Lucy Hutchinson & the English Revolution
Gender, Genre, and History Writing
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CLAIRE GHEERAERT-GRAFFEUILLE
For Tony, Clémentine, and Émilie
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Notes on conventions

The phrase ‘English Civil War’—sometimes abbreviated as ‘Civil War’—refers here to the period going from 1642 (the King raising the Royal Standard at Nottingham on 22 August) to 1649 (the execution of Charles I on 30 January). It encompasses the First Civil War (1642–1646) and the Second Civil War (1648). The phrase ‘Civil Wars’ conveniently covers the period of political and military conflicts of the 1640s and 1650s.


I have kept the complete name of Lucy Hutchinson throughout the book to avoid confusion with other members of her family.

OED is used to refer to Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford UP, 2020).

When quoting Lucy Hutchinson’s manuscripts, I have kept her original spelling as much as possible, but expanded contractions for clarity’s sake.
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Introduction

Lucy Hutchinson is best remembered as the author of the *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, a best-seller in the nineteenth century, first published in 1806 by the Reverend Julius Hutchinson, a descendant of Colonel Hutchinson’s half-brother, Charles Hutchinson, who had inherited her manuscripts.¹ As Governor of the town and castle of Nottingham, the Colonel had fought on the side of Parliament during the Civil War. In 1649, as a member of the High Court of Justice, he decided in conscience to vote for the execution of Charles I. Although at the Restoration his name figured in the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion (1660), he was soon suspected of plotting against the restored regime and was imprisoned without trial.² He died in captivity at Sandown Castle in Kent in 1664. It was presumably between 1664 and 1667 that Lucy Hutchinson wrote the *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*.³ This was a period when the ‘composition and possession’ of a republican manuscript was liable to a charge of treason, and it was therefore unthinkable for her to publish the life of a man—her husband—who had signed the King’s death warrant.⁴ Unlike some memoirs, including the republican *Memoirs* of the regicide Edmund Ludlow, which were published at the turn of the eighteenth century, Lucy Hutchinson’s *Memoirs* remained in manuscript until


³ Seddon, ‘The Dating of the Completion of the Composition of the *Memoirs*’. Until Seddon’s article, the *Memoirs* were assumed to have been composed between 1664 and 1671.

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1806. The chief reason for this was that the Memoirs were held by the royalist branch of the Hutchinson family who did not wish to publicize their links with their republican and Puritan ancestor, John Hutchinson, whose name was mentioned in all the accounts of the regicide. The refusal to circulate the manuscript was noted by the biographer and antiquarian Mark Noble in his Lives of the English Regicides who had heard of 'a MS. written by the widow of the guilty Mr Hutchinson, relative to the important times in which she lived: it was hoped that it would have been lent, to copy what must have been highly gratifying to both the public, and the writer of these volumes; but he was not fortunate enough to obtain the perusal of it.' According to Julius Hutchinson, the first editor of the Memoirs, some people may even have had the opportunity to glance through it, especially when it was in the possession of Sir Thomas Hutchinson, the uncle of the first editor of the Memoirs, but its publication was never authorized. The Memoirs of the Life of Col. Hutchinson had been seen by many persons, as well as the editor, in the possession of the late Thomas Hutchinson, Esq. of Nottinghamshire, and of Hatfield Woodhall, in Hartfordshire; and he had been frequently solicited to permit them to be published, particularly by the late Mrs. Catharine Maccaulay, but had uniformly refused.

Even though it cannot be ascertained to what extent the manuscript circulated, Mark Noble and Catharine Macaulay's interest in the text is evidence of the value that was attached to the Memoirs as a historical testimony in the late years of the eighteenth century. Given the fact that in her History of England, Macaulay makes frequent references to the writings of Restoration historians

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7 Mark Noble, The Lives of the English Regicides and other Commissioners of the Pretended High Court of Justice (London, 1798), vol. 1, 367.

8 For a clear presentation of family links in the Hutchinson family, see Sutherland, 'Note on the Text', Memoirs xxi.

9 Julius Hutchinson, 'Preface', Memoirs i.

10 Devoney Looser believes that Lucy Hutchinson may have circulated the manuscript of the Memoirs in her own lifetime. See Looser, British Women Writers and the Writing of History 1670–1820 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000) 32. On the circulation of the manuscript in the eighteenth century, see Burden, 'Editing Shadows', 177.
such as Edmund Ludlow, John Rushworth, Edward Hyde, and Gilbert Burnet, it is probable that she considered Lucy Hutchinson’s republican Memoirs as another potential historical source for her own work.\textsuperscript{11} Similarly, the first editors of the Memoirs understood their historical importance. In his preface to his 1806 edition, Julius Hutchinson eloquently called them a ‘history of a period the most remarkable in the British annals, written one hundred and fifty years ago’.\textsuperscript{12} The title he chose for the volume foregrounds the historical dimension of the work:

Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, Governor of Nottingham Castle and Town, Representative of the County of Nottingham in the Long Parliament, and of the Town of Nottingham in the First Parliament of Charles II, etc. with Original Anecdotes of Many of the Most Distinguished of his contemporaries and a Summary Review of Public affairs […] to which is prefixed the Life of Mrs. Hutchinson, Written by Herself, a Fragment.

