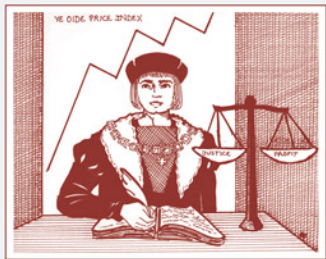


THE GRAMMAR OF PROFIT:
THE PRICE REVOLUTION
IN INTELLECTUAL
CONTEXT



by
ANDREA FINKELSTEIN

BRILL

THE GRAMMAR OF PROFIT:
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IN INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

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In Memory of My Father, Samuel Finkelstein

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CHAPTER ONE

PROFIT AND THE PRICE REVOLUTION

Between 1347 and 1350 Bubonic Plague destroyed one-third of the population of western and central Europe. Regular outbreaks over the next hundred years kept the population and the economy stagnant. When the epidemics abated around 1450 the population began to rebound, slowly at first and picking up speed as the fifteenth century passed into the sixteenth, shifting the median age downwards. This demographic shift and a hundred years of pent-up dissatisfaction with the response of church and state to the plague created a younger, more restless population less willing to accept what had always been. Revolutions were soon afoot. The printing press spread the Italian Renaissance across the continent, exposing widening circles to a dramatically different view of Europe's past; ships laden with adventurers hungry for treasure circumnavigated Africa and crossed the Atlantic plying the Eastern trade and establishing new empires in their wake; Christendom splintered into dozens of competing churches; and a dying priest announced to the world that the earth was not the center of the Cosmos but only one of several planets dancing around the sun. Renaissance, Age of Exploration, Reformation, Scientific Revolution—these are names well known outside of professional historical circles. But they were not the age's only revolutions. Less well known to the general reader, but just as important for understanding life in Early Modern Europe, is the phenomenon usually called the Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century though it extended roughly from 1470 to 1650.

At the end of that period the cost of living across Europe was, on average, five to six times higher than it had been at the beginning. The increases varied by region, by decade, and by product: the cost of food often went up eight or nine times while many manufactured goods only saw increases of one to two hundred percent. But after so long a period of flat or falling prices, even one or two hundred percent was a staggering increase, and as the inflation picked up speed in the sixteenth century proper, it was impossible for people not to notice that something was out of control. In England, for example, a woman born in 1500 who wed in 1525 would hear her mother complain of doubled

food prices as they shopped for her wedding feast, and then make the same complaints herself to her own daughter in 1550. Everyone understood that prices rose after bad harvests and dropped after good, but those were temporary fluctuations, and this inflation was relentless. Whatever the government did to manipulate the money supply only made matters worse. Whatever landowners, traders, or workers did to bring their incomes into line with prices only further aggravated the situation. Printing presses were soon churning out a steady stream of analysis, though contemporary analysts rarely agreed on the cause of the inflation, unless it was some variant of human greed.

The purpose of this book is to begin to understand why they reacted the way they did: to uncover the assumptions about hierarchy, society, and social justice that shaped their reactions to lifetimes of economic realignment and to begin to see how that realignment changed their assumptions in return. Our Englishwoman's grandchildren and great-grandchildren, after all, had no memories of a static economy. The phrases "begin to understand" and "begin to see" have been chosen with some care. To reach such answers for a period of almost two hundred years across the breadth of a continent is an accomplishment well beyond the reach of one book or one investigator. One must start someplace, however, and I have chosen to begin with England. There are practical reasons for this: the English have gone to great lengths to preserve and make readily available nearly every surviving word written down during the period. More importantly, these were the decades in which England took the first steps on its journey to that empire on which the sun never set just as it laid the first courses of that edifice we call modern capitalism. Taking England as a test case, then, this study looks at letters, diaries, wills, court cases, statutes, family manuals, and theological treatises, as well as contemporary attempts to explain the inflation. But although England was rather unique in the degree to which its monarchy was dependent upon a legislature and in its use of Common rather than exclusively Roman law, England was also part and parcel of European Christendom. The English relied on the same corpus of classical and religious texts and read many of the same new books coming off the printing press, and for those who could not handle the Latin, Italian, German, Dutch, Spanish, or French, there were translators galore to "English" the texts. Let us look at just one example. Sir Thomas Smith penned a little manuscript in 1549 nominating debasement for prime mover in the inflation. Over in France, working independently, the Seigneur de Malestroit, controller of the royal mint,

came to a similar conclusion in a book he published in 1566. Both men had probably been as influenced by a fourteenth-century standard text (Oresme's *De Moneta*) as by any empirical evidence. Just two years after Malestroit's book appeared, another French writer by the name of Jean Bodin published a refutation. Though there appears to be no contemporary English translation of the book, Smith must have gotten his hands on the French version, because he used it to change his candidate for the main cause of the inflation from debasement to American treasure before publishing his little treatise in 1581. Taking a different tack and blaming the manipulation of exchange rates, a Dutch merchant living in England published an extensive refutation of both Bodin and Malestroit in 1601. A much more famous book by Bodin, concerning the concept of sovereignty was translated into English by 1606 and found its way into the halls of Parliamentary debate by 1610. So this study looks at both English and continental sources to establish the common foundations upon which European social theory rested and to uncover the European sources upon which the English drew in order to gain a clearer understanding of how the English were and were not differentiating themselves from their contemporaries across the Channel.

The reader may wonder why a book about a Price Revolution spends so much time looking at political and religious disputes. Let us return for a moment to our longsuffering housewife born in England in 1500. In addition to finding it more and more difficult to make ends meet at the market, she might easily live to see her country's religion change from Roman Catholicism to a national church that straddled the divide between Catholic and Protestant under Henry VIII, to a truly Protestant Church under Edward VI, back to Roman Catholicism under Mary I, and on to yet another *Via Media* compromise under Elizabeth I, and with each switch hear sermons denouncing the old faith as false. Catholic authors might blame the destruction of the monasteries and the increased coin it put into circulation for the inflation while Protestants might put it all down to a Catholic conspiracy to unseat Elizabeth. And while they were accusing each other of attacking our Englishwoman's purse they were each claiming the other was trying to deprive her of her rightful "spiritual profit." The social—and mental—dislocations caused by any one Early Modern revolution were heightened by a synergistic interplay with all the others. Each formed part of the context of the others; each is not finally comprehensible unless grounded in the others.

How then to find a path through matters religious, political, social, and economic? One simple word is linked to nearly every economic, social, political, and even religious interchange, and that word is *profit*. Of course, everyone knows, it seems, how little use the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries had for personal gain. Humanists, preachers, civil lawyers, and government ministers alike had nothing to say in its defense. In *Utopia*, Sir Thomas More coyly protested that life could not “be satisfactory” where “all things” were held “in common,” but devoted the book to proving himself wrong.¹ Martin Luther fulminated against “this great, filthy, widespread business of trade and commerce.”² Thomas Wilson called merchants a “kynde of vermine so wedded to scrape uppe money,” that they sacrificed their “dearest” friendships “for the value of a peny.”³ James I decried the “evill custome” of merchants who accounted it “their lawfull gaine and trade, to enrich themselves upon the losse of all the rest of the people.”⁴ The very worst insult Thomas Cromwell could think to throw at the Pope was “marchaunt and occupier of deceypt.”⁵ And everyone agreed that, as Bodin put it, “*la plus noble difference*” between a king and a tyrant was that a king served “*au bien public*,” while a tyrant sought only his “*proffit particulier*.”⁶

Yet, despite those tirades against profit-seeking, it must have sometimes seemed as though being *profitable* was the highest praise the age could offer.

Education was *profitable* to the individual and the community. Bishop Fisher’s anonymous biographer praised the learning from which John

¹ Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516), in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Vol. 4, ed. Edward Surtz and J.H. Hexter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 106–107.

² Martin Luther, *Trade and Usury* (1524), trans. Charles M. Jacobs and Walther I. Brandt, in *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 45, Walther I. Brandt, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 260 and 247.

³ Thomas Wilson, *A Discourse uppon Usuerye* (1572), ed. R.H. Tawney (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1963), 272. The grammar, punctuation, and spelling of the classical, medieval, and early modern texts (whatever the language) used have not been altered with the exception of the substitution of the modern usage of *i/j*, *u/v* and the form of the internal *s*.

⁴ James I, *Basilikon Doron. Or His Majesties Instructions to his dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* (1599), in *The Political Works of James I* (1616), ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 26.

⁵ Roger Bigelow Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 2:87 [#218].

⁶ Jean Bodin, *Les Six Livres de La République*, eds. Christiane Frémont, Marie-Dominique Couzinet, and Henri Rochais, (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1986), 2:58 [II.4].

Fisher had so studiously “profited, that in fewe yeres he became [so] singularly well learned,” that he persuaded the Countess of Richmond to erect two “two notable and goodly Colleges in Cambridge, out of which have sprange manie notable and profound learned men to the great profit and comoditie of the whole Church of Christe.”⁷

The true church was always *profitable* to the community, regardless of which church one thought that was. Just as the Reformation was heating up, the stoutly Catholic Thomas More maintained that whatever was “necessary for preservacyon of the catholyke fayth,” was to the “profyte and advantage” of the whole realm and not just that of “spirytual” men.⁸ Nearly half a century later, the Protestant John Whitgift could maintain that if “it be necessary for the present state of the [true] church, it is also profitable for the present state of the commonwealth.”⁹ The church’s *profit* was as much a matter of heaven as of gold. Luther’s adherents were castigated by Fisher’s biographer for “envyinge the spiritual profitt of others.”¹⁰ Nor did the country’s religious flip-flops make “spiritual profit” any less the concern of every devout English man and woman. Preachers like John Knox were fond of reminding their audiences that “accounts of the talents received”¹¹ would one day have to be rendered by all, while Lady Margaret Hoby’s diary contained her profound regret for an afternoon “spent without any sperituall profetinge,”¹² and a funeral sermon published in 1640 admonished the congregation to pattern itself on the example of the deceased and “be profitable in doing good” and “profitable in receiving good.”¹³

⁷ Ronald Bayne, ed., *The Life of Fisher* (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1973), 10.

⁸ Thomas More, *The Debellacyon of Salem and Bizance* (1533), ed. John Guy, Ralph Keen, Clarence H. Miller, and Ruth McGugan, in *Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 10:87 [II.15].

⁹ John Whitgift, *The Defence of the Answer to the Admonition Against the Reply of Thomas Cartwright* (1574), in *The Works of John Whitgift, D.D.*, ed. Rev. John Ayre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1851), 1:21–22.

¹⁰ Bayne, *Fisher*, 22.

¹¹ John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), in *The Political Writings of John Knox*, ed. Martin A. Breslow (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1985), 41.

¹² Margaret Hoby (née Dakins), *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599–1605*, ed. Dorothy M. Meads (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1930), 103.

¹³ Daniel Featley, Martin Day, Richard Sibbs, Thomas Taylor, et al, ΘΡΗΝΟΙΚΟΣ. *The House of Mourning: Furnished with Directions for, Preparations to, Meditations of, Consolations at the House of Death* (London, 1640), 52.

What was good for the individual soul and the church as society's collective soul was equally important to the health of the collective body, the state. As Sir Thomas Smith explained, "if that part which doth beare the rule, doe commaund that which is profitable" to the commonwealth, it was "accepted" as "just," so "as there is profitable and likelyhoode of profite, so there is right and likelyhoode of right."¹⁴ Or, as Sir Thomas Elyot had earlier put it, "in the Latin tongue," a commonwealth was called "*Respublica*, of which the *Res*" could mean "estate, condition, substance, and profit," because in "our old vulgar, profit is called weal."¹⁵ In the contemporary mind, *profit*, *justice*, and *commonwealth* were virtual synonyms.

In a just commonwealth, the good of country and crown were synonymous. After all, according to the 1606 English translation of Giovanni Botero's *Greatness of Cities*, "profit" was "the very thing from whence, as from the principal cause, the greatness of cities groweth."¹⁶ Back in 1341, "the great men and commons" of England requested an audit of recent military expenses "for the common profit of the king and of themselves."¹⁷ Henry VIII's Act Concerning Corporations (1504) warned guilds against enacting ordinances "in disheritance or diminution of the prerogative of the King" or "against the common profit of the people,"¹⁸ while Elizabeth I's Act Against Smuggling (1559) decried the crime against "the common profit of the realm" that deprived the crown of its "customs."¹⁹

In the mental cosmos of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the family was the unit mediating between the body natural and the body politic, so it is not surprising to find that William Tyndale believed that the Biblical commandment to "Honour thy father and mother" was not merely a matter of "bowing the knees," or loving and obeying them, but also of seeking "their worship, pleasure, will and profit in all things"

¹⁴ Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum. The manner of Governement or policie of the Realme of England* (1583), ed. L. Alston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), 10 [I.2].

¹⁵ Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governour* (1531), ed. S.E. Lehmberg (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1962), 1.

¹⁶ Giovanni Botero, *The Greatness of Cities*, trans. Robert Peterson (1606) in *The Reason of State and The Greatness of Cities* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), 234.

¹⁷ George Burton Adams and H. Morse Stephens, eds., *Select Documents of English Constitutional History* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1901), 105.

¹⁸ J.R. Tanner, ed., *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603, with an Historical Commentary*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 602-603.

because “whatsoever thou doest unto them, be it good or bad, thou doest unto God.”²⁰

Thus we have justice, learning, family, the Church, the King, and God all intimately linked to *profit*, making it a natural path through the series of nested concentric circles—soul, family, society—used by the age to comprehend the world. But what was *profit* that it was simultaneously condemned and praised? In the twenty-first century, the word most immediately brings to mind an accounting residuum, a net income consisting of the excess of revenue over expenses. But *financial* gain is only a particular aspect of profit’s general meaning of advance, progress, and advantage. *Profit* came into English from the Latin *profec-tus*, *proficere* through the Old French *profit*.²¹ While *proficere* could mean business profit, its primary meaning was “go forward, advance, gain ground.”²² *Lucrum* and *damnum* were the usual Latin terms for financial “profit and loss.”²³ Early modern English and French translators, however, routinely used “profit” for *lucrum*, *mulctus*, *profectus*, *commodum*, *commoditas*, *utilitas*, and *fructus* in both the more general and more restricted senses. According to the *Catholicon Anglicum*, an English-Latin dictionary from 1483, profit could be translated into Latin as “*aptitudo*, *comodum*, *frugalitas*, *comoditas*, *profectus*, *summa*, *utilitas*, [and] *usus*,” and profitable as “*aptus*, *conveniens*, *comodus*, *frugalis*, *gratus*, *ydoneus*, *profitabilis*, *necessarius*, *ferius*, [and] *utilis*.”²⁴ Since unprofitable was simply rendered into Latin by adding a negative prefix, *ingratus* meant unprofitable,²⁵ making an ingrate a person who did not return the profitable service rendered them. *Gain* may have come into English from the Frankish *waidanjan* via the Old French *gaigner*, but its meanings were equally diverse, covering harvest and conquest as well as commercial returns.²⁶ *Gain*’s linguistic

²⁰ William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christen Man* (1528), in *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures by William Tyndale, Martyr, 1536*, ed. Henry Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1868), 168.

²¹ *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 8:1431.

²² Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), 1457.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1081. *Damnum* (old form, *damnum*) derives from the Greek *δαπανη* meaning cost, expenditure, money spent, or the money for spending.

²⁴ Sidney J.H. Herrtage, ed., *Catholicon Anglicum, an English-Latin Wordbook, dated 1483*, Camden Society, n.s., 30 (1882), 292. See similarly, Albert Way, ed., *Promptorium Parvulorum Sive Clericorum*, an English-Latin lexicon by one Fratre Galfrido, c. 1440, Camden Society, o.s., 54 (1853), 414. There, “profyte” becomes “*profectus*, *commodum*, *emolumentum*, *commoditas*,” while “profytable” is rendered “*utilis*, *proficius*, *commodus*.”

²⁵ Herrtage, *Catholicon*, 292.

²⁶ Frédéric Godefroy, ed., *Dictionnaire de L’Ancienne Langue Française et de tous ses Dialectes*

cousins can be spotted in the Middle High German *gewinnec* and the Modern German *gewinn*.

It is tempting to draw the distinction between laudable and damnable profit on the basis of whether or not the word is applied to financial matters. After all, did not scripture ask “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”²⁷ But some of the profit being praised above is clearly financial; so another criterium is involved. The contrast between soul and body provides the first clue: a just profit favors the greater good, not the lesser. Even in a merely earthly sense, long term profit was preferred over short term gain. William Harrison used this distinction in support of royal investment in military infrastructure. To those “covetous” persons who supposed money spent on the navy was “nothing profitable to the Queen’s coffers,” he protested that “the good keeping of the sea” was “the safeguard of our land.”²⁸ The greater/lesser distinction also underlay the ever present contrast between private gain and common profit. Thomas Wilson was treading well-worn ground when he warned his readers that the “Romaynes never began to decaye tyll usurie lorded amongst them, for then private gaine thrust oute common profit.”²⁹ The body politic was the whole, the individual the part. To prefer the good of the part to that of the whole was to go as much against reason as against natural law. This relationship held whether the lesser-greater proportion involved the individual in relation to the state or the state in relation to Christendom. Over five hundred years earlier, Pope Gregory VII had cautioned the Duke of Lorraine against over-worldly monarchs such as Henry IV who, “in their thirst for gain and their desire for transient fame . . . set themselves against all that pertains to religion and the righteousness of God,” when they should be mindful that their true “profit” lay “in maintaining justice in accordance” with his “advice and warnings.”³⁰

du IX^e au XV^e Siècle (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881–1902), 4:194. See also the discussion in the *Nouveau Dictionnaire Étymologique et Historique*, 2nd ed., Albert Daurat, Jean Dubois and Henri Mitterand, eds. (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1964), 233.

²⁷ *Matthew* 16:26. See also *Mark* 8:36, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

²⁸ William Harrison, *The Description of England: the classic contemporary account of Tudor social life* by William Harrison, ed. Georges Edelen (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1994), 244 [II.17].

²⁹ Wilson, *Usurye*, 180.

³⁰ Gregory VII, *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII*, ed. and trans. Ephraim Emerton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 7–8.

The analytical model underpinning this part-whole hierarchy was the human body and the age's understanding that each "organ" of that body was designed to work, not on its own behalf but for the good of the whole under the direction of the single supervising organ, the "head." As William Perkins explained,

In man's body there be [be] sundry parts and members and every one hath its several use and office, which it performeth not for itself but for the good of the whole body; as the office of the eye is to see, of the ear to hear and the foot to go. Now all societies of men are bodies. A family is a body and so is every particular church a body and the commonwealth also: and in these bodies there be several members which are men walking in several callings and offices, the execution whereof must tend to the happy and good estate of the rest... [because these callings had been] imposed on man by God for the common good.³¹

As any imbalance in the humors of the natural body impaired its health, any temperamental imbalance in the body politic impaired the common welfare. Selfishness was the first step on the slippery slope to the chaos the anxious age felt lurked in every dark corner. What could one expect of a world where confusion reigned in town after town? As Jacob Rabus remarked of his native Strasbourg in 1570, "one fellow is an out-and-out Lutheran, the second a half-Lutheran, the third a Zwinglian, the fourth a Calvinist, the fifth a Schwenckfelder, the sixth an Anabaptist, and the seventh lot is purely epicurean."³²

In looking for the causes of the Price Revolution in England, contemporary analysts came down hard on the selfishness of the landed gentry who enclosed good farmland for pasturage in order to indulge their appetites for "prodigality and pomp."³³ Thomas Cromwell called a Commons Bill "forbidding any man to keep more than 2000 sheep, and requiring every farmer to put 1/8 of his land in tillage" the "most noble proffyttable and most benefycyall thing that ever was done to the Commone welthe" since the days of Brutus.³⁴ Failure to contribute was as great a disease as selfishness. Rabelais had Gargantua explain that monks were generally disliked because they did not "plow like the

³¹ William Perkins, *A Treatise of the Vocations or Callings of Men* (1603), in *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. Ian Breward (Appleford, GB: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), 449 and 446–447.

³² R. Po-Chia Hsia, editor, *The German People and the Reformation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 28–29.

³³ Harrison, *Description*, 280 [II.22].

³⁴ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 1:373 [#67].

peasant,” “defend” the “country like the soldier, heal the sick like the doctor, preach and elevate like the teacher,” nor “handle essential commodities like the merchant.”³⁵ Even the poor were not exempt from the profitability standard. According to Edward Forset, there was no part of the body “so weake, so little, or so base,” that it could not be put to “some good use,” and so, no state should suffer “so loose, idle, vagrant, and unprofitable” a group “as that no use can bee made of them for the publique behoofe.”³⁶

The family was a society in miniature. Insofar as the family was a *body*, its members existed to further its composite good. For William Perkins, families had two solemn duties: “private worship and Service of God” on the one hand, and, on the other, employing “themselves in some honest and profitable businesse, to maintaine the temporall estate and life of the whole.”³⁷ Insofar as the family was a hierarchy, however, its members had highly differentiated responsibilities to the whole. For Sir Thomas Smith, both husband and wife cared “for the familie,” but the husband’s job was “to get, to travaile abroad, to defende,” while the wife’s was “to save that which is gotten.”³⁸ Parents provided sustenance and instruction for children and expected support in return to buffer their old age. Family relationships were negotiated through expressions of profit. In 1454, Agnes Paston urged John to wrap up negotiations for his sister’s marriage to her “worchup and profyt.”³⁹ In 1465, John complained to Margaret that their son “never stode yow ne me in profite, ese or help.”⁴⁰

“Family” included all the members of the household, whether related by blood or not. The relationships between husbands and wives and parents and children were models for the relationships between masters and servants. In 1455, when Richard Bingham wanted to thank Sir John Fastolf for letting some land to Richard’s son, he promised his

³⁵ François Rabelais, *The Five Books of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. Jacques Le Clercq (New York: Random House, Inc., 1936), 117 [I.XL]. Grangousier’s response that “Monks pray to God on our behalf,” (*ibid.*) was not designed to convince.

³⁶ Edward Forset, *A Comparative Discourse of the Bodies natural and Politique* (London: John Bull, 1606), 54–55.

³⁷ William Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie; Or, A Short Survey of the Right Manner of erecting and ordering a Familie, according to the Scriptures*, trans. Thomas Pickering (London: Felix Kyngston, 1609), 2 and 8–9.

³⁸ Smith, *Republica*, 22 [1:11].

³⁹ James Gairdner, ed., *The Paston Letters, A.D. 1422–1509* (London: Chatto & Windus; Exeter: James G. Commin, 1904), 2:301 [#237].

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4:157 [#591].

son would farm it to Fastolf's "pleaser, wirschip, and profit."⁴¹ When Leonard Smyth needed to explain some delay in a matter he was handling for the Lisle family in 1533, he vowed in the end to conclude everything to "my lord's honour and profit, or else I will be sorry it should be noted to be done with my consent."⁴² A breach of these relations was an insult to *honest* profit, as Thomas Cromwell's 1536 scolding of Thomas Wingifle's wastefulness as controller of the King's works at Dover makes clear:

it appereth right well howe litel ye regarde his graces charges and howe moche you sett by you owne profit (If spoyle may be called profit) ... You shuld for your part have ben the kinges housewief and specially have loked to his graces profit... If with a narrowe respect to your owne private lucer you lose worthely his graces favour and so be brought onely to answer to the partes of your procedinges, you woll lose in the shire that you have gotten in the hundreth.⁴³

As the hierarchical relations were reciprocal, John Knox could remind the nobility that, like monarchs, God had not placed them "above" their "brethren" to "reign as tyrants without respect of their profit and commodity," but to "be God's ministers ... for the wealth, profit, and salvation of their subjects."⁴⁴ Identical usages turned up in the popular prescriptive works of the day. The conclusion of the discussion of the limits of obedience in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528) was that a "gentleman" should obey his lord "in all things profitable and honorable to him," but "not in those things that will bring him harm and shame"; disobedience in honorable affairs was forbidden even if it would result in the lord's "grater advantage and profit" because such disobedience began "the practice of making light" of the lord's commands.⁴⁵ In other words, it threatened the reciprocal bonds that held society together.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3:54 [#308]; similarly, 2:105 [#90], 2:114 [#96], 3:75 [#322], 3:144 [#383], 3:289 [#486], 3:302 [#477], 4:48 [#525], 4:85 [#552], 4:89 [#556], and 4:147 [#585] (the variant "pleasure and profit"). For the less frequent appearance of profit on its own as meaning useful to a superior, see *ibid.*, 2:292 [#231] and 4:38 [#515], or as meaning useful to an inferior, see *ibid.*, 3:191 [#391].

⁴² Muriel St. Claire Byrne, ed., *The Lisle Letters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 1:586 [#61]. See also *ibid.*, 1:614 [#74] and 6:49 [#1662] among other examples.

⁴³ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:38–39 [#172].

⁴⁴ John Knox, *Appellation to the Nobility* (1558), in *Political Writings*, 116.

⁴⁵ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), trans. Charles S. Singleton (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1959), 117–118 [II.23–24].

If we read the hierarchical and reciprocal elements of familial and quasi-familial relationships back into the part-whole analysis, we see that what is at stake is more complex than the problem of preferring individual gain over common profit. A society in balance was harmonious (a term virtually synonymous with justice), but justice was always simultaneously *commutative* and *distributive*. And both meanings revolved around a conception of equity that meant giving to each his *particular* due, making sure each social organ had the privileges and resources it needed to fulfill its duty to the whole and not those needed by any other social organ. According to John Knox, a society in which this harmony was not maintained was “a monster” that “could not long endure.”⁴⁶

Profit's central role in discussions of what maintained or disrupted this harmony was partly the result of the age's inconsistency in dealing with categories of income. Any perusal of wills, correspondence, and court cases from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries reveals that “profit” was a catchall term for rents, fines, patent royalties, office fees, interest, and wages: to each social group its appropriate *profits*. As Roger Fenton explained, “the Gentleman liveth upon his rents; the poore laborer upon the sweat of his browes; the Merchant and Tradesman upon their adventures, skill, and industrie; the Husbandman and Grasier upon the increase of the earth, and breed of cattell.”⁴⁷ Thus, in 1533, Lord Lisle assured Cromwell that one “Master Blunt” being admitted to the next vacant office of “Spear of Calais” would receive the same “fees, wages, profits, and commodities thereunto belonging” as did any other “Spear.”⁴⁸ In the sack of the monasteries, Cromwell awarded the “tythes and profits” of various church properties to his particular favorites.⁴⁹ While, in 1610, government agencies on every level could expect to win in court the “fines, perquisites, ameracements, and other profites growing out of the trials of such causes.”⁵⁰ In 1620 John Manthorpe of Northcove left £20 to be “put out to some honest man at a reasonable rate, exors taking reasonable security for the payment thereof, so that the capital sum & profits accruing to the same”

⁴⁶ Knox, *Political Writings*, 56.

⁴⁷ Roger Fenton, *A Treatise of Usurie* (1612); facsimile reprint in *The Usury Debate in the Seventeenth Century: Three Arguments* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 5.

⁴⁸ Byrne, *Lisle Letters*, 1:530 [#38].

⁴⁹ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:52 [#184].

⁵⁰ Holland, *Camden's Brit.* (1637) 366, cited in *O.E. D.* (1933) 8:1431.

be paid to three heirs when they reached age eighteen.⁵¹ From at least 1439 to 1765, “issues and profits” was the standard legal term for all forms of income from land, and a key meaning of “issues” was actually “profits.”⁵²

If each estate had its appropriate profit, social harmony could be maintained only as long as no estate usurped the profits proper to another. Edward Forset held that in “the bodie politique each part is to know and administer his owne proper works, without entermixing or entermedling in the office of any other.”⁵³ This required that in the state as in the “bodie naturall,” the “sustenance” was “not all carried to one side, or to one part, to the pining and beguiling of the rest,” which meant the nobility was “so to bee maintayned, as that the Commons bee not wronged, and the clergie so to be cherished, as the laytie be not overlayd,” avoiding “any partie or equallitie, which nature herselfe abandoneth,” because even “our garments” had to be “fitted to our bignesse or smallnesse.”⁵⁴

In the anonymous *A Compendious or Brief Examination of Certain Ordinary Complaints of Divers of Our Countrymen*, written in 1549 and published in 1581, the complaint was not of *immediate* harm to the whole but *mediate* harm to the whole through the *immediate* deprivation of other social organs. Threaded throughout the *Compendious or Brief Examination* was the harm done to one social organ by the unjust profit-seeking of another: enclosures caused husbandmen to raise prices, so cappers had to pay higher wages and knights rack rents just to keep up.⁵⁵ This was why Tyndale found himself calling on “Christian landlords” to be “content with their rent and old customs” and “not take in their commons,” but remember God made them landlords to be “as fathers” unto their tenants.⁵⁶ The emphasis on status-appropriate profits meant that attacks upon usury during the period were rarely made solely on religious grounds but also gave considerable weight to the harm usurers did to other estates. In the anonymous *Usurie Aaigned*, the deleterious effects of usury ripple through the ranks in much the same

⁵¹ Marion E. Allen, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, 1620–1624* (Woodbridge, GB: Boydell Press, 1989), 4 [#3].

⁵² *O.E. D.* (1933) 5:512.

⁵³ Forset, *Comparative Discourse*, 50.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 45–46.

⁵⁵ [Thomas Smith], *A Discourse of the Commonweal of This Realm of England* (1581), ed. Mary Dewar (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), 17–19 [1st Dialogue].

⁵⁶ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 201–202.

way as debasement and American treasure did in the *Compendious or Brief Examination*:

Now if Traders and others which have estates in goods shall transport the same into monie, to eat up by Usury, such as have estates in Lands. And landed men on the other side, sell their Lands to eate up Traders and Farmers, whose estates are in goods, do they not between them both spoil (if not grind) the poore which depend on them for employment, year, and also spoile their Countrie by devouring one another.⁵⁷

Profit was deemed “unjust” if it violated even one of three basic distinctions: (1) it favored the part over the whole as did tyrannical kings or merchants who exported coin; (2) it appropriated to itself the resources needed by other social organs as did usurers, forestallers, regraters, engrossers, rent-rackers, enclosers, idle beggars, and some clergy; or (3) it favored the lesser over the greater as did unprofitable children, unthrifty housewives or retainers, and those who starved their souls to feed their bodies.

As the sixteenth century progressed the volume of the attempts to distinguish just from unjust profit, and to prevent the spread of the latter at the expense of the former, rose. To understand why, we must, at the least, attempt to come to grips with the phenomenon known as the Price Revolution.

In 1895, Georg Wiebe published *Zur Geschichte der Preisrevolution des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*⁵⁸ and set off a debate that still rages, as historians of early modern Europe continue to disagree over the causes and chronology of the “Price Revolution.” Most of heat comes from the historians who propose mono-causal explanations: the influx of American silver, the increased production of European silver mines, debasement, the extension of the use of credit instruments, urbanization, and a population increase have all been put forward and criticized in turn. The different starting and ending dates proposed for the inflation tend to depend on the cause supported and the country or countries chosen for investigation. While some historians grudgingly allow additional factors a minor role in events, the few truly multi-causal explanations can barely be heard over the din, and this seems most unfortunate. Given

⁵⁷ [Anonymous], *Usurie Araigned and Condemned* (1625), facsimile reprint in *The Usury Debate in the Seventeenth Century: Three Arguments* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 14.

⁵⁸ Georg Wiebe, *Zur geschichte der preisrevolution des XVI. und XVII. jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1895).

that the inflation seems to have started and ended at different times in different European countries, that different kinds of prices rose at different times and different rates, that population increases across Europe were not uniform, and that our evidence for all of this remains incomplete, the most likely case is that of a multi-causal phenomenon, with different factors being more prominent at different times in different places, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes countervailing each other.

As this book centers on what is revealed about early modern thinking through the age's reactions to these economic dislocations, this is not the place for a detailed treatment of the historiography of the price revolution. More than one such book-length treatment has been published and rendered out of date with each new theory or variation thereof proposed. All that follows here is a brief recap of the basic types of theories: (1) American Silver, (2) European silver, (3) Debasements, (4) Credit and Velocity, (5) Demographic, and (6) Multi-causal.

1. *American Silver*. In a series of articles published between 1928 and 1933, Earl J. Hamilton proposed that the influx of silver from Spain's colonies in the Americas was the main cause of the Price Revolution.⁵⁹ Hamilton was mainly concerned with Spain, but his suggestion that Spain's negative balance of trade coupled with its payments to its armies on the continent and problems in gold-silver ratios were the primary movers of the silver (and hence the inflation) across the continent became staples of the treasure thesis.⁶⁰ Like that put forward by Hamilton, later quantity (and velocity) explanations rely on American economist Irving Fisher's "quantity theory of money" equation. This sets up a proportion in which $MV=PT$: the total amount of money in circulation (M) multiplied by the velocity (V) at which it circulates is equal to the general level of prices (P) multiplied by the total volume of transactions (T). Without an offsetting adjustment in the other variables,

⁵⁹ Earl J. Hamilton, "American Treasure and Andalusian Prices, 1503–1660," *Journal of Economic and Business History*, I (1928):1–35; "American Treasure and the Rise of Capitalism (1500–1700)," *Economica*, IX (1929): 338–357; "Import of American Gold and Silver into Spain, 1503–1660," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 43 #3 (May 1929): 436–472; and "Monetary Inflation in Castile, 1598–1600," *Economic History*, II (1930–1933): 177–212. His data and interpretations can be found in expanded form in his *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain, 1501–1610* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934).

⁶⁰ Hamilton, "American Treasure and the Rise of Capitalism," 345–347.

any increase in the total amount of money in circulation (M) causes a proportional increase in the price level (P).⁶¹ The basic difficulties presented by Hamilton's theory were establishing 1) when and how much of the treasure got into circulation within Spain, 2) how much of that circulation crossed national boundaries and when, and explaining 3) the incomplete correlation between what was known of the movements of the silver and the movements of prices, as well as 4) price rises in other western European countries that predated any measurable influx of Spanish silver. In fact, according to J. Nadal Oller's 1959 revision of Hamilton's work, "the greatest proportional increase in Spanish prices occurred in the first half" of the sixteenth century, not the second, putting Spanish inflation chronologically prior to the main influx of American silver.⁶² One of the most recent proponents of the American treasure thesis is Douglas Fisher. Examining an "upward [price] drift over the period from 1525 to 1585" that was "consistent across countries and, episodes aside, fairly consistent over time," Fisher concluded that as "the monetary approach to the balance of payments... does not require specie actually to move from the deflating to the inflating country," it could be used to eliminate the need for an exact correlation between silver influx and price rises.⁶³ Thus, it would eliminate one objection to the American treasure thesis.

2. *European Silver*. In 1931, Abbott Payson Usher suggested that the inflation in England, France, and Spain began in 1475, and thus American treasure only "intensified a change in price levels that was already in progress," presumably caused at least in part by "some increase in the production of precious metals in Europe and in Africa" but without producing any corroborating data on European or African silver production.⁶⁴ That corroboration appeared in 1941, in an article by J.U. Nef. Nef felt the application of technological improvements

⁶¹ Irving Fisher, *The Purchasing Power of Money; its determination and relation to credit, interest and crises* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1911), chapter 8 and especially 156–158.

⁶² J. Nadal Oller, "La Revolución de los Precios Españoles en el Siglo XVI," *Hispania* 19 (1959): 503–529, translated in J.H. Elliot, *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1990), 194.

⁶³ Douglas Fisher, "The Price Revolution: a Monetary Interpretation," *The Journal of Economic History*, 49 #4 (December 1989), 895 and 888.

⁶⁴ Abbott Payson Usher, "Prices of Wheat and Commodity Price Indexes for England, 1259–1930," *The Review of Economic Statistics*, 13 #1 (February 1931), 110. In an article published the year before, however, he stressed the importance of "currency depreciation and debasement" in pushing French prices higher. For which, see Abbott Payson

in European silver mines accounted for a considerable part of the increased coin in circulation. In particular, the 1451 licensing of “a new invention for separating silver from rich argentiferous copper ores with the help of lead,” led to such a rise in the annual output of central European mines that they were producing over three million ounces per year during their peak production decade of 1526–1535, a level of output not seen again until the 1850s.⁶⁵ This view was restated in 1977 by Harry A. Miskimin, who dated “the most rapid rise in Spanish prices” to 1521–1530, the same decade that “marked the maximum output from the mines of Central Europe.”⁶⁶ Thus a combination of the European and American silver theses seemed to solve some of the chronological problems attending the American thesis on its own.

(3) *Debasements*. The treasure thesis is a silver-volume theory: more bullion, more coin, higher prices. Debasement theories also look to a greater volume of coin in circulation, but attribute the increase to the deliberate reduction of the amount of silver in the circulating coin. In such theories, the prices of goods are not rising because more silver is being paid for them, but because it takes more coins to pay the product’s stable silver price. This was pointed out in 1957 in a sustained critique of volume theories by Ingrid Hammarström.⁶⁷ But as far back as the turn of the century J. Thorold Rogers concentrated on what he saw as a marked increase in non-agricultural prices in England in the 1540’s and decided that, at least as far as England was concerned, the Price Revolution was due to the “Great Debasement” of the coinage by Henry VIII in 1542.⁶⁸ Increases in agricultural prices in England before this point, and even some in non-agricultural prices, could not be explained by Rogers, however, without reference to other theories.

Usher, “The General Course of Wheat Prices in France: 1350–1788,” *The Review of Economic Statistics*, 12 #1 (February 1930), 168.

⁶⁵ J.U. Nef, “Silver Production in Central Europe, 1450–1618,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 44 (1941), 576, 578, 584–585.

⁶⁶ Harry A. Miskimin, *The Economy of Later Renaissance Europe, 1460–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 39.

⁶⁷ Ingrid Hammarström, “The ‘Price Revolution’ of the Sixteenth Century: Some Swedish Evidence,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 5 (1957):118–154; see especially 130–131 and 152–154, in reference to debasement as a response to real inflationary pressures.

⁶⁸ J. Thorold Rogers, *A History of Agriculture and Prices in England, from the year after the Oxford Parliament (1259) to the commencement of the continental war (1793)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1866–1902), 4:727–728.

Rogers concluded that “money was slightly cheapened” even before the Great Debasement, a process that would have been “accelerated” by the influx of “New World” silver.⁶⁹ Debasement theories pose chronological problems not unlike those posed by treasure theories: while they match up in time with some of the peak periods of inflation within the general rise, they do not correlate with the entire sequence. They also pose the further problem of explaining why the extent of the price change within the chronologically matched peak periods is not entirely proportionate to the degree of debasement.

4. *Credit and Velocity*. In 1988, Eric Kerridge decided that “the price rises in England were not caused by the influx of precious metals, but by the same forces that caused the prosperity,” in other words, the causes were “the upsurge of credit and the rise of banking and of the inland bill of exchange.”⁷⁰ Credit-based explanations are monetary explanations that focus on the velocity of circulation rather than the quantity or quality of the circulating coin. In the simplest sense, these explanations assume that a growing economy puts pressure on the available money supply to work harder, meeting that need through the creation of new ways (and wider use of existing ways) to move money without moving coin. These creative solutions reinforce economic growth, which, in turn, creates a need for money to work even harder. Result, inflationary spiral. While accepting Nef’s view of the importance of European silver relative to that of American silver, Miskimin felt velocity had more to do with the over all price rise.⁷¹ Believing that while “mint output is not a direct measure of the available bullion supply,” it still “reflects the level” of that bullion supply over long periods of time.⁷² So Miskimin compared the 1,960,058 pounds of fine silver struck at the London mint between 1273 and 1372 with the 2,276,356 pounds struck between 1501 and 1600, and decided that a 35 percent greater mint output could not explain the sixteenth century price rise of 349.8 points.⁷³ His conclusion was that “a relatively stable bullion supply, a

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 736–737.

⁷⁰ Eric Kerridge, *Trade and Banking in Early Modern England* (Manchester, GB: Manchester University Press, 1988), 99.

⁷¹ Harry A. Miskimin, “Population Growth and the Price Revolution in England,” *Journal of European Economic History*, 4 #1 (Spring 1975):179–186. For Miskimin’s reliance on Nef, see also Miskimin, *Economy of Later Renaissance Europe*, 31.

⁷² Miskimin, “Population,” 182.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 182–183.

slightly enhanced bullion price of commodities, and an increasing level of transactions and output collectively imply a substantial rise in the velocity of circulation of the bullion.”⁷⁴ But that still left the question of what caused the increase in velocity. Miskimin concluded that “population growth heightened the pressure to find an alternative to a money based solely on bullion,” causing such measures as “debasement,” leading to a “consequent acceleration in the velocity of circulation” with “an inflationary affect.”⁷⁵ Some key refinements of the velocity argument were proposed in 1995 by N.J. Mayhew. Since credit and money supply normally tend to rise together and velocity normally falls when the money supply rises, Mayhew emphasized the need to zero in on conditions that might cause this relationship to work in reverse, but did find a more conservative and briefly velocity increase prior to the 1561 recoinage.⁷⁶ The problem here is not chronological; it is not difficult to document the increasing financial sophistication of western Europe in the sixteenth century. The problem is determining which is the cart and which is the horse: why is the economy growing in the first place? Velocity theories seem inevitably to bring us back to the problem of population.

5. *Demographic.* Demographic explanations look to the abatement of plague epidemics around 1450 and the subsequent population recovery within western Europe. They seek to establish that sustained population growth and the accompanying sustained increase in demand were the underlying causes of the continuing rise in prices, relegating both volume and velocity changes to aggravating factors or even effects. Back in 1935, Moritz John Elsas had suggested that, because

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁷⁶ N.J. Mayhew, “Population, money supply, and the velocity of circulation in England, 1300–1700,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 48#2 (May 1995): 252–253. On the need to refine calculations of velocity and explain the factors that made it not move in opposition to supply, see *ibid.*, 253–254. Mayhew’s revision of Miskimin’s conclusions sparked a brief debate. Miskimin maintained that Mayhew’s characterization of Miskimin’s conclusion missed the “distinction” Miskimin drew between his own calculation of the money supply “expressed as bullion” and Mayhew’s reliance on a calculation “in terms of money of account.” Mayhew replied that he preferred “nominal prices because the course of sterling in the later middle ages” had “convinced” him “that the value of bullion really was rising.” For which, see Harry A. Miskimin, “Silver not sterling: a comment on Mayhew’s velocity,” and N.J. Mayhew, “Silver, not sterling: a reply to Prof. Miskimin,” in *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 49 #2 (May 1996), 358 and 361 respectively.

agricultural price increases outpaced those of industrial products, more attention needed to be paid to demographic factors in explaining the Price Revolution.⁷⁷ But the surge in demographic arguments can probably be said to begin with two articles that appeared in *Annales* in 1955 suggesting that increases in the money supply (whether through silver influx or debasements) were responses to an increased demand for money caused by factors exogenous to the Fisher equation.⁷⁸ Most interesting, but most often overlooked is the evidence for a decline in population growth paralleling the winding down of the inflation in the first half of the seventeenth century.⁷⁹ The primary difficulty with demographic theories, however, is establishing how fast any particular population was growing in an age before censuses were part and parcel of everyday government business. M.M. Postan was one of the first to look at changing wage rates as evidence of population change, though in the context of medieval rather than early modern history.⁸⁰ Between 1957 and 1959, E. Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins produced a series of articles documenting centuries of changing prices and builders' wage rates in England and on the continent, to make the case for population pressure as the cause of the inflation.⁸¹ Criticisms of this approach center on the problem of how much a cash wage rate actually tells us when we know neither how many days the typical craftsman worked per year nor to what extent the cash rate was supplemented by payment in kind at any particular point. Even if one

⁷⁷ Moritz John Elsas, "Price Data from Munich, 1500–1700," *Economic History* (Supplement to *Economic Journal*), 3 (February 1935): 63–78.

⁷⁸ C.M. Cipolla, "La Prétendu 'Révolution des Prix': Réflexions sur l'expérience italienne," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, X (1955): 513–516, and C. Verlinden, J. Craeybeckx, and E. Scholliers, "Mouvements des prix et des salaires en Belgique en XVI^e siècle," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 10 (1955): 173–198. These articles appear in translation in Peter Burke, editor, *Economy and Society in Early Modern Europe: Essays from Annales* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

⁷⁹ Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1988), 43–44.

