elizabeth I, of bonfires and Pope-burning pageants (Johnson 64; Rustici).

The gendered aspect of the threat which Mary was presumed to pose at her arrival is related not only to the fears of succession and her potential fertility, but also to historical concerns about Catholic women and

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4 See Jonathan Scott, 7–21.

5 For example, Michal is described as "A soil ungrateful to the tiller's care" in Dryden's *Absolom and Achitophel* (1681) in order to justify Absolom's "Promiscuous use of concubine and bride" (l.12, l.6), for discussion see Susan C. Greenfield.

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sexuality. These are particularly visible in, for example, the Earl of Rochester's poem "Seigneure Dildoe," circulated circa November 1673 at the time of their wedding feast (Love), which begins by asking the "Ladyes of merry England" if they have "been to kisse the Duchesse's hand" and whether they had met in her retinue "A noble Italian called *Signeur Dildoe*" (Wilmot 145). As Sandra Jean Sullivan has argued, this poem constitutes "an attack on [Mary] for bringing unspeakable vices as a Catholic wife of the Catholic heir presumptive to the throne" (112). Associations between Catholic women, vice, and monstrosity were not new, they recycled images of the "poisonous Catholic bride" and the potential "monstrous Catholic mother […] who would infect the individual conscience, commission the rape of the innocent, and destroy the nation to satisfy her Popish masters," of which Henrietta Maria had been the archetype (Airey, *The Politics of Rape* 18). Mary's arrival in 1673 was thus a catalyst for existing anxiety regarding the figure of the female Catholic.

By 1677 and the publication of the first edition of *The State of Innocence*, anti-Popish sentiments were at an all-time high. Marvell's *An Account of Popery and Arbitrary Government* notably discusses Parliament's earlier objections to the marriage based on the "continual apprehensions of the increase of Popery" and the idea that, through Mary, Catholic plots against "the Realm" might come to fruition (F4v). For Marvell and other opposition writers, these objections were still fresh and current, and remained so in 1678 when the Duchess became embroiled in the so-called "Popish Plot." Mary's secretary, Edward Coleman, was found with incriminating letters which leant weight to Titus Oates' claims of a plot to assassinate Charles II and replace him with James, who would rule – it was suggested – with the help of a standing army furnished by his French, Catholic cousin, Louis XIV. Coleman was hanged, drawn, and quartered for treason (Kishlansky 254) and, by 1679, James and Mary were forced to live in (temporary) exile in Edinburgh.

It is within this climate of anti-Catholic sentiment that Dryden chose to adapt Milton's fiercely anti-Catholic poem and dedicate it to Mary, the Catholic queen presumptive, a figure of intense public vilification. There is evidence to suggest that Dryden was already thinking of associating his text with the arrival of Mary and her marriage to James in 1673. It is likely that *The State of Innocence* was intended for performance at James and Mary's marriage celebrations in 1673 (Gabel 188) – celebrations which were, tellingly, largely cancelled due to the unpopularity of the match – and Dryden may still have presented her with a manuscript copy (Verrall 209). This association is maintained in 1677 as Mary features

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prominently as the dedicatee of the first print edition. Stephen Zwicker has suggested that Dryden may have written this exaggerated dedication to antagonize and bait Milton and Marvell, in response to the aforementioned rebukes of his opera in the 1674 edition of *Paradise Lost* (Zwicker, "John Dryden Meets, Rhymes, and Says Farewell" 184–186). I would instead argue that Dryden's text responds to and participates in the production of fears about Mary, Catholicism, and female influence, and that his praise of Mary in the dedication is disingenuous; the paratext is a means to detract from the criticism of Mary and the monarchy found both in his opera and within the language of the paratext itself.