Meanwhile, in France, the nineteenth-century French historian François Guizot included the translation of Lucy Hutchinson’s Memoirs in his collection of English historical memoirs which served as a basis for his Histoire de la Révolution d’Angleterre de Charles I à Charles II, the first volume of which was published in 1826–1827.\textsuperscript{13} At the beginning of the preface, he writes meaningfully: ‘I have published the original memoirs of the English revolution; I now publish its history.’\textsuperscript{14} In England, the historiographical quality of Julius Hutchinson’s edition did not go unnoticed: the Monthly Review concluded that the Memoirs ‘[form] a valuable addition to our records, and is justly intitled to stand by the side of those of Rushworth, Clarendon, and Ludlow’.\textsuperscript{15} According to The Eclectic Review, ‘[h]ad this volume been published in its own day, its merits would have raised it to a high rank among contemporary histories.’\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{12} Julius Hutchinson, ‘Preface’, Memoirs x.
\textsuperscript{16} Rev. of Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, by Lucy Hutchinson, Eclectic Review 3.1 (1807): 16.
Similarly, in an 1847 review from The Christian Examiner, an American Unitarian periodical, the Memoirs were read alongside other books about the history of the English Revolution.¹ In the twentieth century the popularity of the Memoirs declined, but they were still studied at school, especially at the turn of the century. In A Source Book of English History (1912), out of the thirteen texts anthologized in Chapter 2 (‘Civil War and Commonwealth. 1641–1660’), four are excerpts from the Memoirs and the name of Lucy Hutchinson appears in the list of ‘authorities cited’, next to the names of Cromwell, Clarendon, and Marvell.¹⁸ In the same way, the Notes on the Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson, published in 1904 in the ‘Normal Tutorial Series’, offer a decidedly historical approach to Lucy Hutchinson’s text. They provide a map, a chronological summary of the period as well as ‘Explanatory, Historical and Etymological Notes’.¹⁹ Alfred Wood, in Nottinghamshire in the Civil War, considers Lucy Hutchinson’s Memoirs as a key source for local history.²⁰ More recently, Royce MacGillivray and Robert Mayer confirmed that Lucy Hutchinson must be considered as a major historian of the Restoration in her own right. The present study owes much to their pioneering work.²¹

However, this historiographical dimension was often downplayed, or even overlooked, by many reviewers who preferred to emphasize the literary qualities of the Memoirs and the portrait of Lucy Hutchinson as the ideal Puritan wife. Devoney Looser has decisively demonstrated how Lucy Hutchinson’s historical Memoirs were often de-historicized in the nineteenth and even in the twentieth century.²² Today’s scholarship, she argues, continues to minimize their historiographical relevance, privileging their autobiographical and domestic


¹⁸ Arthur D. Innes, A Source-Book of English History for the Use of Schools (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1914), vol. 2, 58–111. Hutchinson’s texts illustrate the following points: ‘After Strafford’s Death’ (58–62); ‘The Presbyterian Turn on the Army’ (70–2); ‘The Army Asserts Itself’ (73–6); ‘Regicide’ (80–6).


²² Looser, British Women Writers 47–8.
dimensions.²³ For her own part, she contends that Lucy Hutchinson’s text should be ‘understood as a historiographical contribution – one that used selected mainstream historical forms and rejected others’.²⁴ There is much textual evidence for this in the Memoirs. First, Lucy Hutchinson describes her own manuscript as ‘history’ (S36/K55) while she discusses the analyses of other historians, in particular Thomas May, with great authority (S53/K75).²⁵ Second, although she dedicates ‘The Life of John Hutchinson’ to her children and describes it as a consolatory narrative meant to ‘moderate her woe’ (S1/K16), she also specifies that it was composed for ‘the benefit of all’ (S2/K17) and in order to ‘instruct the erring children of this generation’ (S1/K16). There is no doubt, therefore, that she imagined the possibility of her manuscript being read by a broader audience, the historical and political contents of her work reaching out beyond a restricted family readership.²⁶ Calling the Restoration age ‘wicked’ (S1/K16), and ‘darke’ (S3/K18), she unequivocally positioned herself as an opponent of Charles II’s monarchy. Her main goal was to provide her readers with an apology of her husband, as well as to refute official royalist historiography and dispel suspicions about the Colonel’s loyalties at the Restoration. Like many memorialists of her age, she wished her narrative to reach a wide audience, and some scholars have suggested that, were it not for the circumstances of the Restoration, she may well have had publication in mind.²⁷ During her lifetime, the manuscript of the Memoirs probably did not circulate beyond a close circle, which included her brother, Sir Allen Apsley, her cousin, Anne Wilmot, Countess of Rochester, and Arthur Annesley, Earl of Anglesey, her patron, who, on 8 October 1682, made the following observation in his diary: “The morning was much