⁸⁰ M.M. Postan, "Some Economic Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 2 #2 (1950): 221–246.

⁸¹ E. Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, "Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, compared with Builders' Wage-rates," *Economica*, n.s., 23 #92 (November 1956): 296–314; "Wage-rates and Prices: Evidence for Population Pressure in the Sixteenth Century," *Economica*, n.s., 24 #96 (November 1957): 289–306; "Builders' Wage-rates, Prices and Population: Some Further Evidence," *Economica*, n.s., 26 #101 (February 1959): 18–37. Their first statement of their conclusion that "population pressure was at the root of the fall in the purchasing power of the wage-rate" appears on page 299 of the 1957 article.

accepts the existence of an increase in population, there remains the question of to what extent production was able to keep up with the growing demand. This often takes the form of a debate over whether population increases affect absolute prices [the price level] or only relative prices. Douglas Fisher, for example, accepted the argument that population increases only affected relative prices.⁸² In 1985, Peter Lindert underlined the importance of determining the age structure of the increasing population in deciding whether it affected absolute as well as relative prices.⁸³ If too much of the population was too young to be productive, output would not increase quickly enough to keep pace with demand, and population growth would have a true inflationary effect.

6. *Multi-causal*. Even those theorists who favor attributing the Price Revolution to one primary cause usually allow other factors a supporting role. In a series of articles published between 1961 and 1965, Y.S. Brenner argued that for England, the primary cause of the price rise was an increased velocity of circulation due to the increasing growth of capitalism within the agricultural, commercial, industrial, and financial sectors, but as aided and abetted by an increased volume of coin in circulation from domestic causes and the failure of agricultural production to keep pace with population growth (thus a decreasing T).⁸⁴ In 1968 Peter Ramsey took population pressure as the underlying cause, with for England, the added factors of the debasement, the “heavy government expenditures” in the “war policy” of Henry VIII and Elizabeth’s Spanish wars, the easing of credit, and the sale of monastic lands under Henry VIII as more important aggravating factors at their respective points in time than any influx of Spanish treasure.⁸⁵ In 1969, R.B. Outhwaite contended that while “‘real’ factors, and especially the growing imbalance between the growth of population and agricultural output,” offered “the more satisfactory general explanation,” with

⁸² Fisher, “Price Revolution,” 892.

⁸³ Peter Lindert, “English Population, Wages and Prices, 1541–1913,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 4 (Spring 1985), 620–621 and 631–632.

⁸⁴ Y.S. Brenner, “Prices and Wages in England, 1450–1550,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 34 (1961), 103–105. See also Brenner, “The Inflation of Prices in Early Sixteenth Century England,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 14 #2 (December 1961): 225–239; Brenner, “The Inflation of Prices in England, 1551–1660,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 15 #2 (December 1962): 266–284; and Brenner, “The Price Revolution Reconsidered: A Reply,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 18 #2 (August 1965): 392–396.

⁸⁵ Peter Ramsey, *Tudor Economic Problems* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1968), 117–119.

debasement exacerbating the “pace” of inflation England, “it must still be acknowledged that increases in the money supply and/or increasing efficiency of its use, were necessary concomitants of the whole process.”⁸⁶ In 1984, Jack A. Goldstone put forward a population, urbanization, and velocity theory. Taking the Price Revolution in England as a 500 percent increase in prices between 1500 and 1650 as against only a doubling of the population, Goldstone looked to the quintupling of the proportion “of the population” living in towns of “over 3000 inhabitants” in the same period to back up his contention that “taking account of the effects of urbanization and occupational specialization on the velocity of money provides a fuller understanding of the price revolution.”⁸⁷ While Goldstone did not discuss the question of age distribution and its effect on productivity, he concluded that the overall “marginal productivity” remained greater than zero and thus population increases would lead to more output and lower prices unless there was an underlying (and more than offsetting) increase in velocity.⁸⁸

The grandest attempt at a synthesis yet appeared in David Hackett Fischer’s *The Great Wave: Price Revolutions and the Rhythm of History* (1996).⁸⁹ Fischer tried to uncover the common causes of four different extended waves of inflation—in the thirteenth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twentieth centuries—as well as their particular impetuses. With a more thorough grounding in the numbers available than in the underlying history and an almost unbounded faith in the accuracy of those numbers, Fischer was able to construct a deceptively coherent account of our Price Revolution as a result of unwise fiscal and monetary policies applied to the inflation caused by population pressure.⁹⁰ But his lack of real investigative depth and his elevation of the Price Revolution to the *causa causans* of every conceivable fissure in early modern society seriously mitigate against the usefulness of his work. For example, there is no doubt that there were connections between the inflation and some of the more violent incidents of the Reformation as depicted by

⁸⁶ R.B. Outhwaite, *Inflation in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1969), 48.

⁸⁷ Jack A. Goldstone, “Urbanization and Inflation: Lessons from the English Price Revolution of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 89 #5 (March 1984), 1122 and 1127.

⁸⁸ Goldstone, “Urbanization,” 1127–1128.

⁸⁹ David Hackett Fischer, *The Great Wave: Price Revolutions and the Rhythm of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 73–87.

Fischer,⁹¹ but he seems totally unaware of the Reformation's long term roots. This reductionism leads to a general explanation of all Price Revolutions as caused by "autogenous change"⁹² that is both too general and too ahistorical to be of much use to anyone studying one particular revolution. Another caveat concerns the purpose of his investigation, which was not merely to document, but to advise. The books leads to a set of policy recommendations designed to mitigate both the extent of the inflation waves and their accompanying social upheavals.⁹³ Whether or not one agrees with his proposals, one is left with the unpleasant afterthought that all that has come before has been shaped by a predetermined point of view.

Shortly after Fischer's book appeared, a 1997 article by J.R. Wordie, on "Deflationary Factors in the Tudor Price Rise," underscored the value to be gained from taking an open-minded look at what actually happened within a narrower scope of time and place.⁹⁴ Wordie suggested that rising demand was both an inflationary and a deflationary factor in the price rise: demand generated by the middle and upper classes increased "because their wealth was increasing," while demand generated by the poor increased "because their numbers were increasing." The reason the price of wheat did not rise as quickly as did the population was "because of the inflexibility of the demand schedule for cereals." In nontechnical terms, when the price of wheat became too expensive for the poor to buy, they turned to cheaper grains, creating a deflationary pressure on the price of the predominant grain, wheat: "the more expensive the foodstuff, the less its price rose" because only a smaller proportion of the population was buying it in the first place.⁹⁵

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 86–87; his handling of the "Crisis of the Seventeenth Century" (*ibid.*, 91–102) is also rather reductionist, and he seems unaware of traditional nature of food riots; see, for example, his characterization of the disturbances in France in the first half of the seventeenth century (p. 100).

⁹² *Ibid.*, 246–251. While his idea of the accumulation of "freely made" choices (p. 249) is appealing, he does not pay enough attention to the "enviroming conditions" he claims frame them (p. 249) when he writes, for example (p. 247) of rent-racking or the actions of the "capitalists" (p. 247), an interesting observation if applied to the more feudal regions of Europe in 1180; the "freely made" choices of serfs would also be interesting to discover. He specifically denies (p. 251) that "intellectual trends" were "mechanical reflexes of price movements," but, unfortunately, that is how he tends to treat them.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 255–258.

⁹⁴ J.R. Wordie, "Deflationary Factors in the Tudor Price Rise," *Past and Present*, 154 (February 1997): 32–70.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 37–44.

Next, Wordie looked at the differences between price increases in agricultural and non-agricultural goods that have so bedeviled price theories, finding a “second major deflationary influence” in the increased supply of manufactured goods based on the greater ease of increasing their production by that growing “labour pool” than in increasing agricultural yield by cultivating “more marginal land.”⁹⁶ Then he considered the deflationary aspects ignored by monetary theorists: if negative trade balances ate up “most or all of” the increased mintage, war costs and interest sent out on the increasing foreign debt would combine with it to produce a deflationary “shortage of money in late Tudor times,” rather than an inflationary surplus.⁹⁷ Finally, the “progressive decline” of the use of barter as the money economy replaced the natural would remove that inflationary pressure as well.⁹⁸

Perhaps the most important insight to be gained from such synthesizing attempts is the need to spend more time working case by case: the more accurate and detailed the picture we can draw for each European state between 1470 and 1650, the better we will be able to determine what were the general and what only the local or periodic factors in the price rise.

Causal theories do not, in and of themselves, illuminate the magnitude of the changes faced by people living through the Price Revolution. Since even those who reject population growth as the primary cause of the inflation accept that the size of the population was growing, population data seems a likely place to start exploring those changes, but the government of Great Britain began taking a decennial census in 1801. For any period before that one has to deal with period or modern estimations. Unfortunately, these can be as varied as modern explanations of why the prices rose. Peter Ramsey proposed that

On the eve of the Black Death (1348) the population of England stood at about 3.75 million. A succession of plagues brought it down as low as 2.25 million by 1374, and by 1400 a further small decline had reduced it to 2.1 million. From about 1430 there was an increasingly rapid recovery, and for the year 1545 an estimate of 3.22 million seems reasonable. This is nearly 50 per cent above the figure for 1374, but still below the high-point of the mid-fourteenth century. Similar trends can be seen in France, where a very rapid recovery after 1460 may have brought the

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44–45.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 55–57.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

population up to 15 million by 1500, and in Italy, where a similar rise from about 1500 may have brought it to 8.85 million by 1550.⁹⁹

On the other hand, John Hatcher believed England's population tended towards the higher end of a range between 4.5 and 6 million in 1348, a number already slightly lower than its turn of the fourteenth century peak. It then dropped to between 2.5 and 3 million by 1377 and continued to fall until the middle of the fourteenth century, bouncing back only to about 2.25–2.75 million in 1522–1525.¹⁰⁰ Julian Cornwall estimated that England's population had fallen to 2.2 million in 1377 and continued to fall until about 1450, bottoming out at perhaps 2 million, then rising slowly to 2.3 million by about 1522–1525, and a little more quickly to 2.8 million in 1545 and 3.75 million in 1603.¹⁰¹ Ian Blanchard suggested a later date for the turn around from population decrease to increase based on a change between 1500 and 1550 from legislation concerning the dilapidation of existing estates to ways and means of accommodating new building.¹⁰² Population estimates can be affected by the estimator's causal bias. N.J. Mayhew thought the population of England was 6 million in 1300, 2.3 million in 1470 and 1526, and 2.9 million in 1546; by putting the turn around after the start of the inflation, he aided his case for velocity as the *causa causans*.¹⁰³ For figures from the middle of the sixteenth century forward at least, most historians work with the tables published in 1981 by E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield. According to their figures, England's population stood at 2.774 million in 1541, 4.11 million in 1601, and 5.177 in 1661 before leveling off for the rest of the century.¹⁰⁴

What about Ramsey's numbers for France and Italy? According to H. Ott and H. Schäfer, France's pre-plague population of 19 million dropped to 12 million by 1450 and was still not back to full strength when the wars of religion began with only about 17.5 million people.¹⁰⁵ Other sources put the French population at 10 million in 1500 and

⁹⁹ Ramsey, *Tudor*, 15.

¹⁰⁰ John Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy, 1348–1530* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977), 68–69.

¹⁰¹ Julian Cornwall, "English Population in the Early Sixteenth Century," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 23 #1 (April 1970), 44.

¹⁰² Ian Blanchard, "Population Change, Enclosure, and the Early Tudor Economy," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 23 #3 (December 1970), 439.

¹⁰³ Mayhew, "Population," 244.

¹⁰⁴ E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871: a Reconstruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 528–529 [Table A3.1].

¹⁰⁵ H. Ott and H. Schäfer, eds., *Wirtschaftsploetz* (Freiburg: Ploetz, 1984), 50, cited in

15 million a century later, the Italian population rising during the sixteenth century from 10 to 13 million, and, over the same period the Holy Roman Empire's population rising from 12 to 20 million while Spain's rose from 7.5 to 10 million.¹⁰⁶ Estimates of population totals for any state are worked up from parish registers, will probates, tax records, manorial records, and convent and abbey records which are far more fragmentary than the derived estimated totals make them seem. According to the data reproduced in the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, taxed hearths in the Kingdom of Naples (without counting the city of Naples itself) rose from 215,127 in 1485 to 540,090 in 1595; in Aragon the number of heads of families rose from 50,391 in 1495 to 70,894 in 1603, in Castile from 1,179,303 in 1541 to 1,340,320 in 1594; and *estimates* of the number of inhabitants in the territory of Zurich (again without the city itself) in 1467 range from 26,700 to 28,900, but in 1585 from 69,975 to 85,525.¹⁰⁷

To some extent, the different rates of recovery and increase can be traced back to the fact that the degree of depopulation caused by successive waves of plague differed from region to region as well. How well each region was placed to take advantage of the economic growth of the sixteenth century also affected its ability to repopulate. The slower rates of recovery in Spain might be due in part to a socio-political climate that mitigated against the growth of a middle class compared to a more favorable atmosphere in England. While Spain was exporting some population to its new colonies in the Americas, it had also expelled some 150,000 of the Jews who dominated its commercial classes and persecuted the *conversos* who remained.¹⁰⁸ Some of the explanation for the steep rise in the prices of foodstuffs in Spain might lie in the consequences of the Land Lease Law of 1501 that prevented pasturage from being converted to tillage to preserve the rights of the Mesta, the sheep herding monopoly.¹⁰⁹ The end result was a country that had to import grain as well as manufactured goods

Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, "Birth Control: The Political-Economic Rationale behind Jean Bodin's *Démonomanie*," *History of Political Economy*, 31 #3 (1999), 424.

¹⁰⁶ Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 191.

¹⁰⁷ E.E. Rich and C.H. Wilson, eds., *The Economy of Expanding Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 21, 22, 24.

¹⁰⁸ John Lynch, *Spain under the Habsburgs, I: Empire and Absolutism, 1516-1598* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 15.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

although “vast tracts of untilled land” could be found throughout its most fertile regions.¹¹⁰ By the second half of the sixteenth century, high prices in Spain were beginning to make its wool unsaleable, and despite the American treasure pouring into its coffers, the Spanish crown had begun to declare bankruptcy and suspend payments on its debts on a regular basis (1557, 1575, 1596), a pattern that continued into the seventeenth century (1607, 1627, 1647).¹¹¹ Like *dérogation* in France, *el dishonor de trabajo* mitigated against Spain making the most of the century’s potential.¹¹² Just the opposite picture emerges in the Netherlands, where, by 1500, most of the land was securely in the hands of peasants free of feudal duties although there were more large estates in the south; in Holland, for example, the peasants owned about 45 percent of the land with much waste still open to reclamation, quite a difference from Castile where 2–3 percent of the population controlled 97 percent of the land and the Mesta monopolized potential expansion.¹¹³ That might help explain why, despite the fact that the population of many of the cities in the Netherlands doubled well before the end of the sixteenth century, the rural population increased even more quickly, and wages seem to have kept pace with inflation.¹¹⁴

Given the fragmentary nature of the data available and the regional differences revealed even in such fragmentary data, estimates for the growth of European population overall such as those compiled by M.K. Bennett cannot offer more than a very general guide. Bennett put the pre-plague population of Europe at about 73 million, dropping to 45 million in 1400 before slowly climbing back to 69 million in 1500 and 89 million in 1600.¹¹⁵

Allowing for increases in urbanization, Wrigley and Schofield calculated that the percentage of the English population employed in agriculture dropped from 76 percent in 1520 to 70 percent in 1600,¹¹⁶ but, due to the overall increase in population in the same period, there

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 115 and 134.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 107.

¹¹³ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 106–107, 109; Elliot, *Imperial Spain*, 113.

¹¹⁴ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 113–114 [Table 3], 115 [Table 4], 15 [Table 1], 328 [Table 12], and 620.

¹¹⁵ M.K. Bennett, *The World’s Food* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 9 [Table 1].

¹¹⁶ Cited in Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: the transformation of the agrarian economy, 1500–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82 [Table 3.8 (a)].

would still be more people farming in 1600 than in 1520. If labor productivity is calculated based on population growth alone, it would rise from 1.32 in 1520 to 1.43 in 1600; the problem, as Mark Overton explains, is that while “the evidence of prices and wages suggests that the output per head was not constant,” there is no way to determine “the extent of the exaggeration” the population method produces.¹¹⁷ To better determine how well production was able to keep up with the growing demand, we need to know something about the age structure of this population. We are on even less sure ground here than we are when estimating population totals, but using Wrigley and Schofield’s calculations, we have an English population for the period 1541 to 1706, in which, on average, 32.62 percent of the population was less than 15 years old. In addition, 8.57 percent of the population, on average, was 60 or older.¹¹⁸ In modern terms, that produces a dependency ratio of 41.19 to 58.81, meaning 41 percent of the population was totally dependent on the productive power of 59 percent. Julian Cornwall did not calculate the aged portion of the population, but estimated the under 16 cohort as averaging about 40 percent of the population.¹¹⁹ If his under 16 estimate is combined with Wrigley and Schofield’s 60 or older estimate, the dependency ratio would stand at 48.6 to 51.4. While children did start working at an earlier age than now, even a fourteen year-old does not produce as much as does a fully grown adult, and, given the inferior nutrition and medical care, people aged faster than they do now, losing productive power earlier as well. One way or another, this was a society in which there were always more mouths to feed than adult hands to feed them. While adults can produce more than enough to feed themselves, they need land on which to do it. As the population recovered, land left untilled during the plague years would have to be brought back into cultivation at a greater effort than needed to work continuously farmed fields. As the population increased past the recovery point, productivity would drop even further as new fields had to be created out of increasingly marginal land. Since it was easier to refine the production of manufactured goods than to increase agricultural yield, that might be why agricultural prices increased faster and sooner than non-agricultural prices. There certainly is evidence of early

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 84 and 82 [Table 3.8 (b)].

¹¹⁸ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population*, 528–529, Table [A3.1], taking the mean average for all the figures from 1541 to 1706.

¹¹⁹ Cornwall, “English Population,” 36.

and growing interest in increasing the yields of existing acreage in the increasing numbers of agricultural manuals—classical and modern—appearing in print. *Rei Rusticae Scriptores*, a compilation of three classical authors (Cato, Columella, and Varro) went through at least eleven editions between its first printing in Venice in 1470 and 1504, Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* was a bestseller in Latin and in vernacular translations; *Husbandry*, an original work by Walter of Henley appeared in 1510 to be followed by dozens of others.¹²⁰

What we really want to know in all this is how the lives of everyday people were affected. Did their incomes keep pace with inflation or not? The basic measure of the rate of inflation in our day is the Consumer Price Index. To calculate it, the government creates a hypothetical market basket for a statistically average family. The basket includes food, clothing, entertainment, rent, and even factors in a portion of the cost of such durable goods as cars and houses. Then the government sends people out into the field to find out the cost of these items, does the math, and produces the index. As what we typically buy changes over time, so do the components of the index.

As one might imagine, so finely tuned and flexible an index cannot accurately be recreated for the period we want to examine. Price records remain for some items for certain periods of time in some places and not for and in others. Even fewer records remain of what households actually bought. The item for which the most comprehensive records remain is the price of wheat, because, being the dietary staple, it was the most subject to official scrutiny by local and national authorities wanting to avoid price riots. The earliest attempts to get a handle on what was happening in early modern Europe centered on determining wheat prices, but wheat's vulnerability to bad weather and

¹²⁰ Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, eds., *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing the Land* (Leicester, GB: Leicester University Press, 1992), 18–19 and 35–62. Joan Thirsk (*ibid.*, 16 and 18) disagrees with the usual explanation that the population, price, and wage changes prompted the interest on the grounds that landowners were not aware of these long-term trends, and makes the books themselves the inspiration. However, the many of the changes were great enough to be noticed within each lifetime, and she offers no other explanation for why the books became so popular when they did. It seems more likely that the initial interest in the books was prompted by economic reasons while the content of the books played the greater part in determining the nature of the improvements made to arable land, with economic factors playing the greater role in determining if the land continued to be used for tillage or was converted to pasture.

bad harvests made wheat indices too volatile to give an accurate picture of overall changes in a family's expenses.

The work of creating a less volatile index for England was first done by E. Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins in 1956 and remains in use today. Working from records of household expenditures where available, Phelps Brown and Hopkins created a market basket of consumables—food, fuel and light, and textiles—for the “typical” family of a wage-earner in Southern England from 1264 to 1964 that breaks down as follows:

20.0 %	Farinaceous	} 80.0 % Food
25.0 %	Meat & Fish	
12.5 %	Butter & Cheese	
22.5 %	Drink (malt, hops, sugar, tea)	
7.5 %	Fuel and Light	
12.5 %	Textiles	
100.0 %	¹²¹	

Such a package does not eliminate the problems caused by the local variations in all the partial price records used to construct the indices or by the relative paucity of the information on household expenditure available, but it does moderate the volatility consequent on using wheat prices alone even if it still lacks a component for durable goods. The base, the “100” of the Phelps Brown-Hopkins index is what one hundred pence would buy of these commodities on average from 1451 to 1475,¹²² a period of stable prices. Like any other index, there are short term drops and surges in the numbers due to years of exceptionally good or bad weather, harvests, epidemics, debasement, re-coinage, or war. For example, the index stands at 270 for 1555, 370 for 1556, 409 for 1557, and 230 for 1558.¹²³ To get closer to the overall price trend, it is customary to use some form of averaging. Using ten-year averages in which, for example, the number used for 1515 is the mean value of all the indices from 1510 to 1519, indicates a gradual rise from 94 in 1475 to 111 in 1515, followed by a steeper rise to 289 in 1555, 472 in 1595, slowing a bit to 516 in 1625, and climbing again to 646 in 1665 before leveling off until the turn of the century.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Phelps Brown and Hopkins, “Seven Centuries,” 297.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 298.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 311–314 [Appendix B].

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 311–314 [Appendix B].

Both the steepness and the timing of the price rises varied from region to region. In what would become Austria, Poland, and Yugoslavia, there does not appear to be any steep rise in prices until the second half of the sixteenth century, and in Czechoslovakia until the second third, although a trend line drawn through the graphs created by Stanislas Hoszowski for these areas does show a slight rise in the preceding decades.¹²⁵ In Prussia, the steep price rise of the 1520s might have been due to a Prussian-Polish war, but when prices did drop at war's end it was not to their previous level, and after 1540 the rate of increase began to accelerate once more.¹²⁶ Flanders experienced a sixfold increase in wheat prices over the course of the sixteenth century, a sevenfold increase in butter prices, and a fourfold increase in cheese prices.¹²⁷ In Wittenberg, food and clothing prices doubled between 1519 and 1540.¹²⁸ Carlo Cipolla was wont to downplay the entire idea of a Price Revolution because prices in Florence seemed to have risen at an average of just under two percent per year between 1552 and 1600.¹²⁹ Even if all of Europe's experience had been as mild to our eyes as that of Florence, it would not change the fact that a ceaseless increase was inexplicable to a culture that expected seasonal variations to center around a fixed price core. Prices certainly retreated after abundant harvests during the sixteenth century but never, it seemed, back to where they had been before.

Prices are only half of the story; they must be matched to wages. There is evidence that wages were rising. Wage legislation in England in 1495 and 1515 included revisions upward of maximum wages on "cognizance" of their "upward drift."¹³⁰ But were they rising fast and far enough to keep pace with inflation? Phelps Brown and Hopkins matched up their consumables index with known data about builders' daily wage rates. Three undeterminable variables modify the accuracy

¹²⁵ Stanislas Hoszowski, "Central Europe and the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Price Revolution," in Burke, *Economy and Society*, 89–91.

¹²⁶ Oliver Volckhart, "Early beginnings of the quantity theory of money and their context in Polish and Prussian monetary policies, c. 1520–1550," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 50 #3 (August 1997), 438–439.

¹²⁷ C. Verlinden, J. Craeybeckx, and E. Scholliers, "Price and Wage Movements in Belgium in the Sixteenth Century," in Burke, *Economy and Society*, 61.

¹²⁸ Edith Eschenhagen, "Beiträge zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Stadt Wittenberg in der Reformationszeit," *Luther Jahrbuch* 9 (1927): 80–85, cited in Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 198.

¹²⁹ Carlo M. Cipolla, "The so-called 'price Revolution': Reflections on 'the Italian Situation'," in Burke, *Economy and Society*, 44.

¹³⁰ Blanchard, "Population Change," 431.

of their results: there is no way to know to what extent the officially determined rates were regularly evaded (either by cash or non-cash supplements) when market conditions worked against the acceptability of the official rate, there is no way to determine how many days a year builders worked on average, and there is no way to know what proportion of builders had other regular sources of income.¹³¹ In addition, there are many years for which no data is available. So, Phelps Brown and Hopkins tried to determine, roughly, how many days a building craftsman had to work at the official rate to fill the family basket in one year as compared with another. The higher the index number for the craftsman, the fewer days he had to work to fill the basket. In 1475, his purchasing power stood at 106; by 1515 it had dropped to 90; by 1555 it was down to 48; by 1595 it had dropped to 44; and it dropped again to 39 in 1625, but rose to 47 by 1665 to hover a few points above or below 50 for the rest of the century.¹³²

Not all wage earners suffered equally. Y.S. Brenner's index reveals a considerable difference between the positions of skilled and unskilled labor in England:

	<i>Foodstuffs</i>	<i>Skilled Wages</i>	<i>Unskilled Wages</i>
1550	100	100	100
1600	244	160	114
1650	316	226	171 ¹³³

Whether one lived in the country, a town, or a metropolis also affected the impact of inflation on one's earnings. In London, the periods of the sharpest price increases were also the periods of the greatest wage increases, moderating the total loss in purchasing power; Steve

¹³¹ Phelps Brown and Hopkins were well aware of the limitations of their data in this regard as well as in regard to the consumables basket; for which see Phelps Brown and Hopkins, "Seven Centuries," 296–297.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 311–314 (Appendix B).

¹³³ Brenner, "Inflation of Prices in England, 1551–1650," 266–284. See, however, the data collected by Jeremy Boulton for the period from 1575 to 1650, which, while it also shows a greater decline and slower recovery in unskilled as opposed to skilled labor, tends to reinforce the results of Phelps Brown and Hopkins rather than of Brenner. The data collected by Boulton for 1580–1700 also favors while somewhat revising Phelps Brown and Hopkins. For Boulton's data, see Jeremy Boulton, "Wage Labour in Seventeenth-Century London," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 49 #2 (May 1996), 288–289, and "Food Prices and the Standard of Living in London in the 'Century of Revolutions', 1580–1700," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 53 #3 (August 2000): 455–492.

Rappaport believed skilled workers in London lost only about 29% of their purchasing power between 1490 and 1603.¹³⁴

Phelps Brown and Hopkins also produced a table comparing the daily wage-rates of “masons, carpenters, painters, tilers, and plasterers”¹³⁵ in France with an indexed basket of consumables, again using 1451–1475 as 100. By 1500, the French price index had risen to 128 and the purchasing power of the wage-rate had dropped to 85; by 1550 prices stood at 265 and purchasing power at 59; by 1600 prices stood at 759 and purchasing power at 34; and by 1650 prices had just about peaked at 949 and purchasing power had gained enough momentum to remain at 34.¹³⁶ The picture is not all that dissimilar from that for England. An index of the prices of barley and butter for Stockholm and the surrounding district put together by Phelps Brown and Hopkins only covers the years from 1460 to 1559, but, as far as it goes, it also varies little from the trend for England and France, with inflation beginning in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and speeding up in the second quarter of the sixteenth.¹³⁷ Earl J. Hamilton produced indices of some commodity prices for portions of Spain for the sixteenth century that show prices more than doubling between 1501 and 1550 (with more of the increase in the second quarter), and then just about doubling again between 1551 and 1600.¹³⁸ J. Nadal Oller’s revisions moved the inflation up but did not change the overall degree. Wages in Spain did not begin to rise more quickly than prices until after 1580, and had not yet caught up by the century’s end, giving us a picture of a steadily declining standard of living for the Spanish peasantry and small working class.¹³⁹ In eastern Europe wages generally fell behind prices as well.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, the index of wages and prices prepared by C. Verlinden, J. Craeybeckx, and E. Scholliers for Belgium shows them running roughly parallel throughout the sixteenth century although they were short periods when one advanced faster than the other.¹⁴¹ Wages and prices also ran roughly parallel throughout

¹³⁴ Steve Rappaport, *World Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 145 and 148.

¹³⁵ Phelps Brown and Hopkins, “Wage-rates,” 292.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 305 [Table 3].

¹³⁷ Phelps Brown and Hopkins, “Builders,” 24.

¹³⁸ Hamilton, *American Treasure*, 189 and 198.

¹³⁹ Lynch, *Spain*, 328–329.

¹⁴⁰ Hoszokski, “Central Europe,” in Burke, *Economy and Society*, 92.

¹⁴¹ Verlinden, Craeybeckx, and Scholliers, “Price and Wage Movements,” in Burke, *Economy and Society*, 74.

the sixteenth century in the northern Netherlands, and, unlike the case in Belgium, continued to stay ahead of prices for the first two decades of the seventeenth century.¹⁴²

Not all groups in society were as vulnerable as were laborers. Merchants, manufacturers, and landowners had better opportunities to pass along increased costs to their customers and tenants, but to understand how each group fared and, more importantly, how each group believed the other was faring, requires dissecting the social fabric of early modern England. And that fabric cannot be taken apart until it has first been created. This study will proceed outward from the microcosm to build that fabric, looking at profit and the individual, the family, the workplace, and society, before putting the social fabric under the microscopes of distributive and commutative justice to reveal the binding thread of just profit and the ways in which it adapted to the strains of early modernization.

¹⁴² Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 351–352. A very different picture is presented by Jan Luiten van Zanden who found that Dutch prices rose by a factor of ten between 1500 and the 1650 while the wages of such skilled workers as master carpenters or masons only rose by a factor of five. For his calculations, see Jan Luiten van Zanden, “The ‘revolt of the early modernists’ and the ‘first modern economy’: an assessment,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 55 #4 (November 2002), 627.

CHAPTER TWO

BODY, MIND, AND SOUL

The sixteenth century saw human beings as microcosmic analogies of the universe. As Paracelsus, the Swiss physician and philosopher, put it, God “formed” humanity out of “*limus terrae*, the primordial stuff of the earth,” but

Limus terrae is an extract of the firmament, of the universe of stars, and at the same time of all the elements... Such is the Great World. Next to it subsists the Little World, that is to say, man.¹

And just as the macrocosmos was divided into more perfect supra-lunar and less perfect sub-lunar spheres, a human being was possessed of a more perfect (immortal) soul and a less perfect (mortal) body. Paracelsus saw our bodies and souls as “animal” and “sidereal” entities, believing the “animal body” was “in itself always dead,” moving only through “the action of the sidereal body.”² This relationship was straight out of Aristotle’s *De Anima*, in which the soul (τῆς ψυχῆς) was the “cause and first principle,” imparting “movement” to the inanimate body.³ For Aristotle, however, the soul could not be physically separated from the body,⁴ and so was neither eternal as Plato had proposed nor immortal as Christianity believed. Neither Aristotle’s nor Plato’s definition of the soul could be used by Christian writers without modification, but the Greek conception of the soul’s superiority to the body was easily folded into Christian theology. For Plato, the function of the soul was “management, rule, deliberation” and its defining virtue “justice.”⁵ Like any other multifaceted thing, a human being was hierarchically divided into “a better part and a worse,” with proper order demanding “the

¹ Theophrastus Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, trans. Norbert Guterman, ed. Jolande Jacobi (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 16–17.

² *Ibid.*, 18.

³ Aristotle, *On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath*, bilingual ed., trans. W.S. Hett (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1957), 87 [II.4] and 19 [I.2].

⁴ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 79 [II.2].

⁵ Plato, *The Republic*, bilingual ed., trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1982), 1:105 [I.23].

control of the worse by the naturally better part.”⁶ In the *Cosmographia* of Bernard Silvestris, a twelfth-century humanist, one finds that “the soul should govern in the head” and the rest of the body “obey its commands.”⁷

One of the key differences between a just and an unjust profit in early modern thought was that a just profit favored the greater over the lesser, the long term over the short. Thus there was no just profit in putting the welfare of the body before that of the soul. According to *Matthew* 16:26, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” or, according to *Mark* 8:36, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” The inescapable conclusion was that spiritual profit was more important than the worldly variety. So it is not surprising to find Margaret Hoby confiding to her diary on December 31, 1599, her profound regret that “many sundrie distractions withdrew my mind from so profitable hearing” of a “Lector”... “as I ought.”⁸ Just nine days earlier Lady Hoby made her “preperation to the supper of the Lord by taking an account” of the “breaches” she had made in her faith preliminary to “reparinge” them through meditation and repentance.⁹ The following February, she bemoaned an afternoon “spent without any sperituall profetinge extraordenarie.”¹⁰ A funeral sermon published in 1640 admonished the congregation to pattern itself on the example of the deceased and “be profitable in doing good” and “profitable in receiving good.”¹¹

In regard to spiritual profit-taking attention is often drawn to seventeenth century examples, stressing their links to Calvinism and a presumed Capitalist Geist. According to such views, from Protestantism came the paradox that while salvation came only through the God-given grace of faith and not human works, humans had nothing but their works and thoughts to look to for signs of election and grace.¹²

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:359 [IV.8]. See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 10, for the medieval legal variant, “the worthier draws to itself the less worthy.”

⁷ Bernard Silvestris, *The Cosmographia of Bernard Silvestris*, ed. and trans. Winthrop Wetherbee (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 121 [XIII].

⁸ Hoby, *Diary*, 93.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹¹ Featley *et al.*, *ΟΡΗΝΟΙΚΟΣ*, 52.

¹² See, for example, Sarah Heller Mendelson, “Stuart Women’s Diaries and Occasional Memoirs,” in *Women in English Society 1500–1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Me-

One concrete form this took in the seventeenth century was the guide to self-examination of which “scores” were published, in effect replacing the Catholic confessional with diaries of “self-surveillance.”¹³ It was a view and a method that crossed party lines, for a typical example was the *Mercurius Christianus* (1673) of the royalist minister Richard Sherlock. Sherlock urged readers “twice a day Morning and Evening” to take a view of their “miscarriages” since the last examination, and implore “pardon for the same,” so that “by daily accounting” for their “dayly offences,” there would be “but ones day sin to account for” when they died.¹⁴ From the increasing penetration of capitalism into all sectors of the economy, and especially the penetration of double-entry bookkeeping, came the language of casting up accounts and taking a balance of profit and loss.¹⁵ The *Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian* (1656) written by the Anglican minister John Beadle was particularly striking in this regard with its exhortations to “cast up” all your “wants,” to remember that “it is very just and equall, that we should thus remember God, who remembers us daily,” and wishes the reader to thrive “in this spiritual soul-trade.”¹⁶ When Sir John Bramston of Skreens (1611–1699), the Anglican royalist, penned his autobiography, he was careful to note that he “lay hold of all opportunities to make up his account with God, his soule, and the world.”¹⁷

However, while there is no doubt that Puritanism, Capitalism, and Double-Entry Bookkeeping were intertwining as they grew apace during the seventeenth century and their confluence intensified this tradition of spiritual accounting, they did not invent it. Bookkeeping did not even invent the idea of taking a balance. Balance scales were thousands of years older, and balance was as integral to the Aristotelian concept of moderation as it was to the medical concept of the four humors that paralleled the physical concept of the four elements. Still, sometimes the borrowing from bookkeeping was unmistakable. In his

thuen, 1986), 181–210, 185–186; and Effie Botonaki, “Seventeenth-Century English-women’s Spiritual Diaries: Self-Examination, Covenanting, and Account Keeping,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30 #1 (Spring 1999): 3–21. On a Protestant (and not merely Calvinist) paradox, see also Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 377–380.

¹³ Botonaki, “Seventeenth-Century,” 4.

¹⁴ Richard Sherlock, *Mercurius Christianus: The Practical Christian, A Treatise Explaining the Duty of Self-Examination* (London, 1673), 3, cited in *ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15 [Beadle, *Journal*, 105, 167, epistle to the reader by John Fuller].

¹⁷ P. Braybrooke, ed., *The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston, K.B., of Skreens*, Camden Society, o.s., 32 (1845), 2.

Treatise of Vocations (1603), William Perkins suggested that Christians literally take trial balances of their souls:

First, we must draw out the bill of our receipts and expenses. The bills of receipt are framed thus; we must call to remembrance what graces, blessings and gifts we have received of God, whether temporal or spiritual... our bills of expenses, which are nothing else but large considerations of our sins... [as] tradesmen for their temporal estates keep in their shops books of receipts and expenses: shall we not then much more do the like for our spiritual estates ... [and gain] some light and knowledge how the case will stand with us, when we shall appear before the great God of all the world to give up our accounting.¹⁸

But the language of spiritual profit has a much more extensive pedigree. The oldest example I have been able to find in which the educated early modern reader might have been exposed to the idea of taking a spiritual balance occurs not in a Christian text, but in Plato's *Republic* [I.5], when Cephalus remarks that the last days of "he to whom the ledger of his life shows an account of many evil deeds" would be "haunted by anticipations of worse to come."¹⁹

The Waldensians, twelfth century followers of Peter Valdes, who anticipated many of the tenets and practices of sixteenth-century Protestants (including pre-determination, doubting the validity of some sacraments, denouncing oath-taking, and eliminating the veneration of saints and relics), produced a catechism that split the church into the invisible (the elect) and the visible (the ministry and the congregation), relating them to each other in this fashion: "the ministers of Christ with the people submitted to them, profiting from the ministry of faith, hope and charity."²⁰ The *Regulata Bullata* of the Order of St. Francis warned "the brothers that in their sermons their words" should be "well chosen for the profit and edification of the people."²¹ Dante noted in his *Monarchia*, composed between 1309 and 1313, that "[I] have been afraid that I might one day be held guilty of burying my talents."²² A mid-fourteenth century Lollard apology proclaimed its intent was not to "bigile ... ani man or womman, in ani unprofitable ... zel of

¹⁸ Perkins, *Work*, 474.

¹⁹ Plato, *Republic*, 1:17 [I.5].

²⁰ Donald A. White, *Medieval History: A Source Book* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1965), 505.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 512 [#9].

²² Dante Alighieri, *Monarchy (and Three Political Letters)*, ed. and trans. Donald Nicholl. (New York: Noonday Press, 1954), 3 [I.1].

spite” by stirring up the waters of spiritual conflict.²³ Walter Hilton, Canon of Thurgarten, penned *The Scale of Perfection*, which circulated for more than a century before being published in 1494. Dealing with the virtues of the contemplative life, Hilton remarked on “how profitable” were the “meekness, mildness, patience, rightwiseness, ghostly strength, temperance, cleanness, peace, and soberness, faith, hope, and charity” found in meditation.²⁴ He believed as well that the “hundredfold that a soul shall have if he forsake the world” (following the promise in *Matthew* 19:29) was “nought else but the profit of this light murkiness” that he called “the gate of contemplation.”²⁵

The perennially popular *Imitation of Christ* attributed to the fifteenth-century Augustinian monk Thomas à Kempis was full of references to spiritual profit:

In judging others, we expend our energy to no purpose; we are often mistaken, and easily sin. But if we judge ourselves, our labour is always to our profit...

Although temptations are so troublesome and grievous, yet they are often profitable to us, for by them we are humbled, cleansed, and instructed. All the Saints endured many trials and temptations, and profited by them; but those who could not resist temptation became reprobate and fell away...

Be assured that a man cannot enjoy both kinds of happiness; he cannot enjoy all the pleasures of this life, and also reign with Christ in Heaven. Moreover, if up to this very day you had lived in enjoyment of all honours and pleasures, how would all these profit you if you were to die at this moment? ...

How greatly to our profit and salvation was Your counsel when You instituted this Sacrament! How sweet and delightful the Feast in which You give Yourself to be our food!²⁶

And those who could not read the work in the original Latin could pick up a copy of any number of sixteenth-century English translations,

²³ James Henthom Todd, ed., *An Apology for Lollard Doctrines, attributed to Wicliffe*, Camden Society, o.s., 20 (1842), 1.

²⁴ Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*. ed. Evelyn Underhill (London: John M. Watkins, 1948), 31 [I.15].

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 342 [II.27].

²⁶ Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1952), 41–42 [I.14], 39–40 [I.13], 61 [I.24], 187 [IV.2]. For other references to the profitability of trials and temptations, see *ibid.*, 50 [I.20], 101 [III.7], and 107 [III.12]. For other references to *Mark* 8:36, with or without direct citation, see *ibid.*, 73 [II.5] and 92 [III.3].

as did Lady Grace Mildmay (1552–1620) who thought the book “containeth a most sensible feeling and conference betwixt the soul of man and the spirit of God.”²⁷

Early in the sixteenth century, Erasmus lamented that monks and laity alike were “growing old in the letter” and “never” took “pains to learn the spiritual sense of Scriptures. They do not hear Christ crying out in the Gospel: ‘The flesh is of no profit; it is the spirit that gives life.’”²⁸ In his *Injunctions to the Clergy* (1536), Chancellor Thomas Cromwell enjoined them to further the “prouffit of the Soules that they have under their cure.”²⁹ The followers of Martin Luther were castigated by the biographer of the executed Bishop John Fisher for “envyinge the spiritual profit of others.”³⁰ John Calvin believed the theologian’s “task” was “to strengthen consciences by teaching things true, sure, and profitable.”³¹ A 1553 English translation of Stephen Gardiner’s *De vera obedientia* (1536) characterized the “commaundements of God” as “righteous,” “honest,” “necessarie,” and “profitable [*utilia*] always to the life bothe of soule and body.”³² And following the parable of the talents (*Matthew* 25:14–30), preachers like John Knox were fond of reminding their audiences that “accounts of the talents received”³³ would one day have to be rendered by all. Montaigne’s *Essais* first appeared in France in 1580 and were translated into English in time to be published in 1603. Montaigne’s view that “*les afflictions*” and “*les douleurs*” were “*profit*” to those who sought solitude for religious reasons³⁴ might have been taken straight out of the *Imitation of Christ*. Lady Grace Mildmay not only believed that her “study in the scriptures” brought her the “most profit, comfort and delight,” but urged her children and grandchildren not to “spend and employ” their “gifts of God vainly”

²⁷ The first English translation might be that made by Richard Whitford ca. 1530. For Lady Mildmay’s comment see Linda A. Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: the Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552–1620* (London: Collins & Brown, 1993), 71.

²⁸ Quoted in Hilmar M. Pabel, ed., *Erasmus’ Vision of the Church* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1995), 43.

²⁹ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:27 [#159].

³⁰ Bayne, *Fisher*, 22.

³¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:182 [I.14.4].

³² Stephen Gardiner, *De vera obedientia* (1536), in *Obedience in Church and State: Three Political Tracts by Stephen Gardiner*, ed. and trans. Pierre Janelle (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 159.

³³ Knox, *First Blast*, in *Political Writings*, 41.

³⁴ Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. Pierre Michel (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 1:350 [I.39].

as all would someday have to “give an account as for the talents of God lent” them. That she did not believe faith brought only spiritual profit can be seen in her certainty that, deprived of her just portion by the actions of both her father and father-in-law, “the law of the land” might have rendered assistance but it was the Lord God who really “restored and established” her in her “whole portion.”³⁵

Which brings us back to Lady Margaret Hoby, who begged the “Lord pardon my ommissiones and Commissions,” having spent September 6, 1599, looking after her husband’s affairs but “nothinge reading nor profiting my selfe or any [other].”³⁶ And taking up her journal again in April 1605 after a considerable lapse, she found “some profitt might be made of that” habit from which “thorow two much neccligence” she “had a Longe time dissisted” of making “a thankfull recorde” of “godes benefittes and especiall favours.”³⁷ The Puritan tradition of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, then, was a continuation and intensification of a deeply rooted Christian tradition rather than the forging of a new one.