2 The Material Text and Political Subtext of Dryden's Dedication

Dedicatees are normally mentioned inside playbooks, but all seventeenth-century editions of *The State of Innocence* name "The Duchess," i.e. Mary, in large, prominent letters in the centre of the title page. This is very unusual for Dryden publications. Across all of Dryden's other works, I found only two other examples of dedicatees who make it onto the title page. Both examples occur much later in his career and under a different publisher, Tonson: *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis* (1693) and *Eleonora* (1692). The dedication to the Earl of Dorset in *The Satires* is much less prominent, and is only noticeable if you actively read the title page looking for its dedicatee. *Eleonora*'s title page gives equal if not more prominence to the dedicatee than *The State of Innocence* does to Mary, but this text, as it states on the title page, was a "Panegyrical poem," commissioned by a husband in memory of his late wife. As such, not mentioning the name prominently on the title page would have been more surprising. The dedication to the Duchess in *The State of Innocence* was not commissioned, and though Dryden had arguably more important dedicatees for other texts they never appeared on his title pages. Of course, it could be argued that this was a decision made by the publisher and printer of the first edition, on which later editions were based. However, Henry Herringman and Thomas Newcomb, the stationers who collaborated on this first edition, also collaborated on other editions of Dryden's plays: *All for Love* (1678), with a dedication to Thomas Earl of Danby; *Amboyna* (1673), with a dedication to Lord Clifford of Chudleigh; *Aureng-Zebe* (1676), with a dedication to John, Earl of Mulgrave and, perhaps most tellingly, *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), with a dedication to James Duke of York. In all of these playbooks, published and prin-

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ted by the same stationers, not one of Dryden's dedicatees features on the title page. The prominence of Mary as dedicatee on the title page of *The State of Innocence* is thus unprecedented in his work, and, I would argue, this suggests that the rationale for the dedication goes beyond the need to simply curry political favour. It is also intended to function as a gloss or commentary on the text itself, in line with Gérard Genette's argument that paratextual materials function as thresholds of interpretation and are inextricably bound up with the content of the narrative and its reception (1). As the early printed editions make clear, we must keep Mary in mind when reading *The State of Innocence*.

The dedicatory letter is hyperbolic and has been described as Dryden's "most heavily perfumed" piece of prose (Winn 254). It focuses primarily on the theme of Mary's beauty, but also makes continuous and pointed reference to her (supposed) religious virtue. For Zwicker, the dedication is "astonishing" because in the praise of "the most famous and feared Roman Catholic in England" Dryden "exalt[s] the mystery and glory of her virtue in an idiom which he adopts pointedly from the writings of St Theresa" ("Milton, Dryden, and the Politics of Literary Controversy" 154). The offensive passage is as follows: "the priest was always unequal to the oracle: the god within him was too mighty for the breast: he laboured with the sacred revelation, and there was more of the mystery left behind than the divinity itself could enable him to express" (A1v). Dryden also references fears associated with Mary's interference in politics and power: "You have subverted (may I dare to accuse you of it?) even our fundamental laws; you reign absolute over the hearts of a stubborn and freeborn people, tenacious to madness of their liberty" (A2v). Zwicker argues that the daring language of this dedication is "hovering between amusement and contempt for public fears;" he accepts that it is "difficult to fix," but ultimately suggests that it constitutes a "piece of service" to the monarchy and serves predominantly to "subjugate Milton's Protestant poetry and poetics in a most humiliating way" ("Milton, Dryden, and the Politics of Literary Controversy" 156). Thomas H. Luxon disagrees that the dedication contains an ill-natured swipe at Milton and instead argues that Dryden was trying "to praise the royal couple in some of the new language of heroic virtue he had gathered from Milton's great poem" by borrowing "this rhetoric of praise from Milton's (And Adam's) own words about Eve" (14, 12), but both Zwicker and Luxon read the praise of Mary as intended to flatter – whether designed to aggravate political opponents or to sincerely, albeit naively, strengthen the Royalist cause.

