A pause in time: history writers and the regicide of Charles I

Matthias Meng Yan Wong
University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Abstract

The unprecedented trial and execution of Charles I left a nation aghast and bewildered. This article examines how the English reacted to such a disruptive event, namely how the regicide changed ideas of time and the future. Using a diachronic approach, this article examines the work of three history writers and the temporalities embedded within their narratives. Recognizing the significance of the regicide as a singular moment in time, these writers adapted their work to incorporate a sense of changed times. By envisioning futures in their texts, these histories informed but also circumscribed the world views of their readers.

Coming at the tail end of the English Civil Wars, the execution of Charles I sent shock waves around the British Isles and the continent. Organized by a small and radical group of Parliamentarians with the support of the New Model Army, the king was executed for spilling the blood of his own subjects for his personal gain. The demise of the symbol of sovereignty and monarchy, according to Nancy Maguire, 'collapsed identifying organizational concepts'. In her survey of published responses to the regicide, Maguire concludes that the English suffered from a sense of 'unorganized confusion', 'self-fragmentation' and 'psychic disorganization'.[1] The regicide was a highly controversial act, the result of motives and a turn of events that are still keenly debated by historians in recent years.[2]

Charles's death brought to bear a period of uncertainty that would plague the nation for years. The death of the figurative head of the nation was followed by the abolition of the monarchy itself and other traditional symbols of authority, including the House of Lords. Scholars have observed how this period of disruptive change was met with efforts at commemoration and remembering, including the Royalist cultivation of the cult of Charles-as-martyr.[3] Others have examined the political and print responses by parties

[1] N. K. Maguire, 'The theatrical mask/masque of politics: the case of Charles I', *Journal of British Studies*, xxviii (1989), 1–22, at p. 4.

[2] See the most recent debate between Sean Kelsey and Clive Holmes over whether the regicide was used as a negotiating tactic. S. Kelsey, 'Staging the trial of Charles I', in *The Regicides and Execution of Charles I*, ed. J. Peacey (New York, 2001), pp. 71–93; S. Kelsey, 'The death of Charles I', *Historical Journal*, xlv (2002), 727–54; S. Kelsey, '"The now king of England": conscience, duty, and the death of Charles I', *English Historical Review*, cxxxii (2017), 1077–109; C. Holmes, 'The trial and execution of Charles I', *Historical Journal*, liii (2010), 289–316; and, most recently, S. Kelsey, 'A riposte to Clive Holmes, "The trial and execution of Charles I"', *History*, ciii (2018), 525–44.

[3] See A. Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge, 2003); L. Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1640–1660* (Cambridge, 1989); E. S. Wheeler, 'Eikon Basilike and the rhetoric of self-representation', in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. T. Corns (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 122–40; K. Sharpe, 'Private conscience and public duty in the writings of Charles I', *Historical Journal*, xl (1997), 643–65; and, most recently, I. Peck, *Recollection in the Republics* (Oxford, 2021).

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in England and across the Three Kingdoms to the Continent.[4] This article complements the study of these responses with a new focus on temporality: how did the English make sense of the times they were living in, and how did the regicide affect providential and cyclical visions of history? Specifically, I propose to identify these visions of England's future and investigate how they were changed by such a disruptive event. This article examines the work of the three history writers from across the political spectrum, all of whom wrote before and after the regicide: the Presbyterian moderate M. P. Clement Walker, the Royalist preacher Thomas Fuller and the official Parliamentarian historian Thomas May.

The humanist historians of the early modern period scoured biblical, Greek and Roman records to explain the present.[5] While scholars have now refuted the Whiggish view of a 'historiographical revolution' in the seventeenth century, they have also established that there was a clear shift away from exemplarity towards causality, particularly with the outbreak of the Civil War and the breakdown in censorship.[6] In her diachronic study of the 'changing rhetoric of political commentary', Pauline Kewes charts how over a century individual writers shifted from allusive styles to more 'explicit analogies'.[7] This article contributes to this endeavour by focusing on how violence and disruption affected the evolution of these historical modes of argumentation.

Once they had traced the causal nexus from the past to the present, it was simple for historians to extrapolate it into the future and predict how the future would unfold.[8] Some scholars have ventured to explore how historians like Hobbes and Milton conceived of the future.[9] However, most histories of historiography in this period are more interested in how historians understood the past and the 'sense of the past' rather than the future, which is a topic that they approach only obliquely.[10] Matthew Neufeld's dissertation 'Narrating troubled times' observes how post-1660 histories were written with an eye towards influencing the future.[11] David Cressy similarly reviews how in the early 1640s histories recounted, in partisan fashion, events of the recent past to justify the latest actions of their faction. These exercises of remembrancing made the onset of revolution 'intellectually manageable', with each faction using topoi that suited their political situation and ambitions: 'Parliamentary supporters linked their history to the

[4] A. Tubb, 'Printing the regicide of Charles I', *History*, lxxxix (2004), 500–24; A. Tubb, 'Mixed messages: Royalist newsbooks reports of Charles I's execution and of the Leveller Uprising', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, lxvii (2004), 58–74; and Peacey, *Regicides*.

[5] D. Woolf, 'From hystories to the historical: five transitions in thinking about the past, 1500–1700', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, lxviii (2005), 33–70, at p. 39.

[6] Woolf, 'Hystories', p. 39; and A. Walsham, 'Revising the past [review of D. Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past*]', *History Workshop Journal*, lix (2005), 246–51, at p. 250. For example, an older history would use a distant exemplar like Augustus Caesar to explain why Charles failed as a king. Newer histories privileged events that were causally linked to Charles's rule. Woolf considers this shift 'in part the … consequence of a severe shock to the body politic in the 1640s' (Woolf, 'Hystories', p. 39).

[7] P. Kewes, 'History and its uses', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, lxviii (2005), 1–31, at p. 14.

[8] Historians did indeed believe that the past determined the future. See R. Koselleck, 'Historiae magistra vitae', in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. K. Tribe (New York, 2004), pp. 37–39, cited in M. G. Neufeld, 'Narrating troubled times: memories and histories of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, 1660–1705' (unpublished University of Alberta Ph.D. thesis, 2008), p. 231 n. 196, now published as M. Neufeld, *The Civil Wars After 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (Woodbridge, 2013).

[9] N. von Maltzahn, *Milton's History of Britain* (New York, 1991); A. Guibbory, *The Map of Time* (Urban, Ill., 1986); and P. Springborg, 'Hobbes and historiography', in *Hobbes and History*, ed. G. A. J. Rogers and T. Sorell (London, 2000), pp. 43–71.

[10] See e.g., the discussion in R. C. Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution* (Manchester, 1998); and R. MacGillivray, *Restoration Historians and the English Civil War* (The Hague, 1974).

[11] Neufeld, 'Narrating troubled times', *passim*.

workings of Providence while royalists were more likely to write of betrayal, folly, or sin'.[12] By surveying the histories of Walker, Fuller and May, this article will similarly describe the dominant topoi of their writing and how these evolved in the face of unexpected violence. To what extent did regicide induce a break in cyclical and providential visions of history? How did their portrayals of the future shift in response to regicide?

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Clement Walker was a self-styled moderate M.P. who published four widely circulated works on parliament from 1647 to 1651. A Presbyterian by denomination, Walker was elected M.P. for Wells, England, in 1646.[13] However, in his first work, *The Mystery of the Two Junto's* (1647), he distanced himself from what he called the Presbyterian 'junto'.[14] The Presbyterian and Independent factions, or 'juntos', in parliament were divided first over the organization of the church and later the prosecution and treatment of the king. Walker accused the juntos' leaders, or Grandees, of polarizing parliament to acquire power and revenue for themselves. Published under the pseudonym 'Theodorus Verax', *Mystery* sought to expose the truth behind the sham.[15] In *Mystery* Walker stated explicitly his belief in a cyclical history. In a statement R. C. Richardson cited as representative of cyclical thinking in this period, Walker described how

> [a] long peace begat plenty, plenty begat pride, and her sister riot; pride begat ambition, ambition begat faction, faction begat Civill War: and (if our evils be not incurable[ )] … our war will beget poverty, poverty humility, humility Peace again … The declining spoke of the wheel will rise again.[16]

Walker portrayed a future in which evil would surely be punished and the repentant would be rewarded with peace. For the Grandees 'an unquenchable fire [would] be [their] lot hereafter', and those whose 'hearts [were] hardned with Pharaoh … [would] be drowned in [their] owne Red Sea'.[17] Through this explicit analogy, Walker condemned the Grandees as a lost cause: individuals who would not change their minds and would be condemned by God's own hand, as Pharaoh was. Walker was confident that the structure of English society was resilient and fundamentally sound. He explained that God sent England into decline, hoping that the English would repent from their sins. Once they were 'sufficiently humbled', England would return to peace once more. There might be periods of war and poverty, but the essential configuration of mixed monarchy – a responsible king counselled by parliament and the people – was stable.[18]

Walker was thus optimistic that England could recover as long as the nation 'first repent[ed], and amend[ed their] sins that first caused [their punishment]'.[19] Walker appealed specially to Charles to reaffirm the tenets of English society and mixed monarchy, for

[12] D. Cressy, 'Remembrancers of the Revolution: histories and historiographies of the 1640s', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, lxviii (2005), 257–68, at p. 268.

[13] D. Underdown, 'Walker, Clement [*pseud*. Theodorus Verax] (*d*. 1651)', *O.D.N.B.* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28473> [accessed 26 July 2021].

[14] C. Walker, *The Mysterie of the Tvvo Iunto's, Presbyterian and Independent* […] (1647), in *Short-Title Catalogue … 1641–1700*, comp. D. Wing (2nd edn., New York, 1972; hereafter 'Wing'), no. W 332B, pp. 1, 3. More context on the politics of this period can be found in D. Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (Oxford, 1971).