The basic principle of favoring the profit of the greater over that of the lesser as established in the soul-body hierarchy was used to construct two other hierarchies, (1) that between faith and reason and (2) that between church and state. These simultaneously personal and social analogies were result of the age’s inclination to see valid parallels between macro- and micro-cosmos in either direction.

(1). *faith and reason*

One of the features that the Renaissance and the Reformation had in common was a renewed emphasis on the importance, and profitability, of learning. This was often cast in the form of that analogy to the relationship between the spirit and the letter used by Erasmus to castigate monks, distinguishing truly profitable learning as that which enhanced spiritual understanding rather than the merely worldly variety. After all, the first vernacular Bible in Germany was not a Reformation but a Renaissance production, appearing as it did in

³⁵ Pollock, *Faith and Physic*, 71–72 and 86. See also *ibid.*, 81, for another reminder of the eventual accounting for the talents.

³⁶ Hoby, *Diary*, 69.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 216.

1460.³⁸ In classical terms this might be put as the superiority of wisdom over merely technical knowledge rather than as a divide between soul and mind, as $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta\varsigma$ included both. In Christian thought, however, the hierarchical divide existed within the individual (soul v. mind) as well as in the type of knowing (faith/revelation v. reason) and the matter known (Scripture v. worldly matters). The lesser was accepted insofar as it forwarded the aims of the greater. In the sixth century, the retired civil servant, historian, and theological writer Cassiodorus explained that while “intelligence” was “not placed in letters alone” and God gave “perfect wisdom ‘to everyone according as he will,’” church fathers did not “scorn” the “study of secular letters” because those letters were “not the least important means of instructing our minds in the understanding of the Sacred Scriptures,” if this knowledge was

sought soberly and reasonably with the support of the divine grace, we should not hope to be advanced spiritually by reading them, but in the course of our reading them, we should desire to have profitable and advantageous wisdom granted us by ‘the Father of lights.’³⁹

For Thomas à Kempis, “curiosity” often hindered understanding Scripture, for people tried “to examine and dispute over matters” that should be passed over and accepted “in simplicity,” so if one desired “to profit” from reading Scripture, one had to “read with humility, simplicity, and faith, and have no concern to appear learned.”⁴⁰ The Italian humanist Polydore Vergil whose English history became, for a time, required reading in English grammar schools, considered the printing press more “profitable” than “libraries” for its ability to preserve and multiply copies of “Greek and Latine Authors,”⁴¹ but in the early 1470s Filippo de Strata was already launching a *Polemic Against Printing* for

³⁸ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 691.

³⁹ Robert Brentano, ed., *Middle Ages: 500–1000* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe/Macmillan, 1964), 55.

⁴⁰ Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation*, 33 [I.5]. Similarly, *ibid.*, 146, [III:43]: “Never study in order to appear more wise and learned; study rather to overcome your besetting sins, for this will profit you more than will the grasp of intricate problems.”

⁴¹ Thomas Langley, trans., *An Abridgement of the Works Of the most Learned Polidore Virgil* (1659), 85, quoted in *Books Have Their Own Destiny: Essays in honor of Robert V. Schmucker*, ed. Robin B. Barnes, Robert A. Kolb, and Paula L. Presley (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1998), 131.

exposing young girls to the “sinfulness” of Ovid and flooding “the market with anything suggestive of sexuality.”⁴²

In mocking abuses, satires underscored the adherence of an age to its values. The very first entry in *Letters of Obscure Men* (1515) began “Since, as *Aristotle* hath it, ‘To enquire concerning all and singular is not unprofitable’” only to pose the idiotic question of whether “*magister nostrandus*” or “*noster magistrandus*” was “the fitter” title for a doctoral candidate.⁴³ Bishop Fisher’s anonymous biographer praised the learning from which John Fisher had so studiously “profited, that in fewe yeres he became singularly well learned,” while simultaneously reminding the reader that some learning (such as the “high and heavenly philosophie”) was “more profitable” than the rest.⁴⁴ The true profit in learning came from its spiritual dimension, on which grounds Fisher was praised for persuading the Countess of Richmond to erect two “two notable and goodly Colleges in Cambridge, out of which have sprange manie notable and profound learned men to the great profit and comoditie of the whole Church of Christe.”⁴⁵ Cromwell’s 1538 *Injunctions to the Clergy*, instructed them to put an English language Bible in each church so their parishioners might “most commodiously resorte to the same,” but to pay close attention to their own behavior so those parishioners might “prouffite” as much from the clergy’s “goode exemple of lyving” as from the “declaration of the worde of god.”⁴⁶ Cromwell might not have disagreed with the opinion voiced by Sir Thomas More in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529) that reason, being the “hande mayde” of faith, should not “chop logike” with her mistress, for, if “suffred to ronne on” unbridled reason would not fail “in rebellyon towarde her maystres fayth.”⁴⁷ But Cromwell evidently did not agree with the conclusion More drew from that relationship, that, as “inordynate appetyte of knowlege is a meane to dryve any man out of paradyse,” English language Bibles should be kept well away from “unlerned” men ignorant

⁴² Filippo de Strata, *Polemic against Printing*, trans. Shelagh Grier (Birmingham: Mayloft Press, 1986), line 36, quoted in Barnes *et al*, *Books*, 138.

⁴³ Ulrich von Hutten *et al*, *Letters of Obscure Men* (1515), trans. Francis Griffin Stokes (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 5–6 [I.1]. See also, *ibid.*, 8 [I.2].

⁴⁴ Bayne, *Fisher*, 8–9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:152–154 [# 273].

⁴⁷ Thomas More, *A Dialogue concerning Heresies* (1529), in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 6, pt. 1, ed. Thomas M.C. Lawler, Germain Marc’Hadour and Richard C. Marius (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 126 [I.22] and 131 [I.23].

and foolish enough to “enserch and dyspute the grete secrete mysteryes of scripture.”⁴⁸ Uncontrolled exploration of scripture could create spiritual cacophony within a society; before authorities were aware of it, any single sanctioned Protestant church could split into any number of sects.

Unwittingly, Luther had begun it. To the hierarchy of the Catholic Church Luther had opposed the radically leveling priesthood of all believers that brought the priest down to the level of the parishioner. To lower the priest was to raise both the prince and the parishioner (though not to the same level). This was challenge enough, yet Luther, albeit unintentionally, went further, on April 18, 1521, in his speech at the Diet of Worms. The resounding finale barely needs recalling, so famous has it become among Reformation scholars:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason ... I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.⁴⁹

To the Papal Nuncio, this was as tainted with anarchy as with heresy:

you say that you are prepared ... to accept instruction out of the holy Scriptures... heretics have always done the same thing; and you, just like them, wish to hold Scripture to be understood according to your [particular] judgment.⁵⁰

As early as 1519, Luther had claimed that “a simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or a council without it,”⁵¹ but the whole tenor of his disputes with Carlstadt, Zwingli, and Münzer, makes it obvious that Luther clearly believed that there was only one incontestable interpretation of Scripture and that he had found it. Thus it was Luther and not the Pope who was surprised by the claims made during the Peasants’ Revolt of 1525.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 333 [III.16]. For an excellent discussion of More’s problems with English Bibles see Craig W. D’Alton, “Charity or Fire? The Argument of Thomas More’s 1529 *Dyaloge*,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 33 #1 (Spring 2002), 66–67.

⁴⁹ Luther, *Works*, 32:112. Bainton added “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.” For which, see Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Mentor/Penguin Books, 1977), 144. These last words may or may not be apocryphal. They first appeared in the earliest printed version of the speech. Bainton suggested that they represented words that listeners were too moved to record.

⁵⁰ Luther, *Works* 32:128–129.

⁵¹ Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 90.

The continuing religious bifurcation of the German states was an object lesson for any monarch who wished to maintain politico-religious unity. Kaspar von Schwenckfeld (1489–1561) parted ways with his adopted Lutheranism over such dangerous ideas as the supremacy of a directly accessible “inner word of the Spirit” over the church-controlled “outer word” of Scriptural interpretation and the independence of the believing spirit from any church control along with the separation of church and state, an attitude hardly congenial to English authorities even if Schwenckfeld believed the state had a role in punishing sin. The elders and priests of the “Family of Love” founded by Hendrik Niclaes (b. 1502) renounced private property, and Anabaptists refused to take the any of the oaths that secured the bonds of early modern society, to name but three of the schismatic groups.⁵² Such examples might have been just as much a part of the reason for the lateness of the appearance of an authorized “official” English Bible (Bishops’ Bible of 1568) as were the religious flip-flops of the Tudor dynasty.

In 1548 an anonymous satire of the Catholic Clergy appeared under the title of *Doctor Double Ale*. Authored by Luke Shepherd, a Protestant physician, it took a stand on false learning akin to that of the *Letters of Obscure Men*:

His learning is exceeding
 Ye may know by his reading
 Yet could a cobblers boy him tell
 That he red a wrong gospell...
 Thus our dominous dodkin
 Wyth its vera bodkin
 Doth lead his lyfe
 Which to the ale wife
 Is very profitable.⁵³

In his *Actes and Monumentes* (1563), the compendium of Protestant martyrs, John Foxe averred that

⁵² George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 473–481. Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), 95–102. For a characterization of the sects as “more or less unrelated [independent?] attempts ... to meet the same problem,” rather than as “offshoots from the parent stock,” see *ibid.*, 77–80. Despite its age, Bainton’s remains an excellent introductory guide to the Reformation as a whole.

⁵³ Quoted in *Religion and the English People, 1500–1640: New Voices, New Perspectives*, ed. Eric Josef Carlson (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1998), 138 [Sig A iii; lines 163–172] and 141 [Sig A viii; lines 416–420].

as printyng of bookes ministred matter of readyng: so readyng brought learnyng; learnyng shewed light, by the brightnes wherof blind ignoraunce was suppressed, error detected, and finally Gods glory, with the truth of hys worde, advanced,

tying the fate of the Reformation to the printing press four hundred plus years before Elizabeth L. Eisenstein did in *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*.⁵⁴ The anonymous author of the *Compendious or Brief Examination* (1581) asked, rhetorically, “What is there else profitable or necessary for the conduct of man’s life here in earth but in learning it is taught more perfectly and more complete than any man can learn only by experience all the days of his life?”⁵⁵ On the other hand, Paracelsus found “mere letters ... dead” if not infused with “the commandment of love” and, for physicians at least, “experience.”⁵⁶ For Calvin, “the mind of man” was God’s “true image,” making “the intellect” the “leader and governor” of the soul, but for all his “treatment of theology as a rational quest,” Calvin posited a God ultimately unknowable to humanity, making the heart, and not the mind, the ultimate seat of faith.⁵⁷

Learning was proving to be something of a double-edged sword to reformers and counter reformers alike. The Reformation was, after all, a media event and propaganda war before the new churches even had a collective name, Protestant. From the moment Luther’s *Ninety-Five Theses* started to roll off the presses, they were followed by learned essays for scholarly consideration, tracts in the vernacular for burghers and magistrates, woodcuts for the illiterate, guides for the “rigged” disputations that often climaxed a city’s “reformation,” and printed versions of the latest sermons to be perused in the guild halls and pondered over by parish clergy having their own problems with the Catholic hierarchy.⁵⁸ Before the flood-tide crested, “more pamphlets appeared in Germany from 1521 through 1524 that during any other four years of Ger-

⁵⁴ John Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes of these latter and perillous dayes* (London, 1570; originally 1563), 2D5v. Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, 178–179, 304–305, and especially 310 and 313.

⁵⁵ [Smith], *Discourse*, 27–28 [I].

⁵⁶ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, 50 and 68.

⁵⁷ William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 78–102, 153–154, 158.

⁵⁸ Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, 303–309; Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: the Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 34–35 and 125; and A.G. Dickens, *The German Nation and Martin Luther* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1974), 103–104.

man history,” and matters were not very different in England, where Henry VIII waged his war for a male heir with broadsides, sermons, plays, books, and tracts.⁵⁹ Scripture was making its way into the vernacular with increasing frequency: rendered into French in 1540, Swedish in 1541, Czech in 1579–1593, Hungarian in 1590, and Welsh in 1604 in addition to the German and English language versions already mentioned.⁶⁰ One might even look at the outpouring of politico-religious propaganda in the sixteenth century as the preparation for the even greater flood of even more politically oriented propaganda during the crisis of the seventeenth century that coincided with the end of the Price Revolution: the literacy spread by one being one of the key underlying causes of the other.⁶¹

So widespread a diffusion of learning was difficult to control. In Bernard Palissy’s *Discours Admirables* (1580), we can see a potter by trade whose practical knowledge of chemistry (for pottery involves a transmutation of substance under heat) led him to challenge the hierarchy of learning with a public offer to demonstrate the superiority of his experimental knowledge in his very own study; the same attitude was struck by Louise Bourgeois when she set the knowledge she gained as a midwife against the texts of physicians.⁶² Books were turning up in the estate inventories of “haberdashers, weavers, drapers, tanners, grocers, cheesemongers, lawyers, locksmiths, pastrycooks, skimmers, dyers, shoemakers and coachbuilders,” with some 15–20 million books in print by 1500 and an additional 150–200 million more produced over the course of the sixteenth century.⁶³ Perhaps the most powerful testimony to the power and threat of the printed word was the institution by the Catholic Church of the Index of Banned Books, but it was neither the

⁵⁹ Bainton, *Reformation*, 74, and J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 164, 303, and 392. See also, James Kelsey McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 33–43, and Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, 179.

⁶⁰ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 223.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 262–264.

⁶² Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965), 216–217.

⁶³ Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, trans. David Gerard (London: Verso, 1990), 186, 262–263. Note, however, Davis, *Society and Culture*, 193–201 and 209–211, on the considerable difference in the penetration of books and literacy in the towns and in the countryside, and the even more communal nature of reading in the latter.

first nor the last word on the subject: the English government restricted printing in 1586 to a limited number of presses conveniently located (for government oversight) in London; Colbert did not institute similar regulations in France until 1666 although the French government had begun executing printers of heretical books back in 1534; while the Papacy had licenced the University of Cologne to censor readers as well as printers back in 1475.⁶⁴

How deeply this fear of the social consequences of uncontrolled access to learning reached beyond rulers and into society itself can be seen by the complaint of the merchant-scholar Gerard de Malynes of the skeptics who would “cast doubts beyond the moon,” creating such confusion that soon people would even “doubt whether you doubt or no.”⁶⁵

Even the new trades created by printing could pose a threat. Printers’ journeymen were “new” men whose very existence challenged the economic, social, and geographic immobility at which the Middle Ages had aimed: these men had left the trades of their fathers, had left their home villages and even home countries, and had mastered (at least in a rudimentary fashion) the language skills of classes generally “above” them. Their independent attitude reflected a kind of pride in that very threat. Seeing themselves as unfairly treated by publishers guilds in Lyons, they formed their own company, the Griffarins, and the fallout from their strikes reached the king himself. Attracted by the promise of the new faith, they first joined in record numbers, but when the solidifying of those new church hierarchies threatened their new-found socio-economic independence, the journeymen returned, even if “lukewarmly” to the old Church that had not insisted they renounce their company oaths.⁶⁶

Attempts to channel learning went hand in hand with the need to find alternative means of propagating the faith in an era in which, despite the spread of literacy, most of the population of Protestant and Catholic Europe could not read. Sermons and *selective* ministerial reading aloud from the Bible were the English Church’s vehicles of choice for reaching literate and illiterate alike. Since salvation was granted through faith alone and “faith cometh by hearing of the word,” Robert Sonne (*A Godly Treatise*, 1588) was among those who heartily

⁶⁴ Febvre and Martin, *Coming of the Book*, 191–192, 196, 244, 309.

⁶⁵ Gerard de Malynes, *The Center of the Circle of Commerce* (London, 1622), 123–124.

⁶⁶ Davis, *Society and Culture*, 1–16. See also Febvre and Martin, *Book*, 134.

approved of “the magistrate’s right to compel church attendance,” while the Royal Injunctions of 1559 “instructed parish clergy to preach or provide a sermon monthly,” and the government began authorizing books of homilies as early as 1547 to control the content of those sermons, only to find it had an ongoing shortage of ministers able and willing to preach.⁶⁷

As the sixteenth century turned into the seventeenth, ambivalence continued toward the profitability of learning. In his *Advancement of Learning Divine and Human* (1608), Sir Francis Bacon argued that it was not “the aspiring” to knowledge that “gave the occasion to the fall,” but man’s “proud” intent “to give law unto himself and to depend no more upon God’s commandments, which was the form of the temptation”; thus there was “no danger at all in the proportion or quantity of knowledge” but only in “the quality of knowledge,” when it lacked the “corrective spice” of “Charity.”⁶⁸ Cardinal Richelieu’s views, on the other hand, went along the same track as Thomas More’s. In his *Testament Politique* (1688), Richelieu averred that because “*la connaissance des lettres*” was supremely “*nécessaire à une république, il est certain*” that they must not be taught “*indifféremment ... à tout le monde.*”⁶⁹ The Cambridge Platonist Henry More seemed more in tune with Bacon when he advised Anne Conway in 1653 to “bind” her “thought within the compass of such things as are mainly profitable for your body and minde. And sett no price at all upon knowledge, but so far as it will make us vertuous, and obedient to God that made us.”⁷⁰ An anonymous biography of William Bedell (b. 1571), Bishop of Kilmore, penned about 1660 was at great pains to prove that the “great profiting” Bedell took in learning was not merely a matter of launching his “first rise” in “worldly advancement,” but producing a man who was as “strict in exacting” his own “performance of Divinity Acts” as he was in exacting that of his subordinates

⁶⁷ Sharon L. Arnout, “‘Spiritual and Sacred Publique Actions’: The *Book of Common Prayer* and the Understanding of Worship in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church of England,” in Carlson, *Religion*, 26–27 and 32.

⁶⁸ Francis Bacon, *The Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning Divine and Human* [1608], in *Selected Writings of Francis Bacon*, ed. Hugh G. Dick (New York: Random House, Inc. /Modern Library, 1955), 160–164 [I].

⁶⁹ Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, *Testament Politique* (1688), ed. Louis André (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1947), 12 [I.2].

⁷⁰ Marjorie Hope Nicolson, ed., *Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and Their Friends, 1642–1684* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 76 [#36].

“to the great delight and profit of the hearers.”⁷¹ Bedell was put forward as a positive example because he put his soul above his mind and the souls of the community above his own.

Henry More’s friend Joseph Glanvill dedicated his *Scepsis Scientifica* (1665) to the Royal Society that had elected him a fellow the year before. Glanvill praised the Society for not teaching men “to hunt Chimaera’s by rules of Art, or to dress up Ignorance in words of bulk and sound,” but, instead, turn “the minds of Men in solid and useful notices of things” and search out “the true laws of Matter and Motion” in order to secure “the Foundations of Religion against all [the] attempts of Mechanical Atheism” to undo them.⁷² Thus he worked from the same relationship between mind and soul, reason and faith, learning and revelation as had his predecessors for over sixteen hundred years.

(2). *church and state*

The Christian mental universe recognized two interlinked sources of authority, religious and secular, usually depicted as in charge of souls and bodies. They were supposed to work in tandem. After all, according to *Romans* 13:1 “There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” As Peter von Andlau, a professor of law in Basel, elaborated in his *Libellus de caesarea monarchia* (1470), “the two chief powers through which God regulates and moves the world” were “the papal authority and the royal power.”⁷³ If the soul was superior to the body, then those into whose care the soul was given bore a greater responsibility than those into whose care the body was given. With a greater responsibility should go a greater authority. Unfortunately there had never been complete agreement on the boundaries of their jurisdictions, and the Reformation upset whatever balance there was. The trouble had been brewing since Constantine saw that Cross. The pagan *Pontifex Maximus* had been an officer of the state; in Rome, Caesaropapism was older than the papacy itself. When Pope Damasus I (r. 366–384) planted his claim of Petrine Supremacy on the “Rock,” it was in

⁷¹ Thomas Wharton Jones, ed., *A True Relation of the Life and Death of the Right Reverend Father in God William Bedell, Lord Bishop of Kilmore in Ireland*, Camden Society, n.s., 4 (1872), 4, 15, and 27.

⁷² Joseph Glanvill, *Scepsis Scientifica: or, Confest Ignorance, the way to Science* (London, 1665), Dedication [a2].

⁷³ Hsia, *German People*, 15.

defiance of the Emperor as well as of the other Apostolic Sees and General Councils of the Church.⁷⁴ In the doctrine of the two swords or powers (*sacerdotium* and *regnum*) elaborated by Pope Gelasius I (r. 492–496), the priority of *sacerdotium* was unequivocal, as can be seen in his 494 letter to the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius I:

There are indeed, most August Emperor, two powers by which this world is chiefly ruled: the sacred authority of the Popes and the royal power. Of these the priestly power is much more important, because it has to render account for the kings of men themselves at the Divine tribunal. For you know, our very clement son, that although you have the chief place in dignity over the human race, yet you must submit yourself faithfully to those who have charge of Divine things, and look to them for the means of your salvation.⁷⁵

The evocation of the superiority of father to “son” served to reinforce that of *sacerdotium* to *regnum*. A similar chain of command was laid down by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who held that “secular power” was “subject to the spiritual power as the body” was “subject to the soul,” because

In order that spiritual matters might be kept separate from temporal ones, the ministry of this kingdom was entrusted not to earthly kings, but to priests and especially to the highest of them, the successor of St. Peter, vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff, to whom all kings must be subject just as they are subject to Our Lord Jesus. For, those to whom the care of an immediate end pertains should be subject to him to whom the care of the ultimate end belongs and be directed by his rule.⁷⁶

While the eighth-century forgery, the *Donation of Constantine*, added a claim of temporal authority in the western Empire, the Church’s claim to power over both swords ultimately rested on *Matthew* 18:18, Christ’s delegation of the keys to heaven to his disciples with the words, “What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.”

In the hands of Pope Gregory VII (r.1073–1085), the use of bodily imagery highlighted the dependence of the state upon the church even for the state’s own survival, as can be seen in this 1073 letter to Duke Rudolf of Swabia, with its reminder to Rudolf

⁷⁴ Nicholas Cheetham, *Keepers of the Keys: A History of the Popes from St. Peter to John Paul II* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1982), 23.

⁷⁵ White, *Medieval History*, 296.

⁷⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas: Representative Selections*, ed. Dino Bigongiari (New York: Hafner Press, 1953), xxxiv [*Summa Theologica*, II–II, Q.60, A.6] and xxxiii–xxxiv [*De Regimine Principum*, II §110].

to advance the glory of the imperial government and also to strengthen the power of Holy Church, namely, that the empire and the priesthood should be bound together in harmonious union. For, as the human body is guided by two eyes for its physical illumination, so the body of the Church is guided and enlightened with spiritual light when these two offices work together in the cause of pure religion.⁷⁷

Which was why Gregory was so angry in 1074 that the nephews of one of his predecessors were “seeking their own profit rather than the things that are of God” by “plundering” some “convent property.” His sentiments were echoed over four hundred years later by Johann Hug, who wrote (in *Quadrivium ecclesie Quatuor prelatorum officium Quibus omnis status tum Secularis tum vero Ecclesiasticus subiicitur*, 1504) that “government” was “preserved by religion” more than “by offices or physical labors,”⁷⁸ but Johann Hug, serving in Strasbourg at the time, was a priest. Protestants tended to read *Matthew* 18:18 in the light of *Matthew* 18:20, “For where two or three have met together in my name, I am there among them.” For them, the congregation, not the clerical hierarchy, was the church, and, as William Tyndale asserted, the keys were nothing more than “the authority to preach” God’s exact, “unaltered word.”⁷⁹ Tyndale was forced to flee his native England when Henry VIII decided Tyndale’s 1525 translation of the New Testament was heretical, and ended up being executed by the authorities in the Spanish Netherlands.⁸⁰ Cromwell’s enthusiasm for English language Bibles in every parish church was not shared by his monarch. Gregory VII had himself muddied the waters, for, while his *Dictatus Pappae* (1075) proclaimed the pope to be above kings, emperors, and councils, he used his influence in the Investiture Contest to uphold the native authority of the German princes in their respective domains against the imperial hold over benefices, thus leaving ammunition for sixteenth-century monarchs to use in their individual campaigns for imperial dominion.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Gregory VII, *Correspondence*, 16.

⁷⁸ Hsia, *German People*, 15.

⁷⁹ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 206–207.

⁸⁰ While Henry VIII used supposedly heretical interpretations in Tyndale’s translation as an excuse, the real quarrel was over Tyndale’s refusal to recognize the legitimacy of Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon. For the negotiations with Tyndale, see G.R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative changes in the reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 91–92.

⁸¹ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, Vol. I: *The Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 20; Cheetham, *Keepers of the Keys*, 93–94; and Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 19.

Things had not always been thus, or had they? John of Salisbury, who served in the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury for some twenty years before being consecrated Bishop of Chartres in 1176, could write that “the soul” was “the prince of the body” having “rulership over the whole thereof” as did the “prefect of religion” who presided over “the entire body” of Christendom, and the political “prince” received his “sword” from “the hands of the Church,” making him “a minister of the priestly power.”⁸² However, John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*, appearing in 1159, was ironically dedicated to Thomas Becket, then Chancellor of Henry II but only three years later to become his adversary as Archbishop of Canterbury for supporting papal supremacy. Power struggles between popes and monarchs were something of a commonplace during the Middle Ages. The first statutes of Provisors (1351) and Praemunire (1353), which respectively removed the right of presentment to benefices from the pope’s hands and forbade appeals to papal courts, were, after all, attempts by Edward III to curb the power of the Avignonese papacy, housed as it was in the territory of England’s old rival, France. Similar rivalries lay behind the *Tractate on the Laws of the Kingdom and the Empire* of Lupold of Bebenburg, Bishop of Bamberg (d.1362); it posited the “independence of the empire” from the papacy.⁸³ What made the upheavals of the sixteenth century different from those that had gone before was the level of popular discontent with the church.

Relationships between clergy and laity had always been complicated by the Catholic Church’s position as a major landowner in each state in Catholic Europe (as the Orthodox Church was in states within its sphere). In the wake of the Great Plague (1347–1350) and the subsequent epidemics, economic advantage shifted from landowners to tenants. When tenants tried to use this advantage to gain greater freedom and/or incomes, however, clerical and lay landlords joined forces to maintain the traditional order causing a great deal of tenant resentment. In the towns and cities resentment built as well against a church that was too slow to accommodate itself to what burghers saw as the realities of commerce. The fact that in some cities within the

⁸² John of Salisbury, *The Statesman’s Book of John of Salisbury. Being the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books, and Selections from the Seventh and Eighth Books, of the Policraticus*, trans. John Dickinson (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), 64 [V.2] and 9 [IV.3].

⁸³ Dickens, *German Nation*, 2–3.

Holy Roman Empire, the church was the state only made matters worse. Further exacerbating church-populace relations was the growth of interest in a personal spirituality (the *devotio moderna*) manifested in the popularity of the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas à Kempis and lay groups such as the Brethern of the Common Life, which the church was slow to accommodate. In dealing with the interaction between the Price Revolution and the Reformation, it is important to remember that Luther's was not the first attempt to reform the church, only the first to succeed in creating a permanent division. The Waldensian movement that spread across southern Europe in the twelfth century, the Lollard community in England founded by John Wycliff (c. 1329–1384), and the revolution set off in Bohemia by the execution of Jan Hus (1369?–1415) all predate the inflation.⁸⁴ Certainly strife between laity and clergy in the German states was a commonplace before 1500.⁸⁵

Christendom was as much a political body as was any state within it and thus just as likely to be modeled on the human. Even Cromwell referred to “the hole unytie state and bodye of Christendom”⁸⁶ as he helped dismember it, much to the discomfort of Sir Thomas More, who wrote to Cromwell in 1534 that since “Christendom is one corps, I cannot perceiue how any member thereof may without the common assent of the body depart from the common head.”⁸⁷ Each monarch only ruled over a portion of that body, while the Church ruled over all: no part could justly defy the whole. However, it would not be long before Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer would defy Mary's

⁸⁴ On the Hussites and Waldensians, see Andrew Pettegree, ed., *The Early Reformation in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 26, 56, and 121. On the Lollards, see John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 25–27. Also Bainton, *Reformation*, 19–20. On the survival of Lollardy into Tudor times, see Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 244, as part of what Scarisbrick termed the “positive, idealistic, and religious anti-clericalism” (*ibid.*, 243) of the age. On the other hand, Ozment (*Cities*, 8–12) took the view that the causes and the appeal of the Reformation were a discontent with the church's “oppressive” medieval theology and the uncertainty of salvation it fostered in believers.

⁸⁵ Pettegree, *Early Reformation*, 17; Hsia, *German People*, 19, 38; Ozment, *Cities*, 34–39.

⁸⁶ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:15 [#149]. For a discussion of the Catholic Church's two bodies—the mystical and the collegiate—see Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 193–206. Christ was the head of the mystical body and the Pope of the collegial (in the Catholic view).

⁸⁷ *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*, ed. Elizabeth Frances Barton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 213 [#53].

inquisitors with the assertion that “There is no subject but to a king”⁸⁸ and the unity of Catholic Christendom was no more.

It was once a commonplace to proclaim as did Thomas More in his *Debellation of Salem and Bizance* (1533) that if something were “necessary for preservacyon of the catholyke fayth, than is the profyte not the spirytuall mennes onely, but that profyte and advauntage is our owne too.”⁸⁹ After all, whatever profited the whole (Christendom) profited the part (the laity of one particular state). The profit in question was both spiritual and financial. Henry VIII launched a propaganda campaign to convince the English people of the rightness of his move to sever the church in England from the control of Rome. As part of that campaign, Christopher St. German, whose *Doctor and Student* (1530) became a standard textbook of common law, attacked the behavior of the Catholic Church and its ecclesiastical courts in several works, including a *Treatise Concernynge the Division betwene the Spirytualtie and Temporaltie* (1532). In the *Treatise*, St. German proposed that the donations sought by priests for pardons and chantries and the like were better put to the payments of people’s debts or “workes of mercy to theyr neyghbours.”⁹⁰ In response, Thomas More, who had resigned the Chancellorship in May of 1532, published a defense of the Catholic Church in an *Apology* (1533). More claimed that those who “murmur agaynst chaunteries, trentals, oblytes, pardons, and plygrymages” bore “an inward hatered unto the profyt of mens soules” in addition to their envy of priests.⁹¹ Like any other social organ, the church was entitled to the profit it needed to perform its duties, and those duties profited the souls of all the members of that society: the church’s financial profit was society’s spiritual profit. This was a point of view roundly disputed by Luther whose doctrinal attacks on the Catholic Church grew out of an earlier discontent with the Church’s wholesale marketing of indulgences to fund its building programs.⁹² The practice prompted the theological questions rather than the reverse. And it certainly led to a practice of one-up-man-ship

⁸⁸ Thomas Cranmer, “Examination at Oxford Before Brokes, September 1555,” *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. John Edmund Cox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846), 213.

⁸⁹ More, *Debellation*, 87 [II.15].

⁹⁰ Quoted by More in Thomas More, *The apologye of syr Thomas More knyght* (1533) in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Vol. 9, ed. J.B. Trapp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 72 [XX].

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 73 [XX].

⁹² The 95 *Theses* were posted in 1517; the protests over indulgences came in 1516 after a first crisis over indulgences in 1511. See Bainton, *Reformation*, 13–14, 29–31, and 37–39.

in sharpness of insult as each side flung accusations of profit taking at the other. Both sides might have been not so unconsciously adapting the characterization of clergymen attributed to Walter Mapes in the twelfth or thirteenth-century *Apocalypsis Gollae Episcopi*, “*plena sunt oculis, eo quod preaetia/lucra respiciunt*,” or, as translated in 1623, those popes and archdeacons “all full of eyes, that alwayes spye their gaine.”⁹³

The splitting of western Christendom into Catholic and Protestant branches in the sixteenth century proved problematic for the inclusion of church and state in one organic analogy. The problem was eerily prefigured in the *Treatise on the Donation of Constantine*, written by the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla in 1440 and circulated in manuscript before its publication in 1517, the year of Martin Luther’s *Ninety-five Theses*. In one passage, Valla imagined Constantine’s advisors challenging any decision to leave the empire to the church with words neatly entwining organic and family analogies as they simultaneously mocked the doctrine of the two swords:

Will you cut one body into two parts, and out of one kingdom make two kingdoms, two heads, two wills, and, as it were, reach out to two brothers swords with which to fight over their inheritance!⁹⁴

Sure enough, as Henry VIII maneuvered to get himself a male heir, that inheritance became a main bone of contention in England. The Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates (1532) accused the Papacy of taking “only for lucre, against all right and conscience” what had originally been intended to fund the crusades, making it Henry’s “duty” for the “conservation and preservation of the good estate and commonwealth” of “his realm,” to keep those revenues within England.⁹⁵ The Act in Absolute Restraint of Annates (1534) and the Dispensations Act (1534) forbidding the payment of Peter’s Pence simply underscored the point already made in 1532. Henry’s solution to the problem of church/state-soul/head was to make the Church of England a branch of the state, a position in which it remains today, although, since the days of the Glorious Revolution (1688–1689) and the Act of Settlement (1701), the Archbishop of Canterbury has not been doctrinally under the thumb of the monarch.

⁹³ Thomas Wright, ed., *The Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes*, Camden Society, o.s., 16 (1841), 7 [lines 119–120] and 285.

⁹⁴ Lorenzo Valla, *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine*, bilingual ed., ed. and trans. Christopher B. Coleman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 41.

⁹⁵ Tanner, *Tudor*, 26–27.

In truth, each faith and each state, Protestant or Catholic, had to devise its own answer to a problem that was far from merely theological. In each realm the “spiritual causes” over which ecclesiastical courts held jurisdiction might include testamentary matters, marriage and legitimacy law (and thus property inheritance), and, from bishops’ courts, appeal to Rome. Thus an extra-national institution could interfere with the disposition of property whose ultimate owner was the monarch. This was of particular importance in Henry’s case. The Papacy’s interpretation of the power to loose and to bind also gave it the power to dispense, and thus to decide what in Scripture was Divine Law and what was human law and dispensable. This ran counter to Henry VIII’s claim that the provision in *Leviticus* (18:16) invalidating his marriage to Catharine of Aragon, being immutable Divine Law, was not dispensable by any Pope.⁹⁶ The Papacy’s interpretation of its powers would make it the arbiter of the succession to the English crown, an extra-national disposition of the monarch’s property that Henry VIII could not afford to accept. The First Succession Act (1534) quoted the proofs and opinions of Archbishop Cranmer, the whole clergy of England in Convocation, and the Universities of “Bologna, Padua, Paris, Orleans, Toulouse, Angers, and divers others” to back up its claim that *Leviticus* 18:16 was Divine Law and thus indispensable.⁹⁷

Churches also controlled wealth not normally taxed by the crown. If the annates, the first year’s income of each new appointee, went to Rome, that was money the local prelate could no longer “grant” to his monarch. As monarchs grew strong enough to control internal competition from nobles and estates it was not surprising that they turned their attention to this “external” competitor. In Catholic countries, the usual solution was a Concordat, giving the monarch some control over the prelates within his territory via the right of presentment. François I won such power with the Concordat of Bologna (1516) and Emperor Charles V by 1523. Ferdinand and Isabella won the right to institute their own Inquisition in 1478, and the Spanish crown gained control of presentment through a series of agreements in 1482, 1486, and 1523.⁹⁸

Jurisdictional problems arose, as well, over that class directly under papal authority: the *benefit* enjoyed by the clergy, not to be *amerced*

⁹⁶ See Gardiner, *Obedientia*, 85–86 on the specific application of the dispensation issue to Henry’s marriage.

⁹⁷ Tanner, *Tudor*, 382–388.

⁹⁸ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 99–102, 107–198, and Lynch, *Spain*, 7–8, 21–22.

(“punished,” originally “fined,” from a fine whose amount was left to the mercy of the inflicter) under lay jurisdiction. This privilege had been recognized since medieval times. Bracton had explained that as the competence to judge rested in the power to punish, a king could not judge a cleric because a cleric’s proper punishment was degradation from Holy Orders, and the king having no power to bestow Holy Orders could have no power to degrade them. Unless the cleric offended further, no other punishment applied, degradation being so great a reduction in status.⁹⁹ Thomas More would say the dignity of a priest “passes all princes,”¹⁰⁰ but these clerics were Englishmen, born subjects of their king: under canon law, the king had in his realm a class of subjects ultimately administered by a foreign authority and not subject to his courts. The English crown’s pre-Reformation understanding of its competency in this area was severely limited; the 1512 Act Denying Benefit of Clergy to Murderers attempted to end abuse of the privilege by the merely lettered; it specifically reserved the benefit for those in “holy orders.”¹⁰¹ After the Reformation the issue was moot as both lay and ecclesiastical courts were under the monarch’s jurisdiction.

For England, the solution was to redefine the church as the congregation and not the hierarchy. The congregation, however, was made up of individuals who lived within various realms, and over each realm there was only one head, the civil ruler. The logic of the argument was laid out by Bishop Stephen Gardiner in *De Vera Obedientia*, published in 1536 as part of that crown-directed propaganda campaign. One cannot imagine Gardiner, who revealed his Catholic colors under Mary I, being pleased with the conclusions he had to draw from the contention that the “word church signifieth ... only the multitude of the people, which being united in the profession of Christ is grown into one body.”¹⁰² The church was neither an institution nor a geographic entity (Christendom), but, there was no amorphous “multitude” without degree in God’s ordered universe. God had made realms, and realms had kings who commanded all their subjects “whosoever they be and of what condition so ever they be, whether they be Jews, Bar-

⁹⁹ Henry de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae*, ed. George E. Woodbine, trans. Samuel E. Thorne (Cambridge MA: Selden Society, 1968), 2:348–349.

¹⁰⁰ More, *Dialogue*, 301 [III.12].

¹⁰¹ Adams and Stephens, *Select Documents*, 223–224.

¹⁰² Gardiner, *De Vera Obedientia*, 93.

barians, Saracens, Turks or Christians.”¹⁰³ Thus “the church of England” was “nothing else but the congregation of men and women of the clergy and the laity united in Christ’s profession” within England under the king whose “dignity hath always been above the chiefest Bishop’s in England.”¹⁰⁴ The pope could not be the head of such a church, as the Protestant Thomas Cranmer believed, for then “the Pope in every realm hath a realm,” but “by Scripture the king is chief, and no foreign person in his own realm above him.”¹⁰⁵ In fact, as Cranmer explained, and Henry VIII endorsed in his own hand, “curates and priests” and all that order had only been instituted in the apostolic Church because there were at that time no Christian kings into whose hands the Church might be put.¹⁰⁶ With the church defined this way, Henry could say with truth to the Spanish ambassador in 1538, “I never wished to make a God of my own and separate from the whole corps of Christendom,” as his *Bishops’ Book* had maintained the year before that all the individual churches were “compacted and united together to make and constitute but one Catholic Church or body.”¹⁰⁷ Henry’s unusual take on history aside, the arguments being put forward in England for national congregations were not entirely original. In 1525, the printer and agent of Cromwell, William Marshall, produced an abridged English translation of the *Defensor Pacis* (1324) of Marsilius of Padua. For Marsilius, the “Donation of Constantine” was proof of the superiority of the secular over the clerical power, for which claim he was condemned in 1327 by Pope John XXII (r.1316–1334).¹⁰⁸ Nor were Henry VIII’s financial rearrangements unique. In his *Appeal to the German Princes* (1520), Luther put forward “Twenty-seven proposals for improving the state of Christendom.” Four of them might have been copied wholesale by Henry’s reformers: (1) the refusal of the annates to Rome, (2) the elimination of Papal appointments to benefices, (4) the elimination of appeals to Rome

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 95 and 119.

¹⁰⁵ Cranmer, “Examination,” in *Miscellaneous Writings*, 213.

¹⁰⁶ Cranmer, *Questions* [#9] and “Corrections of the Institution by Henry VIII with Cranmer’s Annotations,” in *Miscellaneous Writings*, 116–117 and 97. Henry’s remark might be traced to the idea expressed by the Norman Anonymous that while kings were by nature merely individual men, each was “by grace, a *Christus*, that is, a God-man.” For which, see Kantorowicz, *King’s Two Bodies*, 46.

¹⁰⁷ Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 390.

¹⁰⁸ Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis* II.22§9–10, quoted in Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 153; see also *ibid.*, 155 (on the translation of the *Defensor* into English) and 154 (on John XXII’s condemnation of Marsilius).

in any causes touching on temporal matters, and (g) the repudiation of papal claims to authority over the emperor.¹⁰⁹

Protestant constructions of the church stripped it of any secular power, leaving it only theological authority, as outlined, for example, by William Perkins in his *Exposition of the Symbol or Creed of the Apostles* (1595):

Christ alone is the head of the catholic church and that he neither hath nor can have any creature in heaven or earth to be fellow herein. For the church is his body and none but he can perform the duty of an head unto it, which duty stands in two things: the first is to govern the church by such power and authority whereby he can and doth prescribe laws properly binding the conscience of all his members; the second is by grace to quicken and put spiritual life into them, so as they shall be able to say that they live not, but Christ in them.¹¹⁰

By setting up a national church Henry VIII was able to control its theological authority as well; no Convocation or Parliament could put their imprimatur on any ritual practice or article of faith with which he disagreed. The Act for the Submission of the Clergy (1534) specifically constrained Convocation from enacting canons independently of the crown.¹¹¹ Elizabeth I would be the last English monarch to successfully wield such power. Charles I lost his head for, among other matters, the latitude he gave Archbishop William Laud in re-catholicizing the Church of England and his attempts to wrest Scotland from Presbyterian control. The maintaining of unity remained an over-riding concern with the threat of a reintroduction of Catholicism and its concomitant re-establishment of dual sources of political and doctrinal authority. According to Bishop John Thornborough (*A Discourse*, 1604) “Duallitie, or Binarius” bred “intemperature” in states and families as well as “vice, and wicknes” in individuals.¹¹²

Outside of England, church and state remained divided in Protestant Europe: the secular authority wielded disciplinary power while the particular Protestant Church wielded theological power, unless, as in the case of Calvin’s Geneva, the church was the state, in effect. While mainstream Protestant clerics sought to decapitate only the Catholic

¹⁰⁹ *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1961) 406–485.

¹¹⁰ Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbol or Creed of the Apostles* (1595), in *Work*, 265.

¹¹¹ Tanner, *Tudor*, 22–25.

¹¹² Quoted in Michael Questier, “Practical Antipapistry during the Reign of Elizabeth I,” *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (October 1997), 392.

hierarchy, some of their listeners thought they meant to do away with all hierarchy. The clerics soon found themselves more in need of the secular sword than their Catholic rivals had been. Martin Luther's writings seemed to be prophetic. In *A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion* (1522), Luther proclaimed that he was and always would be "on the side of those against whom insurrection" was directed "no matter how unjust their cause," because "no matter how just" the cause of the rebels, insurrections always shed innocent blood.¹¹³ In *Secular Authority: to What Extent it should be Obeyed* (1523), Luther explained that human sinfulness made the secular sword a necessity for human survival, but even true Christians who knew that "the whole spirit" of their lives impelled them to do what was "profitable and necessary" for their neighbors submitted "most willingly to the rule of the sword" in order to "preserve peace, to punish sin and to prevent evil."¹¹⁴ But almost immediately after *Secular Authority* rolled off the presses, the Peasants' Revolt (1523–1526), with perhaps as many as 300,000 German peasants under arms¹¹⁵ (the equivalent of 7.5 percent of England's entire population), convinced many rulers that Protestantism equaled chaos: the rebels' "Twelve Articles" proclaimed that "Christ redeemed and bought us all with his precious blood, the lowliest shepherd as well as the greatest lord with no exceptions."¹¹⁶ Catholics such as Thomas More were quick to blame the revolt on Luther's teachings.¹¹⁷ Protestant faith in a "priesthood of all believers" was proving to be something of a two-edged sword. Calvin thought it wise to begin his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* with an admission to François I that

if this doctrine looked to no other end than to wrest the sceptors from the hands of kings, to cast down all courts and judgments, to subvert all orders and civil governments... the whole world would rightly judge this doctrine and its authors worthy of a thousand fires and crosses.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Martin Luther, *A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and rebellion* (1522), trans. W.A. Lambert, rev. Walther I. Brandt, in *Works*, 45:62–63.