²⁴ Looser, British Women Writers 31.


delighted in reading pious Mrs Hutchesons diary and put thereby in mind of close walking wth God as she did.²⁸

Lucy Hutchinson’s use of manuscript-writing to commemorate her husband’s life in history was not only a means of disseminating her republican ideas; it was also a mode of writing with which, as a woman of the aristocracy, she had been familiar for more than twenty years.²⁹ In the Memoirs, for example, she reports how John Hutchinson felt compelled to meet her when he heard someone reading one of her sonnets which circulated among the members of the court gathered at Richmond. The exchange of letters and papers is materialized in the ‘Notebook’, another manuscript in Lucy Hutchinson’s hand, in which she copied several official letters and documents.³⁰ Her Literary Commonplace Book, written by different hands, is a collection of translations, anthologized poems, and letters; it is typical of coterie writing, as it was practised at the Stuart court in the 1630s as well as in the 1650s and at the Restoration.³¹ It includes, among other poems, Edmund Waller’s A Panegyrick to My Lord Protector (1655), to which Lucy Hutchinson gave a satirical response, now kept in the Hyde Papers in the British Library.³² Furthermore, the fact that her literary activities were known in royalist networks in the 1650s is evidenced in


a poem by Sir Aston Cockayne, who urges his friend Alexander Brome to continue her translation of Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura*, which she, as a woman, ‘must needes give out’.³³ In 1675, Lucy Hutchinson finally offered her full translation of Lucretius to her patron, the Earl of Anglesey, in whom she saw a protection ‘against all the censures a booke might expose me to’—a claim which is here to remind us that manuscript-writing was a form of publication in its own right.³⁴

However, despite her expertise in manuscript-writing and transmission, Lucy Hutchinson was not averse to print. Admittedly, she distrusted the books and pamphlets which poured off the press in the 1640s, but she, like her husband, was aware of the advantages of print publication, and it is significant that she did not object to the publicity of the Colonel’s defence of Nottingham in pamphlets and newsbooks during the Civil War.³⁵ When writing the *Memoirs*, she drew on the Colonel’s narrative of imprisonment that had been published in 1664.³⁶ Also in the *Memoirs*, it is eloquent that she should advise her readers ‘to informe [themselves] better of by [Parliament’s] printed papers and Mr. Maye’s History’ (S53/K75), thereby claiming a place for her own account amidst the published histories of the times. This attitude to print publication brings her close to her royalist neighbour, Margaret Cavendish, who, by the time Lucy Hutchinson was writing the *Memoirs*, had already published several works in her own name in the 1650s, in particular her Epicurean *Poems and Fancies*.³⁷ To a large degree, Lucy Hutchinson’s attitude to print also connects her with some Civil War historians and memorialists whose works, both republican and royalist, were published either during the Exclusion Crisis or at the turn of the seventeenth century.³⁸ If Lucy Hutchinson’s *Memoirs* had not been kept secret by her husband’s family, it is conceivable that they could have been published at the end of the seventeenth century, like the memoirs of another regicide, Edmund Ludlow, to whom she has often been compared.³⁹ Finally, two years before her death in 1681, the

³⁵ *A Discovery of the Treacherous Attempts of the Cavaliers*, to have Procured the Betraying of Nottingham Castle into their Hands (London, 1643).
³⁸ For more examples, see Chapter 2, 2, b (‘Memoir-writing and the truth of history’).
first five cantos of her biblical epic, *Order and Disorder*, were published anonymously, which confirms that she was not hostile to print publication, even though, unlike Margaret Cavendish, she concealed her authorship.40

The autograph manuscript of the *Memoirs*, on which Julius Hutchinson’s first edition was based, was bought by Nottingham Castle Museum in 1921.41 It contains various pieces which all relate to Lucy Hutchinson’s experience of the Revolution: a dedication, ‘To my Children’ (twenty-nine pages), ‘The Life of John Hutchinson of Owthorpe in the County of Nottingham Esquire’ (319 pages), a one-page meditation (only reproduced in Keeble’s edition under the title of ‘Final Meditation’), and sixty-nine pages of biblical verses and references, which were published neither by Julius Hutchinson nor by subsequent editors.42 “The Life of John Hutchinson” is far longer than the other sections, and critics and historians have often found it convenient to refer to this life narrative as the *Memoirs*, an appellation that has been kept here. Besides these items, Julius Hutchinson’s 1806 edition also reproduces a short autobiographical fragment, the manuscript of which was lost after the dispersal of Lucy Hutchinson’s manuscripts at the death of the editor.43 Its writing method recalls the ‘Life of John Hutchinson’ as it brings together the author’s story of her own early life with England’s national history. It is, however, very short and stops abruptly, which makes it difficult to decide whether it was censored by some member of the Hutchinson family or interrupted by Lucy Hutchinson herself.44

Until the publication of Sutherland’s edition in 1973, the reliability of Julius Hutchinson’s edition was not challenged, all the more so as he claimed to have been faithful to the original manuscript: ‘The only deviation we have made from the MS. is in putting the U and V in their proper places; they being

40 *Order and Disorder*: Or, the World Made and Undone Being Meditations upon the Creation and the Fall (London, 1679). On its publication see Norbrook, ‘Order and Disorder: The Poem and its Contexts’, xii–xiii.