[15] Underdown, 'Walker'.

[16] R. C. Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 11–39; and Walker, *Mysterie*, p. 18.

[17] Walker, *Mysterie*, p. 18.

[18] Walker, *Mysterie*, sig. A2r.

[19] Walker, *Mysterie*, p. 18.

God hath inabled [Charles] to remember things past, to observe things present, and by comparing them together, to conjecture things to come, which are the three parts of wisdom that [would] much honour and advantage [Charles].[20]

As king, Charles had the faculties and wisdom to set England on a path of peace and prosperity, if only he would choose to do so. Walker's argument drew its rhetorical power from the concept of 'specific' providence, the idea that God's will was to be performed through men. In effect, Walker dared Charles to defy God's plan by not acting as a prince should. This was possible only because concepts of providence were widely shared and agreed upon across English society, a 'common language' that could be wielded to convince readers that a Christian prince like Charles should act as providence had decreed.[21]

Thomas Fuller was a Royalist preacher who, like Clement Walker, sought a middle way between the absolute monarchists and the Independents.[22] Before the regicide Fuller also portrayed time as a cycle. He argued that the Civil War was only a momentary downturn before the inevitable upturn to peace and normalcy again. Fuller penned *Andronicus: a Tragedy* in 1643 as a satirical piece that critiqued the contemporaneous situation.[23] Andronicus was 'a soldier–politician who took control of the Byzantine empire from a dissolute court only to become, finally, a notorious tyrant'.[24] At the end of the play Andronicus's cruel reign culminated with the intervention of the people, who tortured him and put him to death. Written as a reaction to the breakdown of Christian society around Fuller, with Andronicus serving as a stand-in for parliament, the play warned against usurping royal prerogatives.[25] James Woods argues that in *Tragedy*, Fuller compared the turbulent situation in Civil War England to a stage in a cycle:

Thy long peace did plenty bring, / From thy plenty pride did spring; / From thy pride came woful jarrs, / And from these came bloody warrs; / And from warrs comes desolation, / O begin thy circulation, / By amendment to obtain, / That thy peace return again.[26]

Fuller thought that the present condition was a result of natural decay, an inevitable result of past prosperity and human hubris. The upward turn towards peace was possible: for the cycle to move upwards, the people had to intervene, just as the mob deposed Andronicus. This 'amendment' would 'begin [the] circulation' and let 'peace return again'.[27] Writing in 1643, a year of Royalist victories, Fuller conceived time moving in circular progressions, sustained in motion by hubris and popular intervention. The form of tragedy seemed to describe England's descent into civil war well; as Maguire has observed, the contemporary definition of tragedy involved a 'prosperity to misery'

[20] Walker, *Mysterie*, sig. A2v.

[21] For more on 'specific' versus 'general' providence, see A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999).

[22] F. Sandler, 'Thomas Fuller's "Pisgah-Sight of Palestine" as a comment on the politics of its time', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, xli (1978), 317–43, at p. 318; and W. B. Patterson, 'Fuller, Thomas (1607/8–1661)', *O.D.N.B.* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10236> [accessed 26 July 2021].

[23] The play *Andronicus: a Tragedy* was published in 1661, but its foreword dates the manuscript to 1643, a date that Wood accepts. Wood has convincingly argued that *Tragedy* was completed by December 1645. The manuscript was lost when Fuller fled Oxford for Exeter in 1646, and *Life of Andronicus* (1646) was a salvaged prose version of *Tragedy*. The lost manuscript was eventually found and published in 1661 (J. O. Wood, 'Thomas Fuller's Oxford interlude', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, xvii [1954], 185–208, at p. 195 and pp. 199–200).

[24] Patterson, 'Fuller'.

[25] Wood, 'Thomas Fuller's Oxford interlude', pp. 192–3, 206.

[26] Wood, 'Thomas Fuller's Oxford interlude', p. 207; and T. Fuller, *Andronicus: a Tragedy* (1661), in Wing, no. F 2408, p. 38.

[27] Fuller, *Andronicus: a Tragedy*, p. 38.

narrative.[28] Like the character of Andronicus, the fallible protagonist parliament had incurred misery, and it was headed for a bloody reckoning. Framing recent history as a revenge tragedy also meant that the troubles would eventually come to a cathartic end. Parliament would be reformed and England at peace again in the future, as generic conventions dictated.

Four years later, in 1647, Parliamentarian victories led to an uneasy peace. Fuller chose to compound with the new regime and sought to live in peace with the Parliamentarian authorities. Encouraged by his friends, Fuller republished a fourteen-year-old sermon titled *A Sermon of Assurance* (1647).[29] In the dedication and preface Fuller alluded to how he had been forbidden from 'publicke Preaching'.[30] This left him 'lying … in the Marshes between Hope and Feare' in a 'Purgatorie position'. In response, Fuller chose to submit himself to 'that great pasture of Gods Providence': 'Behold here am I, let him doe to me, as seemeth good unto him'.[31] His attitude was consistent with his theological stance in *Assurance*, which discussed whether Christians could be sure of their salvation. While Fuller accepted the Calvinist principle of predestination, he believed that the comfort of assurance could be attained only after living a long and disciplined Christian life. Assurance did not come merely from faith, which he described as the ascription of salvation solely to God's mercies. Instead, one had to strive over time to eventually achieve the 'fruit' of assurance.[32] Further on in *Assurance*, we see the cyclical theory from *Tragedy*, but couched in the language of divine providence as opposed to human intervention. Fuller described trouble as one of God's many tests and expressed confidence in a positive turn in the future, at least for one's soul: 'That thou mayest shine the brighter before men, hee doth buffet and afflict thee with severall temptations, which give thee occasions to exercise thy graces which lay hid in prosperity'.[33] Times of adversity, initiated and ended by God, 'greatly adde to thy spirituall light and lustre'.[34] Fuller thus advised the reader to

> Apply these and the like consolations to thy soule, and remember what David saith, heavinesse may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Yea but you will say, my night of sorrow, is like the nights in Greene-Land, which last full four moneths together. *A long night I must confesse, but day will dawne at the last, and last the longer for it.*[35]

To Fuller, the future was bright and promising because God's plan was good and just, even if one did not know how long the troubles would last. Fuller also warned his readers not to rush God's plan, for human effort 'cannot make the Clock of Gods Time strike a minute sooner than he hath set it'.[36] Fuller's advice was to submit to God's will and timing:

[28] Maguire, 'Masque', p. 11.

[29] T. Fuller, *A Sermon of Assurance* (1647), in Wing, no. F 2458, sig. A1r. Unfortunately, we do not have an earlier version of this sermon and we cannot be sure what amendments were made before publication. Patterson argues that the themes and arguments in this sermon accord with other sermons Fuller preached and that Fuller's thinking around providence and the assurance of election and predestination did not change over the years (W. B. Patterson, *Thomas Fuller* [Oxford, 2018], pp. 36–40).

[30] Fuller, *Assurance*, sigs. A2r–v. The publication was dedicated to Sir John Danvers, a friend and later regicide, who invited him to preach in Chelsea (Patterson, 'Fuller').

[31] Fuller, *Assurance*, sigs. A4r–v.

[32] Fuller, *Assurance*, pp. 1–21.

[33] Fuller, *Assurance*, p. 22.

[34] Fuller, *Assurance*, p. 22.

[35] Fuller, *Assurance*, p. 22 (emphasis mine).

[36] Fuller, *Assurance*, p. 29.

Quietly attend till God hath cooked thy meat for thee: thinke not in vaine to antidate, his time is the best time. Know that generally the Watches of our desires goe too fast; and therefore to set them right, they must be set backe according to the Sunne-dyall of Gods pleasure. Wherefore without any murmuring or repining, doe thou willingly and cheerefully waite the happy time, when God shall bee pleased to bestow this Assurance upon thee.[37]

Patience, optimism and trust in God's goodness – these were the values that Fuller believed would steer a Christian soul through adversity. While the sermon focused on the internal struggle of the soul, its message of resilience would have resonated with Royalists living through the tumult of the 1640s.

Fuller emphasized his message that only God could resolve England's current troubles in a book of spiritual meditations titled *Good Thoughts in Worse Times*, which was also published in 1647. In a section discussing the timing and appearance of miracles, Fuller concluded that God would 'shew his Finger' only if his work could not be done through men. Reflecting on the time, he then observed that the current 'obstacles' to the 'hope of peace' were 'Iron Obstructions' that were 'not within human power or policy to take away'. Fuller left the task to God, who he hoped would 'be pleased after seaven years [of] hard Apprentiship in civill Warres' and 'miraculously' release them from their 'Indentures, and restore [them] to [their] former liberty'. Warning that no man or 'proud flesh [should] therefore presumptuously pretend to any part of the praise', Fuller discounted the claims of fellow Englishmen who described their actions as doing God's work.[38] God himself would be responsible for the eventual upturn and restoration, which would be done in his own time. In the earlier *Tragedy* and these two works, Fuller expressed his confidence that the future was intelligible and that history would pan out in a predictable cyclical manner. However, in these later works Fuller emphasized the role of providence and the inability of man to affect the course of the future. The time of tribulation would eventually end when God willed it, and worldly peace and prosperity would be restored.