¹¹⁴ Luther, *Selections*, 368–369 and 373.

¹¹⁵ Holborn, *History*, 173.

¹¹⁶ Peter Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective*, trans. Thomas A. Brady, Jr. and H.C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 197.

¹¹⁷ More, *Dialogue*, 368–369 [IV.7].

¹¹⁸ Calvin, *Institutes* 1:10. For the view that the first edition of the *Institutes* "was

In their efforts to place themselves on the side of law and order, the leaders of the magisterial Reformation found themselves having to decide what, if any, limits, there were to a secular authority that might favor the wrong religion. Calvin would only allow passive disobedience to such laws and a meekly suffered punishment because magistrates could not be “resisted without God being resisted at the same time,” and even a “wicked king” was owed obedience as representing “the Lord’s wrath upon the earth.”¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, it was important to set out a government’s legitimate bounds. According to Luther, the laws of “worldly government” extended “no farther than to life and property and what is external upon earth,” for “over the soul,” God “let no one rule but Himself... For no human being can kill a soul or make it alive, [or] conduct it to heaven or hell.”¹²⁰

It was also possible for both sides to adapt Thomas More’s old argument that whatever was “profitable” for the greater was “profitable” for the lesser, by assigning different meanings to the word “church.” In the late sixteenth-century a war of treatises broke out between Thomas Cartwright and John Whitgift. An independent-minded “puritan” denied his doctorate who suffered exile and imprisonment for his criticisms of Anglican administration and practice, Cartwright still insisted traditionally that

if it be shewed that this is necessary for the church, it cannot be but profitable for the commonwealth: nay, the profit of it may easily appear, for that by the censures and discipline of the church ... men are kept back from committing of great disorders.¹²¹

Whitgift was a theological conservative who rose to be Archbishop of Canterbury. He also helped oust Cartwright from his position in Cambridge. When Whitgift posited an identity between the profit of the church and the commonwealth, he put a somewhat different spin on it:

If it be necessary for the present state of the church; it is also profitable for the present state of the commonwealth; for I perceive no such distinction of the commonwealth and the church that they should be counted,

intended in part to end the persecution in France of those with beliefs like his own,” making it “a kind of apologia,” see Bouwsma, *Calvin*, 17.

¹¹⁹ Calvin, *Institutes* 2:1511–1512 [IV.20].

¹²⁰ Luther, *Secular Authority*, in *Selections*, 383–384.

¹²¹ Whitgift, *Defence*, 1:21.

as it were, two several bodies, governed with divers laws and divers magistrates, except the church be linked with an heathenish and idolatrous commonwealth.¹²²

The profit in question being as much spiritual as financial, and given the era's fear of disunity, both sides accepted the argument found in a 1602 entry from Mush's diary, that as "tolleration or libertie of conscience" would create "heretiks," "persecution was profitable to the Church" and thus not to be tempered by toleration on the part of the lesser organ, the state.¹²³ Of course, Mush was referring to the profitability of Catholic persecution of Protestants, while, by 1602, the majority opinion in England would have reversed the position of the two churches in that clause. James I instructed his ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton, in 1619 to encourage the German princes to follow his example in setting up institutions "for such as shall be recovered from schism and rebellion," a "good worke," so "expedient for the common cause of religion and state" that might "in time produce soe many effects profitable" to the Christian world.¹²⁴ If a church was no more than a congregation, every effort had to be made to keep up the membership.

Though there was no general agreement on which was the "right" church, all were agreed that the profit of the right church coincided with that of the commonwealth, while that of the wrong church did not. Thomas Hobbes completed *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament* by 1668 but found the climate not quite right for publishing it until 1682, perhaps because he took as much aim against Calvinist sects as against the Catholic Church, accusing both of illicit profit:

The profit that the Church of Rome expected from them [university scholars], and in effect received, was the maintenance of the Pope's doctrine, and of his authority over kings and their subjects, by school-divines...

[While the Puritans] they did never in their sermons, or but lightly, inveigh against the lucrative vices of men of trade or handicraft; such as feigning, lying, cozening, hypocrisy, or other uncharitableness, except

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1:21–22.

¹²³ Thomas Graves Law, ed., *The Archpriest Controversy: Documents Relating to the Dissensions of the Roman Catholic Clergy, 1597–1602*, Camden Society, n.s., 58 (1898), 2:6.

¹²⁴ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, ed., *Letters and Other Documents Illustrating the Relations between England and Germany at the Commencement of the Thirty Years' War*, Camden Society, o.s., 90 (1865), 47 [#29].

want of charity to their pastors and to the faithful: which was a great ease to the generality of citizens and the inhabitants of market-towns, and no little profit to themselves¹²⁵

The complaints of Thomas Hobbes are a reminder that the problem of the political version of the body/soul relationship was still being worked out as the Price Revolution came to an end. Elizabeth I had faced plotting by Jesuits to assassinate her, papal support for the rising of the northern earls and Irish rebels, plots to replace her with Mary Queen of Scots, and a Spanish Armada. The existence of both Protestant and Catholic heirs to the throne further fanned the old controversies after the death of Elizabeth I. Edward Forset, a justice of the peace active in examining the accused in the Gunpowder Plot (1605), used the body-soul analogy to prop up the civil authority in his *Comparative discourse of the Bodies natural and Politique* (1606). He maintained that “as in every man” there was “both a quickening & ruling soul, and a living and ruled bodie,” so “in every civill state” there was a “commanding power, & an obeying and subjected alleageance.”¹²⁶ Roberto Bellarmino, better known to students of English history as Robert, Cardinal Bellarmine, took exactly the opposite position. A Jesuit theologian responsible for the revision of the *Vulgate* in 1592 and later declared a saint by the Catholic Church, Bellarmine maintained in *De Laicis* that “if there were not in each of one of us a soul to govern and unite the parts and powers” of which our bodies were made, “immediately all would disintegrate,” but accepting that “the inferior” must “be ruled over by the superior,” drew the conclusion that:

the temporal and spiritual power in the Church are not two separate and distinct things, as two political kingdoms, but they are united so that they form one body; or rather they exist as the body and soul in one man, for spiritual power is as the soul, and temporal power as the body... Therefore the temporal power ought to serve the spiritual and to protect and defend it from enemies.¹²⁷

Switzerland endured two civil wars (1529 and 1531) before a canton by canton compromise was adopted. In France, the Wars of Religion ended with the compromise of the Edict of Nantes (1598), but the after-

¹²⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 17 and 25 [Dialogue I, Speaker A].

¹²⁶ Forset, *Comparative Discourse*, 3.

¹²⁷ Robert Bellarmine, *De Laicis, or the Treatise on Civil Government* (1595), trans. Kathleen E. Murphy (New York: Fordham University Press, 1928), 22 [V], 32 [VII], and 81–82 [VIII].

shocks continued, putting the crown under pressure from both faiths. A rebellion of a group of nobles in 1614 prompted the Third Estate to propose an article in its *cahier* at the Estates General condemning the “*pernicieuse doctrine*” against the king’s “*souveraines*” powers established by God that any subject “*spirituelle*” or “*temporelle*” had the right to rebel, only to have it rejected by the regency government of Marie de Medici because it might upset delicate balance of power France had worked out with the Catholic Church.¹²⁸ After protracted royal campaigns against Protestant strongholds during the seventeenth century, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, drawing France even more closely into the Catholic camp. In the Italian city-states and Spain, religious uniformity was enforced by the Inquisition. In central Europe the Habsburgs were singularly unsuccessful in their search for a unified religious settlement; Diet after Diet was called until the battle to impose uniformity was given up: the self-destructive spectacle of the Schmalkaldic War of 1546–1547 between the Catholic and Protestant princes left Charles V no other way to keep his imperial concerns from being sucked into the maelstrom of continual civil war. In 1555, in the Peace of Augsburg, the principal of princely choice (*cuius regio eius religio*) was the compromise adopted, but even there the question was not truly settled until the end of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648).¹²⁹ Any monarch might also try to take advantage of another’s religious problems to further his or her political ends. In 1552, Henri II welcomed the signing of a treaty with the German princes directed against their overlord, Charles V. Charles’s entanglements with France over Italy meant France would attempt to rouse its German clients against Charles’s policies (and Philip’s) in the Netherlands. In 1572, William of Orange’s forces went in to force Alva’s Habsburg troops from German territory, while German cavalry was sent by the elector Palatine to help the Huguenots in France.¹³⁰ In the British kingdoms, *cuius regio* proved to be a particular awkward policy when the monarch at the head of the three kingdoms was Charles I. The Bishops’ Wars brought forth the Scottish National Covenant of 1638; by 1641 Ireland was in revolt,

¹²⁸ Eric W. Nelson, “Defining the Fundamental Laws of France: The Proposed First Article of the Third Estate at the French Estates General of 1614,” *The English Historical Review*, 115 # 464 (November 2000), 1216–1217, 1222, 1230.

¹²⁹ Holborn, *History*, 146, 158, 208, 212–213, 227–231; see, however, Lynch, *Spain*, 91, on the attempt to adopt *cuius regio* at the Diet of Speyer (1526).

¹³⁰ Holborn, *History*, 239–241, and H.G. Koenigsberger, *The Hapsburgs and Europe, 1516–1660* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), 66, 135, 160.

and by 1642 England's Parliament decided to raise its own army rather than finance one headed by Charles. The very last section of Calvin's *Institutes* elaborated upon Peter's edict, "We ought to obey God rather than men (*Acts* 5:29)" in terms that seemed to imply believers had a positive duty to disobey their monarchs when their commands went against that higher duty to God. Calvin enjoined believers to "not pay the least regard" to such commands "nor be moved" by their "dignity" nor act "as if the Lord had resigned his own rights to mortals, by appointing them to rule over their fellows."¹³¹ A hundred years later, men like John Milton were no longer interpreting Calvin's words as a call to passive disobedience and acceptance of punishment. Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) cited that passage from Calvin in defense of the Revolution.¹³² One short-lived experiment with a republic, a restoration, and another revolution later, the Bill of Rights (1689) and the Act of Settlement (1701) established the maxim that has guided the succession ever since: the religion of the people determines that of the monarch.¹³³

In the understanding of the world inherited by the sixteenth century the individual was never merely an individual but always also part of a series of greater organisms that spread out in ever widening circles as the ripples from a pebble tossed into a pond. The first of those greater organisms was the family, and the relationship between profit, the individual, and the family is the subject of the next chapter. Though modeled in fact on the body it encircled, each of the encircling organisms was viewed as taking its laws not from that which it encircled, but from that which encircled it. Thus, whether we move outwardly or inwardly, we should expect to find the same relationship between the profit of the greater and the profit of the lesser within the family as within the body human.

¹³¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2:675 [IV.20.32].

¹³² John Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), ed. William Talbot Allison (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), 47. See also *ibid.*, 45–48, for Milton's similar reinterpretations of citations from Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer.

¹³³ J.R. Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century, 1603–1689* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 13–14.

CHAPTER THREE

FAMILY VALUES

In the mental cosmos of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, the family played a dual role. It simultaneously mediated between the organic and aggregate elements in early modern social theory and between the individual and society in practice. It could do this because families represented a key stage in the creation of the body politic in both Bible-based and contractual versions of the origins of human society. In this view the family was, as Thomas Pickering put it in his introduction to the 1609 edition of William Perkins's *Christian Oeconomie*, "the Seminarie of all other Societies," so it followed that "the holie and righteous government" of the family was "a direct meane for the good ordering, both of Church and Commonwealth."¹

In Bible-based versions, society evolved gradually out of the ever-increasing descendants of Adam. Drawing parallels between Adam's family and monarchical society remained a favorite royalist device even after the Price Revolution drew to a close. Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, written around 1640 although not appearing in print until 1680, would not have been possible without on such parallels:

For as Adam was lord of his children, so his children under him had a command over their own children, but still with subordination to the first parent, who is lord paramount over his children's children to all generations, as being the grandfather of his people.

I see not then how the children of Adam, or of any man else, can be free from subjection to their parents. And this subordination of children is the fountain of all regal authority, by the ordination of God himself. From whence it follows, that civil power ... is by Divine institution... Nor leaves it any place for such imaginary pactions between Kings and their people as many dream of.²

¹ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 2a–3b.

² Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha* §3, in *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), 57.

Bishop Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History* (1681) also reminded its readers that "All men are born from a single marriage, in order to belong forever to but one and the same family, however dispersed or multiplied."³

In any of the social contract theories of the age that relied upon Aristotle, it was not autonomous individuals but the heads of families who came together to form societies. According to Aristotle's *Politics*, all began with the first "coupling" of man and wife. As their family increased in size over generations, their related descendants formed a village. Because an individual village was not large enough or strong enough to provide its inhabitants with everything needed for a "good life," the heads of households in the villages eventually united to form a city-state.⁴ Such an evolution of society could be neatly folded into Biblical theories, both by monarchists and those who put more emphasis on the consensual nature of the change from village to state. Marsilius of Padua, whose *Defensor Pacis* (1324) enjoyed a sixteenth-century revival thanks to Henry VIII's desire for a male heir, had relied upon it:

For the first and smallest combination of human beings, wherefrom the other combinations emerged, was that of male and female, as the foremost of the philosophers says in the *Politics*, Book I, Chapter 1, and as appears more fully from his *Economics*.⁵

During the chaos of the French religious wars of the sixteenth century, Jean Bodin constructed his *Six Books of a Commonwealth* (1576) on a firmly Aristotelian foundation, defining a "*Republique*" as the "*droit gouvernement*" of several households under a "*souveraine*" power and, conversely, a household as the "*droit gouvernement*" of several individuals under the rule of "*un chef de famille*," making "*la famille*" the true "*source et origine*" of all republics.⁶ Bodin's work was immensely popular. Fourteen French language editions had appeared by 1629 and nine Latin editions by 1641. For those in England who could read neither French nor Latin, an English language translation by Richard Knolles (otherwise known for a frequently reprinted history of Turkey) appeared in 1606,

³ Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Discourse on Universal History* (1681), trans. Elborg Forster, ed. Orest Ranum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 119 [II.1].

⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, bilingual ed., trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1932), 5 [I.1.4], 7 [I.1.7], and 9 [I.1.8].

⁵ Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis* (1324), ed. and trans. Alan Gewirth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 8 [I.3.3].

⁶ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 1:27 [I.1] and 1:39 [I.2].

reminding readers yet again that the family was “the true seminarie and beginning of euery Commonwealthe.”⁷

Sir Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum* (1583) was an equally popular work, reprinted ten times in English and four times in Latin by 1641 in addition to partial translations into Dutch (1673) and German (1688).⁸ None of his readers would have had difficulty recognizing the Aristotelian underpinnings of Smith’s version of the family as the “natural beginning and source ... of all civill societies”:

this house thus encreasing and multiplying by generation, so that it cannot wel be comprehended in one habitation ... the father and mother send them out in couples... So by this propagation ... of many houses was made a street or village... And when many cities, borowghes and villages were by common and mutuall consent for their conservation ruled by that one and first father of them all, it was called a nation or kingdomes.⁹

Early modern theories of the origins of society sought to harmonize their organic and contractual elements. The hierarchically functionalist body politic made the needs of the one subservient to those of the many, while the egalitarian associationalism of the contract put the whole at the service of the one. The family occupied a middle ground. In his *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas Aquinas relied on Aristotle to clarify it:

As one man is part of the household, so a household is a part of the state; and the state is a perfect community, according to *Politics* I.i. And therefore, as the good of one man is not the last end, but is ordained to the common good, so, too, the good of one household is ordained to the good of a single state, which is a perfect community.¹⁰

This middle ground allowed the family to act as the “seminary” of civil society in a social as well as an historical sense. In his *Domesticall Duties* (1622), the Puritan minister William Gouge called the family “a schoole wherein the first principles and grounds of gouernment and subiection are learned: whereby men are fitted to greater matters in Church or commonwealth.”¹¹ Often, the family substituted for

⁷ Richard Knolles, translator, *The Six Bookes of a Common-weale. Written by I. Bodin a famous Lawyer...* (London, 1606), 8.

⁸ Smith, *Republica*, 144–147 [editor’s notes].

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23–24 [I.12].

¹⁰ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, 8 [*Summa Theologica* I–II, Q90, A3].

¹¹ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (London, 1622), 18. For a discussion of the centrality of the family to the maintenance of the social order, see Susan Dwyer

the individual in discussions of the one and the many. During the sixteenth-century French religious wars, the Holy League found the family an excellent substitute for the individual in explaining the difference between a *politique* and true citizen. The *politique* was an individual who planned “for the profit and pleasure of his city, so that some of that profit will redound to his own household,” while a true citizen was “united with other citizens for the preservation of the public good,” understanding that it was “not possible to maintain” that public good without acknowledging its dependence on its creator, “the sovereign Lord.”¹² Bodin would hardly have agreed with the League’s definition of a *politique*, but he accepted the basic analogy that as the “*droit gouvernement*” of the household was the true “*modelle*” for the “*gouvernement de la Republique*,” it followed that as the family prospered only so long at its “*membres*” did their duty to it, so the “*Republique*” prospered only so long as every “*famille*” was “*bien gouvernees*.”¹³

The family could create this harmony between organic and contractual social models because it contained elements of both models within itself. It was created by the marriage contract but maintained through organic reproduction. It was simultaneously an aggregation of individuals and a social organism. Just as importantly, it introduced the idea of reciprocal obligation and welded it to the functional hierarchy of the organic model. By putting as much stress on what the greater did for the lesser as the reverse, it reminded those on the low end of the social scale of how much they, too, benefitted from society. And it held lesser and greater in balance through the medium of profit.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a great age of “how to” books. Manuals on almost every aspect of life had been ground out in a narrow but steady stream throughout the middle ages, but the printing press revitalized these genres as it did every other. Sometimes it must have seemed as if everyone who could hold a pen was offering advice on how to do something or other. How to fulfil one’s role in a family was no exception.¹⁴ But these family manuals were, in many

Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 38.

¹² *Le Karesme et moeurs du politique* (1589), 6, in Charlotte C. Wells, “The Language of Citizenship in the French Religious Wars,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30 #2 (Summer 1999), 452.

¹³ Bodin, *Six Livres*, I:40 [I.2].

¹⁴ Compare Amussen, *Ordered Society*, 33, on the crises of the sixteenth century as creating the outpouring of family manuals in the early seventeenth. While I think

respects, retreads (with Christian overlays) of two classical treatises—the *Oeconomicus* of Xenophon and the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*—so they cannot be understood without their classical foundations which were, in fact, closely related and profit saturated.

Xenophon set his *Oeconomicus* as a Socratic dialogue. He began with Socrates trying to draw from Critobulus a coherent definition of “estate management (οἰκονομία),” that hinged on the connection between wealth/property (χρήματα) and what was truly profitable (ὠφέλιμα). The conclusion was that true wealth/property (χρήματα) was whatever was “beneficial (ὠφέλιμα) to its owner.”¹⁵ Thus if land was “not wealth” to an owner who cultivated it at a loss,¹⁶ then οἰκονομία was the skill of creating wealth through the profitable cultivation of both the farm and the family living on it. The work known in early modern Europe as Aristotle’s *Oeconomica* consists of three books, the third of which now exists only in Latin translations. As its title proclaims, it is also, in the main, a guide to *household management*, and the material in books one and three was closely modelled on Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*. The examples that fill book two do not illustrate how a father provided for his family, however, but how various heads of state provided for their treasuries. At which point in time the three books came together and came to be associated with Aristotle cannot entirely be retraced. But the association of book two with the others is not as disjunctive as it seems. The very first paragraph of the very first chapter of Book One set up housecraft (οἰκονομική) and statecraft (πολιτική) as analogous arts, with “differences corresponding to the those between the two kinds of community over which they severally preside.”¹⁷

The two works had varying histories. Well known in classical antiquity and loosely translated into Latin by Cicero, Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* seems to have disappeared from view sometime between the lifetimes of St. Jerome (d.419/420) and St. Isidore of Seville (d. 636).¹⁸ That left the field open to the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, which

Amussen is correct in this as far as she goes, she does not cover the sixteenth-century tradition itself nor its earlier sources.

¹⁵ Xenophon, *Xenophon Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary*, bilingual ed., trans. Sarah B. Pomeroy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 106–107 [I].

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 106–107 [I].

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 327 [I.1.1], in *The Oeconomica and the Magna Moralia*, bilingual ed., trans. G. Cyril Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1935).

¹⁸ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 70 and 74.

was available in a number of Latin translations, such as those of books one and three by William of Moerbeke, Archbishop of Thebes, in 1267, or by Guillaume Durand, Bishop of Mende, in 1295. With such august translators lending their imprimatur, the *Oeconomica* received virtually canonical status, so it was no surprise that when Oresme decided to translate the major works of Aristotle from Latin into French (which he did between 1360 and 1377), he included the *Oeconomica*.

When Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* resurfaced as part of the general recovery of Greek originals during the Renaissance, it found itself competing for attention with its own spin-off. In Italy, the pseudo-Aristotelian work remained much more popular, especially in Leonardo Bruni's 1420 translation. A Latin translation of Xenophon's work did not appear in Italy until nearly a century later. In England, on the other hand, Xenophon's slightly less hierarchical view of marriage seems to have been one of the reasons why he became the more popular choice. And, because of Catharine of Aragon's interest in educating women, an interest she passed on as patron to a circle of humanist scholars, Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* was translated from the Greek directly into English by Gentian Hervet and published in 1532 (as *Xenophon's Treatise of Householde*). Transcribed into a Christian setting (with slaves suitably transformed into servants), it was republished in 1537, 1544, 1550, 1557, and 1573, and formed the model for many new household how-to books.¹⁹

There are some important differences between the *Oeconomicus* and the *Oeconomica*. Xenophon did not concern himself with how kings enriched their estates, pseudo-Aristotle did not lavish chapter after chapter on the specifics of farming, and Xenophon had a higher opinion of a woman's intellectual and moral capabilities than did pseudo-Aristotle. Both works, however, shared a common understanding that profitability resided in the proper use of things. Xenophon's idea of profitable cultivation was reiterated in the pseudo-Aristotelian text, which maintained that an owner "must know how" to both "use" and "improve his property" for those were "the ends for which the powers of acquisition and preservation" were "sought."²⁰ In William of Moerbeke's Latin translation, *improve* became *chresticum*, while Oresme's gloss was even more explicit: that above all that proper use [*pour user en deue-*

¹⁹ On the varying receptions and reasons for the differing popularity of the two works, see *ibid.*, 74–87.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 338–339 [1.6.1].

ment] consisted in using to advantage [*Ce est a dire que l'en sache user des choses deurement*].²¹ In English, “improve” had been synonymous with increasing the profit made on land or money since the late thirteenth century, just about the time William of Moerbeke and Guillaume Durand were making their Latin translations of the *Oeconomica*.²² And both Xenophon and pseudo-Aristotle extended this centrality of *profit* to every aspect of family relationships and household management, a view shared by all ranks within early modern society. Xenophon had concluded that wealth/property (χρήματα) was “whatever is beneficial (ὠφέλημα) to its owner.”²³ In his 1532 translation and recasting, Gentian Hervet explained that “those thynges be called goodes, that a man getteth any profite by.”²⁴ When William Perkins penned his *Christian Oeconomy* in the 1590’s, he must have kept his Xenophon and his Aristotle close to hand, deciding that after service to God, the most important duty of all family members was to “employ themselves in some honest and profitable businesse, to maintaine the temporall estate and life of the whole.”²⁵ The connection between families and profit was closely intertwined with the development of double-entry bookkeeping. In Luca Pacioli’s 1494 pioneering double-entry bookkeeping textbook, household expenses were deliberately not segregated from business expenses because the profit aimed at was the increase in the stock of the household estate.²⁶ This commingling remained a prominent feature of English accounting, which generally lagged behind the Italian, throughout the Price Revolution.²⁷ In Italy, even the most sophisticated

²¹ Albert Douglas Menut, “Maistre Nicole Oresme: le Livre de Yconomique D’Aristote: Critical Edition of the French Text from the Avranches Manuscript with Original Latin Version, Introduction, and English Translation,” in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., 47 #5 (December 1957), 811.

²² On the relationship between improvement and profit, see *O.E.D.*, 5:117, and the discussion in Leslie and Raylor, *Culture and Cultivation*, 36–37.

²³ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 106–107 [I].

²⁴ Gentian Hervet, translator, *Xenophon’s Treatise of Householde* (London, 1550), 3.

²⁵ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 2, 8–9.

²⁶ Luca Pacioli, *Paciolo on Accounting*, trans. R. Gene Brown and Kenneth S. Johnston, intro. Alvin R. Jennings (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 46 [XII] and 72–72 [XXII] on the commingling of household and business goods in the initial inventory of Capital and the commingling of household and business expenses in the expense accounts. For an example of such commingling in practice, see Frederic C. Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice, 1418–1499* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1944), 176.

²⁷ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998), 61–62. For a discussion of the “sloppy” accounting practices (erratic balance taking, confusion of expenses and assets, etc.) as they persisted well into the seventeenth century, see Richard Grassby,

merchants, who kept separate ledgers for their various business ventures would summarize them into a personal account book (“*sustanzia mia*”) in combination with familial expenses to track their family’s net worth.²⁸

The closeness of this connection between families and profit was even more strongly acknowledged by those who sought, as had Plato for his *Republic*’s guardians, to eliminate one by eliminating the other. When Tommaso Campanella (1568–1602) constructed his *City of the Sun* (1623), he instituted “community” of wives, goods, “arts, honors, and pleasure,” because “self-love” was born of private property, making people “publicly rapacious” or privately “avaricious” in order to “increase the wealth or dignity” of their “offspring,” so if “*l’amor proprio*” were eliminated through the elimination of private property, “only concern for the community” would remain.²⁹

The early modern household encompassed apprentices, servants, and assorted dependents as well as the members of the biological family. As Samuel Pepys noted in his diary on December 31, 1663, while taking his annual trial balance of his estate, his family included “besides my wife and I, Jane Gentleman, Besse, our excellent, good-natured cook-mayde, and Susan, a little girl.”³⁰

In this manner early modern households resembled those of ancient Greek city-states, increasing the appeal of the Greek household manuals. In both households, there were three key relationships: those of (1)

The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 186–189; Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth in Renaissance Florence: A Study of Four Families* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 27–28 (which also mentions Spanish methods); and D.C. Coleman, *Sir John Banks, Baronet and Businessman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 202–204. However, it was possible to fairly sophisticated English accounting texts: *The Pathwaye to Perfectnes* (London, 1569) by James Peele gets into inventory valuation issues as well as double-entry methods, while *The Perfect Method of Merchants Accounts* (London, 1697) by John Collins, contains some early elements of cost accounting; for which see Basil S. Yarney, *The Historical Development of Accounting: a Selection of Papers* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 157 [Parker] and 225 [Edwards].

²⁸ Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth*, 19–22.

²⁹ Tommaso Campanella, *La Città del Sole: Dialogo Poetica* (1623), bilingual ed., trans. Daniel John Donno (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 38–39.

³⁰ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1918), III:370. See Will Coster, *Family and Kinship in England, 1450–1800* (Edinburgh: Longman, 2001), 6, on the persistence of the label “family” for such mixed households well into the eighteenth century.

husband and wife, (2) parent and child, and (3) master and servant. All three were cemented by a *profit* created via a network of reciprocal obligations. Each of the six basic roles in the family—husband, wife, parent, child, master, servant—carried with it a unique obligation based on the different abilities of the role players, but each complemented the obligations of the others, creating a whole that exceeded the sum of its parts because of the profit growing out of reciprocity. This chapter is devoted to the relationships that made up the biological family while the following looks at the extension of the parent-child relationship to that of masters and servants.

(1). *Husband and Wife*

For both Xenophon and pseudo-Aristotle, the bond between husband and wife was the most important of the three relationships, because it was the foundation upon which all the others rested. Families were created by marriage, and while procreation was the most basic reason for the marriage, mutual profit was the key to its existence. As Xenophon explained:

the gods seem to have shown much discernment in yoking together female and male, as we call them, so that the couple might constitute a partnership that is most beneficial (ὠφελιμώτατον) to each of them.³¹

In the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, profit also took precedence over procreation. For, unlike the mating of animals (whose sole purpose was procreation), human marriage existed to promote a “happy existence.” It was characterized by “mutual help, goodwill, and co-operation (βοήθεια, εὐνοια, συνεργία).”³² In his gloss, Oresme echoed his sources in deciding that there were six reasons why the relationship of husband to wife took precedence over all other relationships within the household: marriage was “*naturelle, raisonnable, amiable, profitable, divine et convenable*.”³³ His only innovation was the addition of the qualifier that this relationship could only create a help or profit (*ces aides ou profits*) when it had been sanctified by Christian wedlock.³⁴

³¹ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 140–141 [VII].

³² Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 330–331 [I.3.2–3].

³³ Menuit, “Oresme,” 811.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 813.

As Xenophon explained, both spouses were equally bound to increase the prosperity of the whole (“a wife who is a good partner in the estate carries just as much weight as her husband in attaining prosperity”), but through discrete and complementary tasks as “property” generally came “into the house through the exertions of the husband” but was “mostly dispensed through the housekeeping of the wife.”³⁵ This division of labor occurred because human needs for food, clothing, and shelter imposed different types of tasks—“outdoor jobs” such as “plowing, sowing, planting, and herding,” and “indoor” jobs such as making “bread from grain” and “clothing out of wool”—upon the pair, suited to the different qualities of the two sexes: wives were indoor workers because their “natural timidity” was an advantage in the job of guarding wealth, while husbands were outdoor worker because their bodies were “more capable of enduring cold and heat and travelling.”³⁶ Both partners added value to the estate, the husband by reaping product from the land and the wife by transforming that product’s utility. The keys to the relationship were complementarity and reciprocity. One was “capable where the other” was “deficient,” so only if each worked selflessly for the benefit of both could profit accrue to the household.³⁷ This was echoed in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, where the man’s greater strength made him suitable to provisioning the household while the woman’s greater patience made her suitable to preserving those provisions, but each vied “with the other in the effort to contribute most to the common welfare.”³⁸ And again, the profitability of this complementary reciprocity was stressed by Oresme (“*lesquelles leur sont profitables et convenables pour converser ensemble*”).³⁹ William Perkins reinforced the Christianization of the classical models by using the word “communion” to describe the reciprocity of marital duty, calling the “communion of man & wife” that “dutie, whereby they do mutually and willingly communicate, both their persons, & goods each to other; for their mutuall help, necessitie and comfort.”⁴⁰ It was a responsibility accepted in practice as well as in preachment. In 1614, William Cooke was care-

³⁵ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 120–121 [III].

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 142–143 [VII].

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 144–145 [VII].

³⁸ Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 332–333 [I.3.3] and 418–419 [III.4].

³⁹ Menut, “Oresme,” 815.

⁴⁰ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 110–111.

ful in his will to insist that his property be used “for the benefyte, profyte, and comoditie” of his widow.⁴¹

This basic sexual division of labor was reproduced virtually without change in early modern tracts whether written by men or women. When Christine de Pizan penned her *Treasury of the City of Ladies* early in the fifteenth century, she advised the wives of good burghers to “carefully, diligently, wisely, and profitably distribute the property” their husbands acquired, as it was “the man’s role to acquire and bring in provisions and his wife’s role to organize and disperse them suitably, discreetly, and without parsimony.”⁴² In Leon Battista Alberti’s *I Libri Della Famiglia* (1445), women sought shelter in order to facilitate the nurture of children while the “more energetic and industrious” nature of men sent them “out to find things” for the household of which both were to seek “the well-being and honor.”⁴³ In the *Brief and pleasant discourse of duties in mariage* (1568) by Elizabeth’s long-serving master of the revels, Edmund Tilney, the “office of the husbände” was “to go abroad in matters of profite,” while the wife’s was to stay “at home,” “governe well the houshold,” and preserve the “necessaries” her husband procured.⁴⁴ In Sir Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum*, the husband was to “travaile abroad” while the wife should “tarrie at home to distribute that which cometh of the husbändes labor for the nurtriture of the children and family of them both.”⁴⁵ When the Puritan ministers John Dod and Robert Cleaver published their *Godlie Forme of Householde Government* in 1612, they added honor to the mix, but changed little else:

The dutie of the Husband is to get goods: and of the Wife to gather them together, and saue them. The dutie of the Husband is to travell abroad, to seeke [a] living: and the Wives dutie is to keepe the house... It is to be noted, and noted againe, that as the provision on [the] houshold dependeth onely on the Husband: even so the honour of all dependeth onely on the woman.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Samuel Tymms, ed., *Wills and Inventories from the Registers of the Commissary of Bury St. Edmunds and the Archdeacon of Sudbury*, Camden Society, o.s., 49 (1850), 165.

⁴² Christine de Pizan, *A Medieval Woman’s Mirror of Honor: the Treasury of the City of Ladies*, trans. Charity Cannon Willard, ed. Madeleine Pelner Cosman (Tenafly, NJ: Bard Hall Press; New York: Persea Books, Inc., 1989), 186–187 [III.1].

⁴³ *The Family in Renaissance Florence, a translation by Renée Neu Watkins of I Libri Della Famiglia by Leon Battista Alberti* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1969), 38 [I] and 111 [II].

⁴⁴ Edmund Tilney, *A brief and pleasant discourse of duties in mariage, called the Flower of Friendship* (London, 1568), cv-reverse.

⁴⁵ Smith, *Republica*, 22 [I.11].

⁴⁶ John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government: For the*

When Sir John Oglander toted up his accounts in the 1640s, he put his prosperity down to “God’s great blessing and a careful industrious wife who was no spender, nor ever wore a silk gown but for her credit when she went abroad in company,” a wife who was up before him “every day, and oversaw all the outhouses,” that “would not trust her maid with directions,” but “wet” her own “shoe” to see to it herself.⁴⁷

In early modern thinking reciprocity was not a result of equality, but of inequality. Xenophon had assigned “equal powers of memory and concern” and equal ability “to practise self-control” to the two sexes.⁴⁸ Aristotle, like most classical writers, however, thought otherwise. For him, the rule of men over their male children was temporary (owing to the child’s initial incapacity), but the rule of male over female was permanent.⁴⁹ Interpreting marital duties through the creation story in *Genesis*, most writers in early modern Europe found Aristotle’s view more sympathetic to their own. Even as radical a thinker as Paracelsus concluded that as the world “was the first creature, man the second, and woman the third,” the cosmos was “the greatest world, the world of man the next greatest, and that of woman the smallest and least.”⁵⁰ In his *Obedience of a Christen Man* (1528), the Protestant reformer William Tyndale exhorted husbands to

love your wives as Christ loved the congregation, and gave himself for it, to sanctify it and cleanse it. Men ought to love their wives as their own bodies... In many things God hath made the men stronger than the women; not to rage upon them, and to be tyrants unto them, but to help them, but to the bear their weakness.⁵¹

Conversely, he exhorted women to “submit” themselves to their husbands “as to the Lord,” for the husband was “the wife’s head” as Christ was “the head of the congregation.”⁵² For John Knox, arch-enemy of the Catholic Mary Tudor and Mary Queen of Scots, a female

Ordering of Private Families, According to the Direction of Gods Word (1612), 167–168, quoted in Alexandra Shepard, “Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England c. 1580–1640,” *Past and Present* 167 (May 2000), 75.

⁴⁷ Ralph Houlbrooke, ed., *English Family Life, 1576–1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 65.

⁴⁸ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 142–143 [VII].

⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 59 [I.5.2].

⁵⁰ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, 36.

⁵¹ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 200.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 171.

monarch was simultaneously a “subversion of good order, of all equity and justice” and “expressly against God and the profit of the commonwealth.”⁵³

Of course, practice varied from textbook models. After all, when the shop was part of the household, the wife became a partner in her husband’s business, and often went into business for herself. In a study of cases in the Cambridge courts between 1580 and 1640, Alexandra Shepard found that although more than “90 per cent of all litigants in debt cases ... for which depositions survive were men,” many “were only nominally brought in by men, involving transactions apparently conducted independently by their wives.”⁵⁴ Shepard cited, for example, the 1597 testimony of John Shawe concerning his wife Agnes, who “for manie yeares past” had been “a greatt dealler and bargayner” of “divers things & specialye fische,” reaping considerable “profit and Commoditie by the same.”⁵⁵ Christopher Hill cited a Russian visitor to London in 1645–1646 who thought English women dominated their husbands and their households.⁵⁶ Nor was the economic activity of women limited to the middling sort. Barbara J. Harris has opened up a window on the careers of *English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550*, careers “that had as much political and economic as domestic importance.”⁵⁷ They managed estates in conjunction with stewards in the absence of their spouses often away at court, arranged their daughters’ marriages and futures, advised in cases at law, and served in royal households on their own account.⁵⁸ There were several reasons for the persistent diversion between theory and practice as Amy Louise Erickson pointed out in *Women and Property in Early Modern England*. Some were legal: while it was true that in Common Law, the doctrine of *coverture* considered married women as part and parcel of their husband, essentially depriving them of their economic rights, Common Law was only one strand in the legal fabric of early modern England; women had much more economic independence in the equity and ecclesiasti-

⁵³ Knox, *First Blast*, in *Political Writings*, 42 and 48.

⁵⁴ Shepard, “Manhood,” 90.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵⁶ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1991), 309.

⁵⁷ Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, passim, but note especially 28, 64–70, and 210–240.

cal courts as well as under much manorial and borough law.⁵⁹ Others were demographic: with only “60 per cent of marriages” producing a son many of whom were “unlikely to be of age” at their fathers’ deaths, widows controlled considerable property, as did the daughters who inherited jointly when there was neither son nor entail.⁶⁰ Furthermore, unlike the case in Britain today, where more than half the women over the age of sixteen are married, only about “one third of all adult women were married at any given time” in sixteenth-century England, and thus two-thirds were not under the constraints of *coverture*.⁶¹ This is not to say that women enjoyed anything like equal economic opportunity; certainly only the smallest fraction show up in the records of those apprenticed to or practicing trades in London in the period.⁶²

Whether or not their wives deviated from the guidebook model, husbands who failed to live up to their marital obligations came in for harsh censure. As Shepard noted, one such unsatisfactory husband in a 1591 case was discredited as a witness because he did not “provide for himselfe or his wife and familie,” but “carelessly and negligentlye neglectinge his function and vocation doth unthriftelye haunt alehouses ... spendinge unthriftely such commoditye as he getteth.”⁶³ Conditions in England were hardly unique. Though it was more common for women engaged in such trades as the fishing industry in England or France to be relegated to the retail side of the business they were still active, while in both the Netherlands and Portugal women were also active in the wholesale end, and Portuguese women could not only be creditors in their own right (and be held responsible for their own debts) but a wife’s approval was needed for her husband to use her half of the family property as security for his debts, while widows in France could successfully sue for property rights.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), 5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5. According to Ben-Amos, 17 percent of children age ten and 27 percent of those age fifteen being apprenticed in London were already fatherless. For which, see Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 48.

⁶¹ Erickson, *Women*, 100.

⁶² Rappaport, *Worlds*, 36–39.

⁶³ Shepard, “Manhood,” 83.

⁶⁴ Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, “Fishmongers and Shipowners: Women in Maritime Communities of Early Modern Portugal,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31 #1 (Spring, 2000), 8–14, and Wells, “Language,” 443.

This idea of mutual profit being the *causa cousins* of marriage played out in the early modern period in several ways. In the first place, the marriage itself should profit the spouses. When Sir John Fastolf wrote to his cousin in 1449 about the marriage of Stephen Scrope, one of his wards, Sir John noted that he consented to the match because it would be to his ward's "worshippe and profyt" as well as to Stephen's liking.⁶⁵ In 1454, Agnes Paston urged her son John to wrap up negotiations for his sister's marriage with the reminder that "sche seyth to me that sche trystyt that ye wyll do so, that it xall be bothe for hyr worchup and profyt."⁶⁶

Secondly, the marriage was expected to profit the families of the spouses. As Katharine W. Swett explained in discussing the case of a marriage between the children of Sir William Gerard, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and Morus Wynn in 1577, Gerard wrote to Wynn,

that he appreciated Wynn making the match out of 'very friendship without respect of gain,' by which Gerard meant affection and goodwill, but went on to add that he understood Wynn now 'expected friendship' from him, meaning practical assistance using Gerard's Court connections.⁶⁷

In fact, to many, the profit to the families of the newlyweds was the primary point of the union. In 1634, Mathieu Molé, the *procurer général* of the Paris Parlement, rendered his verdict on the clandestine marriage of Marguerite de Lorraine to Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII, with the opinion that "*les mariages*" were not made for "*la considération de la personne qui contracte*" the union, but for "*l'honneur et l'avantage des familles*" because each marriage created heirs and "*alliés*" for those families that they could hardly be expected to receive without their consent.⁶⁸

Thirdly, the marriage (and its issue) should profit the greater community dependent upon the family. When Elizabeth I tried to dissuade Parliament from playing marriage broker, as she did here in 1559, she swore to marry only "such an husband as shall be no less careful for the common good" than she was or find a "successor which may be

⁶⁵ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 2:113–114 [#96].

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:301 [#237].

⁶⁷ Katharine W. Swett, "The Account Between Us': Honor, Reciprocity and Companionship in Make Friendship in the Later Seventeenth Century," *Albion*, 31 #1 (Spring 1999), 1.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Wendy Gibson, *Women in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 43.

more profitable for the commonwealth than him which may proceed from me, sithence the posterity of good princes doth oftentimes degenerate.”⁶⁹

Fourthly, because of the centrality of the family to the maintenance of civil order, because of the general fear of anything or anyone not tied down to a specific point in the hierarchical order of the cosmos, and because of the general suspicion of the sexual urges and attraction of women, women who were neither nuns nor wives were highly suspect. For women living within Protestant states the option to enter a nunnery was usually removed, narrowing their choices to marriage or censure. Maria Heinsius reports the case of Margaretha Blarer, sister of Ambrosius Blarer, a prominent Protestant leader in Constance, who was accused by Martin Bucer of being “masterless” for her decision to remain unwed, with Bucer evidently not mollified by her response that “those who have Christ for a master are not masterless.”⁷⁰ Men were also under considerable pressure to wed, and, in most Protestant circles, that pressure extended to ministers. While celibacy in general was likened to “an insect in the heart of an apple” by Jeremy Taylor, the Anglican Bishop of Down and Connor, marriage was likened to the “useful bee” that “builds a house, gathers sweetness from every flower, labours, forms societies, sends out colonies, feeds the world with delicacies, obeys the sovereign” and “keeps order” among its many virtues.⁷¹ A *Defence of Priestes Mariages* published in London around 1567 argued that religion was never “more in honour” than “when priestes were married.”⁷² The continual stream of pro-marriage propaganda in Protestant Europe may have been necessitated by backlash arising from the Protestant reconstruction of the roles of the sacraments and the minister. Protestant reformers found themselves attacking clerical celibacy while claiming that marriage was not a sacrament; undermining marriage’s ecclesiastical foundations called forth a need to create a new, and civil, foundation for society’s primary bond (and primary vehicle for the transfer of property). So it was not surprising to find

⁶⁹ *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 59.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Hsia, *German People*, 151. See also Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, 88–98, on the pressure to marry and the perpetual economic insecurity of the single woman.

⁷¹ Jeremy Taylor, *The Marriage Ring; or, the Mysteriousness and Duties of Marriage*, quoted in Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 389.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 389.