43 Julius Hutchinson describes it as ‘[a Fragment, giving an account of the early part of her own life’ (i).

written promiscuously. Still, this statement is misleading for at least two reasons. First, as David Norbrook has shown, Julius Hutchinson was ‘an interventionist editor, frequently revising Hutchinson’s wording to shorten sentences and clarify meaning’. Second, as James Sutherland highlighted in the preface to his 1973 edition, the first editor ‘omitted passages amounting to about 9,000 words’. Many of the cancelled passages dealt with religion, which Julius Hutchinson deemed to be ‘so little in fashion’ when he was preparing the edition of the Memoirs. In the dedication, ‘To My Children’, he chose to cut references to Calvin, whether they be direct or indirect, as well as the passages in which John Hutchinson is characterized as a saint and martyr. Julius Hutchinson also cancelled an eight-page portrait of Colonel Hutchinson, which Lucy Hutchinson describes as ‘another assay’ after a first description which she ‘much dislike[s]’. Even if Lucy Hutchinson does not say which portrait she favours, it has been the decision of the first editor and of his successors to leave out this second portrait, which underscores—even more overtly than the first—the Colonel’s status as a saint and martyr. The editor seems to have been guided by the same principles when he passes in silence the three last pages of ‘The Life of John Hutchinson’, in which the Colonel’s death is viewed in a providential light. In a similar way, the removal of both the dark Calvinistic ‘Final Meditation’ and the compilation of biblical verses tend to deconfessionalize the original manuscript. All these editorial choices, which aim at erasing the revolutionary violence of the regicide, and at downplaying the Puritanism and the republicanism of the Memoirs, are consonant with Julius Hutchinson’s preface to the Memoirs, in which he argues that the Revolution of 1688—the triumph of constitutional monarchy—is to be read in

46 See Sutherland, ‘Note on the Text’, Memoirs, xxiv.
47 See ‘The Life of Mrs. Hutchinson, written by herself. A fragment’, Memoirs, ed. Julius Hutchinson, note a, 1: ‘That noble turn of thought which led Mrs. Hutchinson to open her work with thanks to her Maker, instead of apologies to the readers, [...] will probably, by its originality, recommend itself, and prevent the distaste which the air of religion, it wears, might give to many, in times when it is so little in fashion.’ In the preface (vi–vii), the editor declares that ‘Divinity as a science was a study then in vogue, and seems to have tainted the conversation and writings of the greater part of society.’
48 See for instance ‘To My Children’, Memoirs, ed. Sutherland, 5–7 and ed. Keeble, 21–3. The reference to Calvin is removed from Julius Hutchinson’s edition. See also the longer passage about the Colonel’s calling (S35–6/K54–6).
49 See for instance ‘To My Children’: ‘When God afflicted him, he fell downe at his feete [...] God called him to something elce’ (S13/K29).
51 For other cancelled passages that are not religious, see Sutherland, ‘Note on the Text’, xxiv, and Norbrook, ‘But a Copie’, 118–19.
52 This is the title which Keeble gives to it in his edition (337). It has no title in the original manuscript (DD/HU4, [421]).
53 Memoirs, DD/HU4, [423–79].
continuity with the demands of the supporters of Parliament in the early years of the First Civil War. In Julius Hutchinson’s view, the Colonel did nothing but assert the ‘claims of the people to command, through their representatives, the public purse, the freedom of debate in parliament, and the responsibility of ministers’. These claims, Julius Hutchinson maintains, were widely accepted even among the Tories of his day: ‘Upon a fair review of the contest it will be seen that what the Tory and the Courtier of the present day, the friend or even the flatterer of kingly power, admits as axioms, were the grand desiderata of the Whig and the Patriot of those times, and that what were then cried out upon as daring encroachments now pass as the most moderate and unquestioned claims.’

In the present monograph, I shall mostly focus on the Memoirs as edited by Sutherland (1973) and Keeble (1996). I have also used the Nottingham Manuscript (DD/HU4) to quote unpublished sections of the Memoirs and to locate revisions and deletions. In the course of the book, I also pay special attention to an autograph manuscript covering the years 1642–1645, which is held at the British Library. In his 1806 edition of the Memoirs, Julius Hutchinson calls it ‘a book without a title, but which appears to have been a kind of diary made use of when she came to write the Life of John Hutchinson’. In his 1885 edition, the historian C. H. Firth did not view this manuscript as a diary, but as a sketch or a draft which Lucy Hutchinson used to write ‘The Life of John Hutchinson’. He chose to call it the ‘Note-book’, a term that shall be kept here as a convenient shorthand.