The renewal of hostilities in 1648 put a different complexion on Fuller's description of the future, as espoused in *A Sermon of Contentment* (1648). Fuller's focus turned to the spiritual and inward plane. Referring to Jesus's statement that '[His] kingdome is not of this world', Fuller argued that 'what the world counts gain, is losse' and 'what the world counts losse is gaine'.[39] No longer describing the path of return to worldly peace, Fuller's focus was now on the future end point: the eternal peace of heaven. The upward turn of the circle would first show itself inward, in the good conduct of Royalists when they were faced by worldly adversity. Admission to heaven, the final 'happy state', was attainable even during times of tribulation: 'Yea, heaven on earth is actually ours already, [in] the possession of a clear conscience'.[40] Good people with clear consciences accessed a form of internal heaven, which preceded the external advent of heaven proper. This internal and spiritual peace, perhaps akin to a spiritual millennium, contrasted with the millenarian ideas that were increasingly common in Parliamentarian circles.[41] True to his moderate nature, Fuller believed that little doctrinal differences would not discount one from heaven. In heaven, 'God had provided severall repositaries of happinesse for such as differ in smaller opinions, vvhilest all agreeing in generall godlinesse, [so that all the godly] may meet in one grand Heaven and place of eternall Felicity'.[42] Thus, on the eve

[37] Fuller, *Assurance*, p. 30.

[38] T. Fuller, *Good Thoughts in Worse Times* (1647), in Wing, no. F 2436, pp. 69–70. Perhaps a reference to claims by some Parliamentarians that they were God's vessel and that their mission was divinely ordained.

[39] T. Fuller, *A Sermon of Contentment by T.F.* (1648), in Wing, no. F 2460, sig. C3v.

[40] Fuller, *Contentment*, sig. C7r.

[41] See B. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London, 1972), *passim*.

[42] Fuller, *Contentment*, sig. D2r.

of the regicide Fuller was advocating a more internal and supernatural understanding of cyclical progress, while stressing the importance of good character and ultimately God's providence in the trajectory of the future.

Walker shared Fuller's fundamentally optimistic view that good will eventually triumph. Faced with the dominance of the Independent faction, which by 1648 had grown in strength and influence with the support of the New Model Army, Walker believed that the situation would resolve itself naturally. Like Fuller, Walker compared the situation to a tragedy; in *A History of Independency* (1648) he foresaw a 'period and closing up of this Tragedy'.[43] Written as a disapproving response to the Independents blocking settlement negotiations with Charles, the *History* tried to explain how the Independents had come to dominate parliament and his proceedings.[44] Unlike Fuller, who retreated to a more supernatural and internal sense of peace, Walker remained confident that society would work itself out. Invoking the metaphor of nature, he professed how 'there [was] a naturall purging, a naturall phlebotomy, belonging to politicke, as well as natural bodies'.[45] As hopes dimmed for a settlement, Walker was confident that even without his intervention, the situation would bottom out and eventually return to normal. The *History* was Walker's attempt to mitigate the damage. Having previously appealed to the king, Walker now turned to the 'honest moderate men' in parliament, warning that they were being misled, like horses

> step by step so far engaged before they were aware, that they could not draw their feet back, and do now find (to their grief) that the Bit is in their mouths, the saddle fast girt on their galled backs.[46]

Walker advised the moderates to 'take not the more heed, and be not the more resolute' in standing up to the Grandees.[47] His *History* recorded the machinations of the Grandees for all to see, not least these 'more just and modest men', who had been 'fool[ed]'. Embedded in this polemic against the Grandees was a vision of a peaceful future, put just out of reach by a self-serving minority.[48] He argued that a minority faction in parliament was the cause of present troubles: the 'major part' of parliament was held 'in bondage to the minor part'.[49] The Grandees 'have made the people shed their money and bloud abundantly', while 'pretending defence of Religion, Laws, and Liberties'.[50] The Grandees' dispute over church structure was similarly meant to 'keep [the people] disunited with quarrels and feudes'.[51] Walker appealed to the Grandees to let the people 'now at last (being a time of peace) enjoy what they have so dearly paid for' and to 'delay them not with a pretended necessity of [their] owne making'.[52] 'The body of the parliament and army (in the midst of these distempers)' was still 'healthy, sound, serviceable'.[53] Walker argued that if the Grandees repented or were removed from power, the troubles would end: it was already a 'time of peace', plagued only by the Grandees, who were out to '[shake] fundamentals' and 'to ravel back all Governments, to the first

[43] C. Walker, *The History of the Independency* (1648), British Library, E.445[1], pp. 70–1.
[44] Underdown, 'Walker'.
[45] Walker, *History*, pp. 70–1.
[46] Walker, *History*, p. 70.
[47] Walker, *History*, p. 70.
[48] Walker, *History*, p. 71.
[49] Walker, *History*, sig. A2v.
[50] Walker, *History*, p. 63.
[51] Walker, *History*, p. 65.
[52] Walker, *History*, p. 63.
[53] Walker, *History*, sig. A2v.

principle of nature'.[54] Walker was nonetheless confident that, with time, the crisis would abate and the tragedy would end.

In contrast to Fuller and Walker, the writer Thomas May supported the regicide. Trained as a lawyer but afflicted by an unfortunate stammer, May turned to writing and the study of Roman culture and politics.[55] Through his plays and poems May became involved in Charles's court circles in the 1630s, befriending Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon in the process. At this point May was decidedly Royalist: he sought the posts of royal laureate and chronologer of London, and he dedicated much of his work to Charles. Clarendon and the antiquarian John Aubrey believed that May eventually joined the Parliamentarians because he never garnered a courtly position.[56] May began writing for the Parliamentarians during the Civil War, and by 1645 he was prominent enough to be the target of Royalist propagandists. May was named secretary to parliament in 1646, and as official historian he was tasked with writing an official history of parliament.[57] Published as *The History of the Parliament of England* (1647), May's history began in Elizabethan days and ended with the 1643 victory at Newbury.[58] He believed that the English kingdom was characterized by 'an exceptionally high level of natural, civil, and ecclesiastical unity', and he felt caught unawares by the outbreak of an internal war.[59] This was 'a Warre [that was] as cruell as unnaturall', and its unnatural nature demanded an explanation.[60] What set *Parliament* apart from the works of Walker and Fuller was that it made no recourse to large structures of time, whether cyclical or linear. Instead it used the past as a repository where one would find certain truths of human nature and God's nature:

> And how much private interest will oversway publike notions, Books of History, rather then Philosophy, will truly informe you; for concerning humane actions and dispositions, there is nothing under the Sunne which is absolutely new.[61]

In his earlier pamphlet *A Discourse Concerning the Success of Former Parliaments* (1642) May similarly drew general observations from the past:

> For so it happens, that what all should look after, no man does; what is committed to all, no man thinks his own charge. And in that Interim it happens, that those Optimates Regni (as he speaks) who under the Prince are entrusted with government, meaning Councellours, Judges, and other great Magistrates, either through feare, flatterie, or private corruption, does often betray the peoples rights to the Prince.[62]

While May identified the peculiar predications of men and princes, he did not attempt to predict how history would pan out in the future. Human nature was static, and one could expect to see similar behaviour in the future. For the eternal problem of losing one's rights to the prince, May identified parliament as the cure. As a sign of the people's conscience for enlightened rulers, parliaments 'have proved better Physick than any other

[54] Walker, *History*, pp. 63–4.

[55] D. Norbrook, 'May, Thomas (*b.* in or after 1596, *d.* 1650)', *O.D.N.B.* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18423> [accessed 26 July 2021].

[56] Norbrook, 'May'. This account makes May sound vindictive, but it is also hard to disprove. See J. G. A. Pocock, 'Thomas May and the narrative of civil war', in *Writing and Political Engagement in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. D. Hirst and R. Stirer (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 112–44, at p. 112 n. 4.

[57] Norbrook, 'May'.

[58] D. Norbrook, 'The English Revolution and English historiography', in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*, ed. N. H. Keeble (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 233–50, at p. 236.

[59] Pocock, 'Thomas May', p. 117.

[60] May, *The History of the Parliament of England* (London, 1647), sig. A4r; and Pocock, 'Thomas May', pp. 116–17.

[61] May, *History*, bk. iii, p. 30.

[62] T. May, *A Discourse Concerning the Successe of Former Parliaments* (1642), Brit. Libr., E.154[51], p. 3.

earthly wayes or meanes could be'.[63] Again, May did not conjecture how the future would pan out. He instead prescribed a general cure and advice for all future rulers.

May had little regard for those who tried to discern the future, thinking such efforts pointless attempts to discover God's will:

> [The troubles] have made some high-reaching Writes impute the raising and declination of Kingdomes and Common-wealths to certaine aspects of heavenly Constellations, to Conjunctions, and Oppositions of Planets, and various Ecclipses of Celestiall Luminaries; others, to an hidden strength, and secret efficacy of Numbers themselves; and most men to the perpetuall Rotation of Fortune: but the judgements of God in those things are past our finding out, and they are too wise, who are not content sometimes to wonder.[64]

In this passage May discounted cyclical 'Rotation' theories of societal progress and the practices of astrology and numerology.[65] Those who were wise knew better than to try these methods. God's plan could not be predicted and there was no shape of time that existed. All events past and future were the domain of God and his judgement, including the inexplicable and unexpected start of civil war:

> The Prosperity of England seemed then at the height … And it pleases God that States many times shall decline from their happinesse without any apparent signes to us, or reasons that we can give.[66]

The turn from prosperity to civil war, however incomprehensible, was the work of God. May constantly warned against using the present as an indicator of the future. When the royal favourite, the duke of Buckingham, was murdered in 1628, 'the people were possessed with an unusuall joy'.[67] Charles had invested in Buckingham 'all the keyes of the Kingdome', making Buckingham 'extremely hated by the people'.[68] Buckingham's death raised the 'joyes and hopes of men', but

> it may be that God was offended at the excesse of their joy, in that he quickly let them see, the benefit was not so great to them as they expected by it; but his judgements are too high for men to search.[69]