Agrippa's *Commendation of Matrimony* (1540) urging marriage upon those who would be "natural and loving" to their country, their family, and "to the commonwealth."⁷³

And fifthly, Protestants may have been no different from Catholics in envisioning marriage as ideally an insoluble bond, but because the profit of the soul was more important than the profit of the body, Protestants found themselves forced to consider the question of divorce in the cases of spouses adhering to opposing faiths.⁷⁴ But Martin Bucer was highly unusual in accepting "mutuall consent" as grounds for the ending of a marriage; divorce remained the exception to the rule in Protestant Europe.⁷⁵ Even women converting to Anabaptism were expected to remarry within the faith as quickly as they had divorced their unbelieving spouses.⁷⁶

The idea of companionate marriage was making considerable headway against the older idea of marriage as a melding of estates during the sixteenth century, making the profit expected less pecuniary in nature.⁷⁷ In an irony at which he could not have guessed in 1513, Sir Thomas More, in his *History of King Richard III*, came down on the companionate side of the debate. The setting was a conversation between Edward IV and his mother, the Duchess of York, about his proposed marriage to Elizabeth Woodville. The purpose of the piece was to disprove the claims of illegitimacy Richard III would make against Edward's sons by Elizabeth, but we are concerned here with the reasons the Duchess put forward for a foreign match and Edward's counter arguments. The Duchess, according to More, "opposed the

⁷³ Eric Josef Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 113. For the gradual desacralization of marriage during the English Reformation, see *ibid.*, 39–45; for continental parallels, see *ibid.*, 3–5.

⁷⁴ See, for instance, the examples from Thomas Edwards's *Gangraena* (1646), a catalogue of heresies compiled by the Puritan divine, cited by Hill, *World*, 311.

⁷⁵ Hsia, *German People*, 182.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁷⁷ For a well-argued rejection of the view that companionate marriage was essentially an eighteenth-century aristocratic invention, see Jacqueline Sarsby, *Romantic Love and Society* (Harmondsworth, GB: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983), 34–53. But, as Harris noted (*English Aristocratic Women*, 73–74), these marriages were neither companionate in the modern sense of prolonged intimacy (spouses often living apart for months or years at a time) nor in the modern sense of romance, the "love" being urged between spouses being more a matter of developing "a combination of affection, fidelity, trust, and kindness." See also Ralph Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450–1700* (London: Longman, 1984), 15, on the considerable evidence of marital affection overlooked by earlier historians.

marriage” on the grounds that “that it was his honour, profit, and surety” to marry “out of his realm” in order to “increase ... his possessions,” claiming it was as foolish for a king to marry a subject as for “a rich man” to “marry his maid only for a little wanton dotage upon her person,” because “no possessions or other advantages” accrued to the groom thereunto.⁷⁸ Edward protested that “marriage, being a spiritual thing, ought rather to be made for the respect of God—where His grace inclines the parties to love together, as he trusted it was in his—than for the regard of any temporal advantage,” but offered that, “even worldly considered,” marriage to Elizabeth Woodville “was not unprofitable,” because the friendship of no nation was as necessary as the “friendship of his own,” and marriage with a native would gain him great favor among the people, whereas foreign possessions were “often the occasion of more trouble than profit.”⁷⁹ More’s Edward IV was clearly a king with one foot in each value system. Just over half a century before More wrote his history, Alberti had deemed this “conjugal friendship,” this “love of husband and wife,” the “greatest of all” affections, creator of the fullest communication and companionship while preserving “the home,” maintaining “the family,” and governing “the whole economy.”⁸⁰ It was certainly not uncommon in family correspondence in sixteenth-century England to find husbands and wives referring to each other as “deare hart” or “lover.”⁸¹

The aims of spiritual and earthly profit, however, were more often considered complementary than not. As we have seen, William Perkins believed family members had two solemn duties, “private worship and Service of God” and employing “themselves in some honest and profitable businesse, to maintaine the temporall estate and life of the whole.”⁸² Edmund Tilney maintained that after the match was made, “next followeth, to love, and to like well: for perfitte love knitteth loving heartes, in an insoluble knot of amitie.”⁸³

The family’s mix of contractual and organic elements made it easily adaptable by social theorists who wished to preserve the hierarchical

⁷⁸ Thomas More, *History of King Richard III*, in Paul Murray Kendall, ed., *Richard III, The Great Debate: Sir Thomas More’s History of King Richard III, Horace Walpole’s Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard III* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965), 82–83.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 83–84.

⁸⁰ Alberti, *Family*, 98 [II].

⁸¹ Coster, *Family*, 14; similarly, *ibid.*, 123.

⁸² Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 2, 8–9.

⁸³ Tilney, *Brief and pleasant discourse*, biiii-obverse.

social order regardless of whether they saw the body politic as essentially contractual or organic. Early in the fourteenth century Cynus of Pistoia wrote a commentary on Justinian's *Code*, remarking that "as the husband," was "called the defender of his wife," the emperor was "the defender" of the empire, while a few decades later Luca da Penna averred that there was "contracted a moral and political marriage between the Prince and the *respublica*."⁸⁴ Given that monarchs were traditionally called the spouses of their kingdoms, it is not surprising in a climate of the elevation of companionate love in marriage and the era's propensity to model political relationships on familial ones that Judith M. Richards could find that "there was nothing ... necessarily gender-specific" about Elizabeth I's "invoking the language of love to describe the bonds" between herself and her subjects.⁸⁵ In fact, Elizabeth had been preceded in such usage by her half-sister Mary, who, before her marriage to Philip II of Spain, "had argued that" being "already married to her realm, she could hardly be expected to marry a second husband."⁸⁶ The doctrine of the monarch's "two bodies" might be seen as legitimating the seeming "bigamy" created by Mary's marriage to Philip, with the personal body marrying the man and the political body marrying the realm.

(2). *Parent and Child*

According to Xenophon, parents should consider how to "train" their children "in the best way possible," because it would be "be a blessing" to the parents to "obtain the best allies and support" in the parents' "old age."⁸⁷ In Gentian Hervet's hands this became "We shall take counsaile, hoew to brynge them uppe and instruct theym in vertue. For it shall bee for both our profyttes to have them, both to defende us,

⁸⁴ Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 213–214.

⁸⁵ Judith M. Richards, "Love and a Female Monarch: The Case of Elizabeth Tudor," *Journal of British Studies*, 38 (April 1999), 134–135 and 140.

⁸⁶ Judith M. Richards, "The English Accession of James VI: 'National' Identity, Gender and the Personal Monarchy of England," *English Historical Review*, 117 #472 (June 2002), 528. Richards goes on to point out (528–529 and 532) the difficulties caused by the switch from the courtship to the patriarchal model upon the accession of James I (despite his adoption of the "husband" metaphor) after decades of addressing a female monarch.

⁸⁷ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 140–141 [VII].

and to helpe and nouryshe us in our olde age.”⁸⁸ Similarly, according to pseudo-Aristotle, the “benefit (ὠφελείας)” parents received from having children was that “the toil” parents “undergo while they are strong and their offspring is still weak is repaid by that offspring when it in turn is grown strong and the parents by reason of age are weak.”⁸⁹ In the singular ὠφελείη could mean any kind of aid or benefit, but in the plural ὠφελείας (as here), its most common meaning was pecuniary profits or gains. In William of Moerbeke’s Latin version, ὠφελείας became *utilitatem*, which Oresme rendered *profit*:

*Car ce que les parens quant il estoient puissans ont fait our frent a leur enfans quant il estoient impotens, il reportent de ce et reçoivent de rechief le profit en leur vieillesce quant il sunt faiz impotens.*⁹⁰

Thus, while reciprocity between husband and wife was simultaneous, that between parent and child involved a time lag. Mere adulthood did not, however, dissolve the bonds between parent and child. So closely entwined were they, that, according to Aquinas, while one could speak commonly of a kind of “domestic” justice in explaining family relationships, “justice” in the proper sense, did not even apply to family matters:

It belongs to justice to render each one his right... And since what belongs to the son is his father’s, and what belongs to the slave is his master’s, so it follows that, properly speaking there is not justice of father to son or of master to slave.⁹¹

The continuance of the parent child relationship into the child’s adulthood found its sixteenth-century resonance in the duty of children to accept their parents’ advice in choosing spouses. In his *Christian State of Marriage* (1548), Heinrich Bullinger accused those who opposed enforcing parental consent of wishing to make an illicit profit by taking “children against the wills of their parents” and winning their “property.”⁹² Upon the marriage of his youngest daughter in 1649, Sir John Oglander complained to his diary that the costly match had neither his “approbation or good liking,” but had been the result of his giving “way” to “her importunity,” mitigated by his concern for her advancing

⁸⁸ Hervet, *Xenophon*, 22.

⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 332–333 [I.3.3].

⁹⁰ Menut, “Oresme,” 813.

⁹¹ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, 118 [*Summa Theologica*, II–II, Q58, A7] and 103 [*Summa Theologica*, II–II, Q58, A4].

⁹² Hsia, *German People*, 173.

years and lameness.⁹³ Arranging marriages for their sons and daughters was but a further step in profiting their children (and the family) taken by parents, but it was one in which children's wishes played a more active part than in the past. Parental consent was sought but was certainly not legally necessary for adult children. Sixteenth-century church and town ordinances varied across the breadth of Protestant Europe: in Zurich the age of consent was 19; in Nuremberg it was 25 for males and 22 for females; a 1565 ordinance in Strasbourg set the age for both sexes at 25; and in Elizabethan England parents could not automatically annul a marriage arranged without their consent though ecclesiastical courts could still impose a fine on such clandestine marriages.⁹⁴ In an increasingly commercial society, marriage was generally delayed until the couple had the wherewithal to support an independent household. So, although men acquired full legal rights to property at age 21, the mean age at marriage in England from 1550 to 1700 was between 27.6 and 29.3 for men and between 26 and 26.8 for women.⁹⁵

Because of the social ruptures caused by the Reformation, God became even more important in some ways to early modern moralists than to medieval. But emphasis on God went hand in hand with emphasis on profit where parent-child relationships were discussed. Tyndale explained the Biblical commandment to "Honour thy father and mother" was

not to be understood in bowing the knees, and putting off the cap only, but that thou love them with all thine heart; and fear and dread them, and wait on their commandments; and seek their worship, pleasure, will and profit in all things; and give thy life for them, counting them worthy of all honour; remembering that thou art their good and possession, and that thou owest unto them thine own self, and all thou art able, yea, and more than thou art able to do... [because] Whatsoever thou doest unto them, be it good or bad, thou doest unto God.⁹⁶

Humanity was God's possession because God was its only begetter; children were their parents possessions because those parents were their only begetters.

⁹³ Houlbrooke, *English Family Life*, 18.

⁹⁴ Carlson, *Marriage*, 5–6, 97, 123.

⁹⁵ Coster, *Family*, 52, and Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 32. But note Carlson (*Marriage*, 106) gives the median ages as 24–30 for men and 22–27 for women for the second half of the sixteenth century.

⁹⁶ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 168.

Children acknowledged their duty even in apologizing for their failure to fulfill it. As John Paston, junior, excused himself to his father in 1459, he explained that he was “not of power to do any thyng in thys contre for worschyp or profyht of yow.”⁹⁷ But pity the child who did not reciprocate in kind. In 1465, John Paston, senior, indicated his exasperation with the behavior of John junior to his wife with this tirade:

Every pore man that hath browt up his chylder to the age of xii. yer waytyth than to be holp and profited be hes chylder, and every gentilman that hath discrecion waytith that his ken and servantis that levith be hym and at his coste shuld help hym forthward. As for yowr sone, ye knowe well he never stode yow ne me in profite, ese or help.⁹⁸

In parallel fashion, an exasperated Margaret Paston ordered her son home at once or she would “purvey” for herself “so that I trust shall be more ease and vayne for me and non ease nor profite to yow in tyme to come.”⁹⁹ Much wiser the child who greased a begging letter with a delicate reminder of a parent’s obligation to profit a child. When Christopher Trevelyan wrote from Oxford in 1605, requesting prompt delivery of his allowance from his father, he said he not only hoped soon to put him “to no more charges,” but also explained that being “somewhat behind for last quarter,” the cash would “do my tutor some pleasure and myself no small profite,” hinting at other legitimate obligations while finessing the question of how he had gotten behind in the first place.¹⁰⁰

Relationships between siblings and cousins mirrored those between parents and children. Seniors took care of the interests of their juniors. Juniors, in turn, honored their seniors as they would their parents, by working to their profit. In 1459, William Paston was busy trying to secure his elder brother John’s claim to manors willed him by Sir John Fastolf. After a meeting with the Lord Chancellor, William could report back to John that he had found the Chancellor “well disposed in all thyng, and ze schall fynd him ryth profytabyll to zow.”¹⁰¹ In 1662, Samuel Pepys was busy with a project “to get some money” and “profit” for his brother Tom so the fellow could afford to marry.¹⁰² In a

⁹⁷ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 3:137 [#375].

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:157 [#591].

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5:79 [#752].

¹⁰⁰ Walter Calverley Trevelyan and Charles Edward Trevelyan, eds., *Trevelyan Papers, Part III*, Camden Society, o.s., 105 (1872), 86.

¹⁰¹ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 3:191 [#391].

¹⁰² Pepys, *Diary*, 2:209 [April 21, 1662].

letter to her husband in 1679, Lady Conway explained that the greater than expected bulk of a parcel of books going her brother was due to her having “respect to nothing, but his profit and advantage.”¹⁰³

The family’s mediating role in early modern social theory meant that the obligations of *all* its members (not just husbands and wives) could be extended in several directions. Monks were pseudo-siblings. According to *The Rule of St. Benedict*, the brothers were admonished to “Let no one follow what he thinks most profitable to himself, but rather what is best for another.”¹⁰⁴ Marsilius of Padua wrote that to achieve the “fruits of peace ... individual brethren, and in even great degree groups and communities” were “obliged to help one another.”¹⁰⁵ Citizens were children of their countries. Back in 793, Alcuin had asked King Ethelred of Northumbria, “To what does a man owe fidelity, if not to his fatherland? To whom does he owe prosperity, if not to its citizens?”¹⁰⁶ This was an indirect reference to Cicero’s oft-cited rhetorical question (*De Officiis* I.57): “What good citizen would hesitate to welcome death if it were profitable for the *patria*?”¹⁰⁷ Addressing the Council of Genoa back in 1445 about the government of Corsica, the doge and his officials drew on this longstanding tradition of the profitability of parental affection to explain that

putting all private interest aside, we should think of giving such a government to those people that they will understand that this commune holds them dear... Once they understand this, the government will be secure and strong, and the island would no longer be an expense to the community but a source of great profit.¹⁰⁸

Colonies stood in respect to their founding nations as children to their parents, as Giovanni Botero explained in his *Greatness of Cities*. For Botero, “colonies with their mother out of which they issued make, as it were, but one body,” so the “love of our original country, which every man affecteth,” moved colonists to work for the prosperity of both colony and motherland.¹⁰⁹ Mercantilism, at least in so far as it pertained to the relationship between the economies of the colony and

¹⁰³ Nicolson, *Conway Letters*, 448.

¹⁰⁴ Brentano, *Middle Ages*, 93.

¹⁰⁵ Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, 5 [I.1.4].

¹⁰⁶ Brentano, *Middle Ages*, 272.

¹⁰⁷ Kantorowicz, *King’s Two Bodies*, 242.

¹⁰⁸ Christine Shaw, “Counsel and Consent in Fifteenth-Century Genoa,” *The English Historical Review*, 116 #468 (September 2001), 846.

¹⁰⁹ Botero, *Greatness of Cities*, 246–247 [II.2].

the motherland might be said to have its origins in this extension of the familial analogy. A plan for the government of Ireland drawn up in 1550 sought to ensure that the “landes, rentes, woodes, escheates, for-faytes, and other profitts coming therod” should, along with the “rentes and profitts yearly cominge and growing thereof” be “employed to the best purpose and moste proffitt” of the crown of England.¹¹⁰

God being the Father of us all, we were expected to work toward his profit rather than our own, although, in honoring our parent in this manner, we could expect true profit to ourselves in return. As Pope Gregory VII had explained back in 1073 in a letter to Beatrice and Matilda of Tuscany,

neither you nor we, nor anyone who desires to share in the adoption of the children of God, should consider our own advantage, that is, what may profit or injure us, but rather should diligently study and strive to hold fast the righteousness of God, which never fails to bring us happiness. For it is written: ‘Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness’ sake.’¹¹¹

The very phrase “worship and profit” found in the Paston letters as the obligation of a child to a parent was itself an echo of the duties owed God the father. Back in the fourteenth century Julian of Norwich (1343–c. 1412) had urged her fellow Christians to do that which is “most worshipp to Him and profitt to thyselfe.”¹¹² And, if God was the father of all, he was especially the father of all Christians, who formed, as it were, one family. Thus, even in works condemning usury an allowance was made for dealings with non-Christians under the rationale that they did not belong to the same household.¹¹³ The Preacher in Thomas Wilson’s *Discourse uppon Usurye* (1572) believed God allowed usury in such circumstances “as he liked wel that the Israelites should robbe the Egyptians” because taking interest from someone “not of the houshold of Christian faith” was “the next way to undoe hym.”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ J. Payne Collier, ed. *The Eggerton Papers. A Collection of Public and Private Documents, chiefly illustrative of the times of Elizabeth and James I*, Camden Society, o.s., 12 (1840), 15 and 19.

¹¹¹ Gregory VII, *Correspondence*, 8.

¹¹² Julian of Norwich, *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. Georgia Ronan Crampton (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Press, 1994), 52 [X].

¹¹³ For a detailed discussion of usury in relation to a “Christian brotherhood,” see Benjamin Nelson, *The Idea of Usury: From Tribal Brotherhood to Universal Otherhood*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969), *passim*, but especially 3–28.

¹¹⁴ Wilson, *Usurye*, 255–256. See also *ibid.*, 253: “Your distinction of three sortes of men, and three sortes of dealing, is rather politick than Christian... For you ought to

In fact, so tenacious was the made of fashioning all groups in the image of families, that when, in 1689, John Locke published his *Letter Concerning Toleration*, he had to persuade his readers that the analogy was false:

Let us now consider what a church is. A church then I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls. I say, it is a free and voluntary society. Nobody is born a member of any church; otherwise the religion of parents would descend unto children, by the same right of inheritance as their temporal estates, and every one would hold his faith by the same tenure he does his lands; than which nothing can be imagined more absurd.¹¹⁵

In so doing, however, Locke had either forgotten or was deliberately ignoring the “voluntary” nature of the association—marriage—that created families.

Children, there is no doubt, were supposed to honor their parents by working to their profit. But what was expected of parents and pseudo-parents? Why, to profit their children in return! The assumption was that only an insane father would fail to profit his child, as Richard Knolles rendered Bodin’s defense of paternal authority in the *Republic*:

And if the father be not senseless or mad, hee will never without cause kille his sonne, seeing that he willingly chastiseth him not though he deserve the same. For so great is the love and affection of parents towards their children, that the law never presumed that they would do any thing to their disgrace, but all to their honour and profit.¹¹⁶

When Erasmus compared a prince to a “*paterfamilias*” in his *Education of a Christian Prince* (1517) it was to remind rapacious and spendthrift princes that a good “*paterfamilias* thinks whatever increase of wealth has fallen to any of his house is [the same as if it had been] added to his own private goods.”¹¹⁷ When Martin Luther wanted to make a case for

lende freely unto all men, riche and poore, lord and gentlemen, kyng and caysar, so that god, being the lord of the ryche aswell as of the poore, hath utterly and precisely forbidden all usurie amongst all men that are of the houshold of faith.”

¹¹⁵ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990), 22.

¹¹⁶ Knolles, *Six Bookes*, 27 [I.4]. For the original, see Bodin, *Six Livres*, 1:75–76 [I.4]: “Si le pere n’est point insensé, jamais il ne luy adviendra de tuer son enfant sans cause: et si l’enfant l’a mérité, les magistrats ne s’en doyvent point mesler: car l’affection et amour est si grande des pere et mere envers les enfans, que la loy n’a jamais presumé qu’ils facent rien qu’au profit et honneur des enfans?”

¹¹⁷ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1517), trans. (from Froben’s 1540 edition) Lester K. Born (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 171.

lending money without interest in his *Trade and Usury* (1524), he had to remind his readers that such loans could only be made out of their “surplus” and what they could “spare” from their own “needs,” because their “first and greatest obligation” was “to provide for the needs of” their “wife and children and servants”; they “must not divert from them what” they “owe them.”¹¹⁸ The sex of the monarch was no obstacle to the metaphorical imagination of the age. Writing up an account of Sir Francis Drake’s “memorable service done against the Spaniards in 1587,” Robert Leng addressed Elizabeth as a “swete prynces, who like a faithfull mother norisheth her children.”¹¹⁹ When Richard Hooker compared God to a father in a sermon, it was because “Fathers lay up treasure for their children: and shall not your heavenly Father provide sufficient for you?”¹²⁰ The Quaker preacher James Nayler (*the Old Serpents Voice*, n.d. 1656?), believed a father who did not provide for his family was “worse than an infidel,” unconsciously echoing the exact verdict rendered half a century before by Lady Grace Mildmay, while the nonconforming minister Henry Newcombe (1627–1695) wrote in his diary that it was his “constant fear” that he should die and “leave nothing for my wife and children.”¹²¹ When the Anglican minister Joseph Hall (1574–1656) gave a sermon on “The Righteous Mammon,” he explained that some things were “necessary to the father of a family, which to a single man were superfluous,” because a father looked to the “future,” to the “marriage of a daughter, the education of a son,” and an “honest provision for posterity.”¹²² In A. Marsh’s *Confession of the newly married couple* (1683), the newlyweds were admonished “to meditate how to make the best benefit” and “best profit” of their money so that their offspring might “find that they had frugal Par-

¹¹⁸ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:259.

¹¹⁹ Clarence Hopper, ed., “Sir Francis Drake’s memorable service done against the Spaniards in 1587. Written by Robert Leng, Gentleman, one of his co-adventurers and fellow-soldiers,” in *Camden Miscellany V* (Camden Society, o.s., 87, 1864), 23.

¹²⁰ Richard Hooker, *A Learned Sermon of the Nature of Pride*, in *The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine, Mr. Richard Hooker: with an account of his life and death by Isaac Walton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 2:725.

¹²¹ Hill, *World*, 335 (Nayler and Newcombe), and Pollock, *Faith and Physic*, 46 (Mildmay).

¹²² Joseph Hall, “The Righteous Mammon,” in *The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall, D.D. Bishop of Exeter and afterwards of Norwich*, rev. ed. (1863), ed. Philip Wynter (New York: AMS Press, 1969), 5:125.

ents.”¹²³ This interpretation of parental duty was no more novel than its extension to the societal sphere. Back in the early fourteenth century, Dante had claim that “all men ... should feel impelled to work for the benefit of future generations, whom they will thereby enrich just as they themselves have been enriched by the labours of their ancestors.”¹²⁴

The most basic parental duty was nurture, which, given that children were not nearly as productive as adults even given the early ages at which they began work (six or seven for chores and about fourteen for formal apprenticeship), meant a net expense. During the Price Revolution such expense was an added burden; perhaps it is not surprising that in addition to late marriage couples tended to space births two to three years apart even though only about three-quarters of those average six to seven children per family would live past age ten.¹²⁵ Despite earlier suppositions to the contrary, children were loved by their parents as deeply then as now, in spite of if not because of their fragility, and children of both sexes were loved and cared for equally if not identically.¹²⁶

But the parental duty most intimately connected to profiting children was education. In his *Discourses Concerning Government* (1698), Algernon Sidney maintained that “the right of a father proceeds from the generation and education of his children.”¹²⁷ Children were as aware of this as were their parents. Robert Carey (1560–1639), the Earl of Monmouth, regretted in his *Memoirs* that he “had not the ability to profit much” from the excellent education his parents afforded him,¹²⁸ while Jean de Lannoy, Stadholder of Holland, advised his son in 1465 to read deeply in the books he would leave him because

Those who have learned and retained much, and who have the greatest desire to learn and know, attain great good, honor, and riches... This

¹²³ A. Marsh, *The Confession of the Newly Married Couple* (London, 1683), 9–10.

¹²⁴ Dante, *Monarchia*, 3 [I.1].

¹²⁵ Coster, *Family*, 25. Note also, Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 40–43, on the gradual introduction of children into the workforce in both rural and urban households. Also, Erickson, *Women*, 51–52, to the effect that the younger a child was put out to apprenticeship, the larger the premium paid by the parents.

¹²⁶ On differing historical treatments of parental affection, see Coster, *Family*, 13–14; on the equal expenditures for the maintenance of boys and girls in the families of wage laborers and farmers, see Erickson, *Women*, 50.

¹²⁷ Algernon Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government* (London: J. Toland, 1698), ed. Thomas G. West (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1990), 69 [1§20].

¹²⁸ Robert Cary, *The Memoirs of Robert Carey*, ed. F.H. Mares (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 3.

has often caused me deep displeasure not for envy of them, but, because of my simplicity and slight knowledge and because I was never put to school.¹²⁹

This emphasis on education stemmed, in part, from the idea (popular long before Locke enshrined it) that the mind at birth was a *tabula rasa*. Sir John Fortescue's *De Laudibus Legum Anglie* did not appear in print until 1545, some ninety years after it was written, but once published it went through at least eight English and Latin editions by the end of the century. In it, Fortescue admonished the prince "whilst you are young and your mind is as it were a clean slate [*es et anima tua velut tabula rasa*]," to "impress" worthy things upon it, for "as a certain sage observes, *What a vessel takes when new it tastes of when it is old.*"¹³⁰ Alberti believed that "in the father's watchfulness" lay "the son's character."¹³¹ In his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, published in sections between 1593 and 1661, Richard Hooker wrote of the "soul of man being therefore at the first as a book, wherein nothing is and yet all things may be imprinted."¹³² Whether the learning stressed was secular or religious seemed to have been not so much a matter of time as of circumstance, of whether the discussion providing the context for the remark concerned a child's livelihood or character, but religious issues were always present as a subtext. When Lady Brilliana Harley admonished her son Edward in 1639 never to "neglect the oportunity of profeting in the ways of lerning," it was because she believed "the ways of wisdom" would instill in him an "upright hart."¹³³ Echoing the age's concern with spiritual profit, her ultimate wish for her son, after all, was that God would "inriche" him "with those saveing grasess of His spirit" that it was "happines" to "injoye" and "mesery" to be without.¹³⁴ The *Constitutions and Canons of the Church of England* (1603) were even more explicit, requiring all "fathers, mothers, masters, and mistresses" to

¹²⁹ J.H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History: New Views on History and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 62–63.

¹³⁰ John Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Anglie*, bilingual ed., trans. S.B. Chrimes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), 18–19 [VI].

¹³¹ Alberti, *Family*, 38 [I].

¹³² Hooker, *Works*, 1:163 [I.vi§2]. For a discussion of the evolving reaction to Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, see Diarmid MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation," *English Historical Review*, 117 #473 (September 2002): 773–812.

¹³³ Thomas Taylor Lewis, ed., *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley, Wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan. Knight of the Bath*, Camden Society, o.s., 58 (1854), 64 [#49].

¹³⁴ Lewis, *Harley Letters*, 56 [#42].

send their “children, servants, and apprentices” to Church to learn the catechism or be suspended themselves by the Ordinaries.¹³⁵

Religious issues were not the only subtext, however. The education in question had to be fitted to the social status of the family and the sex of the child. After all, as Pope Gregory I had explained, what was “profitable to some, harms others... Wherefore, the discourse of a teacher should be adapted to the character of the hearers.”¹³⁶ For the patricians of Venice, the *studia humanitatis* were a vehicle intended to “mold” their sons “in character, responsibility and destiny.”¹³⁷ According to the Memmingen school ordinance of 1587, female students were expected to learn their “Catechism, modesty, obedience” and “penmanship” in addition to needlework.¹³⁸ Needlework was an important skill, for as Edmund Tilney advised, a wife needed to “spend hir time in some profitable exercise, as with hir needle.”¹³⁹ Certainly, given their eventual managerial responsibilities, aristocratic daughters in Tudor England needed “some knowledge of arithmetic” and property law in addition to household management and basic literacy.¹⁴⁰ Gender-based learning aside, both daughters and sons were expected to learn to read across an ever wider social range. While this push towards literacy is most often associated with the Protestant Reformation, its roots lie in the Renaissance and in the pre-Reformation increase in personal piety. The brass plate on the fifteenth-century headstone of one Elizabeth Stratham of Derbyshire included an engraving of a subject that was already becoming increasingly common in manuscript books of hours, that of St. Anne reading to her young daughter, Mary.¹⁴¹ If nothing else, a literate girl could profit from the instruction given in the ever increasing number of Protestant and Catholic marriage manuals to be “chaste, silent, and obedient.”¹⁴² Certainly, however, the Reformation’s increasingly violent struggles between churches for the souls of their congregations fed into the traditional concept of the soul’s profit as more important than the bodies, and prompted the flood of tracts, ver-

¹³⁵ Coster, *Family*, 122.

¹³⁶ Brentano, *Middle Ages*, 96.

¹³⁷ Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 24.

¹³⁸ Hsia, *German People*, 156.

¹³⁹ Tilney, *Brief and pleasant discourse*, eiiii-obverse.

¹⁴⁰ Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, 28.

¹⁴¹ Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 110.

¹⁴² Hsia, *German People*, 153.

nacular bibles, and catechisms for young and old alike, for educational material on every level, even “didactic picture book[s]” for the youngest children, so that each family was a school for spiritual as well as worldly profit.¹⁴³

But education was not a task undertaken simply for the child’s sake; the parent educated the child in order to profit from the superior productivity of the educated offspring. The productivity in question was simultaneously moral and financial. As pseudo-Aristotle explained it:

For unless parents have given their children an example how to live, the children in their turn will be able to offer a fair and specious excuse (for undutifulness). Such parents will risk being rejected by their offspring for their evil lives, and thus bringing destruction upon their own heads.¹⁴⁴

Edmund Tilney warned fathers to “bee carefull in the education” of their children, “for much better were they unborne, than untaught.”¹⁴⁵ Lady Mildmay castigated parents who had “no regard” for the quality of the “governors they set over their children,” seeing how easily “the minds of children” were “tainted and corrupted” by ill-teaching; in fact she reminded those parents that if they paid more attention to their children’s education fewer of them would be “disconcerted” in “their old age by the wickedness” of those children toward them.¹⁴⁶

That which was good for the child was not always pleasant to it. Education might hurt. Julian of Norwich was certain that if God suffered his children to fall, it was because “it nedith us to fallen” in order for us to know

the mervelous love of our maker... And this is one understanding of profite... The Moder may suffre the child to fallen sumtyme ... for the owen profit, but she may never suffre that ony maner of peril cum to the child, for love.¹⁴⁷

Because the family mediated between the individual and the community, whatever caused it to prosper caused the whole to do the same. So the education of children was not only expected to profit the parents but also to profit the community. In his 1536 “Injunctions to the Clergy,” Thomas Cromwell urged “parentes Maiseters and gov-

¹⁴³ Dickens, *German Nation*, 107. Bainton, *Reformation*, 71–72, Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, 68 and 349.

¹⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 406–407 [3.2].

¹⁴⁵ Tilney, *Brief and pleasant discourse*, cvii-reverse.

¹⁴⁶ Pollock, *Faith and Physic*, 25 and 30.

¹⁴⁷ Julian of Norwich, *Shewings*, 125–126 [VI].

ernours” are urged to “bestowe their children ...Lernyng or to some other honest exercise occupacion or husbandire” to prevent their future resort to “begging stealing or some ofther unthriftnes,” when, if the children “had bene well educated,” their parents would (“being rulers of their owne familie”) have “proufited aswell theymself as divers others persons to the greate commoditie and ornament of the common weale.”¹⁴⁸ A century later Lady Brilliana Harley also linked profit in learning to the community as well as to the soul in her letters to her son Edward, advising him to “store yourself with knoledg, for this is your harvest in which you must gather the fruits which beare; after you may bring out to your owne and others profete.”¹⁴⁹

Because of the young age at which girls married in ancient Greece, a new wife was, in many respects, a child to be educated by her husband. Thus the relationship between husband and wife contained some parallels to that of parent and child. As Isomachus explained to Socrates in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, his wife was only fifteen when they wed, so he had to teach her to perform her share of the household management before she could become his full partner.¹⁵⁰ In Gentian Hervet’s version, he taught her “to lerne that of me, that shuld be good and profitable to us bothe.”¹⁵¹ Pseudo-Aristotle was less concerned with the tender age of the wife than with what he considered to be her natural intellectual deficiencies. So he looked at the education of a wife from a different angle, that of the need to create the best offspring (since she was primarily responsible for the nurture of infants). But he, too, believed a “wife’s training” to be the “object of a man’s unstinting care,” as the husband would profit from the virtuous children a well-educated wife produced, an emphasis on self-interest further underlined by comparison to a farmer who “spares no pains to sow his seed in the most fertile and best cultivated land, looking thus to obtain the fairest fruits.”¹⁵² English wives were older than the brides of classical Greece, but their supposed intellectual infirmities still kept them in a pupil’s role in the how-to books. Not surprisingly, the same theme appeared in William Perkins’s *Christian Oeconomie* with a link to a Biblical source: “in

¹⁴⁸ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:27 [#159].

¹⁴⁹ Lewis, *Harley Letters*, 71 [#54].

¹⁵⁰ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 138–139 [VII]. The extensive treatment of the wife’s education in Alberti’s *Della Famiglia* more closely echoes Xenophon’s treatment than Aristotle’s. For which, see Alberti, *Family*, 208–211 and 223–224 [III].

¹⁵¹ Hervet, *Xenophon*, 21.

¹⁵² Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 406–407 [3.2].

Scripture” the husband was “called the *guide of her youth*, Prov.2.17.”¹⁵³ So James I would have been in breach of his responsibilities as a parent if he had not advised his son in his *Basilikon Doron* (1599) to rule his wife as his “pupil” and “teach her not to be curious in things that belong her not.”¹⁵⁴ Likewise George Savile (1633–1695), Marquess of Halifax, if he had not included in his *Advice to a Daughter*, the opinion that

You must lay it down for a Foundation in general, That there is *Inequality* in the *Sexes*, and that for the better Oeconomy of the World, the *Men*, who were to be the Lawgivers, had the larger share of *Reason* bestow’d upon them; by which means your Sex is better prepar’d for the *Compliance* that is necessary for the better performance of those *Duties* which seem to be most properly assign’d to it... We are made of differing *Tempers*, that our *Defects* may be the better be mutually supplied.¹⁵⁵

The duties of fathers extended to those who stood, figuratively, *in loco parentis*. Abbots were so bound to the brethren of the monastery. According to *The Rule of St. Benedict*, an abbot should “manifest the sternness of a master and the loving affection of a father. He must reprove the undisciplined and restless severely, but he should exhort such as are obedient, quiet and patient, for their better profit.”¹⁵⁶ Relying on the authority parents had because they were their children’s creators, Martin Luther could establish the superiority of Scripture to Catholic tradition on the grounds that the church was “a created thing,” “instituted by God’s promises, and not God’s promises by her,” and thus bound to God’s word because “No man can beget his own parents or settle the author of his being.”¹⁵⁷

If countries were “fatherlands,” ruler were “fathers.” Erasmus decided that the “spirit” distinguishing “a real king from the actor” was

¹⁵³ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 123.

¹⁵⁴ James I, *Basilikon Doron* (1599) in *Political Works*, 36. Amussen felt that patriarchal (or royalist) writers made greater use of familial analogies than did contractual theorists, but also proposed that where they did use familial analogies, contractual writers paid more attention to the husband and wife relationship. For which see, Amussen, *Ordered Society*, 55 and 57–58. However, because of the hierarchical nature of the bond between husband and wife, it was as suitable to a royalist view as to a contractual one, as this example shows.

¹⁵⁵ Sir George Savile, *The Lady’s New-Year’s-Gift: Or, Advice to a Daughter*, in *The Complete Works of George Savile, First Marquess of Halifax*, ed. Walter Raleigh (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970), 8. Each work paginated independently.

¹⁵⁶ Brentano, *Middle Ages*, 85; see also *ibid*, 92: “Let him know also that it is better for him to profit others than to rule over them.”

¹⁵⁷ Martin Luther, *The Pagan Servitude of the Church* (1520), in *Selections*, 340–341.

that of being “like a father to the state.”¹⁵⁸ According to an anonymous pamphlet (1576) published during the Dutch revolt, the “lord of the country” should be “like a father of the fatherland, whose task it is to serve all, be they poor or rich, noble or common, with equal laws, justice and judgment.”¹⁵⁹ In 1674, John Whitgift reminded his congregation that “the prophet Esay [Isaiah] saith that ‘kings and queens shall be the nursing fathers and mothers,’ the defenders and maintainers of the church.”¹⁶⁰ Even Hobbes, who sought to explain all in terms of matter and motion, could not avoid the comparison. In *De Homine* (1658), he said that “to be a *king* is nothing else but to have dominion over many persons; and thus a great family is a kingdom, and a little kingdom a family.”¹⁶¹ Hobbes was a monarchist at heart and monarchists were especially fond of drawing parallels between kings and fathers. In his *Patriarcha*, Robert Filmer found that the only difference between the “natural duties” of a father and of a king was in their “latitude” or “extent”:

As the Father over one family, so the King, as Father over many families, extends his care to preserve, feed, clothe, instruct and defend the whole commonwealth. His wars, his peace, his courts of justice, and all his acts of sovereignty, tend only to preserve and distribute to every subordinate and inferior Father, and to their children, their rights and privileges, so that all the duties of a King are summed up in an universal fatherly care of all his people.¹⁶²

Some commentators did see a difference between kings and biological fathers. In *The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland* (1662), Pieter de la Court suggested that

Altho’ civil rulers are very well termed fathers, and the subjects their children, yet herein is the difference, that parents do indulge and take equal care of their children to their utmost power... contrariwise the politick governors making up with the generality one body politick, which we call the *State*, must shew more or less favour, yea hurt and ruin, to some who are more or less profitable, or pernicious to the state.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Erasmus, *Christian Prince*, 152.

¹⁵⁹ *Address and Opening* (1576), in *The Dutch Revolt*, ed and trans. Martin van Gelderen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 85.

¹⁶⁰ Whitgift, *Defence*, 34.

¹⁶¹ Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine and De Cive*, ed. Bernard Gert (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 208. [VIII.1]. *De homine* is translated by Charles T. Wood, T.S.K. Scott-Craig, and Bernard Gert; *De cive* is as translated by Thomas Hobbes.

¹⁶² Filmer, *Patriarcha*, 63 [VII].

¹⁶³ Pieter de la Court, *The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland*

Be that as it may, as fathers, kings were required to educate their subjects. In the *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598), James I explained that “as the Father of his fatherly duty is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and virtuous government of his children; even so is the king bound to care for all his subjects.”¹⁶⁴ Like any other parent, the state expected to profit from the education of its children. The *Book of Orders*, January 5, 1631, reminded the people of England that “divers good laws and statutes” had been “enacted in Parliament” for “the training up of youth in honest and profitable trades and mysteries, by putting them forth to be apprentices,” which if they were duly executed “would prevent and cut off many offences and crimes of high nature.”¹⁶⁵ Remembering that what was good for us was not always pleasant, even evil rulers might be thought of as furthering our education. They were object lessons from God the Father. According to Tyndale, it was a divine “wrath and vengeance” that parents should “hate their children,” husbands be “unkind” to their wives, masters mistreat the servants who “waiteth” on their “profit,” and lords and kings be “tyrants” unto the “subjects and tenants” who toiled “to maintain them in their estate.”¹⁶⁶

This parallel drawn between kings and fathers made it exceedingly difficult for early modern political theory to countenance the removal of inconvenient kings because the bonds of obligation binding a child to a parent were held to be indissoluble. In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, first printed in 1536 and reprinted at least nine times in French or Latin by 1560, Calvin chided readers who did not understand this:

But (you will say) rulers owe responsibilities in turn to their subjects. This I have readily admitted. But if you conclude from this that service ought to be rendered only to just governors, you are reasoning foolishly. For husbands are also bound to their wives, and parents to their children, by mutual responsibilities. Suppose parents and husbands depart from their duty... Shall either children be less obedient to their parents or wives to their husbands? They are still subject even to those who are wicked and undutiful.¹⁶⁷

(1662), facsimile reprint of the 1746 English edition (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 98–99. On early modern treatment of the differences between kings and fathers, see also Amussen, *Ordered Society*, 37.

¹⁶⁴ James I, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (written 1598) in *Political Works*, 55.

¹⁶⁵ J.P. Kenyon, ed., *The Stuart Constitution, 1603–1688: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 497.

¹⁶⁶ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 195.

¹⁶⁷ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2:1516 [IV.20.29].

Bodin was equally adamant that although fathers were bound to “*instruire ses enfans*,” those children were not “*excusé*” from their duties by a parent’s failure to perform.¹⁶⁸ The roots of this unbreakable obligation lay in that analogy between generation and creation. Paracelsus maintained that

It must be established once and for all that our body is not ours but God’s, that it is made not for us but for God, and not for our own but for God’s benefit. And since this is the nature of man’s body, it must come entirely from God, that is from Him to whom it belongs.¹⁶⁹

Although the age understood human beings to stand in a similar relationship to their parents, who were, after God, their sole creators, there was no unanimous agreement on how far the authority of a parent over a child should reach. Some writers looked back to absolute *patriam potestatem* of ancient Rome. Bodin, as we have seen, thought governments should not interfere with paternal authority because no sane father would kill his child without cause.¹⁷⁰ In *The Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law* (1673), Samuel Pufendorf awarded fathers the right to sell sons into “endurable slavery” if there was no “other means of supporting his child” ... “at least on the condition” that the father would “buy back the child” in better times.¹⁷¹ Fortunately for early modern children, however, most writers would have agreed, not with Bodin or Pufendorf, but with Francisco de Vitoria (c. 1485–1546), professor of Theology at the University of Salamanca. In his *On Civil Power*, Vitoria, followed Aristotle in holding that “since the family is part of the commonwealth, the law can determine where the obedience of children to their parents should be required and where it should not.”¹⁷²

Though Aristotle had been careful to state that there was a difference in kind (and not merely in degree) between the authority of a ruler and that of a parent,¹⁷³ medieval and early modern commentators tended to apply the indissoluble nature of the parent-child bond to any-

¹⁶⁸ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 69 [I.4].

¹⁶⁹ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, 194.

¹⁷⁰ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 75–76 [I.4].

¹⁷¹ Samuel Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law* (1673), ed. James Tully, trans. Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 127 [II.3].

¹⁷² Francisco de Vitoria, *On Civil Power* [3.7§24], in *Political Writings*, ed. Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43.

¹⁷³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 3 [I.1.2].

thing even roughly analogous to a parent. During the twelfth-century renaissance, John of Salisbury had applied it in his *Policraticus* to the “law of nature,” opining that “to violate the laws of nature is a sort of parricide, and to nullify the mandates of a parent and not to render due homage to the mother of us all is like a sacrilege.”¹⁷⁴ Thomas Starkey, chaplain to Henry VIII, explored the inflation already roiling the English economy in a *Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset* and presented to his monarch sometime between 1533 and 1536. In it, he applied the parental analogy to the country as a whole, maintaining that as humans were born to “profit” each other they were as bound to aid “their country” in its distress as the child was to a “father” unable to “help himself” because of “sickness or age.”¹⁷⁵ François de Hotman used a similar analogy in his *Francogallia* (1573), claiming that if it were “all but blasphemy to bear impatiently the humours ... of family elders,” it was a “much greater” offence “to resent our native country, which the wise have always unanimously preferred to natural parents.”¹⁷⁶ Royalists applied it personally to the king. According to Bodin and his translator Knolles, because a prince was even more “sacré” and “inviolable” than a father, however “cruel” he might be, the laws of God compelled us “to suffer stripes, yea and death also rather than to attempt any thing against his life or honour.”¹⁷⁷ Almost as though he was prophesying the troubles awaiting his son, James I had asked in his *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) whether it was “lawful” for a child or subject to “turn and strike” a father/king pursuing the child “with a drawn sword.”¹⁷⁸ Even those who, in the seventeenth century, defended regicide found it necessary to explain away the analogy of father-ruler. In his *Defence of the People of England* (1651), John Milton maintained that even though kings were called fathers of their countries,

¹⁷⁴ John of Salisbury, *Fivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers. Being a Translation of the First, Second, and Third Books and Selections from the Seventh and Eighth Books of the Policraticus of John of Salisbury*, trans. Joseph B. Pike (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1938), 12 [L.2].