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What is not noted here, or in other criticism, are the pointed references made to Mary's negative reception, which surely seem out of place in a statement of loyalty. Rather than baiting the opposition by sardonically reframing their own fears, as Zwicker suggests, Dryden instead undermines his dedication to Mary through repeated references to the lack of celebration and praise she received upon her arrival: "Thus *MADAM*, in the midst of Crouds you Reign in Solitude; and are ador'd with the deepest Veneration, that of Silence" (A2r). Whilst he does attempt to gloss this as a positive – by suggesting that it was her beauty which evoked a stunned speechlessness – the veneer is all too thin, and ending the sentence with the word "Silence" causes readers to take pause. This "Silence" does not only draw attention to the lack of celebrations, but can also be seen as a conspicuous reference to the overt and loud public demonstrations against her and her religion. Further, Dryden writes that she has caused "The brightest and most victorious of our Ladies [to] make daily complaints of revolted Subjects" (A2v). Though once again couched in the positive frame that her beauty means that all men have abandoned previous mistresses or lovers for her, when combined with the language of "Rebellious Fugitives" (A2r), it is ominously similar to the rhetoric of Catholic brides seizing power through sexual domination (Dolan). More particularly, the Duchess did not seem to make a great impression at court, as one commentator remarks that "Most of our great ladies have been rude in their behaviour towards the Duchess of Modena" (Blackburne 40), and so this reference to ladies' complaints might have been founded on a genuine lack of popularity known to courtly readers of the text. These underhanded remarks in the dedication may have raised suspicions about why this particular text, which openly recognises a Protestant republican as its source, was dedicated to Mary, a Catholic princess. Indeed, if Mary or James ever read *The State of Innocence* then they might also have been rightly concerned about the play's depiction of a marriage in which a woman wields power before causing both the fall of her husband – and all of mankind – and the loss of the dominion over which he was "made […] to Reign" (B4v).

3 Dryden's Eve and the Female Threat in *The State of Innocence*

Dryden's Eve has more agency and power than Milton's Eve and she becomes the main subversive threat in the text, displacing Lucifer and the devils. Comparison of Milton and Dryden's Eve reveals three key ways in

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which Dryden modified the character and each alteration, as I intend to argue, invites parallels between Eve and Mary whilst voicing anti-Catholic rhetoric. Firstly, Eve's own recognition of her power and manipulative abilities render Adam helpless. Secondly, Eve's relationship with Dryden's Lucifer, a far less prominent figure than Milton's Satan, depicts Eve not as victim but instead as seducer of herself and author of her own fall. Finally, the consequences for Eve following the fall have been changed in Dryden's adaptation.

From birth Dryden's Eve displays a habitual instinct of gaining power over others. Eve's first lines in the semi-opera indicate her awareness of her power:

> The feather'd kind peep down, to look on me;
> And Beasts, with up-cast eyes, forsake their shade,
> And gaze, as if I were to be obey'd.
> Sure I am somewhat which they wish to be,
> And cannot: I my self am proud of me. (C3r)

Further, Dryden retains and expands Milton's Narcissus-like reflection-scene and shows Eve trying to embrace her reflection in a fountain. Upon failing to take possession of her own reflection, instead of God gently intervening to correct her, Eve instead gives voice to misogynistic rhetoric about female nature: "Ah, fair, yet false; ah Being, form'd to cheat / By seeming kindness, mixt with deep deceipt" (C3r). Having thus recognised her power, beauty, and deceitfulness, Eve's instinctive reaction to Adam's longing for sexual relations is to wield her sexual power to control Adam and maintain sovereignty.

> Somewhat forbids me, which I cannot name
> For ignorant of guilt I fear not shame:
> For some restraining thought, I know not why,
> Tells me, you long should beg, I long deny…
> I well fore-see, when e'r thy suit I grant,
> That I my much-lov'd Soveraignty shall want. (C3v)

This is not, then, a pre-lapsarian and innocent Eve, but instead, as Airey has argued, an Eve "already fallen" ("Eve's Nature, Eve's Nurture" 529). Her demurring and reluctance to copulate may also have been read by contemporaries as analogous to Mary's initial refusal to marry James and the delayed consummation of their union due to their proxy marriage. Dryden's Eve, far more clearly than Milton's, wishes to gain power over

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herself and others. Eve is thus a character who reflects misogynistic fears of the threat posed by female agency.

Eve appears more threatening because her manipulations are successful and result in Adam worshiping her in an idolatrous fashion, reminiscent – to seventeenth-century Protestants – of Catholicism. Adam continually reveres Eve as a second God. At their first meeting he states: "Thee Goddess, thee th'Eternal did ordain / His softer Substitute on Earth to Reign" (C3r). Adam is thus shown to idolize Eve in the same way Catholics were perceived to idolize female figures. As Francis Dolan has argued, Catholic iconography often focused on powerful women such as the Virgin Mary and St Theresa (whose writing, as mentioned above, is referenced in Dryden's dedication). For Protestants of all sects in seventeenth-century England, the notion of praying to and worshiping a human woman in the figure of the Virgin Mary was not only considered idolatrous but also intrinsically tied to fears of female agency.