May attributed to God the hardening of Charles's heart against parliament and the subsequent arrest of prominent M.P.s.[70] While he was not absolutely sure of God's intentions, he believed events had panned out exactly as God intended:

> It cannot but be thought, by all wise and honest men, that the sinnes of England were at a great height, that the injustice of Governours, and vices of private men, were very great; which have since called downe from Almighty God so sharpe a judgement; and drawne on by degrees so calamitous and consuming a Warre.[71]

The troubles were a punishment from God for sinful behaviour; unlike Walker and Fuller, May did not see the war as a necessary result of peace.[72] The war would not

[63] May, *Discourse*, p. 12.
[64] May, *History*, .bk. i, p. 4.
[65] May, *History*, bk. i, p. 4.
[66] May, *History*, bk. i, p. 4.
[67] May, *History*, bk. i, p. 12.
[68] May, *History*, bk. i, p. 13.
[69] May, *History*, bk. ii, pp. 12, 13.
[70] May, *History*, bk. i, p. 13. May was still cautious, not pretending to know the mind of God: the events 'may be' caused by God, not 'certainly' (May, *History*, bk. i, p. 12).
[71] May, *History*, bk. i, pp. 12, 15.
[72] Fuller also thought sin was the important explanation for the outbreak of civil war, but this was folded into a narrative of a natural descent from peace to war.

have occurred if people had behaved better. There was no sense of inevitability that accompanied cyclical views of history: every upturn or downturn was contingent only on God's plan and on the people's state of sin. The outbreak of war had resulted from a culmination of sin, from 'Prophannesse' and 'superstition', to the 'pride and excessed … in new fangled and various fashioned attire'.[73] Suffering was thus a way to cleanse sin, but suffering was effective only if the reader knew exactly what it was for. May's history was thus motivated by the need to cast the war as punishment, to inform the reader that the troubles were the result of their own faults:

> But to be silent in that, were great injustice and impiety toward God, to relate his judgements upon a Kingdome; and forget the sinnes of that Kingdom which were the cause of them. The Heathen Historians do well instruct us in that point of piety; who never almost describe any Civill Warre, or publike affliction, without relating at the beginning, how vitious and corrupted their State was at that time grown, how faulty both the Rulers and People were, and how fit to be published, either by themselves or others.[74]

For May, describing the causes of the war was an act of piety. *Parliament* was written to remind readers of the sins of the kingdom. This was essential to ending the war: society needed to be cognizant of its sins and how they had led to war; only then could it repent and thereby placate God into ending the war. If society continued in sin, God's punishment in the form of war and strife would continue. This spirit of confrontation was evident in May's treatment of the Grand Remonstrance of 1641. Narrowly passed in the house of commons, it listed parliament's various grievances from the past decade of Charles's personal rule.[75] The Remonstrance debate was split between a more radical Parliamentarian faction and a moderate faction, which included Clarendon, who believed that parliament was infringing too much on Charles's rights as king. On the matter of the Remonstrance's style, May sided with the radicals, arguing that parliament should not try 'to win [Charles] by the sweeter way of concealing his Errors'. It was parliament's duty to bring Charles to his senses by acutely pointing out his errors and sin, rather than sugar-coating their words to gain Charles's goodwill.[76] For May, the radicals were doing God's work, a message he drove forth with his conclusion to *Parliament*. Writing in 1647, May chose to end with the 1643 victory at Newbury:

> The Parliament was at that time so farre sunke, both in strength and reputation, and so much forsaken by those who followed fortune, that nothing but an extraordinary providence could make it againe emergent. The Cause [of Liberty], and very being of it, was now at stake; by the successe onely of this Expedition to be redeemed or quite lost. But it pleased God, that according to that extremity, the resolutions of men were fitted.[77]

God had turned the tide of the battle, giving 'the Kings side … an irrecoverable Defeat'.[78] May described a causal universe where each event subsequently led to consequences. However, when it came to implausible and unexpected events, it was God who caused or allowed them to happen. It was thus futile to seek a general pattern to history and the future, since God often intervened to make the implausible happen. The only metric one could use to see or affect the future was ascertaining one's state of sin.

[73] May, *History*, bk. i, p. 19.
[74] May, *History*, bk. i, pp. 15–16.
[75] May, *History*, bk. ii, pp. 16–19. Charles had ruled for the preceding eleven years without summoning parliament.
[76] May, *History*, bk. ii, p. 18.
[77] May, *History*, bk. iii, p. 102.
[78] May, *History*, bk. iii, p. 102.

*

In December 1648 Colonel Thomas Pride of the New Model Army arrested or forced into seclusion all non-Independent M.P.s from parliament, including Walker himself.[79] Secluded from parliament, Walker and three hundred other M.P.s watched as the remaining eighty Independents voted to try Charles for treason, eventually leading to Charles's execution. The momentous events of 1648–9 prompted Walker to publish two sequels to *History*, *Anarchia Anglicana* (1649) and *The High Court of Justice* (1651).

After the regicide Walker's work evinced less certainty in the course of the future. He portrayed the future as open and contestable, and he advocated for militant action to secure England's recovery. Walker envisioned himself a servant of God, expressing God's truth in *Anarchia* so

> that [God] may take every Man by the right hand and lead him out of this Ur of the Chaldeans, this Land of Egypt, this House of Bondage in judgment and conscience.[80]

Drawing an explicit analogy to the biblical exodus out of Egypt and Abraham's departure from his home town, Walker framed action against the regime as a divinely ordained project congruent with God's message in the Bible. Exhorting his readers to action, he told them that this was not the time to 'lie in the Ditch and crie, God help us … since God neglects faint-hearted and cowardly prayers'.[81] Readers were to emulate Moses's and Abraham's examples, listening to God's missives and journeying towards their destined land of freedom and prosperity. Since fighting against the regime was a mission from God, it behoved all godly Englishmen to join and thereby not tempt God's anger. This struggle against tyranny would be challenging and difficult, like the exodus, as was befitting God's test for England.[82] In this new time Walker abandoned his pre-regicide 'part of a friendly Physician' for a 'Martyr' infused with 'a perfect hatred [for vice], a Holy Anger'.[83] Placing himself in the proverbial firing line, he 'thought it as easie & more honourable to die waking and working for my God, my King, and Country, than to die sleeping, and have my throat cut in a Lethargy'.[84] Walker argued that the English were now living in a different time with an indeterminate future and that the Grandees were creating new precedents and innovations that would lead England towards destruction. He referred to a sermon by Hugh Peters, the churchman of the Grandees, in which Peters pronounced that 'this is an Age to make examples and presidents in'. According to Peters, the Virgin Mary's immaculate conception was also unprecedented, and thus a lack of precedence should not stop the Grandees from 'root[ing] up Monarchy, not onely here, but in France and other Kingdomes round about'.[85] The Grandees had executed the king and abolished the monarchy and house of lords in the course of a month, and Walker extrapolated this pattern of destruction, arguing that parliament itself would soon cease to exist. It would be replaced by 'a fantasticall new invented Representative (destructive to Parliaments)'.[86] Walker warned that the new regime was changing the fundamental norms of English society. He railed against the legality of swearing

[79] Underdown, 'Walker'.
[80] C. Walker, *Anarchia Anglicana* (1649), Brit. Libr., E.570[4], sig. A3r.
[81] Walker, *Anarchia*, sig. A3r.
[82] Providential victories by evil men were not necessarily signs of God's favour. See B. Worden, 'Providence and politics in Cromwellian England', *Past & Present*, cix (1985), 55–99, at pp. 81–2, for some examples.
[83] Walker, *History*, p. iv; and Walker, *Anarchia*, pp. v, 3.
[84] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 3.
[85] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 50.
[86] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 24.

new oaths of allegiances to the new state, which had '[swept] away King, Lords, Laws, Liberties, property, and fundamentall Government of this Nation'.[87] In the king's place were 'many of these Mushrooms of Majesty [who] were but Mechanicks, Gold-smiths, Brewers, Weavers, Clothyers, Brewers-Clerks', lower-class individuals whose new-found prominence set a dangerous norm for the future.[88]

To encourage his readers to act, Walker painted a vivid dystopian picture of the Grandees' preferred future. He summarized how Charles's downfall meant 'His Authority lapsed into the two Houses' and with the 'Peers House' abolished, 'all Authority fell downe into the Commons House', which in turn would fall and 'the Supreme Authority translates it selfe into a Councell of State'. This 'Councell' itself would fall next, and 'all Authority [would] be grasped into the iron hands of Campson Gaurus and his Mamaluchy'.[89] Walker also drew out the frightening implications of various pieces of legislation being passed, including one enabling the Council 'power to grant special and particular Letters of Marque'. England would turn into a society of pirates: 'a Den of Thieves and Robbers, Common Enemies to Traffique and humane Society', 'whereby all Princes and States [would] be provoked to make a Pyraticall Warre upon England'.[90] Essentially, Walker foretold a linear future, moving downwards into autocratic rule of the sword. This was a vivid illustration to show his readers that should they remain apathetic, the current regime would sow the seeds of a destitute future.