¹⁷⁵ Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue Between Reginald Pole & Thomas Lupset*, ed. Kathleen M. Burton (London: Chatto & Windus, 1948), 22 [Chapter 1].

¹⁷⁶ François [de] Hotman, *Francogallia*, Latin text ed. Ralph E. Giesey, trans. J.H.M. Salmon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 136–137.

¹⁷⁷ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 2:80 [II.5], and Knolles, *Six Bookes*, 225.

¹⁷⁸ James I, *Political Works*, 65.

A father and a king are very different things. A father has begotten us; but a king has not made us, but rather we the king. Nature gave a father to people, the people themselves gave themselves a king; so people do not exist because of a king, but a king exists because of the people.¹⁷⁹

The analogy of the state as political family survived the first of England's seventeenth-century revolutions but it did not do as well in the second, when the contractual model of society triumphed in treatise and in fact. Nonetheless, that it was not yet entirely gone can be seen in John Locke's need to remind the readers of his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) that the family's role in the evolution of the first societies did no more than "accustom" individuals to monarchy, the "government" of "their infancy."¹⁸⁰

Every relationship within society that could be modeled on the family was as dependent on a profit created by reciprocity as were family relationships themselves. But each member of a family was due some just profit. The question was, did each member of society have a similar due and what was it? The answer to that question begins to become clearer when we look into the remaining key household relationship, that of master and servant. And that is taken up in the following chapter.

¹⁷⁹ John Milton, *A Defence of the People of England* (1651), trans. Claire Gruzelier, in *Political Writings*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 68 [Chapter 1].

¹⁸⁰ John Locke, *Second Treatise*, in *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), ed., Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 338 [VIII§107].

CHAPTER FOUR

MASTER AND SERVANT

The third basic relationship in the early modern household was that of master and servant. Contractual rather than organic in origin, it was still substantially patterned on the parent-child relationship. Thomas Cranmer proposed that “what love soever the son pretendeth unto his father, or the servant unto his master” was “but coloured and feigned, if they be not glad to accomplish the will and commandments of their father and master.”¹ In one sense, the analogy was bi-directional, for even Charles II called himself “Your Majesties most humble and obedient sone and servant” when writing to his mother in the years before his own coronation.² But the equivalency was potentially more fraught with conflict when servants were equated with children because attempts to extend the master-servant analogy to relationships between social superiors and inferiors carried with them the internal contradiction of being understood as rooted in both dissoluble (employment) and indissoluble (biological) relationships, mirrored by two other conflicting contractual models: the dissoluble bond of homage and the indissoluble covenant between God and his children/servants as played out in the parable of the talents. Profit, however, remained fundamental to all these variations in which the reciprocal but unequal duties between the husband/parent/master/lord and wife/child/servant/vassal developed their own language of “honor and profit.”

I. *the profitable servant*

As children worked to profit their parents, servants worked to profit their masters. When Charles V reformed the administration of royal taxes in France in 1372, he decreed that the newly established *généraux-conseillers* should “limit and moderate” the numbers of their assistants

¹ Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 85. See also Amussen, *Ordered Society*, 40.

² “Five Letters of King Charles II,” *Camden Miscellany V*, Camden Society, o.s., 87 (1864), 6.

“to the profit of the king.”³ But, as parents were responsible for raising profitable children, masters were responsible for creating profitable servants. Xenophon believed that the quality of the service rendered by slaves depended on the quality of their treatment; a householder who wished to be “a successful farmer” needed to remember that slaves needed “some good thing to look forward to ... even more than free men” did. Equally important to the profitability of their service was the quality of their training, implicitly paralleling the parental duty to educate children. Xenophon put both spouses to work educating their inferiors. Husbands supervised the “slaves whose work” was “outdoors,” while wives supervised “those whose work” was “indoors.” The supervision and training was not devised for the slaves’ benefit, however, but for the owners’ profit. A wife taught a slave to spin because that would “double her value” to the family. Not surprisingly, creating profit from such a relationship required reciprocity. Slaves were taught “to be loyal” by being given “a share” in their owners’ “success.” Since slaves were conceived of as childlike, this share might be nothing more than better clothing or extra food and a few well-chosen words of praise, but it had to be justly granted: the harder worker got the perks; the greater the slave’s responsibility, the greater the potential reward. This reciprocity was what instilled “a sense of justice” in slaves, prompting them to behave justly to their masters in return. The slave’s own desire for profit acted as a behavior modifier along the lines of the laws of the kings of Persia which not only punished evildoers but “reward[ed] the honest,” so that “many lovers of profit” would “refrain from dishonesty.”⁴ Such reciprocity found immediate echoes in the religious struggles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1602, Dr. Humphrey Ely reminded Sir Robert Cecil that if by “humaine meanes and obligations that may be profitable” to the commonwealth, Catholics in England were allowed some freedom of worship, those same Catholics should be “redy to oblige and bind themselves” to their patrons in this effort.⁵

For Aristotle, a slave was a *naturally* inferior being, a “live” article “of property,” a “tool (ὄργανον)” belonging to another and, like any other

³ James B. Collins, *Fiscal Limits of Absolutism: Direct Taxation in Early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 26.

⁴ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 132–133 [V], 144–147 [VII], 156–157 [IX], and 176–179 [XIII–XIV].

⁵ Law, *Archpriest Controversy*, 199.

household tool, existing to secure the master's "good life."⁶ For Aristotle, the master-slave relationship partook of both the parent-child and husband-wife relationships. A master's rule over a slave was monarchical (as was the rule of fathers over children, but not that of husbands over wives) and perpetual (unlike that of fathers over children, but like that of husbands over wives).⁷ Reciprocity was little in evidence in the dismissive treatment of the master-slave relationship in the *Politics*: all a master owed a slave was "to be the cause" of the slave's "proper" virtue.⁸

The treatment of the master-slave relationship and its integral reciprocity was more expansive in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*. The discussion opened not with the responsibilities of the slave, but those of the master, and the first responsibility of the master was to educate the slave because "the character of the young (παιδεία) can be molded by training."⁹ The use of παιδεία (child) underscored the parallel between the parent-child and master-slave relationships. In further elaborating the master's duties, a quasi-contractual element also crept in. According to the *Oeconomica*, masters were to give a "share of honour" to slaves who did a "freeman's work" (supervision), and more food to those who worked "with their hands," because one had to "pay men" to "control them."¹⁰ Following Xenophon, the purpose of just treatment of slaves—rewarding virtue and punishing vice—was to produce a better, and hence more profitable, slave.¹¹ This central role of profitability became even more explicit in Oresme's gloss of the *Oeconomica*. According to Oresme, the slave-caretaker should be "trained in prudence to promote the honor and profit [*le honneur et profit*] of the household," while laboring slaves were to receive more food because, being "poorly endowed with virtue," they were "more concerned with profit than with honor [*de profit que de honneur*]."¹²

Justice and reciprocity were not central to the master-slave relationship in all influential classical texts. In *De Agri Cultura*, Cato the Elder recommended disposing of ill or elderly slaves as one did "worn-out

⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 14–17 [I.2.4–6] and 22–25 [I.2.14–15].

⁷ *Ibid.*, 28–29 [I.2.21] and 58–59 [I.5.2].

⁸ *Ibid.*, 28–29 [I.2.20] and 64–65 [I.5.11]. Note also *ibid.*, 30–31 [I.2.23] to the effect that the "science" of employing slaves "is one of no particular importance or dignity."

⁹ Aristotle, *Oeconomica*, 334–335 [I.5.1].

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 335–337 [I.5.2–3].

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 336–337 [I.5.4].

¹² Menuet, "Oresme," 818.

oxen.”¹³ So close an attention to the profit motive was not uniformly approved of even in ancient times. Plutarch took Cato to task for “thinking there ought to be no further commerce between man and man, than whilst there arises some profit by it.”¹⁴ It was Plutarch’s view, and not Cato’s, that echoed through the centuries separating early modern writers from their classical models. Reinforcing the link between the household and the state, Justinian’s *Institutes* (AD 533) laid it down of dependent persons that it was “in the public interest that nobody should treat his property badly.”¹⁵ As John of Salisbury believed that even “menial occupations” were “in the highest degree useful and profitable to the corporate whole of the commonwealth,” he felt “superiors” owed it “to their inferiors to provide them with all things needful for their protection and succor” just as much as “inferiors” owed it to their superiors to provide them with service.¹⁶ In March 1534, Sir Thomas More wrote to Henry VIII, reminding him of the promises made when the king allowed More to resign the Chancellorship two years before:

It pleased your Highness further to say unto me, that for the service which I before had done you (which it then liked your goodness far above my deserving to commend) that in any suit that I should after have unto your Highness, which either should concern my mine honor (that word it liked your Highness to use unto me) or that should pertain unto my profit, I should find your Highness good and gracious lord unto me. So is it now, gracious Sovereign, that worldly honor is the thing, whereof I have resigned both the possession and the desire, in the resignation of your most honorable office; and worldly profit, I trust experience proveth, and daily more and more shall prove, that I never was very greedy thereon.¹⁷

If masters did not owe their servants a reciprocal “profit,” there would have been no irony for More to weave into this letter. Without reci-

¹³ Cato the Elder, *De Agri Cultura*, II.7, in *Marcus Porcius Cato On Agriculture*, *Marcus Terentius Varro On Agriculture*, bilingual ed., trans. William Davis Hooper, rev. Harrison Boyd Ash (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library), 8–9. This remark immediately precedes the adage nearly universally quoted in balance of trade theory, “*Patrem familias vendacem, non emacem esse oportet* (The master should have the selling habit, not the buying habit).”

¹⁴ Plutarch’s “Life of Cato,” 5.1 in *Plutarch’s Lives*, Dryden’s translation revised by A.H. Clough (New York: Hearst’s International Library Co., 1914), 2:354.

¹⁵ *Justinian’s Institutes*, trans. Peter Birks and Grant McLeod, Latin text ed. Paul Krueger (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 41 [I.8].

¹⁶ John of Salisbury, *Statesman’s Book*, 243–244 [VI.20].

¹⁷ More, *Letters*, 202 [#52].

procuity there was, in fact, no commonwealth, according to Sir Thomas Smith, Roman masters and slaves “were no common wealth” for these lords sought only their own “wealth” and “not the profit of the slave or bondman.”¹⁸ In his *Book Named the Governor* (1531), Sir Thomas Elyot supposed the reciprocity was as much the origin of nobility as it was of commonwealths:

in the beginning, when private possessions and dignity were given by the consent of the people, who then had all things in common, and equality in degree and condition, undoubtedly they gave the one and the other to him at whose virtue they marveled, and by whose labor and industry they received a common benefit, as of a common father that with equal affection loved them... and the persons were called gentlemen.¹⁹

The concept of the divinely-assigned calling so essential to Protestantism only served to reinforce the importance of reciprocity in master-servant relationships. According to Calvin, “a shiftless steward” and a “savage” master equally committed “theft in God’s sight,” for he who did not “carry out” what he owed “to others according to the responsibility of his calling” was appropriating that which was “another’s.”²⁰

Master and servant could refer not only to those within one household but also to those within one nation, and thus to all superior-inferior relationships. William Tyndale urged “Christian landlords” to be “as fathers unto your tenants” and not raise “the rents or fines” or bring “new customs to oppress” them.²¹ In the war of pamphlets between John Whitgift and Thomas Cartright, Cartwright said of magistrates, “We love them as our fathers and mothers, we fear them as our lords and masters, and we obey them in the Lord, and for the Lord.”²² Olivier de Serres noted in his *Théâtre d’agriculture* (1600), that “the seigneur (*père de famille*)” should “cherish” his subjects as if they were “his children,” protecting them from harm whether from troops or taxes.²³

So it is not surprising that in correspondence from the era, servants acknowledged owing their masters as much profit as children

¹⁸ Smith, *Republica*, 21 [I:10].

¹⁹ Elyot, *Governor*, 103–104 [II.4].

²⁰ Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:409 [II.8.45].

²¹ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 201–202.

²² Whitgift, *Defence*, 1:79 [Cartwright’s *Reply*, 2§2].

²³ J.H.M. Salmon, “Venality of Office and Popular Sedition in Seventeenth-Century France: A Review of a Controversy,” *Past and Present*, 37 (July 1967), 43.

acknowledged owing their parents. In 1425, the baliff John Hamme asked Thomas Stonor's assistance in a manner to his lord's "profyt and worship."²⁴ In 1455, when Richard Bingham wanted to thank Sir John Fastolf for letting a farm to Richard's son, he said his son would always be Fastolf's "true lad and servaunt," willing to do whatever might be to Fastolf's "pleaser, wirschip, and profit."²⁵ In 1462, John Russe asked John Paston for an appointment, promising to "gyde" himself in the office as "I truste shuld be most profit to my seyde Lord."²⁶ When Edward Stafford (1478–1521), the third Duke of Buckingham, sent his steward a series of financial instructions, he did it with a reminder to "to help drive the most to our profit."²⁷ In 1529 the Bishop of Norwich asked Cardinal Wolsey to appoint an abbot whom he thought "most mete and profightable for the place."²⁸ In 1530, Thomas Cromwell assured his patron that his efforts on Wolsey's behalf "shalbe for your good onelie proffit and availe."²⁹ When Leonard Smyth needed to explain some delay in a matter he was handling for Lady Lisle in 1533, he vowed in the end to conclude everything "as it shall stand both with your pleasure, my lord's honour and profit, or else I will be sorry it should be noted to be done with my consent."³⁰ By 1536, Cromwell was giving orders rather than taking them, so he could remind customs officers at Dover to do everything for "the kynges profyght and advauntage."³¹ In 1552, Roger Ascham told Sir William Cecil he would find Ascham "lesse ready to deserve good will, then to desire proffit."³² In 1580, Sir Henry Sydney advised the new Lord Deputy of Ireland to be careful how he picked his assistants as in them "reste much, importing bothe honnor and profitte."³³ When John Brown published his *Marchants Avizo* in 1589, he dedicated it to his former employer

²⁴ Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., *The Stonor Letters and Papers, 1290–1483*, Camden Society, 3rd ser., 29 (1919), 1:42. [#49].

²⁵ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 3:54 [#308].

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4:38 [#515].

²⁷ Sir Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 3rd ser. (London: Dawson's of Pall Mall, 1969), 1:220–226.

²⁸ Thomas Wright, ed., *Three Chapters of Letters relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries*, Camden Society, o.s., 25 (1843), 5 [#2].

²⁹ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 1:331 [#18].

³⁰ Byrne, *Lisle Letters*, 1:586 [#61]. See also *ibid.*, 1:614 [#74] and 6:49 [#1662] among other examples.

³¹ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:30 [#160]. See similarly, *ibid.*, 1:340 [#22].

³² Sir Henry Ellis, ed. *Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*, Camden Society, o.s., 23 (1843), 11 [#4].

³³ Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, ed., *A Commentary of the services and charges of*

because he acknowledged himself “bounde, both to your Worship, and to all those of my profession, to emply my whole labour to do you any pleasure or profit that I might.”³⁴ In the Archbishop of York and Sedgwick’s case in 1612, Chief Justice Coke said that the “oath of judges” was to “do and procure the profit of the King and his Crown.”³⁵ In 1619 John Keymer promised Sir Dudley Carleton to do him “the best offices and services” it should “lie in me to be done” to accomplish matters to Carleton’s “honor and profit.”³⁶

A breach of these relations was as serious as any other violation of the age’s hierarchical organicism. Bad servants looked to their own profit at the expense of their masters’. This characterization was hardly an early modern innovation. In the thirteenth-century Exchequer manuscript known as the *Red Book*, a memorandum on exchange warned the exchanger to purchase silver at

the best profit (*proficere*), since he shall answer for the profit (*proficuo*) to the king, because he himself has fixed wages of £ 10. But the profit (*proficuum*) will be the king’s, but not the loss (*dampnum*), because he is either diligent or not. For the king has no need of a man who is not diligent (*industrio*).³⁷

The same idea ran through Thomas Cromwell’s attack on Thomas Wingifle’s wastefulness as controller of the King’s works at Dover (while stressing another parallel between servants and wives):

it appereth right well howe litel ye regarde his graces charges and howe moche you sett by you owne profit (If spoyle may be called profit) ... You shuld for your part have ben the kinges housewief and specially have loked to his graces profit... If with a narrowe respect to your owne private lucer you lose worthely his graces favour and so be brought onely to answer to the partes of your procedinges, you woll lose in the shire that you have gotten in the hundreth³⁸

William lord Grey of Wilton, KG by his son Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton KG, Camden Society, o.s., 40 (1847), 69.

³⁴ John Brown, *The Marchants Aviso* (London, Richard Field, 1589), Ai.

³⁵ J. Godbolt, *Reports of Certain Cases Arising in Several Courts of Record at Westminster* (1652), 201–202, quoted in Kenyon, *Stuart*, 97.

³⁶ M.F. Lloyd Prichard, ed., *Original Papers Regarding Trade in England and Abroad Drawn up by John Keymer for Information of James I about 1620* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967), 32.

³⁷ *The De Moneta of Nicholas Oresme and English Mint Documents*, ed. and trans. Charles Johnson (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1956), 9–10. There is a similar warning in the indenture of William de Turnemire (December 8, 1279) as master of the Mint, that “whatever profit (*proficuum*) may accrue shall be the king’s.” For which, see *ibid.*, 60–61.

³⁸ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:38–39 [#172].

Paracelsus was “horrified that a servant should be no servant but a master,” having nothing but harsh words for those of his students who

see to their own profit and take delight in letting me starve and perish. They lie about me to the patients, they receive patients behind my back, without my will and knowledge, treat them for half the money, say that they know my art, that they have watched me do it.³⁹

Churchmen were doubly servants of the Church and ministers of the congregation. They owed it to place the profits of others before their own in both cases. Thus John Colet warned Convocation in 1511 to look to “the good bestowing of the patrimony of Christ,” and not waste it in “costly building ... sumptuous apparel and pomps” or the “enriching of kinsfolk,” but use it “in things profitable and necessary to the Church.”⁴⁰ When Latimer admonished priests for teaching errors, he reminded them that their office was not to “teach your own traditions, and seek your own glory and profit.”⁴¹ Cromwell’s 1536 *Injunctions to the Clergy*, warned them not to seek “their owne prouffit [rather] than the prouffit of the Soules that they have under their cure or the glorie of god.”⁴² Writing during Queen Mary’s reign, the anonymous biographer of the martyred John Fisher, criticized Wolsey for presenting “to all benefices whom he pleased, to his owne no small gaine and profit”⁴³ when he should have been looking after the welfare of the church. In 1561, Richard Clough complained to Sir Thomas Gresham of frauds perpetrated by Elizabeth’s customs officials, hoping that the corruption would be ended to “the Quenes Majesties profett, and the honor of the realme,” because no matter how customary the corruption had become, it could never have been to “the honor or profett of the realme” to allow it to persist.⁴⁴ In 1625, Sir Edward Cecil complained to Sir John Coke of sailors given to stealing in similar terms:

For more ignorant captains and officers [on a ship] can hardlie be found, and men more carelesse of his Majesties honour and profitt, as

³⁹ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, 7.

⁴⁰ Tanner, *Tudor*, 73.

⁴¹ Carlson, *Religion*, 49.

⁴² Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:27 [#159].

⁴³ Bayne, *Fisher*, 47–48.

⁴⁴ R.H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds., *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1962), 2:226–228.

if they were rather enemies then servants, studying their owne ease and comoditie more then anything else.⁴⁵

In 1641, Strafford was impeached for, among other things, restraining “native commodities to be transported for private gaine,” but replied that the money had actually gone “to the king’s own use,” and the Commons should remember that not only was tunnage and poundage “the inheritance of the crowne by act of parliament,” but, in awarding the customs on tobacco back under James, the commons had specifically desired that it be employed for the king’s “best profit.”⁴⁶

Of course, the reciprocity inherent in the master-servant relationship required that servants receive some profit in return for their service, as long as their masters benefitted as well. In 1661 Samuel Pepys hoped to assist his patron’s embassy in the matter of the marriage of Charles II to his “Lord’s honour, and some profit” to himself; while assisting his patron in victualing the garrison of Tangier in 1664, Pepys hoped he might “get something by it ... nobly and honestly with profit to the King.”⁴⁷ Good servants were rewarded. When Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, made his will in 1544, he said that if Mistress Anne Hayward should refuse to marry William Stanley, then Stanley should still have the same “advantage, profett, and commoditye” of the marriage as he would have received if it had actually taken place.⁴⁸

2. *the unprofitable servant*

As the examples above make abundantly clear, the early modern social order had as little patience with servants who failed to profit their masters as with children who failed to profit their parents. But to speak of “unprofitable servants” was to tie family values to a particular Christian tradition. In 1420, the bailiff John Dymmok wrote to his superior of friends who “spareth” nought to speak both for his “worchip and profet,” while reminding his boss that he was truly “a profitabel reve.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Alexander B. Grossart, ed., *The voyage to Cadiz in 1625. Being a Journal written by John Glanville*, Camden Society, n.s., 32 (1883), xxxvii.

⁴⁶ John Bruce, ed., *Verney Papers: Notes of Proceedings in the long Parliament*, Camden Society, o.s., 31 (1845), 19 [XI].

⁴⁷ Pepys, *Diary*, 2:49 [June 10, 1661] and 4:163 [July 2, 1664].

⁴⁸ *Wills from Doctor’s Commons. A Selection from the Wills of Eminent Persons Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1495–1695*, Camden Society, o.s., 83 (1863), 12.

⁴⁹ Kingsford, *Stonor Letters*, 1:32 [#42].

In an undated letter from the reign of Henry V or Henry VI, one Richard Bokeland questioned whether some inferiors would do him “trew and profittable service.”⁵⁰ Any contemporary receiving such a letter who could read the Bible or remember the Lesson might hear in these letters an echo of the parable of the talents and its command to “cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness [*Matthew* 25:30].” With their faith in a purely Biblical authority, Protestant reformers produced one vernacular translation of the Bible after another, making it ever easier for their contemporaries to read that parable for themselves.

Despite the fact that the “talents” in the parable were literally coins, fifteenth-century interpretations were not necessarily pecuniary. In fact, one of the most widely read, *The Imitation of Christ*, was decidedly not. According to Thomas à Kempis:

Oh, how powerful is the pure love of Jesus, free from all self-interest and self-love! Are they not all mercenary, who are always seeking comfort? Do they not betray themselves as lovers of self rather than of Christ, when they are always thinking of their own advantage and gain? Where will you find one who is willing to serve God without reward? ... Let him not regard as great what others might esteem great, but let him truthfully confess himself an unprofitable servant. For these are the words of the Truth Himself; ‘When you shall have done all those things that are commanded of you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants.’⁵¹

For those who had no Latin, the *Imitation* was available in English by about 1530 in Richard Whitford’s translation. What Thomas was quoting at the end, however, was not a Biblical disparagement of profit, but a recognition that servants who merely did their duty were not profitable to their lord because they had done no more than that which was owed. Profit entailed an increase over and above what belonged to masters by right. The citation was *Luke* 17:10: “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have [only] done that which was our duty to do.”

Whether the citation chosen was from *Luke* or *Matthew* depended upon the context, but the unprofitable servant was a sixteenth-century staple. Richard Taverner, an associate of Thomas Cromwell who survived the religious upheavals of the Tudor dynasty to become a justice of the peace under Elizabeth I, published a book of *Postils* in

⁵⁰ Cecil Monroe, ed., *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckington and others*, Camden Society, o.s., 86 (1863), 39.

⁵¹ Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation*, 83 [II.2].

1540. In it he reminded clergymen that if they followed the example “of the unprofitable servaunte spoken of in the Gospell,” they would share his fate and be “caste as servauntes unprofyttable into utter darkenes.”⁵² In the century’s battle between faith and works, the tale of John Foxe’s exorcising a demon afflicting one Robert Brigges culminated in Brigges’s conversion: “Althowght I never did good workes, as I confesse I have not for let me doo all I canne, yet am I an unprofitable shervante.”⁵³ Christopher Marsh found sixty-eight uses of the “unprofitable servant” in the preambles of wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, between 1569 and 1693, ultimately stemming from Thomas Becon’s *The Sicke Mans Salve* (c. 1558–1559), an immensely popular religious tract reprinted at least 28 times by 1632.⁵⁴ In this work, the ailing Epaphroditus prepared for his imminent departure by drawing up a will that began:

I Epaphroditus, the unprofitable servant of God, weak in bodie, and not withstanding, strong in mind; doo willingly and with a free heart, render and give again into the hands of the Lord my God, my spirit which he of his fatherly goodnesse gave unto me.⁵⁵

After 1590, professional scribes could also have found a cribbed version of the preamble in William West’s *Symbolaetographia*, a popular legal formulary.⁵⁶

The unprofitable servant was found in both worldly and spiritual contexts well into the seventeenth-century. In 1638, a not yet successful Oliver Cromwell wrote to thank a cousin for her “love” and “kind remembrance,” but like any other inferior when addressing a superior, continued: “Alas, you do too highly prize my lines, and my company. I may be ashamed to own your expressions, considering how unprofitable I am, and the mean improvement of my talent.”⁵⁷ In 1657, Protector Cromwell refused the offer of the crown in the “Humble Petition and Advice,” with the protest “If I had undertaken anything not

⁵² Margaret Christian, “‘I knowe not howe to preache’: The Role of the Preacher in Taverner’s Postils,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29 #2 (Summer 1998), 380 [*Postils, Summer Part 2–2v*].

⁵³ Kathleen R. Sands, “Word and Sign in Elizabethan Conflicts with the Devil,” *Albion* 31 #2 (Summer 1999), 251.

⁵⁴ Carlson, *Religion*, 204 and 237–238.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 205 [Becon, *Salve*, 90].

⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, 238–239, on the use of West’s version by professional scribes.

⁵⁷ *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell: With an Introduction, Notes and a Sketch of His Life*, ed. Wilbur Cortez Abbott and Catherine D. Crane (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 1:96.

in faith, I shall serve you in mine own unbelief, and shall then be the unprofitablest servant that ever a people or nation had.”⁵⁸ In the posthumously published *Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture* (1709), Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet looked at kings as both fathers of their people and servants of God:

Article III: Royal authority is paternal, and its proper character is goodness. 6th Proposition: The prince who is useless for the people’s good is punished, as well as the evil [ruler] who tyrannizes. It is the rule of divine justice to punish not only those violent servants who abuse the power he has given them, but also those useless servants who do not make the most of the talent he has placed in their hand. ‘The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness’—that is, in the deep and dark prison which is without the house of God.⁵⁹

3. *homage*

Bossuet was not, however, penning an approval of popular revolt. A true royalist, he believed only God could justly punish a tyrant, for only God was the tyrant’s true master. Therein lay the problem in the early modern concept of master-servant relationships: while it was easy to dismiss unprofitable servants, what did one do about unprofitable masters? The addition of a right of revolution to social contract theory in the English civil wars of the 1640s and the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 was adapted in considerable part from the constitutional propaganda of the French religious wars of the sixteenth.⁶⁰ This is not to say that England did not possess its own tradition of the revokable master-servant relationship in the form of the legal contract of homage.

Throughout feudal Europe, homage was the bond cementing together all the non-slave strata of society. In law if not necessarily always in practice, a lord was as bound to reciprocity as was his vassal, and, therefore, was as subject to dismissal for failure to reciprocate as for an outright attack on the vassal’s rights. In a Capitulary from 816, four of

⁵⁸ *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. Ivan Roots (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1989), 119.

⁵⁹ Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, trans. and ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 69 [III.3.6].

⁶⁰ The key work on this linkage is J.H.M. Salmon, *The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). See especially the material on the Elizabethan reception of the French works (pp.17–26), the list of French works published in England between 1560 and 1598 (Appendix A, 171–180), and the contacts between Elizabethan statesmen and French writers (Appendix B, 181–185).

the five reasons for which a vassal might sever the bond involve true crimes but the fifth is a simple failure on the lord's part to perform his part of the bargain:

If anyone shall wish to leave his lord (*seniorem*), and is able to prove against him one of these crimes, that is, in the first place, if the lord has reduced him unjustly into servitude; in the second place, if he has taken counsel against his life; in the third place, if the lord has committed adultery with the wife of his vassal; in the fourth place, if he was wilfully attacked him with a drawn sword; in the fifth place, if the lord has been able to bring defense to his vassal after he has commended his hands to him, and has not done so; it is allowed to the vassal to leave him. If the lord has perpetrated anything against the vassal in these five points it is allowed the vassal to leave him.⁶¹

The two most influential English medieval law texts were those known as by Glanvill and Bracton, appearing in the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries respectively. Reciprocity was the defining feature of the relationship between lord and vassal created by doing homage in Glanvill who maintained that the “bond of trust arising from lordship and homage should be mutual” that “the lord owes as much to the man on account of lordship and the man owes to the lord on account of homage, save only reverence.”⁶² Even more explicitly, the lord's failure to reciprocate was a contract breaker in Bracton's account: the tenant might “do nothing to the disherison of his lord,” nor might “the lord so act toward the tenant. If either so acts homage is completely dissolved and extinguished.”⁶³

The continuing influence of this tradition of homage can be clearly seen in Erasmus's *Education of a Christian Prince*. According to Erasmus, the “common relation between the prince and people” entailed “money allegiance, and honor” from the people and “good and careful” rule from the prince who was bound to “question” his own performance of his “duties” toward the people before exacting taxes from them.⁶⁴

The problem was what to do when practice deviated from theory. The seventh of the *Twelve Articles of the Peasants* (1525) demanded “strict observance by the lords of the agreements made with their tenants.”

⁶¹ Brentano, *Middle Ages*, 170.

⁶² *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill* [c. 1187–1189], ed. and trans. G.D.G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 107 [IX.4].

⁶³ Bracton, *De Legibus*, 2:228 and 2:233.

⁶⁴ Erasmus, *Education*, 180.

As the nature of the complaints in several of the other articles—an end to expropriation of common fields, to increased rents, to unc customary labor services—make clear, the Price Revolution was already causing land owners in the German states to violate the spirit if not the letter of their bonds.⁶⁵

As fathers, as lords, as ministers, as servants, profit was a key element in understanding the nature of kingship. Sir Thomas Elyot believed rulers were “ministers” for the “profit and commodity” of those of lesser “understanding,” charged to “employ all the powers of their wits” to the “preservation” of those “inferiors.”⁶⁶ Calvin called upon all magistrates to remember that they were “vicars of God,”⁶⁷ and John Knox reminded the nobility that they, like monarchs, had not been placed “above” their “brethren” by God to “reign as tyrants without respect” of their inferiors’ “profit and commodity,” but to “be God’s ministers ... for the wealth, profit, and salvation of their subjects.”⁶⁸ Ever since Aristotle laid it down in his *Politics*,⁶⁹ this had been the universally acknowledged difference between a king and a tyrant in classical, medieval, or early modern times: kings sought the profit of their subjects while tyrants sought a personal profit at their subjects’ expense. One finds it in Aquinas, Oresme, Erasmus, More, Luther, Guicciardini, Tyndale, Bodin, pamphlets from the Dutch revolt, Sir Thomas Smith, Cardinal Bellarmine, James I, Milton, and Sidney, among others.⁷⁰ As it was proving an increasingly dangerous tool in the hands of constitutionalists, royalists like Sir Robert Filmer tried to attack it in the 1640s, but the best he could come up with was the claim that even a tyrant profited a few of his subjects, so it was incorrect of Aristotle to say tyrants profited only themselves.⁷¹ The ultimate use of

⁶⁵ Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 275–276.

⁶⁶ Elyot, *Governor*, 4–5.

⁶⁷ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2:1491 [VI:20:6].

⁶⁸ John Knox, *Appellation to the Nobility* (1558), in *Political Writings*, 116.

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 206–207 [III.5.4], and 324–327 [IV.8.3].

⁷⁰ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, 6 [*Summa Theologica* I–II, Q. 90, A2] literally with respect to laws rather than to kings; Oresme, *De Moneta*, 24 [XV]; Erasmus, *Education*, 181; More, *Utopia*, 94–95; Luther, *Secular Authority*, in *Selections*, 394; Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi*, bilingual ed., trans. Ninian Hill Thompson (New York: S.F. Vanni, 1949), 56–57 [I.92] and 205–251 [II.172]; Tyndale, *Obedience*, 202–203; Bodin, *Six Livres*, 2:58 [II.4], 212; Van Gelderen, *Dutch Revolt*, 186; Smith, *Republica*, 14–15 [I.7]; Bellarmine, *De Laicis* 34 [VII], as *advantage* rather than *profit*; James I, *Political Writings*, 18; John Milton, *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), in *Political Writings*, 10–11; and Sidney, *Discourses*, 91[2 §3].

⁷¹ Filmer, *Observations upon Aristotle* (1652), in *Patriarcha*, 204.

the dictum can be seen in the sentence of death pronounced against Charles I on January 27, 1649, which claimed his “evil practices” were “carried on for the advancement and upholding” of his “personal interest” against “the public interest, common right, liberty, justice, and peace of the people of this nation.”⁷²

Homage was a contract between social unequals, but one in which both parties were presumed equally to have consented to the bond’s creation. The descendants of the originating lord and vassal were equally bound for two reasons, the parents’ right to bind the child and the consent implicit in the children’s continued acting out of the bond. If both parties had consented to create the bond, then both parties had to consent to break it, and kings did not usually consent to their own removal. And since it was a maxim universally acknowledged in English law that no one could be a judge in his/her own case,⁷³ breaking the bond required the approval of (or recognition from) a judge either superior in status to the lord and vassal or at least possessing the right to adjudicate between them as the legal representative of their superior. As against an immediate master, the appeal was to the king as the master’s own overlord, a limitation enshrined in the oath of homage itself. The tenant swore to “become” his lord’s “man with respect to the tenement which” he held of the lord, to bear him “fealty in life and limb and earthly honor ... against all men ... saving the faith owed the lord king and his heirs.”⁷⁴ So it was quite traditional for Stephen Gardiner to maintain in *De vera obedientia* that servants must obey the king as “superiour mayster” to both the contracting parties.⁷⁵ Kings, however, were usually held to have no earthly superior, unless that superior was the Pope.

The problem had long been recognized; John of Salisbury had struggled with it in the *Policraticus*:

The prince, as the likeness of the Deity, is to be loved, worshiped and cherished; the tyrant, the likeness of wickedness, is generally even to be killed...

The histories teach, however, that none should undertake the death of a tyrant who is bound to him by an oath or by the obligation of fealty...

⁷² Kenyon, *Stuart*, 392.

⁷³ See, for example, Tyndale, *Obedience*, 174.

⁷⁴ Bracton, *De Legibus*, II:232.

⁷⁵ Gardiner, *Obedientia*, 91. He did say that God’s commands were to be preferred to the king’s but he was not suggesting rebellion, only suffering in silence if an unjust monarch persecuted the godly (p. 99).

And surely the method of destroying tyrants which is the most useful and the safest, is ... to pray devoutly that the scourge wherewith they are afflicted may be turned aside from them. For the sins of transgressors are the strength of tyrants.⁷⁶

Twice, once in the case of soldiers having a duty to disobey the commands of their superior officers when those commands would entail breaking “the faith” the soldier “owes first to God,” and once in the case of any subject of a ruler who made “war against God,” John of Salisbury accepted a papal sanction of a king’s removal.⁷⁷ The same logic that put the profit of the soul above that of the body, that by analogy extended to the welfare of the church in relation to that of the state, found further reinforcement when church and state were considered as master and servant. For the state existed to maintain the peace in order for the devout to work out their salvation: the state served the church. The lesser end was subordinate to the higher. When the Pope was the personification of the Church, however, the logical conclusion that a Pope could order the removal of a king was not acceptable in England after Henry VIII’s Reformation. Furthermore, by making himself head of both church and state, Henry VIII had fused master and servant into one office.

God could, of course, still be put above the monarch when the monarch was of one religion and the writer of another. In *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), John Knox struck out against Mary Tudor (only to have to eat his words months later when Elizabeth came to the throne):

women, being promoted in sovereign authority, her laws must be obeyed, her opinion followed, and her tyranny maintained, supposing that it be not expressly against God and the profit of the commonwealth, as to manifest experience doth this day witness.⁷⁸

The early modern mind loved nothing so much as multiple analogies that reinforced each other. This was what Tillyard meant when he referred to the “immense net of correspondences” from which Eliza-

⁷⁶ John of Salisbury, *Statesman’s Book*, 33 [VIII.17] and 372–373 [VIII.20]. As Cary Nederman pointed out, John of Salisbury looked at the physical safety of the organism not as its ultimate end but as a ground for its spiritual safety, hence the need for the pope to sanction its upending. For which, see Cary Nederman, “Introduction” to his translation of sections of John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xix.

⁷⁷ John of Salisbury, *Statesman’s Book*, 201 [VI.9], 212–213 [VI.12], and 258 [VI.25].

⁷⁸ Knox, *Political Writings*, 42–43 and 48.

bethans derived as much “intellectual and emotional satisfaction” as did their medieval forebears.⁷⁹ The bonds of homage were analogous to those of wedlock. Bride and groom promised to profit each other as did lord and vassal, but bride and groom no more made identical promises to each other than did lord and vassal or master and servant. The bride/vassal/servant promised to obey, the groom/lord/master to protect. Parallel unequal reciprocal relationships applied, a potent symbolism when monarchs, as we have seen, routinely spoke of themselves as husbands of their kingdoms/wives.

For Bodin, homage was a model for understanding citizenship. His *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1565) was perhaps only slightly less widely read than his *Six Books of the Republic*, being issued thirteen times in Latin between its first publication and 1650. According to the *Methodus*:

To be made a beneficiary or vassal, it is necessary that a man shall be born in this status, or if he wishes to give his homage to another, the consent of the superior and that of the inferior are then needed. So, also, in being made a citizen it is enough that he should accept the rule of the man in whose territory he was born (he agrees if he does not openly dissent), or if he would betake himself elsewhere, he must subject himself to the rule of the other and be accepted before he is called a citizen.⁸⁰

As the upheavals of the French religious wars increased, Bodin's tone grew more strident. Homage was too breakable a bond to please him. In *The Republic*, Bodin drew a picture of the origin of kings that gave subjects the choice of obedience or slavery: when the man who led them to victory was chosen captain, his followers lost their “full and entire” natural liberty, and those who “would not abate any” portion of it to live under their leader's laws, “lost [it] all.”⁸¹

While the royalists and the *politiques* looked to obedience, constitutionalists looked to history. François de Hotman proposed that pre-Roman Gaul had been ruled by elected sovereigns subject to removal by the people in his *Francogallia* (1573).⁸² Furthermore, the bond of lord and subject was created from the bottom up and not the other way

⁷⁹ Eustace Mandeville Wetenhall Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture: A study of the idea of order in the age of Shakespeare, Donne and Milton* (New York: Vintage Books, n. d.), 83 and 85.

⁸⁰ Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1565), trans. Beatrice Reynolds (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), 164 [VI].

⁸¹ Knolles, *Six Bookes*, 47; Bodin, *Six Livres*, 112 [I.6].

⁸² Hotman, *Francogallia*, 155 [I] and 235 [VII].

around. Hotman reminded his readers that there might “be a people without a king,” but “idea of a king without a people” was “as inconceivable” as that of “a pastor without a flock.”⁸³ The idea that a king was the servant of the people was a sentiment just as likely to be voiced by kings who had no intention of being judged by their people, however, as by constitutionalists. In giving instructions to the Viceroy of Naples in 1558, Philip II wrote that rulers must “*trabajar para el pueblo*” because “the people were not made for the sake of the prince, but the prince was made for the sake of the people.”⁸⁴

As conflicts between King and Parliament heated up in England during the seventeenth-century, parallel arguments appeared. Decades before the civil wars began, James I found himself forced to defend his title to the throne against those who wished to reestablish a Catholic succession. In his *Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, James used homage as subtext for his defense of irrevocable monarchy:

And if it be not lawful to any particular Lord’s tenants or vassals, upon whatsoever pretext, to control and displace their master, and over-lord ... how much less may the subjects and vassals of the great overlord the King control or displace him?⁸⁵

Homage was a bond sealed with an oath. Kings took a Coronation Oath. If homage was a revocable contract, did the coronation oath create a revocable contract between monarch and people? James had an answer for that as well. While he claimed to “deny any such contract to be made then,” taking the oath for no more than a voluntary “promise” to do his duty, he used the maxim that no man could be a judge in his own case to show the folly of treating the oath as a contract:

a contract cannot be thought broken by one party, and so the other likewise to freed thereto, except that first a lawful trial and cognition be had by the ordinary Judge of the breakers thereof: Or else every man be both party and Judge in his own cause; which is absurd once to be thought. Now in this contract (I say) betwixt the king and his people, God is doubtless the only Judge.⁸⁶

Unfortunately for the Stuarts, victory would be on the side of those who thought the expression “unbreakable contract” was an oxymoron. In

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 399–401 [XIX].

⁸⁴ Quoted in Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 249.

⁸⁵ James I, *Political Works*, 64.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 68–69.

his *Holy Commonwealth* (1659), the Presbyterian minister Richard Baxter maintained that

A warre raised against the Body of a Nation, is by them to be construed to be against the common good; No warre therefore against the Body of Nation, by any of its members; Prince or people, can be lawfull... If one party shall remain bound, though the other violate their fidelity, the Covenants are vain.⁸⁷

Oliver Cromwell thought the language of bookkeeping and stewardship appropriate, writing to the Chevalier de Marville in 1654, that when sovereigns “sacrifice the people to their caprices the people have a right to demand an account and set a term to their violence.”⁸⁸ The nature of a true social contract was still being argued during the Glorious Revolution. In the *Anatomy of an Equivalent*, Sir George Savile argued that the key thing “necessary to making a fair Bargain” was the “*exact equality ... of taking or refusing, concurring or objecting*” to it regardless of the social inequality of the contracting parties.⁸⁹ French constitutionalists had forged contractual readings of the body politic during the religious wars of the sixteenth century. In the anonymous *Discours politiques des diverses puissances* (1574), an unusual variation on the family analogy was tied to the idea of the coronation oath as a social contract. According to the *Discours*, the king, who was “the child of the country in respect to his generation,” was only made the “father of the country through his office,” and recognized the superiority of “the people” when he tendered “the oath to the community, to maintain its liberties.”⁹⁰ The alert reader will recognize yet another variation on the concept constructed during the Middle Ages of the king’s two bodies, the eternal office and the mortal office-holder.⁹¹ However, the revival of the French monarchy during the seventeenth century postponed any actual (as opposed to theoretical) French constitutionalism into late eighteenth century.

⁸⁷ Richard Baxter, *A Holy Commonwealth* (1659), ed. William Lamont (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 191 and 200 [XII].

⁸⁸ Cromwell, *Writings and Speeches*, 3:324.

⁸⁹ Savile, *Complete Works*, 106.

⁹⁰ Mack P. Holt, editor, *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 38.

⁹¹ The standard treatment of this theme is Kantorowicz’s *The King’s Two Bodies*; see *ibid.*, 7, for Plowden’s definition of the king’s “body politic” (as “consisting of Policy and Government,” and not the same as the commonwealth itself) as opposed to his “body natural,” but note *ibid.*, 13, for a differing view (*Willion v. Berkley*) in which the king’s body politic is the commonwealth: the king “has” a body politic of which he is the head and the subjects are the members.

The English were determined to rid themselves of James II and equally determined not to be seen to be innovating in doing it, but this seemed to require some reconfiguring of the original bond of homage. During the debates in Parliament, Sir George Treby even managed to drag in James I's view "that when a king breaks in upon his laws, he ceases to be a king," and Sir Robert Howard was sure that both people and king had "divine right," so that if a king broke "that pact and covenant with his people," they had every right to sever it in return.⁹² When the Earl of Clarendon countered that "this breaking of the Original Contract" was "a language that has not been long used in this place," Treby was able to respond that Richard Hooker had used it in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, a work "very worthily recommended by the testimony of King Charles I" himself, and violating the "original contract" was finally the claim chosen to make against James II.⁹³ Perhaps the ultimate argument was John Locke's, using the concept of the servant's duty to argue for, rather than against, the right to rebel, harking back, simultaneously to the overriding power of the parent as only begetter:

For Men being all the Workmanship of one Omnipotent, and infinitely wise Maker; All the Servants of one Sovereign Master ... they are his Property, whose Workmanship they are...