Returning to Dryden's dedication once again, the language reflects an awareness of these fears of idolized Catholic women and ties them to the impact of Mary whose beauty, he says, inspires a love akin to dangerous religious zeal:

> To hope to be a God, is folly exalted into madness: but by the Laws of our Creation we are oblig'd to Adore him; and are permitted to love him too, at Humane distance. 'Tis the nature of Perfection to be attractive; but the Excellency of the object refines the nature of the love. IT strikes an impression of awful reverence; 'tis indeed that Love which is more properly a Zeal than Passion. 'Tis the rapture which Anchorites find in Prayer, when a Beam of the Divinity shines upon them […] Mortality cannot bear it often: it finds them in the eagerness and height of their Devotion, they are speechless for the time that it continues, and prostrate and dead when it departs. (A2v)

He couches this supposed compliment in terms of the "madness" of hoping to be a God, and likens meeting her to the experiences of monks who in worship forfeit their speech and life: a particularly sobering and damning image to use in a dedication to the most feared Catholic woman in England. That this idolatry and the religious zeal for beauty represented in the dedication to Mary is reflected in Adam's response to Eve, which results in their fall from paradise, arguably compounds the association Dryden hoped his readers would make between Eve and Mary.

Adam is not the only character who pales in comparison to the newly empowered Eve figure as Lucifer, Dryden's Satan, also has a drastically reduced role in Dryden's adaptation. He and his court of devils become a

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parody of Interregnum republicans and Lucifer, no longer a powerful leader, is just another member of the council. Dryden's Satan figure no longer plots with Beelzebub in advance of the council of Hell to corrupt humankind as Milton's does (Milton 2.379–380). In Milton, this kind of subterfuge shows that Satan only co-opts republican discourse and does not in fact believe in it, undermining freedom of speech and liberty and ruling as a tyrant. By contrast, Dryden's Lucifer and the council of devils come to the decision far more collaboratively. Indeed, it is not even Lucifer's suggestion but that of another devil, one who does not feature at all in Milton, called Asmoday. There is no indication that this has been pre-prepared and Lucifer is not characterised as an individual "Machiavellian" schemer and usurper but simply as a tool of the Republic of Hell. It is worth mentioning, however, that despite this reduced role, Dryden does make sure to give Lucifer a line that reflects Catholic threat: when opening the council, he exclaims that the devils can "blow him up, who justly Rules us now" (B2r). The allusion will not have been lost on contemporary audiences used to witnessing celebrations of England's preservation from the 1605 Gunpowder Plot during Pope-burning pageants held annually on November 5th on the streets of London (Rustici 271).

More importantly, Lucifer is rendered almost auxiliary in the seduction of Eve. In Dryden's text, Eve is not led to the tree by a serpent who has interrupted her work. She has instead separated herself from Adam to deliberately come to visit the tree alone:

> Thus far, at least, with leave, nor can it be
> A sin to look on this Celestial Tree…
> But Heav'n forbids: I could be satisfy'd
> Were every tree but this, but this deny'd. (E3r)

It could be argued that it is Lucifer's earlier whispered invasion of her dreams which convinces Eve to go to the tree. Certainly, the dream takes on grander proportions and more prevalence in the operatic version than it does in Milton's epic poem, and it is presented as a theatrical spectacle that Lucifer "set[s] before the Woman's eyes" because "Vain shows, and Pomp, the softer sex betray" (D2r). Even in this scene, however, Lucifer's role is rendered less textually and visually prominent: the stage is taken up by the tree, dancing angels, and a "*Woman, habited like Eve*" (D2r), who takes an active role in the persuasive spectacle, whilst Lucifer merely "sits down by Eve" in the background (D2r). Eve as a character is thus more prominent as a figure in a masque designed to persuade herself to sin, more deliberate and aware of her choice to fall and then to bring the

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human race with her.[6] This dream sequence is perhaps reflective of ideas that Mary was a Catholic insurgent poised to bring down Protestant England from the marriage bed: Adam remains in the scene sleeping soundly next to her.

Similarly, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it is Satan who rhetorically convinces Eve that God would not allow a lowly beast to eat the fruit while forbidding her, asking "Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast / is open?" (9.691–692). However, in *The State of Innocence*, it is Eve who begins to convince herself of her right to eat the fruit. Having seen a serpent eat from the tree, before Lucifer as a character can appear on stage and begin his persuasion, she already begins to persuade herself of her right to eat it using the same arguments as Milton's Satan.