Walker's argument against innovations and new norms has parallels with the conservative rhetoric in Charles I's *Answer to the Nineteen Propositions* (1642), in which Charles warned of the introduction of 'new Doctrine', of 'some Persons, who [had] now too great an Influence … upon both Houses' and who desired a 'new *Utopia* of Religion and Government'. Charles added that parliament's first demand was 'but one Link of a great Chain … by which our Just, Antient, Regal Power is endeavour'd to be fetch'd down to the ground'.[91] These criticisms against novelty resonated in a society that thought itself 'addicted to newfangledness'; this was a rhetorically powerful conservative response to any development that could be considered 'new'.[92] Following a similar logic, both Walker and the *Answer* come to strikingly similar conclusions: that the estates would descend into confusion and chaos and that all order and government would be lost. The *Answer* and *Anarchia* were published in the aftermath of striking developments, like the Militia Ordinance and Charles I's move to York, or the regicide in the latter case. Both sought to rally readers in these times of political crisis and change. Like Charles in the *Answer*, Walker similarly sought to promote a vision of a tempered monarchy to contrast with the dystopian future he sketched out. Instead of using a theoretical argument like Charles did, Walker devoted a section of *Anarchia* to a discussion of the thirteenth-century Barons' War. Citing the settlement treaty, the Dictum of Kenilworth (1266), Walker laid out how Henry III had negotiated successfully with his rebelling barons and come to a conciliatory agreement that was both gracious and fair:

[87] Walker, *Anarchia*, pp. 56, 187.
[88] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 186.
[89] Walker, *Anarchia*, pp. 202–3.
[90] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 209.
[91] J. Rushworth, 'Historical collections: June 1642', in *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State*, iv: *1640–42* (London, 1721), pp. 722–51 <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rushworth-papers/vol4/pp722-751> [accessed 29 July 2021].
[92] S. Warneke, 'A taste for newfangledness: the destructive potential of novelty in early modern England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, xxvi (1995), 881–96.

The King did not slay those whom he had taken with his Sword and with his Bow, but reasonably fined them, not unto destruction … They were but once punished, not always tormented and kept upon the rack … Our fellow Servants and Subjects … will never suffer the partition wall between us to be throwne down, England once more to become one Nation, and one People; and our broken bones to be againe set and knit together.[93]

Walker praised the 'great care' the Dictum had exhibited and 'how much regard was had to preserve innocent Persons'.[94] By illuminating a path out of the present troubles, Walker proposed a return to the monarchical system, based on a gracious king and loyal subjects. Displaying a lack of conviction that society would eventually return to this state, Walker did not appeal to the pedigree of Kenilworth as a past event. That it had happened once before did not mean it would happen again. Walker could only 'wish that the like justice were now observed'.[95] In his conclusion he declared his dedication to preserving the 'Antient, setled and well approved Lawes' and 'old Religion', as well as his refusal to submit to the authority of the Grandees.[96] His final point was that 'we must and will have A KING': Walker considered the existence of a future king as a normative fact, recognizing the contingency of the present moment. The monarchy would not inevitably be restored as a matter of fate, but only through conscious effort exhorted from the English nation.[97] While the rhetoric of *Anarchia* and the *Answer* was similar, Walker argued for a radical departure from the Interregnum's status quo of 'slavery', whereas Charles's *Answer* indulged in the fiction that a small 'Cabalists' were responsible for imposing their views on parliament and ultimately expressed a confidence in the status quo: '[we] being most confident of the Loyalty, good Affections and Integrity of the Intentions of that great Body [Parliament]'.[98]

Shortly after the publication of *Anarchia*, Walker was arrested for high treason and imprisoned in the Tower.[99] There he penned the last part to his *History*, *The High Court of Justice*.[100] In this piece he recognized the pregnant potential of the present, calling it 'this dead-water our turning Tide between the old Regall, and this new unknown Government'.[101] Walker criticized the judicial system of the new regime as being unjust and subservient to the Grandees' political aims. Here again we find Walker taking offence to Grandees' precedence-setting. His 'intended task' was 'to shew that this Usurped power, is kept and administered, by as wicked and violent policies, as it was gotten by'.[102] *High Court* was written in the same vein as *Anarchia*; it sought to prove the Grandees were out to install values of violence and injustice as the basis of future society. Walker focused on the 'Articles of Impeachment' for treason 'drawn up' against Colonels John Lilburne and Eusebius Andrews, arguing that the impeaching articles violated basic rights granted by the Magna Carta and other fundamental laws of the land.[103] Furthermore,

[93] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 190.
[94] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 195.
[95] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 195.
[96] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 261.
[97] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 262 (wrongly numbered as 254).
[98] Rushworth, 'Historical collections: June 1642'.
[99] See R. E. Maddison, 'Clement Walker and the History of Independency', *Notes and Queries*, xiv (1967), 330–3.
[100] Underdown, 'Walker'.
[101] C. Walker, *The High Court of Justice* (1651), in Wing, no. 324D, p. 44.
[102] Walker, *High Court*, p. 14.
[103] Walker, *High Court*, pp. 36–8. There were no formal articles of impeachment, and this was in all likelihood Walker's exaggeration or figure of speech.

Walker decried the authority of the High Court, which tried impeached individuals and was also responsible for the execution of Charles I. He took particular aim at its source of authority, calling it 'such a Mistery of iniquity, so unscrutable and unquestionable'. The illegal Court was a dangerous innovation by the regime.[104] Walker had previously addressed the redefinition of treason in *Anarchia*: the Grandees, having purged parliament, had voted such that 'obedience to the knowne Lawes … to be Treason; and what all our Lawes call Treason, they Vote[d] no Treason'.[105] The high court, in enforcing these treasons and justifying them on flimsy reasoning and dubious grounds, was committing a cardinal sin. To Walker, the court's members 'have propagated [the Devil's] Kingdome of Sinne and Death more by their Imprudent Justifications, then by their Turbulent Actions'; Walker took more issue with the precedent the court was setting than with the sentences they passed out.[106] Walker was cognizant of the potential ramifications that came with an unquestioned acceptance of the court's rhetoric. Should English society accept the court's reasoning and justifications, the future would belong to the Grandees. He compared the court to others set up by tyrants like Augustus and the duke of Alva, remarking that 'Our High Court of Just[ice] exceedes all this'. These tyrants used the courts to solidify their power, and in England's case they had 'cast the people and all they have into the bottomlesse Chaos of their Arbitrary Domination'.[107] Walker wrote to warn England, 'by way of overplus', about the 'great dangers and slavery that will befall all sorts of People, if they tamely and cowardly suffer themselves to be deprived of their anticent legal Tryals by Endictment and Juries of the Neighbourhood'. The new regime would 'prove a Cittadell over their Liberties, snare to their Estates … if not timely opposed'.[108] Having seen what historical tyrants had done to their subject's liberty, Walker warned the English to not fall into the same situation. England's future was still malleable, and decisive action had to be taken to avoid falling under the thumb of the upcoming tyrannical regime.

Although he emphasized the contingency of the present moment and the necessity of struggling for a future of their choosing, at times Walker evinced a quiet confidence that his side would win out. He was certain that 'scornfull Fortune', who had 'in a spitefull merriment' brought the regime to prominence, would 'weary with laughing at their disguises' and eventually bring them down.[109] Furthermore, Walker maintained that God's will was still being done, arguing that 'wicked Men performe the secret will of God to their Damnation'.[110] By invoking Fortune's whimsies and God's greater plan, Walker attempted to downplay the radical nature of the regicide and regime change. The times were still intelligible despite the great changes that had happened. Additionally, Fortune and God worked on much longer timeframes: victory was assured, with the caveat that it might come only in the distant future. For now, the English would have to fight to preserve their liberties, or they would suffer in the meantime.

Thomas Fuller was among those who opposed the regime and the regicide but later accepted that Charles's execution was divinely ordained. The news came as a surprise to

[104] Walker, *High Court*, p. 41.
[105] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 105.
[106] Walker, *High Court*, p. 59.
[107] Walker, *High Court*, pp. 3–8, 12.
[108] Walker, *High Court*, p. 44.
[109] Walker, *Anarchia*, p. 186.
[110] Walker, *Anarchia*, sig. A2r. Walker's relatively light use of providence contrasts with how other Englishmen invoked the same idea as a pretext to submit to the new regime. See Worden, 'Providence', p. 80.

Fuller. Upon hearing the news, Fuller 'resolved to abandon' his project of documenting the significant personalities of Britain. He saw there was no point in continuing, since 'this Horrid Act, will bring such an infamy upon the whole Nation as will ever cloud and darken all its former, and supresse its future rising glories'.[111] Fuller's first work after the regicide was a sermon, *The Just Mans Funeral* (1649), one of very few funeral sermons for Charles preached and published.[112] While it made no mention of regicide, it was published just ten months after Charles's death, and it focused on the question of why good men died while wicked men continued to succeed and flourish.[113] Fuller examined the attributes of good men and described how they were handicapped by their godly ways, as compared to wicked men, who were not restricted by ethics. Despite Charles's failings, Fuller believed he had been a fundamentally good person.[114] In *Just Mans* we find Fuller surrendering all speculation of the future to God. The death of the righteous was considered essential in the lead-up to Christ's return.[115] Fuller asked that his readers be reminded of this calculus and that they pray

> that God would shortly accomplish the number of his elect, consummate this miserable world, put a period to the dark night of his proceedings, that so that day, that welcome day, may begin to dawn … The day of the revelation of the righteous judgement of God.[116]

However, Fuller did not venture to discuss what signs his readers should look out for in order to ascertain that the apocalypse was near. The end time was simply when God's plans and justice were revealed to all.[117] Having lost confidence that there was an intelligible pattern to history, Fuller retreated to the most basic truth of God's providence: that all things were orchestrated by God.[118] God followed a logic unintelligible to man, which explained why good men had to die and why unreasonable and inexplicable events happened. The regicide reminded Fuller that predicting the future was a quixotic affair.