For a Man, not having the Power of his own Life, *cannot*, by Compact, or his own Consent, *enslave himself* to any one, nor put himself under the Absolute, Arbitrary Power of another, to take away his Life, when he pleases. No body can give more Power than he has himself...

[thus] there remains still *in the People a Supream Power* to remove or *alter the Legislative*, when they find the *Legislative* act contrary to the trust reposed in them.⁹⁴

4. *honor and profit*

Like the parent-child relationships on which they were patterned, master-servant and monarch-country relationships developed a unique set of terms of address woven around the theme of profit. These terms came in reinforcing pairs—profit and advantage, profit and ease, profit

⁹² Cobbett's *Parliamentary History of England from the Norman Conquest, in 1066, to the Year 1803* (London: T. Curson Hansard, 1808) 5:41 and 5:46.

⁹³ Cobbett 5:76, 5:70, and 5:50.

⁹⁴ Locke, *Second Treatise*, 271 [II§6], 284 [IV§23], and 367 [XIII§149].

and avail, profit and worship, profit and pleasure, profit and honor—whose components were not necessarily synonyms but some of whose meanings overlapped at different points in time.

With its classical pedigree, “honor and profit” was the oldest of these rhetorical pairs. It was also the most complex, because honor and profit were as likely to be used as antonyms as they were as synonyms. In Cicero’s hands, “honor and profit” were appeals to different qualities. In discussing the functions of oratory in his *De Inventione*, Cicero explained that, unlike Aristotle who took advantage to be the only end of deliberative oratory, he recognized both “honor and advantage (*honestatem et utilitatem*)” as oratorical ends. Honorable ends included “virtue, knowledge and truth,” things sought for their “intrinsic merit” rather than for “any prospect of gain (*emolumento*),” while “advantageous” ends such as “money (*pecunia*)” were sought for the “profit or advantage (*fructum atque utilitatem*)” derivable from them. But Cicero introduced an element of ambiguity into this classification when he recognized as a third class of legitimate ends, those of “friendship and a good reputation (*amicitia, bona existimatio*)” that were desired for a combination of their “merit” and the “prospect of some advantage (*utilitatem*).” This mixed group, Cicero also called “*honestum*.”⁹⁵ So, even in Cicero’s hands, it was not impossible for honor and profit to be treated as synonyms rather than antonyms.

This duality became entrenched in the medieval era and persisted into the early modern because of the evolving meaning of honor. If profit had a host of connotations that were not financial, honor often entailed financial gain. Honor could certainly mean “glory, renown, fame” or “reputation” and “good name,” but it also meant “credit” (a word with its own financial connotation as monetary credit depended on reputation and status) and “reverence ... accorded to rank” or even the “exalted rank” itself.⁹⁶ “Honorable” was certainly a title applied only to persons of rank, and “reputation” was a term Sir Thomas Smith associated with “gentlemen” but not with “burgesses” despite their prominence in their respective local governments.⁹⁷ But, in law,

⁹⁵ Cicero, *De Inventione*, bilingual ed., trans. H.M. Hubbell (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1949), 325–327 [II.51–53].

⁹⁶ *O.E.D.* (1933), 5:367–368. The most thorough discussion of the interplay between the ethical and monetary meanings of credit is that found in Muldrew’s *Economy of Obligation*. For a brief statement of his thesis that the financial meaning was still subsumed within the ethical during the seventeenth century, see *ibid.*, 3.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Republica*, 41 [I.21].

an “honor” was “a seigniorship of several manors held under one baron or paramount lordship,” giving us the sixteenth-century expression, the *lord of the honor or manor*.⁹⁸ And what the lord of the manor expected from this “honor” was, in one word, “profit.” So when William Wayte opened a letter to Lord Lisle in 1535 with “My duty to your honourable lordship supposed, In all humbly wise desiring daily to hear of your prosperous estate” and ended it with “In doing this I am bound as I have been always, to pray for your noble estates long to endure, with increase of honour,”⁹⁹ he was not referring to the estate’s reputation for probity but to an increase in its size and income. When the grocer William Cholmeley proposed a scheme in 1553 for finishing woolen cloths in England before exporting them, a scheme he believed would bring in “infinite treasure,” it was so that the king act “to the greate honoure” of his realm.¹⁰⁰

Because kings were the fathers of their countries, they were also the masters, but masters were as bound to profit their servants as servants were to profit their masters. Because kings were anointed, they were also ministers, bound to service in this way as well. So, it is not surprising to find the same language of profit running through legislation as through the correspondence of masters and servants and parents and children. The fourteenth-century political upheavals in England had no effect on these relationships. The Ordainers and their opponents spoke the same language of profit. In the Ordinances of 1311, the Ordainers relinquished all gifts of “land, rent, liberty, escheat, wardship, marriage,” so that “all sources of profit” would be “improved for the benefit of the king” until his debts were paid off “and some other ordinance ... made for the honour and profit of the king.”¹⁰¹ Both the 1353 *Protest of Parliament against Legislation by Ordinance* and the 1354 parliamentary confirmation of those ordinances claimed to further the “common profit” or what was “good and profitable” for crown and realm.¹⁰² One member of the Parliament of 1376 acknowledged his own inferior status when he claimed it would be neither “profitable” nor honorable for the common “to deliberate on such great affairs” without “the counsel and

⁹⁸ *O.E.D.* (1933) 5:368.

⁹⁹ Byrne, *Lisle Letters*, 1:566 [#51a].

¹⁰⁰ Thoms, *Request*, 5.

¹⁰¹ Carl Stephenson and Frederick George Marcham, eds., *Sources of English Constitutional History*; Vol 1: *A Selection of Documents from A.D. 600 to the Interregnum*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 193.

¹⁰² Adams and Stephens, eds., *Select Documents*, 126.

aid of those greater and wiser than we are ... the lords.”¹⁰³ An entry in the Parliament Rolls for 1399 reveals that the members of the House of Commons “prayed our said lord the king” uphold some measures enacted under his predecessor because they were to “the great honour and common profit of the whole kingdom.”¹⁰⁴ If the phrase was shortened at all, it was usually honor that was left out as being included in profit. Measures in Parliament in Richard II’s day routinely bore the prefatory tag “*Pour cōe profit du royaume d’Engleterre.*”¹⁰⁵

The medieval preference for honor and profit was hardly limited to England. Oresme, as we have seen, managed to squeeze both possible constructions of the pair into one gloss on the contrasting training of field hands and supervisory slaves: supervisors should be “trained in prudence to promote the honor and profit of the household (*et que il soit prudent pour faire le honneur et profit de le hostel*),” while laborers received extra food because they were “more concerned with profit than with honor (*ont plus cure de profit que de honneur*).”¹⁰⁶ A more strictly business-oriented Italian variant shows up in thirteenth through sixteenth-century account books and partnership agreements as “*A nome di Dio e guadangnio* (“in the name of God and profit”),” shorthand for “In the name of God and of profit which God will give for the benefit of soul and body.”¹⁰⁷

In England, however, as the fourteenth century gave way to the fifteenth, the fashion changed from honor to worship. In letters addressed to “your worship,” inferiors pledged their actions would be to the “worship and profit” of their patrons. In 1462 B. Essex wrote to John Say, esquire:

Worshipful Sir I recommaunde men unto you lating you wite that the King maketh right grete bostes of you for the truest and the feithfullest man that any christen Prince may have, of the whiche I am right glad and joyeux that ye have soo borne you, which I pray to God that it may longe endure to youre proufit and worship.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Stephenson and Marcham, *Sources*, 1:221.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, I:255.

¹⁰⁵ John Mitchell Kemble, ed., *Certaine Considerations upon the Government of England by Sir Roger Twysden, Kt. And Bart.* Camden Society, o.s., 45 (1849), 152 [14.14].

¹⁰⁶ Menut, “Oresme,” 818.

¹⁰⁷ *Business, Banking, and Economic Thought in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Selected Studies of Raymond de Roover*, ed. Julius Kirshner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 71–72.

¹⁰⁸ Sir Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 1st ser. (London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1969), 15 [#8].

The Pastons and their friends, dependents, and relations could hardly put pen to paper without due attention to worship and profit. A more effusive stylist might write of his superior's "worchep, profyfte, or avayle" or "pleaser, wirschip, and profit," while a curter correspondent referred only to his "pleasure and profet" without changing the sense of obligation, and a still curter writer might simply use "profit" on its own to mean useful to a superior or an inferior.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps because English was still closely tied to its Germanic and French sources, this language of obligation developed its own equivalent of the *vous* and *tu*. Social superiors might refer to their own "worship" to remind laggard servants of their duty, as Alys, Lady Sudeley, did when she told Thomas Stonor (sometime before 1431) to seal some deeds for "gret consideracions and causes touching my worship and gret profit."¹¹⁰ However, etiquette seemed to require that one thanked inferiors for their efforts to your "ease and profite," as Sir John Fastolf thanked John Paston in his will by leaving him a number of properties.¹¹¹ "Ease" could also be used by superiors in a negative sense as seen in the previous chapter when John complained to Margaret Paston that her son had never done anything to their "profite, ese or help."¹¹²

The spread of the Renaissance to England brought back "honor" as the more fashionable pair with profit in the sixteenth century as letters once addressed to the "most worshipful" lord/lady/madam/sir were now more fashionably addressed to the "right honorable" lord/lady/madam/sir, but the transition was a gradual one. In a Paston family letter from 1464, we find "honor, worsschippe, and profit."¹¹³ When the Northern Merchants listed their grievances against the London Merchant Adventurers in 1478, they wrote of the danger to the "grete honor, worship, and profett" of the realm.¹¹⁴ And before honor and profit established its pre-eminent place in the sixteenth century, a number of alternatives made the rounds. Godfrey Grene promised his "reverend and worshipfull master" that he would "faine do that as might be

¹⁰⁹ For "worship and profit," see Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 2:105 [#90], 2:114 [#96], 3:75 [#322], 3:144 [#383], 3:289 [#466], 3:302 [#477], 4:48 [#525], and 4:89 [#556]. For "worship, profit, and avail," see *ibid.*, 4:85 [#552]. For "pleasure, worship, and profit," see *ibid.*, 3:54 [#308]. For "pleasure and profit," see *ibid.*, 4:147 [#585]. For "profit" alone, see *ibid.*, 2:292 [#231], 3:191 [#391], and 4:38 [#515].

¹¹⁰ Kingsford, *Stonor Letters*, 1:47 [#53].

¹¹¹ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 3:160–161 [#386]; also 4:246 [#641] ("profit and ease").

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 4:157 [#591] and 5:79 [#752].

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 4:89 [#536].

¹¹⁴ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:2.

most” to Sir William Plumpton’s “pleasure and her [his sister’s] profit” in 1464 while Brian Roccliffe had assured the same Sir William two years earlier of his efforts to the “profit and pleasure” of his “right reverend and honorable master.”¹¹⁵ Profit was paired indifferently with avail, advantage, benefit, and commodity in Thomas Cromwell’s letters.¹¹⁶ Sir Thomas More had claimed that whatever aided the Catholic Church was to the “profyte and advantage” of the realm.¹¹⁷ If the transition was gradual, it was also incomplete. Tyndale couched obedience in terms of “worship, pleasure, will and profit,” while John Brown thought he owed his former master and his profession “pleasure or profit,” in publishing the *Marchants Avizo* (1589).¹¹⁸ While the Renaissance ushered in the vogue for classically-inspired vocabulary, the change in fashion may also have been the result of “worship” having uncomfortable connotations in a Protestant ear when applied to ordinary mortals: the term once ubiquitous in Catholic England was rare in Protestant.

But the fashion for “honor and profit” was gaining ground in England and on the continent in two very different senses: honor was sometimes treated as a virtual synonym for profit and sometimes to used distinguish the aims of the genteel classes from those of the bourgeoisie. At other times, the context was so vague as to be capable of either construction. Erasmus set them up as parallels in his *Education of a Christian Prince*:

In the promulgation of laws, the first concern is to see that they do not savor of royal financial plans nor of private gain for the nobility but that they are drawn up on an honest plan and that everything looks to the welfare of the people... A law should have its effect, then, in all these ways—honor and disgrace, profit and loss.¹¹⁹

In the *Monarchy of France* (1519), Claude de Seyssel seemed to equate the two. He advised monarchs considering conquest to choose another enterprise “*plus honorable et profitable*,” if they had not the means to hold what they conquered or if the conquest would cost more than any possible “*profit*” from the new territory, though, in making up their balance sheet, “*l’importance*” the importance of the place had to be

¹¹⁵ Thomas Stapleton, ed., *Plumpton Correspondence*, Camden Society, o.s., 4 (1839), 10–12 [#8] and 6 [#6].

¹¹⁶ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 1:331 [#18], 1:340 [#22], 1:354 [43], 1:373 [#67], 2:29 [#159], and 2:30 [#160].

¹¹⁷ More, *Debellacyon*, 87 [II.15].

¹¹⁸ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 168; and Brown, *Marchants Avizo*, Ai.

¹¹⁹ Erasmus, *Education*, 221 and 224.

considered as one possible type of “*profit*.”¹²⁰ If one considers that the importance of the conquest also redounded to the conqueror’s honor, then one has to consider that honor, for Seyssel, was sometimes a form of profit.

Baldesar Castiglione’s oft reprinted *Book of the Courtier* (1528) was the work of a renowned diplomat. The conclusion of his discussion of the limits of a courtier’s obedience was that a “gentleman” should obey his lord “in all things profitable and honorable to him,” but not in anything that would bring the lord “harm and shame,” and disobedience in honorable affairs was forbidden even if it would result in the lord’s “greater advantage and profit” because such disobedience began “the practice of making light” of the lord’s commands.¹²¹ The point here was not to contrast honor and profit but to understand the relationship between obedience and honoring one’s lord. The ultimate judge of that obedience was not the servant, however, but the master. In 1586, Lord Burghley wrote to the Earl of Leicester that the Queen was so angered by Leicester’s accepting the governance of the Netherlands that she would “not endure” any defense thereof, though Burghley himself thought Leicester’s action “both honorable and profitable” to the crown.¹²²

In 1537, Cromwell instructed the Duke of Norfolk in 1537 to make sure the Council of the North guided their efforts “to the kinges honour & resonable proffict”¹²³ with no distinction intended. The Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini kept a book of *Ricordi* for his own edification that attained considerable popularity after it was posthumously published by his family in 1576. As set out in the *Ricordi*, the distinction between honor and profit was quite clear:

In this world of ours they manage their affairs well who keep their own interest [*lo interesse proprio*] always in sight, and measure every action by this gauge. Mistakes will, however, be made by those who do not rightly apprehend wherein their true interest [*lo interesse suo*] lies; who, for instance, think it always to consist in some pecuniary gain [*commodo*

¹²⁰ Claude de Seyssel, *La Monarchie de France et deux autres fragments politiques*, ed. Jacques Poujol (Paris: Librairie D’Argences, 1961), 205–206 [V.2].

¹²¹ Castiglione, *Courtier*, 117–118 [II.23–24].

¹²² John Bruce, ed., *Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, during his government of the Low Countries, in the years 1585 and 1586*, Camden Society, o.s., 27 (1844), 104 [#37]. The following month, Burghley wrote Leicester that he had reminded the Queen her anger was “lyk to endaunger hir in honor, suerty, and proffitt.” For which, see *ibid.*, 197 [#73].

¹²³ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:56 [#184].

pecuniario] rather than in honour [*onore*], and in knowing how to maintain their credit and good name [*la riputazione ed el buono nome*].¹²⁴

And even more clearly drawn in his *Dialogue on the Government of Florence* (written between 1521 and 1524):

thinking solely about profit and being able to enjoy one's own things with security is a private matter rather than one befitting the public interest, where one should have regard for honour, magnificence and majesty, giving more consideration to generosity and breadth of spirit than to utility.¹²⁵

In his preface to the Ten Articles of 1536, Henry VIII appeared to draw a fine distinction between honor and profit, reminding his subjects that their obedience would spur him to further efforts tending to “the honour of god” and “the profytte” of those subjects.¹²⁶ But this is not the Ciceronian distinction we might expect of a Renaissance monarch; rather, it reflects the different duties inherent in reciprocity between superiors and inferiors. Henry VIII was as famous for not accepting earthly superiors as he was for changing wives, but even he did not question that he was God's servant. And servants were as duty bound to honor their masters as children were to honor their parents. So, he was honoring his master while, fulling his role as a true king (and not a tyrant), he was thinking always of the profit of his subjects. A king was as much a servant of the realm (as a whole) as he was the superior of any subject within it, so it was also quite proper for a king to honor that realm. Thus the 1526 Act disbanding the smaller religious houses, giving “all their rights, profits, jurisdictions and commodities, unto the King's Majesty and to his heirs” was to be used “to the pleasure of Almighty God and to the honour and profit of this realm.”¹²⁷ A partial translation of Polydore Vergil's *English History* made during the reign of Henry VIII praised Henry VI for beginning his reign by doing all things appertaining “to the honor of the realme, and profite of the common wealth.”¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Guicciardini, *Ricordi*, 288–289 [II.218]. For sixteenth-century publication information, see the unpaginated forward by Giuseppe Prezzolini.

¹²⁵ Francesco Guicciardini, *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, ed. and trans. Alison Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 92 [II].

¹²⁶ Christian, “Taverner's Postils,” 379–380.

¹²⁷ G.R. Elton, *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 376.

¹²⁸ Sir Henry Ellis, ed., *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, Camden Society, o.s., 29 (1844), 1 [Book 23].

In 1549, Protector Somerset relied on the same distinction as had Henry VIII, albeit varying the vocabulary somewhat, in promising relief to the rebels “so as the same” might most advance “the benefit of the comon welthe and the honor of God.”¹²⁹ In 1552 the citizens of London employed the pairing in the same sense when they asked the Privy Council to aid them in their suit to the king to acquire Bridewell to use as a poorhouse: “not doubting but even as God hath called you to honor, even so will he preserve and continue you to his honor and the profit of the common wealth.”¹³⁰ When Robert Thorne tried to persuade Henry VIII in 1527 to take part in the colonization of the Americas, it was because he thought that in so doing Henry could reap “perpetual glory” and his “subjectes infinite profite.”¹³¹ In fact, distinguishing God as the king’s superior by the use of honor from the king, realm, or subjects as inferiors with the use of profit (or benefit) was not a Renaissance innovation but a long-standing tradition. Edward I’s Confirmation of the Charters (1297) claimed it was for “the honour of God and of Holy Church and for the benefit of our entire kingdom,”¹³² while “the commons very humbly pray that, for the honour of God, for the maintenance of your crown, for your own profit and that of all the prelates and lords, and for the relief of the poor commons of your realm,” the king complete appointments to his council in the Parliament Rolls for 1386.¹³³ Emperor Maximilian’s prohibition of the import of English cloth into the Netherlands 1494 rested on the same grounds and the same rhetorical distinction, as he believed it would be to the “*prouffit et utilite*” of his country and subjects.¹³⁴ Bodin drew the same distinction when discussing measures to relieve the poor, believing such imposts were to the “*honneur de Dieu*” and the “*proffit de la republique*,” or, as Knolles slightly altered it, “most pleasing” to God and “most profitable to the Commonweale.”¹³⁵ One honored a superior (God) and profited one’s inferiors. Not only was the distinction quite traditional, it was also not unique to the honor and profit pairing. Back in 1476 or thereabouts, one of Sir William Plumpton’s stewards desired to remedy

¹²⁹ Ethan H. Shagan, “Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives,” *The English Historical Review*, 114 #455 (February 1999), 60.

¹³⁰ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:306.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 2:87.

¹³² Stephenson and Marcham, *Sources*, 164.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 1:238.

¹³⁴ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:8.

¹³⁵ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:81 [VI.2]; Knolles, *Six Bookes*, 670.

a tenant dispute to Sir William's "worshipp" and "great profit" to his tenants.¹³⁶ When discussing a monarch's proper attitude toward revenue, Bodin again unconsciously echoed Henry. The monarch, as servant of the realm must use his revenues to the "*proffit et honneur de la Republique*."¹³⁷

There is some evidence that this sense of the pair continued until at least the early seventeenth century. In 1590, Sir John Smyth complained to Lord Burghley about the suppression of a little book on weapons Smyth had written tending "to the honor, proffitt, and suretie of the realm."¹³⁸ A client of Raleigh's by the name of John Keymer addressed some *Observations made upon the Dutch fishing* to the Queen in 1601. When he tired of receiving no response, Keymer drew up a new memorandum for James I in about 1620, reminding his king that the information was of "extraordinarie importance for" the "honor and proffitt" of James and his posterity.¹³⁹ Keymer explained that if his policy recommendations were followed the king's "revenues" would increase by "many thousands of pounds yearly," and "please and greatly proffitt" his "people."¹⁴⁰ More interesting, perhaps, is the reversal of these terms we have already seen used by Richard Clough in 1561, when he presumed that getting rid of corruption in the customs office would be to the Queen's "profett, and the honor of the realme."¹⁴¹

However, any author could use the same phrase in different senses at different times. While Bodin used the same distinction as had Henry VIII in discussing poor relief or a monarch's attitude towards revenue, he employed the phrase to quite different effect when setting out ways in which a king should reward faithful subjects. There, Bodin proposed that the rich receive positions that afforded more profit than honor [*"plus d'honneur que de proffit"*] while the poor receive positions that afforded more profit than honor [*"plus de proffit que d'honneur"*], as those who were already rich enough [*"assez riche"*] sought "*l'honneur*" while the poor sought "*proffit*."¹⁴² This was certainly a case of honor *or* profit rather than honor *and* profit, a distinction between the final ends

¹³⁶ Stapleton, *Plumpton Correspondence*, 39 [#29].

¹³⁷ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:35 [VI.2].

¹³⁸ Ellis, *Literary Men*, 60 [#18]; see also the same phrase, spelled differently in his letter to the Queen, *ibid.*, 64 [#19].

¹³⁹ Prichard, *Original Papers*, 35.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁴¹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:226–228.

¹⁴² Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:303 [VI.6].

appropriate to two social classes, those who were already wealthy and those who were not. If profit was to become a term associated only with the business classes, one would expect that it would no longer be able to act as the glue that held all the roles in the commonwealth (husbands-wives, parents-children, masters-servants) together. But in sixteenth-century England, that tradition was unaffected by such distinctions. Certainly, English nobles were not subject, as were the French, to the rules of *dérogéance*.

In fact, even as a rhetorical device, attitudes towards honor and profit were all over the map. *Political Education* (1582), an anonymous pamphlet coming out of the Dutch revolt, found the revolutionary solidarity oath “honest, profitable, righteous, lawful, proper, possible, feasible” as well as “useful and profitable,” and thus “not only [to] be embraced, accepted and sworn for the sake of profit and honor but also because it is founded on justice.”¹⁴³ When James VI of Scotland’s tried to dissuade Elizabeth I dissuade from executing his mother, he asked

what should move you to this form of proceeding, supponing the worst, which in good faith I look not for at your hands—honor or profit? Honor were it to you to spare when it is leased looked for, honor were it to you ... to take me and all other princes in Europe eternally beholden unto you in granting this my so reasonable request, and not ... to put princes to straits of honor whereupon your general reputation and the universal (almost) misliking of you may dangerously peril both in honor and utility your person and estate. Ye know, madame, well enough how small difference Cicero concludes to be betwixt *utile* and *honestum* in his discourse thereof, and which of them ought to be framed to the other.¹⁴⁴

The confusion continued into the seventeenth century. For those who thought honor pertained to gentlemen and profit to businessmen, Sir Francis Bacon answered that honor as well as profit might be a spur to “business,” but neither was the right rationale. According to his *Advancement of Learning* (1608):

no kind of men love business for itself but those that are learned; for other persons love it for profit, as an hireling that loves the work for the wages; or for honour, as because it beareth them up in the eyes of men ... only learned men love business as an action according to nature, as agreeable to health of mind as exercise is to health of body, taking pleasure in the action itself, and not in the purchase.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Gelderen, *Dutch Revolt*, 171–181.

¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 291–292 [# 73, A].

¹⁴⁵ Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* (1608), in *Selected Writings*, 169 [I].

Honor was as empty of value for the radical John Warr. In his *Administrations Civil and Spiritual* (1648), Warr argued that “all the Demetriuses of these Dianas, will cry out when their honor and profit is taken off, as it will undoubtedly be, when equity itself comes to be exalted.”¹⁴⁶ Demetrius was the Ephesian silversmith who set the mob on Paul’s messengers because Christianity threatened his brisk trade in silver shrines for Diana [*Acts* 19:24–41]. For Thomas Hobbes, honor and profit were only two different varieties of the “power after power” sought ceaselessly by all until “Death” finally put an end to their restless desires, claiming natural “equality” should make “every man ... equally love every man, as being equally man,” but man was so corrupted as to only “frequent those, whose society affords him honour or profit.”¹⁴⁷ The most elevated classes were hardly the only ones claiming the right to honor. In 1667, Samuel Pepys built himself a “stable and coach-house,” because he found it “necessary ... both in respect to honour and the profit of it,” the profit being savings over the long run “expense” of hiring “hackney-coaches” and the honor being the credit in the eyes of his peers it would bring him.¹⁴⁸

Nonetheless, there seems to have been a growing trend by the beginning of the seventeenth century to see Cicero’s theme of the potential conflict between *honestas* and *utilitas* as a social distinction. In an article on “Classical Rhetoric and the Promotion of the New World,” Andrew Fitzmaurice cited example after example. To reproduce two of the most revealing, in *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625), we find “if Honour hath prevailed with honourable and higher spirits, we shall come laden with arguments of profit to prese meaner hands and hearts to the service of Virginia,” while in William Crashaw’s *A Sermon Preached before the right honourable the Lord Lawarre* (1609), we find “profit is not the principal end of this action; if it were, what should so many of the Nobilitie, of the Gentry, and especially of the Clergy have their hands in it? It is not fit for them to [be?] Merchants.”¹⁴⁹ The change is likely

¹⁴⁶ John Warr, *Administrations Civil and Spiritual* (1648), in *A Spark in the Ashes: The Pamphlets of John Warr*, ed. Stephen Sedley and Lawrence Kaplan (London: Verso, 1992), 34 [XVI].

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), ed. C.B. Macpherson (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1985), 161 [I.11]; Hobbes, *De Homine* and *De Cive*, 111 [*De Cive* I.2].

¹⁴⁸ Pepys, *Diary*, 4:326 [June 1, 1667].

¹⁴⁹ Andrew Fitzmaurice, “Classical Rhetoric and the Promotion of the New World,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58 #2 (April 1997), 230 and 231; see *ibid.*, 229–230 for the equating of the rhetorical and social distinctions.

due to multiple causes. Decade after decade of social dislocation due in part to rising prices and decade after decade of trying to discover the cause of that inflation surely contributed to “profit” leaving an increasingly bad taste in the mouth. The long-standing tradition of rendering “honor” or “worship” to one’s superiors and “profit” to one’s inferiors would help fix “profit” in the aristocratic mind as a bourgeois value, and much of the prescriptive literature of the age was penned by the aristocracy. Even the surge in bookkeeping and trade manuals would help reinforce the idea that the middling sort preferred profit to honor. Yet, the question remains to what extent profit had been truly reduced to a term applying only to middle-class activities in particular or even business activities in general if it was used one way in rhetorical set pieces and another in legislation, mirrors for princes, and everyday correspondence among the upper as well as the middle classes. With such conflicting meanings, a great variation in interpretation was possible for any contemporary reader.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BODY OF PROFIT

Though early modern writers often followed their classical sources in creating society through conscious aggregation rather than through biological evolution, once that society was created it took on an overwhelmingly organic cast. Society, as the sixteenth-century understood it, had seven basic characteristics. It was (1) necessitated by and created from the functionally incomplete nature of the individual (2) and the differing skills humans possessed, (3) resulting in a necessary social division of labor, (4) seen as analogous to the physiology of the human body, (5) but organized hierarchically, (6) requiring above all that each individual profit the whole, and (7) thus animated by justice. This chapter is devoted to the first six of those seven characteristics. The complex nature of the seventh will be explored in the chapters following.

1. *Society is necessary for human survival*

In Plato's *Republic*, the city came into being because human beings did not possess all the skills they needed to survive; in consequence, variously skilled individuals gathered in one place because they understood that supplementing each other's talents worked to their own advantage.¹ When Aristotle attempted to explain the priority of the state over the individual in the *Politics*, he stressed a Platonic insufficiency in humankind: "for if each individual when separate is not self-sufficient, he must be related to the whole state as other parts are to their whole." But, according to Aristotle, society owed its existence as much to a psychological need for company as it did to any functional insufficiency: "even when men have no need of assistance from each other they none the less desire to live together." In consequence, society existed not merely "for the sake of life," but to make possible the "the good life,"

¹ Plato, *Republic*, 149 [II.11].

the most human life.² For Aquinas, it was an insufficiency in human reasoning ability as much as in human physical aptitudes that made society necessary:

It is not possible for one man to arrive at a knowledge of all those things by his own individual reason. It is therefore necessary for man to live in a multitude so that each one may assist his fellows, and different men may be occupied in seeking, by their reason, to make different discoveries—one, for example, in medicine, one in this and another in that.³

Vitoria combined these elements into a view that society arose because human beings were “frail, weak, helpless, and vulnerable” but also because their “rational” souls made them “need partnership.”⁴ Botero brought back the consciousness of self-interest, maintaining that it was an understanding of “how great [a] profit they were like to enjoy” if “they would unite themselves into one body” that both created and maintained civic polities.⁵ Profit played an equally prominent role in Sir Thomas Elyot’s explanation of why a commonwealth was “called *Respublica*” in Latin: “of which the Res ... also signifieth estate, condition, substance, and profit. In our old vulgar, profit is called weal.”⁶

For Thomas Starkey, the problem was that human beings did not understand that they were created “to commune such gifts as be to them given, each one to the profit of other,” and “not to live to their own pleasure and profit, without regard of the weal of their country.” They forgot that, just as a single body’s overall state of health was not a matter of the “health of one particular part thereof” but a matter of the harmony of the whole, the health of the political body “standeth not in the weal and prosperous state of any particular part separate from other, but in every part coupled togidder, unite and knit as members of one body by love.” If they did understand this they would not “so much regard the private weal as they do,” comprehending that “in a country, city or town where every man regardeth only his own profit, wealth and pleasure, without respect of the profit of the whole, they shortly fall in decay, ruin and destruction.”⁷ The individual’s inability to stand alone made regard for the supporting whole equally vital to the survival of the whole and the part.

² Aristotle, *Politics*, 11 [I.1.12], 201 [III.4.2], and 9 [I.1.8].

³ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, viii [*De Regimine Principum* I, § 6, p. 176].

⁴ Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 7–8 [*On Civil Power*, 1.2 § 4.1–4.2].

⁵ Botero, *Greatness of Cities*, 227 [I.2] and 233–234 [I.7].

⁶ Elyot, *Governor*, 1 [I.1].

⁷ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 22 [I], 62 [II], and 70 [II].

2. *Human uniqueness*

As *tabula rasa* theory developed over the course of the Enlightenment, it stressed the basic identity of human beings, but in the understanding of human nature inherited by the sixteenth century, human beings were born highly differentiated both in inclinations and abilities. This Greek view was certainly reinforced by the sixteenth century's elaboration of the parable of the talents—Lady Mildmay, for example, believed “one man hath not all gifts,” but as “every man hath some” he “ought to search out” and develop them as he “shall be called to account for his own talent” in the end⁸—, but the idea was logically inseparable from the idea of human incompleteness from the first. If all human beings were born possessing identically insufficient natures, no greater grouping of human beings would possess the necessary survival skills. Neither the society nor the human race itself could survive. Each one of us, then, had to possess a unique skill required for human survival. Plato was adamant that “our several natures” were “not all alike but different,” making one individual “naturally fitted for one task and another for another.”⁹ For Aristotle society would not be possible if we were alike; the “components” that made up “a unity” had to “differ in kind.”¹⁰ Identity was monotony, not harmony. Aquinas believed that “the perfection of the universe” was the result not of any “plurification” of individuals with the same “given natures,” but of a divinely provident “diversification of natures” ensuring that “nothing necessary to human existence” was “ever lacking.”¹¹ The same natural “differentiation in the generation of men” making possible the same “sufficiency of life” found its way into Marsilius of Padua's *Defensor Pacis*.¹² For Sir Thomas Elyot, that uniqueness created a profitable order:

God giveth not to every man like gifts of grace, or of nature, but to some more, some less, as it liketh His Divine Majesty... it is therefore congruent and according that as one excelleth another ... so should the estate of his person be advanced in degree or place where understanding may profit.¹³

⁸ Pollock, *Faith and Physic*, 81.

⁹ Plato, *Republic*, 151–153 [II.11].

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 71–73 [I.1.4].

¹¹ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, xi [Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard; I Sent. 44.I.2.5] and ix [Quaestiones quodlibetales vii.17; cf *Summa contra gentiles* iii.132 and *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* v. 27].

¹² Marsilius, *Defensor*, 25 [I.8.1].

¹³ Elyot, *Governor*, 4 [I.1].

In the writings of many Protestant reformers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these diverse “natures” became “callings,” divinely imposed social roles. The claim that this change was a uniquely Protestant feature of early modern social thought generated a considerable amount of controversy in the first decades of the twentieth century. In an extensive note in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1920/21), Max Weber detailed what he took to be the transformation of the classical and secular *officium* into the medieval and religious *vocatio* and finally into the Protestant and secular *Beruf* (“calling”) in the writings of Martin Luther.¹⁴ Weber’s thesis had first been put forward in a two-part article published in 1904 and 1905. Opposing theses were not long in coming. First in an appendix to a 1913 speech to the Munich Academy of Sciences and then in *Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus* (1916), Lujo Brentano made the case that the secular calling was as much a feature of Catholic Christianity as of Protestant. In particular, he cited the Vulgate version of *I Corinthians* 7:20–24 with its repeated exhortations to “every man” to “abide in the calling (*vocatione*) to which he was called.”¹⁵ For the modern controversialists, the origin and development of the idea of the calling was not investigated for its own sake but in order to uncover the “spirit” that produced Capitalism. For our purposes it is more important to uncover how well the idea of the calling fit the organic functionalism of early modern society whether under Catholic or Protestant rule.

¹⁴ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976), 204–211. Weber located the font of capitalism in the more radical forms of Protestantism as opposed to the centrality of Lutheran or Calvinist thought proper, but this, too, has been a subject of much controversy. See, for example, Michael Walzer’s contention that Puritan Calvinism was the main instrument of socio-political as well as socio-economic change in *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), *passim*, and Margo Todd’s counter-claim that the Puritans learned it from the Christian Humanists in *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), *passim* but especially 16–17. In all three versions, however, the resulting *Geist* is an unintended rather than an intentional result of behaviors designed to promote a social as well as a personal reformation.

¹⁵ Lujo Brentano, *Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus* (Munich: Verlag de K.B./Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1916), 136ff.

3. *Social Functionalism*

Since our self-survival required drawing on the skills of others, all members of any society had to contribute their individual talents to the survival of that society in order to survive themselves. While it would be possible to create a miniature society in which there was only one individual with each necessary talent (one farmer, one builder, one weaver, etc.), political societies were made up of much larger numbers. In consequence, no individual related directly to the whole society. Instead, all individuals possessing the same skills formed a group (farmers, builders, weavers, etc.) that related directly to whole society, while the individual related directly only to the group. In other words, individuals related indirectly to the society through the mediation of the group, which became the basic functional unit. Individuals became cells in a social organ. This allowed for the creation of a social division of labor based on function (farming, building, cloth making). The specialization of function accompanying the division of labor allowed for maximum production: more of what everyone needed was produced at a higher level of quality, in greater quantities, and with less effort.

The earliest example of the recognition of the effects of a productive division of labor is probably that in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, with its linking of the fine quality of the items produced in the Persian ruler's palace to the division and specialization of labor employed within.¹⁶ By the time it reappeared in Plato's *Republic*, quantity and ease of production had been added to quality in a formulation that did not appear novel to Socrates or his listeners:

The result, then, is that more things are produced, and better and more easily when one man performs one task according to his nature, at the right moment, and at leisure from other occupations... The farmer will not make his own plough.¹⁷

One can almost hear Adam Smith rehearsing his examples of tailors who do not make their own shoes, cobblers who do not make their own clothes, and farmers who make neither but exchange their crops for both.¹⁸ This was hardly a justification for *laissez-faire* in ancient Greece,

¹⁶ Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, bilingual ed., trans. Walter Miller (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 2:332–335 [VIII.2.5–6].

¹⁷ Plato, *Republic*, 151–153 [II.11].

¹⁸ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 478 [IV.2.11].

however. For Aristotle, “one man one job” may have been “the best rule for efficiency,” but, rather than trust to enlightened self interest to match up jobs and holders, he believed “the lawgiver ought to see that this may be secured, and not appoint the same man to play the flute and make shoes,” and favored making the functional divisions hereditary, since “permanence of function” was “better for the political community.”¹⁹ Not surprisingly Aquinas placed tremendous importance on the role of the “diversification of men for diverse tasks” in maintaining the society as well as the individual.²⁰ By the sixteenth century, all this had become something of a commonplace. Sir Thomas Elyot duly noted that “the husbandman feedeth himself and the clothmaker; the cloth maker apparelleth himself and the husband; they both succour other artificers; other artificers them; they and other artificers them that be governors.”²¹

4. *The Organic Analogy*

At the most basic level, the analogy of the body politic saw each specialized social group (farmers, builders, weavers, etc.) as performing a unique function necessary to the survival of the whole, just as each organ of the human body performed a unique function necessary to the body’s survival. Neither Plato nor Aristotle used the expression, “body politic,” but both worked from an analogy between the state and the human body. Without that analogy, Plato’s *Republic* would not even be possible, for to examine the nature of justice in the individual, Socrates proposed to search for it first in a city, a larger version of a human being.²² For Aristotle, a state was simultaneously a “multitude” and a “unity,” but “just as the multitude becomes a single man with many feet and many hands and many senses, so also it becomes one personality as regards the moral and intellectual faculties.”²³ When he wanted to explain the priority of the state over the individual he again relied upon the relationship between the human body and its parts: “since when

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 163 [II.8.8] and 73 [III.1.6].

²⁰ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, ix [*Quaestiones quodlibetales* vii.17; cf *Summa contra gentiles* iii.132 and *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* v. 27].

²¹ Elyot, *Governor*, 4–5 [I.1].

²² Plato, *Republic*, 147–149 [II.10].

²³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 71–73 [II.1.4] and 223 [III.6.5].

the whole body is destroyed, foot or hand,” rendered unable to perform their defining functions, “will not exist except in an equivocal sense.”²⁴

Of all the metaphors used for the state—a family, a ship, a clock—that of the human body has proved the longest lasting. And for good reason, it is not only flexible—one can match up parts and functions in so many different ways—but also ingenious in that even consciousness, the key difference between the human being and the cell, can be used to its advantage.

(a) flexibility. Developed over the centuries, the parallels drawn between body parts and social functions range from the perfunctory to the elaborate. Functions assigned the parts change over time and place, allowing monarchists and parliamentarians, constitutionalists and absolutists, and secularists and theologians to make the model fit their biases, although certain pairings—church/soul, ruler/head, farmer/feet—persist throughout the variations. With the recovery of the Aristotelian corpus, Aristotle replaced Plato as the classical cornerstone of mainstream medieval and early modern political thought. Plato’s supposed communalism, in particular, did not sit well with most medieval and early modern political theorists, though most of those who both opposed or favored it seem not to have remembered that Plato did not prescribe it for society as a whole but only for its guardian class.

Aristotle divided society up into six functionally differentiated classes: magistrates to administer justice, priests to provide religion, soldiers to defend, wealthy men to provide funds, farmers to provide food, and artisans to labor.²⁵ This remained a popular schema at least into the early seventeenth century. The merchant and economic writer Gerard de Malynes used it over and over again in a series of books published between 1601 and 1622. Malynes claimed:

Our society and weale publicke is furnished with sixe necessary things, namely divine service, judgement, armes, riches, arts and sustenance ... and those that have the managing thereof as Clergy men, Magistrates, Noblemen, Merchants, Artificers and Husbandmen ... execute their charge according to their profession.²⁶

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 [I.1.11].

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 571–573 [VII.7.4–5]. For a less coherent numbering resulting from his critique of the *Republic*, see *ibid.*, 293–297 [IV.3.11–14].

²⁶ Gerard de Malynes, *Saint George for England, Allegorically described* (London, 1601), 16.

Of which professions:

the Clergie-men did say, we instruct; the Noblemen, we fight; the Magistrates we defend; the Merchants, we enrich; the Artificers, we furnish; and the Husband-men, we feed.²⁷

The only real alteration Malynes made to Aristotle, which Malynes felt his century's increased experience with trade justified, was to substitute merchants (who brought bullion into a realm when they traded correctly) for Aristotle's reliance on landed wealth.²⁸

While Aristotle's schema continued to provide a basic outline for body politic theory into the seventeenth century, it was common long before then to further elaborate matters. One of the most charming anatomical elaborations was that put forward by John of Salisbury in the *Policraticus* (1159):

since the soul is, as it were, the prince of the body, and has rulership over the whole thereof, so ... the prefects of religion preside over the entire body... The place of the head in the body of the commonwealth is filled by the prince, who is subject only to God and to those who exercise His office and represent him on earth, even as in the human body the head is quickened and governed by the soul. The place of the heart is filled by the Senate, from which proceeds the initiation of good works and ill. The duties of eyes, ears, and tongue are claimed by the judges and governors of provinces. Officials and soldiers correspond to the hands. Those who always attend upon the prince are likened to the sides. Financial officers ... may be compared with the stomach and intestines... The husbandmen correspond to the feet, which always cleave to the soil ... and therefore deserve aide and protection all the more justly since it is they who raise, sustain, and move forward the weight of the entire body.²⁹

The hand of the commonwealth is either armed or unarmed. The armed hand is that which performs the soldiering of camps and blood; the unarmed is that which administers justice.³⁰

Some users of the analogy were more novel in their anatomical arrangements than others. Instead of equating the church with the soul,

²⁷ Gerard de Malynes, *Consuetudo, Vel Lex Mercatoria, or The Ancient Law-Merchant* (London, 1622), 62. Lewes Roberts, a member of both the East India and Levant Companies, borrowed this schema virtually intact; for which, see his *Merchants Mappe of Commerce* (London, 1638), unpaginated "Epistle" and 20.

²⁸ See Gerard de Malynes, *The Maintenance of Free Trade* (London, 1622), 37–38; also *Lex Mercatoria*, 62, 416 (mispaginated as 316) and 486.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 64–65 [V.2].

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 173 [VI.1].

John Knox maintained that “religion is as the stomach to the body, which if it be corrupted, doth infect the whole members.”³¹ Erasmus equated the prince with the heart because a “sound” heart imparted “life to the whole body, since it is the fountain of the blood and life spirit; but if it has been infected, it brings utter collapse to every part of the body.”³² For Thomas Starkey, “civil order and politic law administered by officers and rulers” was the soul, the prince was the heart, the prince’s “under-officers” were the head because they watched out for the state’s welfare as the eyes and ears watched out for body’s, the “craftsmen and warriors” were the hands that defended the body and made it whatever it needed, while “the ploughmen and tillers of the ground” were the feet whose labor sustained it.³³

Along with its unique government, England would also develop a unique bodily analogy, as in John Spelman’s *Reading on Quo Warranto* (1519) in which the king was the head of the body politic, but parliament (“the lords spiritual and temporal and the commons”) were “the limbs.”³⁴ For Sir Thomas Smith, parliament “representeth and hath the power of the whole realme both the head and the bodie. For everie Englishman is entended to bee there present, either in person or by procuration.”³⁵

So flexible a tool was the analogy that Elizabeth I could dismiss parliamentary consideration of any possible royal marriage in 1567 simply by relegating that organ to a different body part: “who is so simple that doubts whether a prince that is head of all the body may not command the feet not to stray when they would slip?”³⁶ She might easily have been echoing Cranmer’s condemnation of the rebellions resulting from Henry VIII’s closing of the monasteries on the grounds that “Who did ever see the feet and legs divide themselves from the head and other superior parts?”³⁷ That same flexibility allowed Georg

³¹ Knox, *Political Writings*, 149.