I will also occasionally refer to Lucy Hutchinson’s Commonplace Books, as well as to the ‘Elegies’ which in their own ways constitute a singular historiographical enterprise. The manuscript of these Elegies is now kept in the Nottinghamshire Archives; it has been edited by David Norbrook, who assumes that the twenty-three poems were composed around the time when

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54 Julius Hutchinson, ed., Memoirs v.
55 Julius Hutchinson, ed., Memoirs vi.
57 Julius Hutchinson, Preface, Memoirs i.
58 Memoirs, ed. Firth, x–xi. On the genre of the Notebook, see Chapter 5 and a forthcoming chapter, ‘From Local to National History: Lucy Hutchinson as a Historian of the English Revolution’.
60 Norbrook, ‘Lucy Hutchinson’s Elegies’, 469.
Lucy Hutchinson was writing the *Memoirs*, that is to say between 1664 and 1667, which may explain why there are ‘innumerable verbal echoes between the two texts’. The new Oxford edition of the *Memoirs*, edited by David Norbrook, will, in all likelihood, highlight their intertextuality and their links with other Hutchinson’s texts, and provide an edition of the unpublished parts—the sixty-nine pages of biblical verses and meditation to be found at the end of the Nottingham manuscript.

1. History and memory

The Civil Wars stimulated the writing of many lives which were then understood as histories rather than as biographical explorations of an individual’s personality or character. ‘Charles II’s return to England in 1662,’ Ian Donaldson remarks, ‘initiated a period of intense interest in the chronicling of lives, especially of those who had played a major part in the great political and religious events of the preceding decades.’ Lives, as a genre of writing, were indeed a major way of history writing until the beginning of the eighteenth century. A very useful definition, quoted by some Restoration life-writers, was provided by Francis Bacon’s historiographical typology in *The Advancement of Learning*. Lives, according to Bacon, were ‘perfect history’

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that ‘excell[ed] in profit and use’. ‘Lives,’ he continued, ‘if they be well written, propounding to themselves a person to represent, in whom actions both greater and smaller, publique & priuate haue a commixture; must of necessitie containe a more true, natuie, and liuely representation.’

Lucy Hutchinson does not mention Bacon, but his definition of a life reflects her own project. ‘The Life of John Hutchinson’ is indeed ‘well written’ and displays the ‘commixture’ that Bacon advocates, the private being never split from the public, the personal from the historical. In this regard, the Colonel’s public career can only be understood if one considers his own motivations and the bonds that tied him to his wife and to God. Moreover, Lucy Hutchinson’s tour de force lies in her ability to link her husband’s life to what Bacon calls ‘Chronicle’, that is, to national history. Combining the history of someone’s ‘life’ with the history of their ‘times’ was a frequent practice after the Civil Wars. Two well-known examples are Baxter’s Reliquiæ Baxterianæ, subtitled Mr Richard Baxter’s Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times, and Clarendon’s History of the Rebellion, which was in fact the conflation of a history of England (started in the 1640s) with his own life (composed during his exile in 1668 and 1669). Such a combination was close to the genre of ‘memoirs’, which were histories written ‘by such persons who have had a hand in the management, or else have been eye-witnesses of the transacting of affairs, containing a plain narration, either of the actions of their prince or statesmen, or of themselves’. Matthew Sylvester, the editor of Baxter’s Reliquiæ Baxterianæ (1696), speaks of ‘the Author’s ordering and digesting of his own Memoirs’, while Baxter himself claims that he ‘must bear this

68 Bacon, The Second Booke 11: ‘HISTORY which may be called IVST and PARFITE Historie, is of three kinds, according to the obiect which it propoundeth, or pretendeth to represent; for it either representeth a TIME, or a PERSON, or an ACTION. The first we call CHRONICLES, the second LIVES, and the third NARRATIONS, or RELATIONS.’
faithful Witness to those times, that as far as [he] was acquainted.\(^7\) Hyde does not use the term ‘memoirs’ in his History of the Rebellion, but he too insists that he was a witness to many political transactions and debates:

> And as I may not be thought altogether an incompetent person for this communication, having been present as a member of parliament in those councils before and till the breaking out of the Rebellion, and having since had the honour to be near two great kings in some trust, so I shall perform the same with all faithfulness and ingenuity.\(^7\)

For that matter, the first editor, Julius Hutchinson, highlights the proximity of the approaches taken by Edward Hyde and Lucy Hutchinson, even signalling the superiority of the latter’s ‘representation of affairs’:

> although there are many histories of the same period, there is not one that is generally considered satisfactory; most of them carry evident marks of prejudice or partiality; nor were any of those which are now read written at or near the time, or by persons who had an opportunity of being well acquainted with what was passing, except that of Clarendon. But any one who should take the pains, which the Editor has done, to examine Clarendon’s State Papers, would find therein documents much better calculated to support Mrs. Hutchinson’s representation of affairs than that which he himself has given.\(^7\)