Fuller's surrender of the future to God is also markedly clear in his first direct treatment of the 1649 regicide, found in his great work *The Church-History of Britain* (1655). Comprised of eleven books and two additional histories of Cambridge University and Waltham Abbey, *Church-History* was a magisterial account of Christianity in Britain, spanning from first contact to the regicide. In the last book Fuller described the regicide as follows:

> Many now did hope for a happy Arrangement betwixt the King and Parliament, when Divine Providence, (whose wayes are often above Reason, but never against Right) had otherwise ordered it; and seeing it was Gods will, it shall be ours to submit thereunto. Oh what can a day bring forth! especially some pregnant day in the Crisis of Matters, producing more than what many barren years before beheld.[119]

[111] *The Life of That Reverend Dizine and Learned Historian, Dr. Thomas Fuller* (1661), quoted in Sandler, 'Thomas Fuller's "Pisgah-Sight of Palestine"', p. 329. Fuller did eventually complete his *Worthies of England*, which was published posthumously in 1662.

[112] Sandler, 'Thomas Fuller's "Pisgah-Sight of Palestine"', p. 329.

[113] T. Fuller, *The Just Mans Funeral* (1649), in Wing, no. F 2449, *passim*. W. B. Patterson makes the same conclusion, based on Fuller's call for an annual commemoration of the man's death (Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 137).

[114] Fuller, *Just Mans Funeral*, p. 15.

[115] Fuller, *Just Mans Funeral*, p. 24.

[116] Fuller, *Just Mans Funeral*, p. 24.

[117] Fuller, *Just Mans Funeral*, p. 25. This was a stark departure from 'the eschatological and apocalyptic emphases' of the time (Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 221).

[118] This was 'general' providence, as opposed to 'special' or 'particular' providence, where God appeared to spontaneously interrupt a normal sequence of events. See Walsham, *Providence*, p. 12.

[119] T. Fuller, *The Church-History of Britain* (London, 1655), in Wing, no. F 2416, bk. xi, p. 236.

Fuller ascribed the regicide entirely to providence. Writing years after the event, Fuller still considered the regicide as a momentous and unexpected development.[120] Nonetheless, he fully accepted how the past had panned out, trusting God entirely in his wisdom and righteousness. Also evident is Fuller's recognition that the future was completely unpredictable: the regicide could not have been predicted in the preceding years, and God's plan for the future could not be discerned. Appearing as an unexpected and inexplicable event, the regicide was prime evidence of God's mysterious ways. Fuller immediately continued:

> The Kings person is seized on, and brought up to London, arraign'd before a select Committee for that purpose, indicted, and upon his refusal to own their Authority, finally condemned. But these things belong to the Historian of the state, and this subject in itself is not so amiable and tempting, as to invite us to trespas in the property of others, in Courting the prosecution thereof.[121]

Fuller's refusal to describe in more detail the events leading to the regicide is in curious contrast to his attitude laid out earlier in the text, where he chided historians who chose not to write about contemporary events: 'The most informative Histories to Posterity … are such as were written by the Eye-witnesses thereof'.[122] To abstain from 'Modern Times' was a practice 'Disgracefull to Historians'.[123] Fuller was probably being disingenuous: even though the work was titled *Church-History*, Fuller's work encompassed more than ecclesiastical history. As Patterson observes, Fuller was driven to understand 'what had caused the calamities that had befallen England in his own day'; 'his concerns, in both the *Church-History* and the *Worthies* seem to have been, broadly, with his nation, its achievements, its problems, and its prospects'.[124] While Fuller acknowledged that all events in history derived from the first cause, throughout *Church-History* he rarely invoked providence in explaining the course of history, choosing instead to explain the second causes that brought England so low.[125] Fuller was probably wary of being censored and thus deferred a thorough explanation to a better-informed person.[126] It is interesting that Fuller's admission of inability immediately followed and resonated with his account of being caught off-guard by God and the regicide. Fuller saw himself as ill-equipped to describe the regicide, in the same way that he could not predict the regicide. Fuller thus left political history 'to the Historian of the state'.[127] Similarly, Fuller expressed his inability to envisage the future correctly.[128] This struck at the heart of his identity as a historian. Back in his *Historie of the Holy Warre* (1639) Fuller had stated how history 'not onely maketh things past, present; but inableth one to make a rationall conjecture of things to come'.[129] The regicide made Fuller recognize that the domain of the future belonged exclusively to God and that he should not trespass on God's prerogative by

[120] Fuller, *Church-History*, sig. A4r. The first three books were written before the regicide, and the subsequent nine were completed after with a certain sense of urgency. See also Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 156.

[121] Fuller, *Church-History*, bk. xi, p. 236.

[122] Fuller, *Church-History*, unpaginated epistle of bk. x, p. iv, sig. Ggg2v.

[123] Fuller, *Church-History*, unpaginated epistle of bk. x, pp. iii–iv, sigs. Ggg2r–v.

[124] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 185.

[125] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 176.

[126] Fuller had nonetheless provocatively dedicated *Church-History* itself to a relative of Charles I and also dedicated subsections to notable Royalists (G. Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* [Oxford, 2007], p. 272 n. 32).

[127] Fuller, *Church-History*, bk. xi, p. 236.

[128] Fuller, *Church-History*, bk. xi, p. 236.

[129] T. Fuller, *History of the Holy Warre* (1639), quoted in S. Roberts, *Thomas Fuller: a Seventeenth-Century Worthy* (Manchester, 1953), p. 6.

making his own conjectures of the future. Concomitantly, Fuller placed little emphasis on the trajectory of the future: God was ultimately in control, and the future he had ordained with his own purposes in mind.

Fuller's abandonment of the future is also evident from the end points to his *Church-History*. As noted earlier, his chronology of the British church ends with the regicide. Fuller described over two pages the burial rites of Charles and then ended his text abruptly on this sombre note.[130] The post-1649 debate over Presbyterianism and the future of the church is missing. This practice was consistent: Fuller's additional histories of Cambridge and Waltham Abbey ended in 1643 and 1641, respectively.[131] *Cambridge* ended with an account of the disastrous effects of the Civil War and also with a humorous pun: a college petitioned a benefactor for continued funding, lest the college 'Stand Still, meaning they must desist from going farther in their intended fabrick'.[132] The benefactor replied, 'May your Colledge, and all the Colledges in [Cambridge and Oxford] Stand Still'.[133] Taking it 'In the charitable meaning', Fuller then closed the text with a prayer, not for great progress but simply the continued existence of the two universities until the apocalypse.[134] *Waltham Abbey* concluded with Charles's 1641 approval of a renovation grant and how it had eventually fallen through.[135] The lack of contemporary events is particularly striking, as Fuller was based there from 1648 to 1658.[136] Fuller seemed unwilling to place present-day events into his histories. Pressure from censorship does not explain this fully, since Fuller had benefactors on both Royalist and Parliamentarian sides, and Fuller was brave enough to dedicate the parts of *Church-History* to prominent Royalists, including a surviving relative of Charles himself.[137] Fuller also continued to address various contemporary ecclesiastical debates, like the validity of infant baptism.[138] Perhaps Fuller believed that the state of England had not changed since the regicide, and hence the five intervening years between the execution and *Church-History* need not be recorded. If England's situation had been in stasis since the regicide, histories that ended in the 1640s could be considered 'up-to-date'. Another possibility is that by leaving out most recent events, Fuller could forestall his readers from conjecturing the future. These propositions are not mutually exclusive, and they could have all been in play when *Church-History* was published in 1655.

Fuller's histories' curious distance from the contemporary period was complemented by an idealization of the past; rather than discuss the shape of the future, he elevated the past as a model for England's future recovery, and he devoted himself to ensuring the spiritual health of the church. King James's reign was twice described as one of 'peace, plenty, and prosperity', and despite James's setbacks in the 1620s, Fuller thought England had been left richer and more peaceable.[139] Fuller also celebrated the past in another historical work, *Abel redivivus*. Published in 1651, this co-authored work catalogued the

[130] Fuller, *Church-History*, bk. xi, p. 238.

[131] T. Fuller, *History of the University of Cambridge* (1655), appended to Fuller, *Church-History*, in Wing, no. F 2416, p. 172; and T. Fuller, *History of Waltham Abbey* (1655), in Wing, no. F 2443, p. 21.

[132] Fuller, *Cambridge*, p. 171.

[133] Fuller, *Cambridge*, p. 171.

[134] Fuller, *Cambridge*, pp. 171–2.

[135] Fuller, *Waltham Abbey*, p. 21.

[136] Patterson, 'Fuller'.

[137] Parry, *Trophies*, p. 272 n. 32.

[138] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 149.