> Strange sight! Did then our great Creator grant
> That priviledge, which we their Masters want,
> To these inferior beings? Or was it chance?
> And was he blest with bolder ignorance?
> I saw his curling crest the trunk infold:
> The ruddy fruit, distinguish'd ore with gold,
> And smiling in its native wealth, was torn
> From the rich bough, and then in triumph born:
> The vent'rous victor march'd unpunish'd hence,
> And seem'd to boast his fortunate offence. (E3v)

Here, Dryden even has Eve use the language of Milton's Satan to describe the tree, borrowing the description of the fruit as "Ruddie and Gold" directly from Satan's lines to Eve (9.578). Though the serpent eating the fruit and prompting this reflection is supposed to be Lucifer in disguise, his role is more insubstantial and functions predominantly as a prompt for Eve's own proclivities, mirroring the dream sequence. Once again, it is Eve's interpretation of a visual spectacle and her vanity, her sense of her

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6 The clear masque-like aspects of the dream vision are worthy of further investigation as it is notable that Dryden uses a genre heavily associated with Royalist politics and ideology not, for example, to represent a heaven-like courtly culture but instead in association with Lucifer, Eve, and the temptation of sin. At the very end of the play there is a stage direction referring to a short spectacle designed to show the utopian state they might achieve in the future, but it is in no way as fully developed as the dream masque: "Here a Heaven descends, full of Angels and blessed Spirits, with soft Music, a Song and Chorus" (G2v). Eve's response to this promise of potential future happiness is also damning: "Ravish'd, with Joy, I can but half repent / The sin which Heav'n makes happy in th'event" (G2v).

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power and entitlement, which persuades her to eat. Though the spectacle is necessarily brought about by Lucifer, he seems to be relegated from the position of primary antagonist to a stage prop. This is further underscored when Lucifer does appear on stage and begins to talk only for Eve to respond imperiously with, "Thou speak'st of wonders: make thy story plain" (E4r), in other words, asking him to get to the point rather than waste his time with unnecessary rhetorical persuasion. Lucifer thus plays the role of an accessory or subsidiary participant in Eve's temptation of herself.

The treatment of Eve after the fall further aligns Dryden's Eve with misogynistic anti-Catholic rhetoric of the 1670s. Dryden's Eve is no longer represented as the hope for the future and "Mother of Man Kind" as she is on numerous occasions in Milton's epic (1.36, 5.388, 11.159). In Dryden, there is no mention of her giving birth to the heel that will bruise the serpents head, a redaction I attribute to fears around Mary's ability to produce a Catholic heir who would certainly not be considered a saviour by many late seventeenth-century readers. After the fall, Adam, in a misogynistic tirade to Eve asks "Ah: why must man from woman take his birth?" (F4r), reflecting the grievances felt by many in the period that so much of their political future was dependent on women's bodies. Female bodies are indeed categorised by Adam as "sin[s] of nature" and "fair defect[s]" (F4r). Tellingly, then, pregnancy and painful labour are no longer mentioned at all in Eve's punishment. Instead, Eve is to have unsatiated desire and be restrained from her domestic control:

> She, by a curse, of future wives abhorr'd.
> Shall pay obedience to her lawful Lord:
> And he shall rule, and she in thraldome live;
> Desiring more of love than men can give. (G1r)

This highlights the connection between Eve and Mary as future Queen consort and reflects back on the problems which many feared an assertive Catholic woman could cause if not kept in check.

I have suggested that in Dryden's adaptation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the threat is no longer Lucifer, but instead the character of Eve and her ability to manipulate Adam, which is expressed in anti-Catholic and misogynistic tropes. By placing this textual analysis in relation to the dedication to Mary of Modena this chapter posits that Dryden may, in fact, have been using the positive dedication as a Trojan horse to smuggle in a warning of the dangers which the Duke of York's marriage posed. Read in this way, the text comes across as a veiled threat, or warning, against the

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irresponsible actions of James and the problems that his choice of bride could cause for the restored monarchy, were they to have a child. It was, of course, the birth of Mary and James's Catholic son, a male heir destined to continue James's Catholic reign after his death, that brought about his ousting from power in the so-called 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688.

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