Unsurprisingly, Guizot also includes the Mémoires de Lord Clarendon, grand-chancelier d’Angleterre sous le règne de Charles I, in his Collection des Mémoires relatifs à la Révolution d’Angleterre, which gathered a wide range of historical texts from Thomas May’s Histoire du Long Parlement to the Mémoires de Mistriss Hutchinson.\(^7\)

From this perspective, and contrary to what has sometimes been argued, the term ‘memoirs’, chosen by Julius Hutchinson for his 1806 edition, is a fitting term for Lucy Hutchinson’s autograph manuscript, which does not bear an overall title.\(^7\) There is no reason to believe that the first editor betrayed his

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\(^7\) Hyde, The History of the Rebellion, vol. 1, 3.

\(^7\) Julius Hutchinson, ed., Memoirs x.


\(^7\) Looser’s contention that the term ‘memoirs’ was anachronistic (British Women Writers 36) and Norbrook’s view that the term ‘memoir’ corresponds to a ‘certain softening of the text’s political edge’
ancestor’s intentions when he published her manuscript under the title *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson.* Admittedly, he may have been influenced by the publication in 1698 of another republican testimony, the *Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow.* He may also have wanted to capitalize on the nineteenth-century fashion for the memoir genre. According to David Norbrook, his ‘decision to publish the Memoirs, by subscription, was in part an attempt to recoup his fortunes. The book did well, going through three editions in four years.’ But Julius Hutchinson’s choice to call Lucy Hutchinson’s life of her husband ‘Memoirs’ was not only guided by a nineteenth-century vogue. It testifies to his good grasp of her historiographical and literary enterprise and matched the definition of the ‘memoir’ (in the plural or singular), which refers, according to the OED, to ‘[r]ecords of events or history written from the personal knowledge or experience of the writer, or based on special sources of information [2a]’. This choice was endorsed by Firth in his 1885 edition of Lucy Hutchinson’s *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson,* as well as in the *Memoirs of the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle; the Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle,* which he published in 1886.

In Restoration England, the term ‘memoirs’ (which comes from the French *mémoires*) was less often used in this sense than in the nineteenth century, and before 1660 the use of ‘memoir(s)’ for this kind of writing was rare. Nevertheless, some ‘memoirs’ were published in the wake of the English Civil Wars, which indicates that late seventeenth-century historians were acquainted with the genre. ‘The term ‘memoir’ was frequently paired with the term ‘life’, the two words being near in meaning, the former merely adding


83 On the fashion for memoirs in late seventeenth-century England and for examples, see Chapter 2, 2, b (‘Memoir-writing and the truth of history’).
the idea that the account of one’s ‘life’ was based on a first-hand experience of history or, at least, a reliable testimony. In France, the Memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz, written between 1675 and 1677 (and only published in 1717), were originally entitled the Vie du Cardinal de Rais; Madame de la Guette’s Memoirs, published in 1681 (but written in the 1670s), present themselves explicitly as the story of ‘her life’. In England too, the two genres were often connected. This was the case of David Lloyd’s Memoirs of the Lives, Actions, Sufferings & Deaths of those Noble, Reverend, and Excellent Personages (1668), or Gilbert Burnet’s The Memoires of the Lives and Actions of James and William Dukes of Hamilton and Castleherald (London, 1677).

The memoir genre as practised in England and France in the seventeenth century was not strictly codified. It belonged to a European historiographical tradition that went back to Caesar’s Commentaries and Philippe de Commynes’s Memoirs and became prominent from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Frédéric Charbonneau has shown that the genre covered a great variety of texts, at the intersection of several traditions, among which the lives of Plutarch and Suetonius, the Confessions of Augustine, and the chronicles of Froissard. The Whig historian Gilbert Burnet, himself a memorialist, thus recognized that ‘Of all Nations in the world the French have delighted most in these Writings […] every year we get over new Memoires of some one Great Person or another. […] this way of Writing takes now more in the World than any sort of History ever did.’


sense of a French literary superiority was corroborated a century later by Madame de Staël’s observation: ‘There are no memoirs, confessions, or autobiographies in England; the pride of the English character refuses such details and avowals.’ Staël’s statement was predicated on a slightly later meaning of the term ‘memoirs’ as ‘autobiographical observations; reminiscences’. She was not aware of the historical significance of the word that prevailed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, when it was almost exclusively used to designate writings in the style of Caesar’s Commentaries or Comynne’s Memoirs, that is, based on the historical experience of the author. It was eloquently used in this latter sense for instance by Pierre Le Moyne in Of the Art Both of Writing & Judging of History to designate the writings of ‘Beleagnangis, Montluc, the Duke de Nevers, the Sieurs Castelmeau, de Tavannes, or Saillie’.