[139] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, pp. 235–6.

lives of prominent personalities of the English Reformation.[140] *Abel redevivus* was written in response to what Fuller saw as a lack of good churchmen – a critical situation in the moral health of the nation and the church. Competing ideas of morality and conduct were now popular and accessible to the people. There was now a 'thinnesse in Eminent Divines, caused from our present distractions'.[141] Fuller described the dire situation:

> I feare whilst the streame of a new supply from the two Fountaines of Learning and Religion in this Kingdome is much disturbed and partly obstructed in these tumultuous times, and whilst the present Generation of eminent Divines, maketh haste to their graves, able Ministers will almost be drayned dry in the Kingdome.[142]

The obstruction was a result a lack of 'Discipline', caused by the abolishing of the Church of England. Church structure and authority was now extremely fluid:

> Because as the arrow mortally wounded Ahab betwixt the joynts of his Armour, so in the interstitium betwixt two Disciplines (and give me leave to terme Discipline the Armour of the Church) Episcopacy put off, and another Government not as yet close buckled on, Prophanenesse and Licenciousnesse have given a great and grievous wound to the Church of God.[143]

This period of contestation, referred to as 'the interstitum', distracted the church from its teaching and exposed churchgoers to unholy and deviant ideas. A 'Discipline', or structure of the church, was like armour that protected the church from immorality. In this period of caesura various models of 'Discipline' competed with each other for supremacy. These 'Disciplines', including those of Presbyterianism and Independency, were antithetical to the tenets of Fuller's preferred episcopal structure.[144] The church was also dying by attrition: the ranks of able church ministers were aging and depleting, and too few were adopting episcopalism to replenish the numbers. Thus, *Abel redevivus* was Fuller's active attempt to rectify the situation. Its explicit purpose was 'to furnish our present Age with a Magazeen of religious Patterns for their Imitation'.[145] The characters described in the book were to be seen as role models, for they conducted themselves well and steadfastly in troubled times not unlike the present:

> Christians were most couragious and confident always in Earthquakes … The same holds true here in many worthy Saints, in such concussions and commotions of Church and State, wherein all was almost turned upside downe, they acquited themselves most fearless and valiant, still preferring a good conscience; a grace very worthy of our Imitation, especially in this Age, when the very Foundations are shaken, and most at a loss, how to behave themselves.[146]

Essentially, *Abel redevivus* taught readers how to retain faith in God, his justice and providence in the face of adversity. Having faith in God and his ways would lead to contentment and happiness, even in a time of tribulation. The role models achieved such a disposition, and thus they were selected by Fuller 'to guide and conduct us to arrive at the same

[140] This type of exemplary histories for moral edification were common in the early modern period, and they were used in the education of statesmen and nobles. Exemplary histories have their roots in classical histories from antiquity.

[141] T. Fuller, *Abel redevivus, or, The Dead Yet Speaking* […] (1651), in Wing, no. F 2400, sig. A4r.

[142] Fuller, *Abel*, sig. A4v.

[143] Fuller, *Abel*, sig. A4v.

[144] Fuller did not believe the church's foundations were completely destroyed. Nonetheless, they needed much help to survive the onslaught of immorality and contrary teachings, of which disbelief in God's providence was probably a potent challenge. See Sandler, 'Thomas Fuller's "Pisgah-Sight of Palestine"', p. 331.

[145] Fuller, *Abel*, sig. A2v.

[146] Fuller, *Abel*, sigs. A3r–v.

happiness, by steering our course according to the purity of their lives, and constancy of their deaths'.[147] *Abel redevivus*, along with other less direct work like *The Pisgah-Sight of Palestine* (1650), is evidence of Fuller's continuing attempts to shepherd and safeguard English society through caesura, which brought about competing visions of the church and 'moral conduct'. As Patterson notes, these biographies were 'less successful in evaluating the historical importance of their subjects than in presenting them as credible examples of Christian behavior'.[148] This was more a didactic text than a critical history.[149] Fuller sought to build a society of godly individuals, who were robust in their moral conduct and resilient in the face of both current and future adversity. These godly people would not be obsessed or fight over the future, because they would have placed their trust in a benevolent, omnipotent God, who would steer them eventually towards heaven on earth.

A later work, *Ephemeris Parliamentaria* (1654), continued this effort at providing models of behaviour. The work related the constitutional debates from the sessions of parliament in 1628, where disagreements with Charles led to the Petition of Right. Other documents covered the session of 1629, where parliament rallied against prerogative taxes and Arminian church practices. Fuller believed that this parliament was a model to be followed, and his work served to illustrate this healthy constitutional system with 'lesse eagerness & more moderation … matters not being then heightened with such mutuall animosi|ties as since we have beheld'.[150] Sin and 'English wickedness' finally led to 'the abrupt breaking off of the Parliament', 'the beginning of all our miseries'.[151]

The regicide changed Fuller's treatment of the future. It showed him the futility of trying to ascertain God's ordained future, and Fuller abandoned discussion and contestations of the future trajectory of society. Instead he devoted himself to the defence and survival of the episcopal church, against the competition the unorthodox ideas circulating during caesura. As Patterson has concluded, Fuller was 'determined' to remain active in the recovery of his country through his work.[152] Florence Sandler similarly argues that post-regicide, Fuller devoted himself to uniting the church and uncovering its corruptions. Crossing political and doctrinal divisions, Fuller remained friends with the king-killer Sir John Danvers and declared his willingness to work with his doctrinal foes the Presbyterians. Sandler attributes this to Fuller's desire to mend the country in the relative peace of the Interregnum.[153] Fuller's experience of regicide and regime change propelled him to look to the past for lessons, to identify robust models of society for England to emulate. His work aimed to create a godly society that trusted in God's providence and would remain cheerful and prepared for whatever future God had planned for his people. Fuller's focus on publishing exemplary and analogical histories is an interesting contrast to Woolf's observation of 'noticeable swing in the 1640s toward granting greater priority to causation, contingency, and contiguity'.[154] For a disillusioned Royalist seeking to survive a post-regicide world, a retreat to analogical history typical of the Elizabethan period would have been prudent.

[147] Fuller, *Abel*, sig. A2v.

[148] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 146.

[149] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 145.

[150] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, pp. 147–8; and T. Fuller, *Ephemeris parliamentaria, or, A Faithfull Register* […] (1654), in Wing, no. F 2422, sig. ¶4r.

[151] Fuller, *Ephemeris parliamentari*, sigs. ¶4r, ¶¶ 2v.

[152] Patterson, *Thomas Fuller*, p. 156.

[153] Sandler, 'Thomas Fuller's "Pisgah-Sight of Palestine"', pp. 330–1, 341.

[154] Woolf, 'Hystories', p. 47. Fuller was more prolific in the Interregnum period, and his shift was one of emphasis: the pre-regicide *Andronicus* was an exemplary and moral history, and post-regicide *Church-History* consisted of second-cause histories.

While Thomas May continued to write second-cause histories, his work continued to emphasize the unpredictable and singular nature of recent history and of God's providence. In 1650 May published *A Breviary of the History of Parliament*, which summarized his *History* and included events up to 1648. In this tract, May observed how despite 'the Kingdoms liberties' being 'oppressed', England was at 'peace' and 'seemed happy in that tranquility; until the fatall Coal … began to be kindled in 1637'.[155] The Bill of Attainder against Strafford 'was a thing, that former Ages had not seen the like of' and that 'no King ever granted the like before', as was the fact that 'no King had ever before made so great a necessity to require it'.[156] Parliament was at one point 'victorious' and 'guarded with a gallant Army, [with] no forces visibly appearing against it, yet [it] was never in more danger'.[157] To emphasize the singular nature of these events, May made the decision to remove 'almost all historical analogies' in *Breviary*. The classical parallels that he drew in *History* and other pre-regicide work were not present in *Breviary*, creating the illusion that England was going through an unparalleled time.[158] Presiding over this sequence of events was God, 'by whose providence all things are guided'.[159] This included Charles's escape from the battlefield at Kingston and Fairfax's army's first victories.[160]

May's approach to history in *History* and *Breviary* remained consistent with his pre-regicide work. His histories were framed as narrations of the truth, which he considered as the sequence of events that no Englishman could disagree upon. *Parliament* was portrayed as being truthful, a bare narration of events and actions that were evident to all observers.[161] Readers were asked to compare what they were reading to their own memory, to judge whether *Parliament* was accurate and honest.[162] May littered his text with constant exhortations to exercise their own judgement: 'I shall … make a short enumeration … that the Reader may the better judge of the causes of succeeding troubles'; 'I will not presume to publish any opinion of mine own, how or when this ruine of the Kingdom should have been prevented; but onely relate what was then done, that posterity hereafter may judge of it'; 'Whether the parrallel will in some measure fit this occasion or not, I leave it to the Reader'.[163] May's plain narration in *Breviary* contained no speculation of the future, and the history ended abruptly with the lead-up to the regicide in 1648. May's other post-regicide work, *The Changeable Covenant* (1650) reveals his thoughts about historiography:

> This little Pamphlet pretends to nothing at all that is new, the materials of it having heretofore been discussed in more large, rationall, and demonstrative Treatises; nor it the scope of publishing it to teach judicious men, but only to put some Englishmen in minde of what hath passed heretofore, such Englishmen as in all these times of trouble, have had (to the great misfortune of the Common-wealth) very treacherous memories.[164]

[155] T. May, *A Breviary of the History of the Parliament* (1650), Brit. Libr., E.1317[1], p. 4.
[156] May, *Breviary*, p. 31.
[157] May, *Breviary*, pp. 185–6.
[158] G. Rivett, 'Make use both of things present and past: Thomas May's histories of Parliament, printed public discourse and the politics of the recent past, 1640-1650' (unpublished University of Sheffield Ph.D. thesis, 2010), pp. 228–9.
[159] May, *Breviary*, p. 90.
[160] May, *Breviary*, pp. 82, 114–15.
[161] May, *History*, sigs. A4v–B1r.
[162] May, *History*, sigs. A4v–B1r.
[163] May, *History*, bk. i, p. 14; bk. ii, p. 45; bk. iii, p.31. May acknowledged that he had privileged access only to Parliamentarian sources, and he challenged Royalist historians to publish with similar honesty. See Pocock, 'Thomas May', pp. 115–17.
[164] T. May, *The Changeable Covenant* (1650), Brit. Libr., E.613[11], p. 1.

May put forth his work as a reliable narration of events that he hoped would help remind the reader of the correct sequence of events, in the hope that they see God's providence in the way May did. A bare-bones summary of events, May often neglected to discuss the intricacies of political opinion and debate. For example, when discussing the Newcastle Propositions of 1646,

> it was debated, and at last agreed, that nineteen Propositions (so many there were) should be sent to Newcastle, to the king; which because they are long, and fully recited in a larger History, I will not relate in this Epitome.[165]

May preferred to refer his readers to longer works, where the source material was reproduced. Similarly, in the account of the New Model Army's increasing dominance May narrated simply the events, without much detail on the proximate causes.[166]

The one exception to May's practice occurred at the end of *Breviary*, when May went into detail on the content of petitions calling for regicide. May recounted how various petitions were submitted in 1648 to restore Charles to power and how there were also other petitions that called for Charles to be put on trial. May then chose to summarize the positions only of the latter group, saying that these were 'divers and frequent'.[167] In May's words, these petitions 'entreat that the King himself, the Chief offendor, the raiser of the whole War, and author of Englands calamity, might be called to Judgement'. May then included an extract from a petition:

> Parliament itself … [and] the Kirk of Scotland … had declared … that he was guilty (besides other horrid Crimes) of shedding the blood of many thousands of his best Subjects. Which things if they were true, and not at all punished, nor any satisfaction made; it might be feared would provoke (by so much injustice) the wrath of God; who had delivered that King (after so bloody a War) into their hands. They therefore humbly entreat the Parliament, that they would not ungratefully throw away so many miraculous deliverances of Almighty God, nor betray themselves and their faithfull friends, by deceitfull Treaties, to an implacable Enemy.[168]

Clear from this excerpt was the idea that God would be angry if Charles was not tried and executed. At the most basic level, God had given the English a chance to bring justice to their society by trying Charles, who was responsible for the war. This belief that Charles's capture was a gift from God probably resonated with May; the level of detail and explanation deviates from his long-standing editorial practice of simply narrating a chronology of events. May's chosen excerpt and presentation emphasized the need for regicide, eliding over the fact that many of these petitions were much more circumspect and asked for justice without naming the king directly.[169] May used the petitions to enunciate his views on the regicide, before tantalisingly ending *Breviary* with a promise to look into the regicide proper, even though he published a year after the event.[170]

Providence remained important to May, and it was constantly invoked to explain the flow of events. Charles's 1642 escape from Parliamentary forces was considered God's will, as were Charles's and the earl of Newcastle's subsequent tactical blunders.[171] When

[165] May, *Breviary*, p. 147.
[166] May, *Breviary*, p. 159.
[167] May, *Breviary*, pp. 212–13.
[168] May, *Breviary*, p. 214.
[169] Rivett, 'Things present and past', pp. 285–7.
[170] Perhaps May avoided discussing a contentious, emotionally raw event like the regicide, leaving hidden his personal opinion and to keep an impartial, disinterested image.
[171] May, *Breviary*, pp. 82, 89–90.

discussing the unexpected victories of the largely untrained Parliamentarian army in 1645, he cautioned that

> whoever considers this, must take heed that he do not attribute too much to [the army], but give it wholly to Almighty God; whose providence over this Army, as it did afterwards miraculously appear.[172]

To May, God's hand was always evident in past events and how they have led to the present. May clearly identified God's providential interventions as signals to the nation. All extraordinary past events happened with God's approval and sanction. In the post-regicide period, this would have included a significant event like the execution of Charles, which should be celebrated as a sign of God's intentions. May's attitude towards providence was shared by his compatriot John Milton, who had used *Parliament* as a major source for his polemic *Eikonoklastes* (1649).[173] The similarities between Milton and May are striking: in Milton's *Of Reformation* (1642), the Civil War was considered an act of 'extraordinary providence' caused by a 'delay in the reformation of the elect nation'.[174] Like May, Milton saw a need to recognize and celebrate past providential events as signals from God: Milton exhibited 'a Puritan fear lest signal providences go uncelebrated'. In the wake of war, '[preachers] saw a need for the historical review of England's punishments as much as her deliverances'.[175] For Milton, the regicide opened a time of change, an 'intereign' when a new government was to be set in place by the interregnal authority. Like Clement Walker described in *Anarchia*, Charles's death opened up the future for new possibilities in government. Sharing similar views on God's providence in England, it is probable that May saw the regicide as Milton did: a providential event delivered by God as 'both a reiteration and consummation of the [providential] past, and a promise [from God] for the future'.[176] This view is congruent with May's effort to overemphasize popular support for regicide in the petitions he uncharacteristically summarized in *Breviary*, which argued that Charles's death was necessary, an opportunity given by God to get justice for the blood Charles had shed.[177]

This hypothesis also accords well with what we know about May's thoughts on the outbreak of war: the Civil War was punishment for past sins, and regicide, which was allowed to happen and marked the end of the Civil War, could be God's ordained signal to the people that their punishment was complete, unless they continued to sin even more. In his analysis of May's continuation of Lucan's poetry, David Norbrook observes how May defended the regicide as 'a necessary sacrifice', a defence that resonates with the polemicist Henry Robinson's declaration: 'We are now (through providence) on a new Foundation'.[178] Pocock similarly observes that in *Breviary*, May's 'heightened rhetoric' may indicate that May was no longer be expecting a national reconciliation with the Royalists.[179] The omission of historical analogies similarly signalled that a new time was at hand and that it was without

[172] May, *Breviary*, pp. 114–15.
[173] Von Maltzahn, *Milton's History of Britain*, p. 59.
[174] Von Maltzahn, *Milton's History of Britain*, p. 87.
[175] Von Maltzahn, *Milton's History of Britain*, p. 56.
[176] M. Neufeld, 'Doing without precedent: applied typology and the execution of Charles I in Milton's "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates"', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, xxxviii (2007), 329–44, at. p. 343.
[177] See P. Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, that man of blood', *Journal of British Studies*, xvi (1977), 41–61.
[178] [H. Robinson], *A Short Discourse Between Monarchical and Aristocratical Government* (1649), Brit. Libr., E.575[31], p. 7, quoted in D. Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric, and Politics* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 228.
[179] Pocock, 'Thomas May', p. 139.

parallel.[180] For May the regicide was God's signal that his time of wrath and punishment was on hold; it initiated a new time, in which society had the chance to reconfigure itself and move away from its sinful ways. In this break from the normal time of wrath, the people now had the choice of whether they wanted to continue sinning by keeping to the old ways or to reform society to follow godly principles. *Breviary* was advice literature for a nation at the crossroads, telling the people how going down the path of absolute monarchy would lead to God's wrath in the form of civil war. The regicide was, however, only the first step towards moving into communion with God. Society had to continue reforming to attain salvation or risk falling back into civil war.

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Broader histories of the period have used the regicide as a chronological starting or concluding point.[181] Histories of the regicide itself have sought to explain how such an event came to pass, and the structural implications of the political changes that happened soon after.[182] While previous scholarship has recognized the shocking and startling nature of the regicide, we have too often elided over the emotional resonances of the event itself. The regicide was a clear sign to contemporaries that the world they knew had changed fundamentally. The regicide sundered the present from the past, changing the complexion of the times and leading contemporaries to re-evaluate where England sat in the grand scheme of things. These changes were reflected in the tenor and modes of histories written in this time. Disenchanted by the regicide, Fuller moved towards more analogical histories that were temporally disconnected to the present. Walker abandoned his confidence in the status quo and rallied his readers by portending a dystopian England. May used his post-regicide histories to emphasize the gifts of providence.

These findings speak to a growing body of literature on the psychological and emotional afterlife of the English Civil Wars.[183] The recent turn towards exploring the ramifications of war and trauma has thrown light on the emotional impact of such turbulent times and actions. Having drawn inspiration from memory studies, their synchronic approach has focused research on remembering and constructions of the past. I believe a diachronic approach, as used in this article, is helpful in elucidating the qualitative nature of an event like the regicide. By tracking changes over time, we can better gauge the impact of such disruptive events and also evaluate contemporaries' responses to the world around them. A focus on conceptions of time and the future is particularly useful. These express both the emotional tenor and a rational response to events of the recent past. In narratives of the past and what was to come, they highlighted what was deemed important and in what ways past events were significant. In their fashioning of time we get a glimpse of how they believe the world was ordered and how they should then act. A focus on early modern temporality can help marry the study of emotions with that of political behaviour.

The regicide signalled a break in the normal course of events, and it sparked introspection and reflection in authors of history. It struck all three history writers that they were living

[180] Rivett, 'Things present and past', pp. 228–9. Classical parallels were common in *History* and May's other pre-regicide work.

[181] J. Peacey, 'Introduction', in Peacey, *Regicides and Execution*, pp. 1–13, at p. 4.

[182] P. Baker, 'The regicide', in *Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*, ed. M. J. Braddick (Oxford, 2015), pp. 154–69.

[183] See C. Carlton, *Going to the Wars: the Experience of the British Civil Wars, 1638–1651* (London, 1992); M. Stoyle, 'Memories of the maimed: the testimony of Charles I's former soldiers, 1660–1730', *History*, lxxxviii (2003), 204–26; and E. Peters, 'Trauma narratives of the English Civil War', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, xvi (2016), 79–94.

in special times. This break in time brought new possibilities, the features of which varied according to politics and personal dispensation. Writing from across the political spectrum, Walker, Fuller and May refashioned the future in the light of the regicide. They portrayed possible futures and dystopias that asked readers to evaluate their positions and then pushed them towards particular courses of action. In his assessment of the politics of time, Ian Klinke observed that twentieth-century geopolitical texts contained temporalities, which in turn always carried 'normative imperatives'.[184] Early modern contemporaries recognized the political power of such writing. Walker's work, specifically the *Anarchia*, was considered so dangerous to the Grandees that they commissioned a parliamentary committee to address the book. R. E. Maddison has called this a 'serious reaction and one for which there was little precedent'.[185] In the political marketplace of the Interregnum, these histories were not simply recounts of the past, they were also roadmaps for action.

[184] I. Klinke, 'Chronopolitics: a conceptual matrix', *Progress in Human Geography*, xxxvii (2013), 673–90, at p. 686.

[185] Maddison, 'Clement Walker'.