As a matter of fact, although Restoration England may not have had a Cardinal de Retz or a Duc de Saint Simon, many historians opted for particular history when it came to relating the Civil War and Interregnum. ‘The history of the Revolution and Restoration,’ Zwicker and Sharpe claimed, was written by ‘biographical narratives’ telling the lives of heroes, martyrs, politicians, or less famous actors, at a time when there was ‘an appetite and market for lives’. Many of these lives fall in within the broad category of ‘memoir(s)’, a most important historical genre according to Susan Wiseman:

As memoir, taken broadly, was one of the dominant genres in which history of the Civil War was made in the period from 1660 to the publication of Catherine Macaulay’s pioneering History in the late eighteenth century, the test to which such writing was subjected by its readers was that of political commitment. Was it true? Whose side was it on?


89 See ‘Memoirs’, OED, 2b.


What is implied here is that truth and impartiality, the qualities one has come to expect from historical writing, were not met in most histories of the Civil Wars, whose authors turned polemicists, as they felt called to defend a party, a man, or a church. For the Church historian, Thomas Fuller, this plurality of views amounted to a return to Babel:

Such as lived after the Flood, and before the Confusion of Tongues, were happy in this particular, that they did Hear to Understand, and Speak to be Understood with all persons in their Generation. [...] Happy those English Historians who wrote some sixty years since before our Civil Distempers were born or conceived [...]. But alas! Such as wrote in or since our Civil Wars, are seldom apprehended truly and candidly save of such of their own perswasion, whilst others doe not (or what is worse will not) understand them aright.93

When the nation was divided against itself, it could no longer be identified with the King. Pro-monarchical national chronicles, which some historians had found insufficient for at least fifty years, became obsolete. ‘By the mid-seventeenth century,’ Daniel R. Woolf remarks, ‘the twilight of the chronicle as a published genre was turning to night.’94 The traditional definition of history as a narration, in which ‘were laid up and deposited the Actions and glorious Exploits of preceding Worthies’ was no longer relevant.95 Parliament’s official historian, Thomas May, was aware of this when he wished in the preface to The History of the Parliament of England that his ‘Theame could rather have been the prosperity of these Nations, the Honour and happinesse of this King, and such a blessed condition of both [...] [t]hen the description of Shipwracks, Ruines, and Desolations’.96 Furthermore, as Martine Watson

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Brownley remarks in her monograph, *Clarendon and the Rhetorical Form*, ‘in the peculiar merging of public and private concerns that was characteristic of the English civil wars, history became reduced not only to personal polemical views, but also to individual experiences’.⁹⁷ For Woolf, this means there was no longer any ‘broadly unified ideological perspective’ from which history could be written: ‘The collapse of stable government, the virtual disappearance, for a time, of effective censorship, and the emergence of competing religious and political ideologies swept forever away the univocal narrative historical writing of the earlier period’.⁹⁸ In that deeply divisive period, particular histories—especially lives and memoirs—although they were partisan and incomplete, were deemed to be more reliable and truthful than general histories because they were narrower in focus and based on first-hand knowledge.⁹⁹ As Firth remarks: ‘More trustworthy materials were supplied by the early biographers: though they vindicated or glorified their personages they often wrote from personal knowledge and sometimes based their lives on manuscript materials.’¹⁰⁰ This is a late nineteenth-century point of view, but it could have been shared by many Restoration authors of lives and memoirs who were also aware of the advantages of the genre. It was, for instance, what Margaret Cavendish argued in *The Life of William Cavendish*: contrary to a ‘general history’ or a ‘national history’, ‘the History of the life and actions of some particular Person […] goes not out of its own Circle, but turns on its own Axis, and for the most part keeps within the Circumference of Truth’.¹⁰¹

Given the high status assigned both to the witnesses of history and to particular history, it is not surprising that what was most valued in Civil

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⁹⁹ See Bacon, *The Second Booke* 10: ‘Narrations, and Relations of actions as the War of Peloponnesus, the Expedition of Cyrus Minor, the Conspiration of Catiline, cannot but be more purely and exactly true, then HISTORIES of TIMES, because they may choose an argument comprehensible within the notice and instructions of the Writer: whereas he that undertaketh the story of a time, specially of any length, cannot but meet with many blankes, and spaces, which hee must be forced to fill vp, out of his own wit and conjecture.’ See Sharpe and Zwicker, ‘Introducing Lives’, 9. Brownley, *Clarendon and the Rhetoric of Historical Form* 7.


INTRODUCTION

War memoirs was that they were based on autopsy, understood as ‘the action or process of seeing with one’s own eyes; personal observation, inspection, or experience’. As will be apparent, Lucy Hutchinson, like Thucydides and Polybius before her, and many of her humanist predecessors and contemporaries, made much of her position of eye-witness or ear-witness. She was present in the castle of Nottingham throughout the Civil War, not only dressing the wounds of the injured soldiers but also sharing her husband’s political and military experience, and sometimes making important decisions. This unique experience of the war—what she saw, heard, and said—gives her narration a historical authority she could not have claimed in other circumstances.

Finally, memoirs were often also conceived as acts of remembrance and almost invariably displayed a double temporality, merging the recorded past with the time of writing. In this sense, Lucy Hutchinson’s Memoirs, written in the 1660s, are not only a record of the Civil War in Nottinghamshire; they are also about the way she remembers the Civil War at the Restoration, when silence was the only option for republicans and dissenters like herself. The political stakes of memory were indeed high when the 1660 Act of Indemnity and Oblivion stipulated the necessity to erase the Rebellion from public memory.

That if any person or persons within the space of three yeares next ensuing shall presume maliciously to call or alledge of, or object against any other person or persons any name or names, or other words of reproach any way tending to revive the memory of the late Differences or the occasions thereof, [. . .] shall forfeit and pay unto the party grieved in case such party offending shall be of the degree of a Gentleman or above ten pounds, and if under that degree the summe of forty.

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103. See “Civil War historiography” (Chapter 2, 2, a) and “Lucy Hutchinson, witness and confidant” (Chapter 3, 1, a).
Another symbolic instance of the determination to cancel out the memory of the Civil Wars was the decision to exhume the bodies of parliamentary supporters, most notoriously those of the regicides Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, John Bradshaw, and Thomas Pride. Even more significant for the present study is the removal from Westminster Abbey of the remains of Thomas May, the Parliament’s historian and secretary, on whose work Lucy Hutchinson copiously drew in the *Memoirs.*

Logically enough, in 1660, Charles II gave the title of ‘historiographer royal’ to James Howell, who had served his father in the 1630s, which indicates a desire to restore a sense of continuity with pre-revolutionary England. Ultimately, the Restoration politics of memory extended to language. As Mark Stoyle observes,

> euphemistic language became commonplace. Most people avoided speaking about the war in public, and when forced to do so, resorted to carefully neutral formulations. They did not speak of the conflict as “the rebellion,” for example – a term which would have implied criticism of the former rebels – but referred delicately instead to “the late warres,” “the late unhappy times,” “the troublesome times,” or just “the troubles.”

Yet, despite the hopes of Charles II’s supporters, the 1662 settlement failed to restore the monarchy as it was before the Civil Wars or to create a new era of political stability. On the contrary, the unresolved conflicts of the English Revolution, the fears of a new civil war, and the impossibility to obliterate the past could well explain the uncertainty of the Restoration period and the crisis of 1688–1689.

The complexity of the politics of memory has been recently explored by two historians working in the field of memory studies. Matthew Neufeld, in

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The Civil Wars after 1660, has researched the different ways in which the monarchy of Charles II ‘attempted to shape the public remembering of the Civil War and Interregnum’, looking in particular at the official anti-Puritan reconstruction of past events in published histories.¹¹³ Meanwhile, Edward Legon takes a different standpoint by investigating the ‘seditious memories’ of the Revolution, that is, the unauthorized recollections of those who remained loyal to the ‘good old cause’—the republic.¹¹４ These memories, which challenged royalist views of the Revolution, constitute a counter-memory which has been relatively less explored than the royalist memory of the wars. This alternative vision of history is present in various ‘seditious’ speeches to be found in state papers and court records as well as in diaries, memoirs or letters, which either have remained unpublished or were published after 1688.¹¹⁵

It is clear that Lucy Hutchinson’s Memoirs furnish a very good instance of these ‘seditious memories’.¹¹⁶ In his wake, I suggest that Lucy Hutchinson’s reconstruction of the past can be interpreted as a republican response to Restoration politics and contribute to enriching our appreciation of the Restoration counter-memory of the Civil Wars.¹¹⁷ For instance, she sees the death of John Hutchinson as a direct consequence of the politics of Charles II’s monarchy. Nowhere does she entertain any hope in the new régime; she deplores instead that the ‘glorious Parliament’ (i.e. the Long Parliament) ‘gave place to the fowlest mists that ever overspread a miserable people’ (S224/K274). But the Memoirs are a complex testimony that evades easy ideological categorization. The first official reason she gives for the ‘preservation of [her husband’s] memory’ is ostensibly her love for him—politics only come second:

I that am under a command not to grieve att the common rate of desolate woemen, while I am studying which way to moderate my woe, and, if it were possible, to augment my love, can for the present find out none more just to your deare father no consolatory to myselfe than the preservation of his memory. (S1/K16)

¹¹³ Neufeld, The Civil Wars after 1660, back cover. George Southcombe and Grand Tapsell, Restoration Politics, Religion and Culture (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): ‘Remembering was figured as rebellion’ (9).
¹¹⁵ Legon, Revolution Remembered 17–18. See Stoyle, ‘Remembering the English Civil War’, 27 on ‘the pro-Cromwellian counter-tradition’ which ‘survived beneath the surface’.
¹¹⁶ Legon, Revolution Remembered, 7.
¹¹⁷ MacGillivray, Restoration Historians 2–3: almost all histories published in the 1660s were royalist. A greater variety of histories (parliamentarian, royalist, Whig) were published between 1688 and 1702.