³² Erasmus, *Education*, 175–176. For many during the period, Kepler, Galileo and Harvey among them, the heart held a special place in physiology that linked it with the sun in the heavens, hence its affinity with monarchs; for which, see Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: The Zodiac of Life*, trans. Carolyn Jackson and June Allen; rev. Clare Robertson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1983), 9–11.

³³ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 55–57 [II].

³⁴ Baker, *Spelman*, 76 [Lecture I (Text A)].

³⁵ Smith, *Republica*, 49 [II.1].

³⁶ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 105.

³⁷ Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 193.

Obrecht (1547–1612), professor of Law in Strasbourg and Palgrave of the Empire, to use the analogy to justify noble participation in trade:

I however regard commerce as in a way necessary for a republic, and so necessary, indeed, that it cannot be separated from the body of the republic. For merchants are in the body of the republic, as it were, attendants, carriers, feet, etc... consequently, I hold it as more honorable than despicable when noble and high persons carry on trade for the sake of lightening the burdens of their subjects, and of discharging public obligations with the least difficulty.³⁸

(b) ingenuity. Centuries before humanity could even see the cell, the individual member of the group was, in fact, seen as analogous to a cell within a specialized organ. The organ did not function if all its cells/members did not perform their assigned tasks. The body did not function if all its organs/social groups did not perform their assigned tasks. The founders of the theory were well aware that as conscious individuals, human beings could choose not to perform their jobs, but rather than destroy the theory, this key difference between human beings and cells was incorporated into it through the functions of education and discipline. While Plato and Aristotle saw individuals as differing at birth in inclination and ability, they still recognized that education was necessary to actualize these differing potentials. Had they seen human beings as identical to cells, they would have treated education as being nothing more than technical training. But each recognized that education had a second, equally vital, function: it had to make the individual a willing performer. For that reason, both the technical skills and the supporting values taught each functional group within society had to differ from group to group. If a willing worker was a more productive worker, then well-taught human beings were better at making society function than robotic cells were at making a human body function. The disadvantage became an advantage. Thus the subject of education was introduced in the *Republic* with an explicit link to its role in molding group members' ideas rather than their skills:

Shall we, then, thus lightly suffer our children to listen to any chance stories fashioned by any chance teachers and so to take into their minds opinions of the most part contrary to those that we shall think it desirable for them to hold when they are grown up?³⁹

³⁸ Albion W. Small, *The Cameralists: the Pioneers of German Social Polity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1909), 53.

³⁹ Plato, *Republic*, 177 [II.17].

Functionally differentiated education and discipline were a given for Aristotle because of the “unlimited” nature of the appetites most of humanity lived only to satisfy. Thus “the starting-point in such matters” was “to train” the naturally “respectable” not to “wish for excessive wealth, and to contrive that the base may not be able to do so.”⁴⁰

Society also required a means of fending off disorder, whether from within or without. If human willfulness made disorder from within a possibility, then the mechanism created by society to restore order from within stood it in good stead in warding off disorder from without. Once again, a potential disadvantage was turned into an advantage. Recognition of this idea is implicit in the metaphor of the physician that so often turns up in conjunction with discussions of the body politic. From ancient to early modern times, the dominant theory of ill-health was of a disorder of the bodily fluids. Even when some specific diseases were seen as caught from without, their primary action was to create this organic imbalance. Since the body did not have an internal order restorer, an external harmonizing agent—the physician—was needed. The ability of physical organs to malfunction reinforced their similarity to social organs whose members could malfunction willfully. The fact that the *political* body contained an internal harmonizing agent (its disciplinary organ) marked its functional superiority over the natural body. Since the differences between humans and cells could be made to work to society’s advantage, the analogy was seen to hold.

As Socrates reminded his listeners in Plato’s *Republic*, a physician’s purpose was not to seek his own advantage, but the advantage of the patient.⁴¹ And just as in the family analogy, sometimes parents had to cause their children pain in order to profit them, sometimes a ruler/physician had to maim the body politic in order to save it. John of Salisbury warned his king that “love of his brethren should not prevent him from correcting their errors with proper medicine,” even as it was “the practice of physicians when they cannot heal a disease with poultices and mild medicines to apply stronger remedies such as fire or steel.”⁴² Sir John Fortescue concurred, believing that as a surgeon did not “err” in cutting off an “affected limb” provided he restored “the

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 119 [II.4.11–12].

⁴¹ Plato, *Republic*, 63 [I.15].

⁴² John of Salisbury, *Statesman’s Book*, 37 [IV.8].

sick man to health, though maimed,” so neither did a “good king err” who wasted “the goods of his subjects” or exposed “some of them to inevitable perils” for “the safety of the kingdom,” if it could not otherwise be preserved.⁴³ Sir Thomas Elyot maintained that the “governors” of a body politic, standing “in the stead of physicians,” should “proceed” to its “most speedy and sure remedy.”⁴⁴ Cranmer sermonized about a king who “like a merciful prince, is loath to cut off the members of his body, although many of them are so rotten and corrupt, that, if they might, they would infect the whole body.”⁴⁵ John Knox warned the Regent of Scotland that it was “more profitable” that “pestilent humors” such as the “papistical religion” be “expelled with pain than that they be nourished to the destruction of the body” politic.⁴⁶ As France struggled through civil wars between Protestants and Catholics, François de Hotman wrote that just as natural bodies, “when dislocated by some external blow,” could not “be repaired unless each member be restored to its natural seat,” so would the “commonwealth” of France “return to health” when it was “restored” to its original constitution.⁴⁷ James I told his Parliament in 1609 that a king might, as part of his duty to preserve the body politic, “apply sharp cures, or cut off corrupt members, let blood in what proportion he thinks fit, and as the body may spare.”⁴⁸

Not all commentators were so sanguine however about the feasibility or eventual success of such purges. Guicciardini believed it was “difficult to find the right medicine,” for it had to “avoid hurting the head by treating the stomach,” or “by removing important decisions from the hands of” the uncomprehending masses, create “tyranny by giving too much authority to any single individual.”⁴⁹ Botero maintained that “just as not all illnesses of the human body are curable ... so not all disorders of the body politic can be remedied.”⁵⁰

In a world in which the private was always dependent upon the public, monarchs were also reminded that their own health depended

⁴³ John Fortescue, *De Natura Legis Naturae*, trans. Chichester Fortescue, in *The Works of Sir John Fortescue*, ed. Thomas Fortescue, Lord Clermont (London: privately printed, 1869), 1:216 [I.25].

⁴⁴ Elyot, *Governor*, 232 [III.26].

⁴⁵ Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 197.

⁴⁶ Knox, *Political Writings*, 89.

⁴⁷ Hotman, *Francogallia*, 143.

⁴⁸ James I, *Political Works*, 308.

⁴⁹ Guicciardini, *Dialogue*, 98 [II].

⁵⁰ Botero, *Reason of State*, 111 [V.9].

upon their maintaining the health of the body. Thomas Mun believed the ruler was “like the stomach in the body, which if it cease to digest and distribute to the other members, it doth no sooner corrupt them, but it destroys itself.”⁵¹

5. *social hierarchy*

As an exercise in mere logic, it might be possible to create an organic analogy without hierarchy, or at least without any hierarchy beyond that of distinguishing a supervisory organ from a group of contributing organs. But, historically speaking, lack of hierarchy was rarely found even in social contract theory until the middle of the seventeenth century. The organic analogy appears as hierarchical from the very first because the analogy’s creators wove their pre-existing hierarchical world view into its very fiber. The most basic distinction in Greek thinking was between Chaos and Logos; Chaos was always associated with lack of differentiation and Logos with hierarchical distinctions. The gold, silver, brass, and iron ages of human history paralleled the gold, silver, brass, and iron natures of the human beings in the *Republic*, who were to be uprooted from their families if the metal of their nature did not match that of their parents, and moved up or down the social scale accordingly.⁵² The distinctions between the rational, passionate, and nutritive portions of the soul in Aristotle’s psychological theory directly paralleled his distinctions between human, animal, and plant life. From Ptolemy came the hierarchy of heavenly bodies and spheres. To this foundation, the Judeo-Christian tradition added hierarchies of angels and devils. All found their way into Marsilio Ficino’s *Book of Life* (1489) in which “a magnet attracts iron from all directions” because “the magnet holds a higher rank in what it contains of the Bear Star” the iron “a lower one,”⁵³ and

⁵¹ Thomas Mun, *Englands Treasure by Forriagn Trade* (London, 1664), 70.

⁵² Plato, *Republic*, 307 [III.21]. For the fullest treatment of the “Great Chain of Being,” see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), *passim*; its neo-Platonic origins are discussed on page 59.

⁵³ Marsilio Ficino, *Marsilio Ficino’s ‘Book of Life’* (1489), trans. Charles Boer (Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, 1994), 133 [III.15].

There is thus a more perfect life in animals, to the extent that their complexion is further removed from contrariety than it is in plants. In men, again, for the same reason, there is an even more perfect mixture.⁵⁴

And by the time Sir Edmund Dudley described the great chain of being in *The Tree of Commonwealth* (written 1510 and circulated in manuscript although not published until 1859), it went:

God hath set an order by grace bytwene hym self and Angell, and betwene Angell and Angell; and by reason between Angell and man, and betwene man and man, man and beest; which order, from the highest pointe to the lowest, god willyth us fymely to kepe without any enterprise to the contrary.⁵⁵

And Sir Thomas Elyot could illustrate his view that “order proceedeth” from the “discrepance of degrees” and “Chaos” from equality with examples of hierarchies among the “heavenly ministers,” elements, plants, animals, and humans.⁵⁶ Shakespeare could have Ulysses proclaim that “when degree is shak’d,” the “enterprise is sick” and “discord follows,” while Richard Baxter could prove that “nature doth make such inequality of persons in point of sufficiency and endowments, as necessitateth Government” by pointing to the “inequality or Order” amongst the “Sun and Moon, and Stars” and the inequality in size of “the very stones of field.”⁵⁷ And what Catholic priest or clergyman of any mainstream Protestant sect would have disagreed with the sentiment found in Guicciardini’s *Ricordi* that “True merit [*la laude*]” lay not in seeking to change our station but “in doing what we have to do well, and as befits our means ... each in his own station” deserving of “honor and praise [*laude ed onore*].”⁵⁸ Certainly not Robert Crowley, whose *Way to Wealth* (1550) proclaimed that God would “prosper” those who stayed within their degrees, for, as Sir Thomas Smith so colorfully put it in his *De Republica Anglorum*,

when to ech partie or espece and kinde of the people that is applied which best agreeth like a garment to the bodie or shoe to the foote, then the bodie politique is in quiet, and findeth ease, pleasure and profit. But

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 154 [III.19].

⁵⁵ Edmund Dudley, *The Tree of Commonwealth*, ed. D.M. Brodie (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1948), 90–91.

⁵⁶ Elyot, *Governor*, 2–5, [I.1].

⁵⁷ William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* (I.3), in *The Tragedies of Shakespeare* (New York: Random House/Modern Library, n.d.), 1:16. Baxter, *Holy Commonwealth*, 64–65.

⁵⁸ Guicciardini, *Ricordi*, 96–97 [I.151]; similarly *ibid.*, 287–287 [II.216].

if a contrary forme be given to a contrary maner of people, as when the shoe is too little or too great for the foote, it doth hurt and encomber the convenient use thereof.⁵⁹

From all these sources combined came the basic hierarchies of mind/soul over body, male over female, master over slave, and intellectual functions over manual. Even knowledge was hierarchical, with cosmic, religious, and political knowledge considered too “high” for the “lowly” sort to study.⁶⁰ Explaining why it was not wise to make education available to all, Richelieu maintained that a body with eyes all over it (“*des yeux en toutes ses parties*”) would be “*monstrueux*,” as would a state all of whose subjects were “*savants*”: without a just proportion, without a hierarchy of order into which everyone fit, “*le repos public*” could not be maintained.⁶¹

While one might have expected the triumph of Christianity, with its emphasis on the equality of souls, to moderate if not altogether eliminate social hierarchy, one finds instead that a careful distinction was usually consciously drawn between spiritual and political realities. Bracton acknowledged that the implication of *Luke 22:26* (“he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve”) was evidence that “there is no respect of persons with God,” but insisted that this in no way voided the earthly spiritual hierarchy of pope, archbishop, and lesser prelates or that secular hierarchy of “emperors, kings and princes, and under them dukes, earls, and barons, magnates or vasavours and knights, also freemen and bondsmen.”⁶² Whether or not Richard Hooker ever read Bracton, he certainly would seem to be agreeing with him in this sermon:

And although the nature of the mystical body of the church be such, that it suffereth no distinction in the invisible members ... all are equally Christ's, and Christ is equally theirs: yet in the external administration of the church of God, because God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, it is necessary that in every congregation there should be a distinction, if not of inward dignity, yet of outward degree.⁶³

⁵⁹ Robert Crowley, *The Way to Wealth* (1550), quoted in Ramsey, *Tudor*, 133; and Smith, *Republica*, 28 [I.15].

⁶⁰ The classic treatment of this hierarchy and its demise is Carlo Ginzburg, “High and Low: The Theme of Forbidden Knowledge in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Past and Present* 73 (Nov. 1976): 28–41.

⁶¹ Richelieu, *Testament*, 204.

⁶² Bracton, *De Legibus*, 2:32.

⁶³ Hooker, *Works*, 2:787 [*Sermon VI*].

Every action of everyday life was governed by the social hierarchy. In Christine de Pizan's treatment of thank you gifts, considering the giver's "situation in life" was just as important as considering the "value, beauty or curiosity of the gift," and was treated in much more detail.⁶⁴ Castiglione advised princes "to love those close to him according to their rank," giving justice equally to all but maintaining "a reasonable inequality" in the distribution of "honors and dignities."⁶⁵ Fortescue's approval of the legislation requiring jurors to have "lands or rents ... to the value of at least forty shillings a year" for cases involving forty marks or more was that it prevented suborning caused by a juror's "hunger and poverty."⁶⁶ Such attitudes would even survive the political upheavals of the seventeenth century. The hubris that brings about the downfall of many of the characters in Molière's plays was overstepping "the normal bounds ... of prescribed action in their familial and societal situations."⁶⁷ In the *Nouveau traité de la civilité* (1671), an etiquette handbook popular in both France and England, Antoine de Courtin noted that

When it be your fortune at any play, or ball, or spectacle, to be placed next to the person of quality, it is ungraceful to fly out into any rapture or extravagant acclamation at every passage that pleases you; you must give him leave to judge first, by attending his approbation. For though many times you may have reason enough, and it may show your Capacity, yet it will be a greater evidence of your want of breeding and respect. It is the best way therefore to forbear till that Person of Quality applauds or condemns it, and then you may fall in as you see occasion.⁶⁸

Monarchs were especially sensitive to the coercive power of that hierarchy. While Henry VIII had few compunctions about putting himself at the head of England's religious hierarchy, he still ordered up a "Homily on Obedience" to remind his subjects that just as God had "created and appointed all things in heaven, earth and waters in a most excellent and perfect order," every "degree of people, in their vocation, calling

⁶⁴ Pizan, *Medieval Woman*, 116–117 [I.20].

⁶⁵ Castiglione, *Courtier*, 316–317 [IV.33].

⁶⁶ Fortescue, *De Laudibus*, 59 [XXV].

⁶⁷ Holt, *Society*, 156.

⁶⁸ Antoine de Courtin, *The Rules of Civility, or, Certain Ways of Deportment Observed in France* (1671), 47–48, as quoted in Jolanta T. Pekacz, "The Salonnieres and the Philosophes in Old Regime France: The Authority of Aesthetic Judgment," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 #2 (April 1999), 279.

and office” had to keep to the duty appointed them or all would end in “babylonical confusion” with no man left “unrobbed” or “unkilled.”⁶⁹

As any upsetting of the fixed hierarchy was almost universally seen as certain to lead to disaster, hurling such charges at an opponent was a common rhetorical device, Machiavelli attacked one Florentine regime in his *Florentine Histories* (1525) for favoring the common people at the expense of the nobility. This encouraged the lowly to think themselves above their duty, ensuring chaos because the “grave and natural enmities” between classes created the nobility’s “wish ... to command” and that of the commonality “not to obey” were “the cause of all the evils” that arose in society.⁷⁰ In 1548, William Thomas was certain no

estate should long prosper, where the power is in the commonalty. For like as it becometh neither the man to be governed of the woman, nor the master of the servant, even so in all regiments it is not convenient the inferior should have power to direct the superior.⁷¹

John Knox was equally certain that a body with “no head eminent above the rest,” or eyes in its hands or ears in its feet was “a monster” that “could not long endure.”⁷² Richard Hooker chose to make the same point by referring to the celestial hierarchy, asserting that if “any principal thing, as the sun, the moon, any one of the heavens or elements, but once cease or fail, or swerve,” the “sequel thereof would be ruin both to itself and whatsoever dependeth on it.”⁷³

Hierarchical schemes could be almost as varied as assignment of body parts because they tended to mirror the actual state of affairs in a particular kingdom. So for Claude de Seyssel, the step on the hierarchical ladder below the king was taken by the nobility, the step below that by the *peuple gras* (rich commoners), and the bottom step by the *peuple menu* (non-wealthy commoners). What was important was not the division itself but that each estate had its own “*droits et prééminences*”

⁶⁹ Elton, *Tudor Constitution*, 15.

⁷⁰ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories* (1525), trans. Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 105 [III.1].

⁷¹ William Thomas, “Treatise on Government (1548),” quoted in Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, 25.

⁷² Knox, *Political Writings*, 56.

⁷³ Hooker, *Works*, 1:182 [*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I.9§1]. See also, *Works*, 2:780 [*Sermon VI*]: “For as in a chain, which is made of many links, if you pull the first, you draw the rest; and as in a ladder of many staves, if you take away the lowest, all hope of ascending to the highest will be removed.”

according to its particular “*qualité*” that kept it from oppressing other estates or conspiring against the king.⁷⁴ In addition, the knowledge that one could rise from *menu* to *gras* through one’s own efforts, and from *gras* to *noblesse* for outstanding service to the king, kept the people “*contenté*” in their estates rather than giving them “*occasion de machiner*” against the others.⁷⁵ The estates arose because just as in “*un corps humain*,” it was “*nécessaire*” in a political body that there be “*membres inférieurs, servants*” to their “*supérieurs*.”⁷⁶ In the hands of a constitutionalist such as Hotman, Seyssel’s estates were transmogrified into the chambers of a mixed government.⁷⁷ In his *Description of England* (1577), William Harrison drew a basic four-part division of the English into “gentlemen, citizens or burgesses, yeoman, and artificers or laborers,” with the monarch, nobility, bishops, gentry, doctors, and professors grouped in ranks within the classification of gentlemen.⁷⁸ The key break in the classification scheme was that between gentlemen and the other three groups, and the defining feature was that gentlemen could “live without manual labor.”⁷⁹ Harrison’s schema is a reminder that some distinctions in the hierarchy were universally more important than others.

The intellectual-manual distinction played a key role in the hierarchical organization of the social organs from the first, as can be seen in Plato’s attitude toward the *Republic*’s wage-earners:

And there are, furthermore, I believe, other servitors who in the things of the mind are not altogether worthy of our fellowship, but whose strength of body is sufficient for toil; so they, selling the use of this strength, and calling the price wages.⁸⁰

Although Aristotle included farmers and laborers among the six classes necessary to a state’s existence, he drew a sharp distinction between workers and citizens. For Aristotle, farmers, craftsmen and laborers were “a necessary appurtenance of states,” but only “the military and deliberative classes” were truly “parts of the state,” while merchants were also excluded from citizenship because their life was “ignoble.”⁸¹

⁷⁴ Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 120–121 [I.13].

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 125 [I.17].

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 124 [I.16].

⁷⁷ Hotman, *Francogallia*, 293–294.

⁷⁸ Harrison, *Description*, 94, 97, and 113–114 [II.5].

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 114 [II.5].

⁸⁰ Plato, *Republic*, 157 [II.12].

⁸¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 579 [VII.8.6] and 575 [VII.8.2]. See similarly, *ibid.*, 195 [III.3.2] and 235 [III.7.5].

The intellectual-manual distinction was reinforced by the physical arrangement of the human body. If one looks, for example, at the *Cosmographia* of Bernard Silvestris, one finds that “the soul should govern in the head, the vital force established in the breast obey its commands, and the lower parts, the loins and those organs placed below them, submit to rule.”⁸² Even though the heart was “the animating spark of the body, nurse of its life, the creative principle and harmonizing bond of the senses,” it was subject to the brain because it was located below it.⁸³ Marsilius of Padua borrowed Aristotle’s six-part division of the state, and the same hierarchical distinction between “honorable” and “vulgar” classes.⁸⁴ The *Memoirs of Philippe de Commines* were first published in France in 1524 and translated into English in 1596. Commines explained that

when I say people, I mean those who have high positions and dignities under their authority... It will sufficient to speak of the high-ranking people, for it is through them that God’s power and justice are made known. For if misfortunes befall a poor man or one hundred of them no one worries about this... When calamity befalls a great city, however, the reaction is not the same; yet it does not arouse so much commotion as in the case of a prince.⁸⁵

There were more attempts to alter than to do away with the hierarchical underpinning of the age’s social theory during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The more radical elements in the Peasant’s Revolt and in some of the more extreme sects that emerged in the sixteenth century broached the issue of true equality, but had little widespread or permanent effect. The major thrust of the constitutionalists in the French Religious Wars of the sixteenth century was to alter the relationship between the body and the head, not that amongst all the members of the body. Even during the British Civil Wars (1642–1649) of the seventeenth century, most factions also sought only a new balance of power between the body and the head. When as typical a republican as Algernon Sidney declared that “a civil society” was “composed of equals, and fortified by mutual compacts,” he was talking about the relationship between “the head” which he believed could have no

⁸² Bernard Silvestris, *Cosmographia*, 121 [XIII].

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 125 [XIV].

⁸⁴ Marsilius, *Defensor*, 15 [I.5.1].

⁸⁵ Philippe de Commines, *The Memoirs of Philippe de Commines*, ed. Samuel Kinser, trans. Isabelle Cazeaux (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1969–1973), 1:361 [V].

“subsistence without the body” and that body.⁸⁶ Thomas Hobbes may have believed that, philosophically speaking, “nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind” that “when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claime to himself any benefit, to which another may not pretend,” but that was also what he believed lay behind the “Warre” in the state of nature that created society in the first place.⁸⁷ For a few years, however, before Oliver Cromwell succeeded in pacifying the communities of the British Isles, it must have seemed as if the world had truly been “turned upside down,” judging from the theories put forward by radical factions such as Gerrard Winstanley and his Diggers who supposed that private property and the hierarchy it spawned were, in fact, the “cause of all wars and bloodshed.”⁸⁸ The Leveler Richard Overton declared in 1646 that “every man” was “by nature ... a King, Priest and Prophet,” all being equally “sons of Adam.”⁸⁹ In 1648, John Warr declared that when society’s “first principle” was “fully restored, the Lord alone” would be “exalted” as all humanity stood “on even ground, in a perfect level, co-ordination and parity.”⁹⁰ So strong was the hierarchical mind set in England that even a republic proved too much of a leveling to be tolerated for long. By 1660, England once more had a king, and the only permanent change to the social order was a tipping of the balance of power away from the monarch toward parliament.

6. *Part to Whole*

Given that human beings created society to make up for their own shortcomings, their well-being was seen as dependent on that of society. For Plato basic self-preservation demanded that each must “perform” the “one social service in the state for which his nature was best adapted.”⁹¹ The reciprocal relation was acknowledged in Aristotle, who maintained that it was “not possible for the whole to be happy, unless

⁸⁶ Sidney, *Discourses*, 88 [2§2] and 538 [3§30].

⁸⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 183 and 185 [I.13].

⁸⁸ Hill, *World*, 139.

⁸⁹ G.E. Aylmer, ed., *The Levellers in the English Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 69–70.

⁹⁰ Warr, *Spark*, 34.

⁹¹ Plato, *Republic*, 367 [IV.10]; see similarly, *ibid.*, 149–151 [II.11].

most or all of its parts, or some of them, possess happiness (*eudaimonia*),” but it was clearly the less important of the two relationships: “the state is also prior by nature to the individual; for if each individual when separate is not self-sufficient, he must be related to the whole state a other parts are to their whole.”⁹² John of Salisbury accepted that “the well-being of the head” did not “long continue when sickness attacks the members,” and Bracton was convinced that a foolish king would “destroy” his people, for “corruption” descended “to the members” from “the head.”⁹³ In the end, however, functional and logical priority was always given to the whole over the part. So, for example, Aquinas, who believed “every part is ordained to the whole, as imperfect to perfect” and each “man is a part of the perfect community,” would not allow private persons to deprive criminals of life or limb “even with the consent of the possessor,” because “of the harm that thereby results to the community,” not because of any harm that resulted to the “individual.”⁹⁴ Because of the head’s role in maintaining the health and harmony of the whole, it often stood in for that whole in this logical proportion. Thus Fortescue believed that “as nature” impelled “the several members” of the body “to expose themselves to blows rather than allow their head to be endangered,” a king’s “subjects must be exposed to danger” if necessary to avoid the death of their king.⁹⁵ Where Aristotle, as we have seen, wrote of the members not really existing once the body was killed because they were no longer able to fulfil their functions, by the time Saint Augustine was writing the *City of God*, the head stood in for the body in this context, as can be seen in Fortescue’s citation:

Saint Augustine, in the 19th book of the *De Civitate Dei*, chapter 23, said that *A people is a body of men united by consent of law and by community of interest*. But such a people does not deserve to be called a body whilst it is acephalous, i.e., without a head. Because, just as in natural bodies, what is left over after decapitation is not a body, but is what we call a trunk, so in bodies politic a community without a head is not by any means a body.⁹⁶

⁹² Aristotle, *Politics*, 97 [II.2.16] and 11 [I.1.12].

⁹³ John of Salisbury, *Statesman’s Book*, 60 [IV.12], and Bracton, *De Legibus*, 2:306.

⁹⁴ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, xviii [*Summa Theologica* I–II, Q 90, A2 and II–II, Q 65, A1 and A2].

⁹⁵ Fortescue, *Natura*, 1:216 [I.25].

⁹⁶ Fortescue, *De Laudibus*, 31 [XIII].

So overriding was the consideration of the welfare of the whole that so conservative a writer as Thomas Wilson could, in his *Discourse uppon Usurye* (1572), take a stand that any modern day defender of a William Clinton would instantly recognize:

And thys I saye, that like as one maye bee a good magistrate to the people, and yet no goode man to hymselfe, even so may one bee a good man to hymselfe, and prove no good magistrate to the people. And of these two, lesse harme doth that man to privatlye offendeth in hys lyfe, than he that publikelye offendeth in his charge.⁹⁷

This view had a certain legal parallel. John Spelman defined abuse of franchise as “where someone uses his liberty otherwise than as the law wills, in derogation of the common weal or of the king; but not where [the misuse] is only in derogation of his own profit [*son profett demesne*].”⁹⁸ When Nicholas Udall (d. 1557), a teacher at Eton, praised Valerius Flaccus for turning around a life which in youth had been “a famous example of all riotousness,” he did not stress any benefit to Flaccus himself, but how Flaccus became “infinitely more holsome and profitable to the commen weale then he had afore been pernicious in the same.”⁹⁹

In order for that whole community to function (and hence for the individual to profit), each individual had to work for the good/profit of the whole. This was stressed repeatedly in body politic theory both in a positive and a negative sense. The theory was full of positive injunctions to the members to perform their parts well for their own profit, as we have already seen in the admonitions of John of Salisbury and Bracton to the head to maintain the members. A French pamphlet of 1296 declared

Depraved is that part that does not conform with its whole, and useless and quasi paralytic a limb that refuses to support its own body; layman or cleric, nobleman or man of low birth, whoever refuses to come to the support of his head and his body, that is, the lord king and the kingdom [of France], and lastly of himself, proves to be a non-conforming part and a useless and quasi paralytic limb.¹⁰⁰

In Dante’s *Monarchia* (1324) we find that because “the proper function is not instituted for the sake of the creature but the latter is created to

⁹⁷ Wilson, *Usurye*, 179 [Preface].

⁹⁸ Baker, *Spelman*, 101 [IX (A)].

⁹⁹ Ellis, *Literary Men*, 5 [#1].

¹⁰⁰ *Antequam essent clerici*, quoted in Kantorowicz, *King’s Two Bodies*, 258.

serve its proper function,” an individual man, like any other “part of his community ... ought to sacrifice himself for his country, preferring the greater to the lesser good.”¹⁰¹ Anyone leafing through the *Imitation of Christ* would find the familiar verdict that “he does well, who serves the community before his own interests” even if his “loving action really springs” from “self-interest.”¹⁰² Calvin reminded his readers that God intended “the gifts” He bestowed upon them to be “distributed for our neighbor’s benefit” just as members of the human body took no “profit” from their “power except” what proceeded “from the common advantage of the whole body.”¹⁰³ Thomas Starkey believed that virtue that was “not published abroad to the profit of other” was, like “treasure closed in coffers” or “riches heaped in corners,” a waste of God’s gifts.¹⁰⁴ William Perkins was equally certain that as each “member” of the human body performed its function “not for itself but for the good of the whole body,” human beings were intended to make “the works” of their “calling [s] ... profitable not only to the doers, but [also] to the commonwealth.”¹⁰⁵

While early modern authorities used positive reinforcement in a coercive sense, the constant harping on the overwhelming duty of individuals to use their talents to profit their communities (financially or otherwise) had an unexpected empowering effect on what were usually seen as inferior voices. Women, especially, seem to have realized that they might step out of their traditional silence if what they had to offer could be claimed to profit their fellows. Julian of Norwich set down the visions that assailed her in 1373 that she might “counsel” readers for their “owne profit.”¹⁰⁶ Christine de Pizan admonished her fellow females in her *Book of Virtues* to “let what has earlier been said benefit everyone where it fits. May each one take from it what she thinks she may need for the good and profit of her soul and her behavior.”¹⁰⁷ In 1587, Charlotte de Minut, abbess of the Poor Clares in Toulouse, published her deceased brother Gabriel’s *Morbi Gallos* with

¹⁰¹ Dante, *Monarchy*, 6 [I.3] and 46 [II.7].

¹⁰² Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation*, 43 [L15].

¹⁰³ Calvin, *Institutes*, 695 [III.7.4].

¹⁰⁴ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 24–25 [I].

¹⁰⁵ Perkins, *Works*, 449, 462.

¹⁰⁶ Julian of Norwich, *Shewings*, 49 [VIII].

¹⁰⁷ Pizan, *Medieval Woman*, 149 [II.1]. See similarly, *ibid.*, 197 [III.4]: “In order for this work to be more completely profitable to women of all classes, we will speak now to widows among the more common people.”

the explanation that “men of sound and honest judgment” assured her “that many would find reading it useful and profitable [*utile et profitable*], tending to the advancement of Christian people and the sanctity of life,” and thus in putting herself forward as her brother’s agent, she was acting “not for greed or glory ... but rather that blessed souls might profit [*profiter*]” from the book’s good advice.¹⁰⁸ Despite what she termed her own “weakness, ignorance and unworthiness,” Lady Grace Mildmay could use her understanding of a parent’s duty to instruct her children and a part’s duty to profit the whole to write out her memoirs so that “the wise, humble, and patient reader” might find “this said course of good rules of instructions ... profitable and fruitful.”¹⁰⁹

Negative reinforcement took both general and specific forms. In general, selfishness was depicted as leading to social collapse or Chaos. As Aquinas put it rather succinctly, “where there are many men together and each one is looking after his own interest, the multitude would be broken up and scattered unless there were also an agency to take care of what appertains to the common weal.”¹¹⁰ A similar, if more drawn out, conclusion was reached by Dante. Citing Aristotle’s *Politics* and the “house divided” theme of *Matthew* 12:25, Dante concluded that individuals, families, villages, cities, states, and the world itself would be “utterly destroyed through some members’ scheming” if “one person” were not “supreme over all others.”¹¹¹ If any organ failed to fulfill its function, other organs would have to abandon their own jobs to fill in, as Thomas Wimbeldon explained in a 1388 sermon: “if laboreris wer[k]en not, bothe prestis and knytis mosten bicomme acremen and heerdis, and ellis they sholde for defaute of bodily sustenaunce deie.”¹¹² That the sentiment survived unchanged into the sixteenth century

¹⁰⁸ Susan Broomhall, “‘In my opinion,’: Charlotte de Minut and Female Political Discussion in Print in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31 #1 (Spring 2000), 36 [*Morbi Gallos*, 5–6]. See also Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr., eds., *Her Immaculate Hand: Selected Works By and About The Women Humanists of Quattrocento Italy* (Binghamton NY: State University of New York, Binghamton, 1981), 13–15 and 26, on some of the problems facing learned women.

¹⁰⁹ Pollock, *Faith and Physic*, 25. While Mildmay’s memoir is ostensibly addressed to her progeny and their offspring, this citation is only one of many to a more general “reader,” perhaps indicating that she thought at one time of publishing it for a wider audience.

¹¹⁰ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, xii [*De Regimine Principum* I, §§8–9, pp.176–177].

¹¹¹ Dante, *Monarchy*, 10–11 [L.5].

¹¹² John Hatcher, “Labour, Leisure and Economic Thought before the Nineteenth Century,” *Past and Present* 160 (Aug. 1998), 64.

should surprise no one familiar with the social and political dislocations of the Reformation and the Price Revolution. Thus Vitoria was as certain as Aquinas that

If all members of society were equal and subject to no higher power, each man would pull in his own direction as opinion or whim directed, and the commonwealth would necessarily be torn apart... Just as the human body cannot remain healthy unless some ordering force directs the single limbs to act in concert with the others to the greatest good of the whole.¹¹³

For Calvin it was a given that a transfer of power from state to people was to be avoided at all costs, “For as elements” cohered “only in unequal proportion, so countries” were “best held together according to their own particular inequality.”¹¹⁴ Given the civil war that the Reformation produced in France, Bodin put it even more adamantly, rejecting the communalism of Plato’s *Republic* with the assertion that nothing could be “*publique*” where nothing was private (“*propre*”), nothing “*commun*” where nothing was “*particulier*,” no pleasing harmony (“*harmonie plaisante*”) without diversity (“*divers*”).¹¹⁵ Kings were specifically reminded that their jobs entailed weeding out the unprofitable; Sir Thomas Elyot likened the monarch to a “captain” bee relieved of laboring “for his sustenance,” just so that if he saw “any drone or other unprofitable bee entereth into the hive, and consumeth the honey gathered by other,” he was free to “immediately” expel the drone “from that company.”¹¹⁶

Within this context, the superiority of whole to part might be used to condemn any specific policy proposal with which one disagreed. Thus in 1559, John Hales introduced his economic arguments against a new imposition on cloth with the following:

Ye know who teache that in makynge of Lawes and governement men ought to have respecte to the hole, more than to any one parte: for the hole comprehendeth the partes, and it is impossible that the hole prosperynge but every parte shalbe partaker therof; but contrarie one parte may prosper and all the rest maye be in evill case. This I write to put you in remembraunce, as I doubt not but ye have, howe that sekyng the Queenes profet, if ye hurte not the rest of the bodie, ye do but your duetie and well.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 9–10 [*On Civil Power*, 3.2 §19].

¹¹⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2:1494 [IV.20.8].

¹¹⁵ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 44 [I.2].

¹¹⁶ Elyot, *Governor*, 7 [I.2].

¹¹⁷ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:223 [*S.P.D. Elizabeth I*, III #40].

Negative reinforcement also came from condemnations of specifically unprofitable members, groups of individuals whom any theorist saw as failing to work for the whole. A common example being the poor who refuse to work or, in Protestant hands, the cloistered clergy and the Papal hierarchy. The satirical *Letters of Obscure Men* attacked the Dominican order with this riposte:

A certain Jurist lately declared that it hath been prophesied that the *Order of Preachers* would perish, and that out of that Order would proceed such grievous offences against the Christian Faith—such as were never heard of before. But grant that this may be far from the truth! For that Order is right profitable, and if it were not for that Order I know not how Theology would endure—for the *Dominicans* are more deeply immersed in Theology than the *Minorites* or the *Augustinians*, follow the way of the *Holy Doctor*, who have never erred.¹¹⁸

And Rabelais had Gargantua explain that monks were generally not liked because they did not “plow like the peasant, defend his country like the soldier, heal the sick like the doctor, preach and elevate like the teacher, nor ... handle essential commodities like the merchant.”¹¹⁹ Both the undeserving poor and the begging orders of monks were pilloried in the *Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly at Leisnig* (1523), which ordered that “anyone not incapacitated by reason of age or illness shall work or, with the aide of the authorities, be expelled from the parish, the city, and the villages.”¹²⁰ *The Lords’ and Common’s Petition* to Elizabeth I (March 2, 1576) complained of incompetent and “infamous” ministers who through

nonresidence, pluralities, and suchlike dispensations so withdrawn from their flocks that their gifts are almost altogether become unprofitable, whereby an infinite number of your majesty’s subjects, for want of the preaching of the Word ... have already run headlong into destruction, and many thousand of the residue yet remain in great peril.¹²¹

If most Protestants attacked monks and some Anglicans, Protestants, and Catholics alike kept a sharp eye upon the poor. The poor might always be with us, but early modern commentators expected all but the most ill, to earn their keep. Botero segued smoothly from the opinion that “Land should not be used unprofitably or made into parks” to

¹¹⁸ Hutten *et al*, *Obscure Men*, 27 [I.12].

¹¹⁹ Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 117 [I.40].

¹²⁰ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, 185–186.

¹²¹ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 171–172.

the conclusion that cost of assorted public works “should not cause concern,” because it could be carried out by convicts and galley slaves, or, if these were not to be had, well “there is always a supply of gypsies and strays and vagabonds, whom it is better to employ to some public good than to let them go begging.”¹²² Edward Forset was certain that in the body political there was no “part so weake, so little, or so base” that God had not intended it for “some good use,” so no state should suffer “an so loose, idle, vagrant, and unprofitable people, as that no use can bee made of them for the publique behoofe.”¹²³

In *Inutiles au monde: Truands et misérables dans l'Europe moderne (1350–1600)*, Bronislaw Geremek demonstrated the prevalence from the fifteenth century onward of the phrase “useless weight upon the land” (*charge inutile de la terre* or, in Latin, *sunt pondus inutile terrae*) to describe and condemn the idle poor in everything from French royal ordinances to reformist tracts.¹²⁴ Virginia Krause placed Rabelais’ condemnation of the Gastrolates as *charge inutile de la terre* squarely within this tradition and quoted from the *De Subventione Pauperum* of Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives to remind the reader of the Biblical source of this condemnation as well its universality within Christian Europe:

From the outset this principle must be accepted which the Lord imposed on the human race as a punishment for its many sins—that each man should eat the bread which is the fruit of his labor... None among the poor should be idle, provided, of course, that he is fit for work by his age and health.¹²⁵

As *utile* was often rendered into English as *profitable* rather than *useful*, *inutile* might be seen as a form of *unprofitable*. English thinking on the unemployed poor can be set well within this tradition, even though the phrases used differed from those common on the continent. When the citizens of London petitioned the Privy Council to give them Bridewell for use as a poorhouse in 1552, the stress was on making the poor profitable to the whole body:

In this house shall be erected sundry occupations, wherin shall be trained all the former sorts of people, and those occupations shall be such as

¹²² Giovanni Botero, *Reason of State*, 149–150 [VIII.2].

¹²³ Forset, *Comparative discourse*, 54–55.

¹²⁴ Bronislaw Geremek, *Inutiles au monde: Truands et misérables dans l'Europe moderne (1350–1600)* (1980), 10, quoted in Virginia Krause, “Idle Works in Rabelais’ *Quart Livre*: The Case of the Gastrolates,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30 #1 (Spring 1999), 53.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 54. For the relationship of the treatment of the Gastrolates to the tradition explored by Geremek, see *ibid.*, 52–53.

may be profitable to all the king's majesty's subjects, and hurtful to none: as the making of caps, which shall be made as good, as well dressed and died, and more substantial than any are made in France... Also the weaker sort of people, that is to say, such as are lame of legs, and whole of hands, shall be occupied in making of feather-bed ticks, wool-cards, drawing of wire, spinning, carding, knitting, and winding of silk, and other profitable devices: and the stubborn, and fouler sort, shall be exercised in making of nails and other iron-work.¹²⁶

Poorhouses were not the only way to make the poor pay their own way. Nicholas Terpstra documented the intensive efforts made by the fifteen orphanages opened in Florence and Bologna between 1506 and 1615 to recoup their operating costs by using orphans as unpaid labor while simultaneously training them for a productive place in society through such means as apprenticeships for the boys or jobs in domestic service for the girls. In one particular orphanage, Florence's Pietà, female inmates were already contributing 39 percent of the institute's income from alms in 1556, its second year in operation.¹²⁷ Fear of the threat to the social order posed by vagrants, usually assumed to be male and hence "masterless men," prompted punitive measures by anxious governments. A.L. Beier looked at over eleven hundred arrests of vagrants in eighteen counties between 1569 and 1572 and discovered some interesting discrepancies between sixteenth century perception and reality. In the first place, the numbers of the masterless taking to the roads were far lower than the 10,000 or so estimated by William Harrison in his *Description of England* (1577).¹²⁸ In the second place, only half of them were the feared single men; a quarter were single women and a fifth families with children, while evidence for their ages suggests most of the single men and women were no more than adolescents.¹²⁹ Most suggestively, many were simply underemployed workers, out on the road seeking jobs in their regular trades: the over reaction to the phenomenon of the migrating worker is strong proof of the threat to their social order and values contemporaries felt in an age of economic

¹²⁶ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:308.

¹²⁷ Nicholas Terpstra, "Making a Living, Making a Life: Work in the Orphanages of Florence and Bologna," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31 #4 (Winter 2000), 1069. See also Davis, *Society and Culture*, 42-43, on similar endeavors under French poor relief programs.

¹²⁸ A.L. Beier, "Vagrants and the Social Order in Elizabethan England," *Past and Present* 64 (August 1974), 5.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5-6 and 9.

change.¹³⁰ A marginal comment to *Acts* 17:6 in the Geneva Bible blamed “vagabonds” who did “nothing but walk the streets ... to be hired for every man’s money to do mishchief” for the “sedition and tumults” of the age, while the elites of Herefordshire complained that measures to extend military training to the entire population in 1588 would make their servants bold enough to forsake their places and swell the ranks of masterless vagabonds.¹³¹ The idle poor were even blamed for the economic disturbances of the age. In his *Remedy for Sedition* (1536), Richard Moryson complained of the ground “lost,” the corn not grown and exported, the cities “decayed,” and the towns impoverished because “the third part of England” lived “idly.”¹³²

When working from contemporaneous sources, one always has to ask to what extent were sixteenth and seventeenth-century commentators accurate in their depictions of the poverty and lawlessness of their age. In his *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*, Paul Slack collected statistics from assorted English cities and towns to paint a picture of a persistent and not inconsequential problem. Poor Pensioners in Exeter, Norwich, and Salisbury accounted for some four to five percent of the population between 1563 and 1634, with their average weekly pensions increasing from 3.7 to 5.3 pence over the same period.¹³³ The same period also saw a marked increase in organized crime, while recorded illegitimate births followed a similar arc, peaking around the turn of the century.¹³⁴ That more than conditions particular to England were at work here is well illustrated by the numerous governmental and quasi-official “experiments in poor relief” popping up across Western Europe—and across the religious spectrum—in the first half of the sixteenth century; Slack notes them in Nuremberg (1522); Strasbourg and Leisnig (1523–1524); Zurich, Mons, and Ypres (1525), Venice (1528–1529); Lyons, Rouen, and Geneva (1531–1535); Paris, Madrid, Toledo, and London (1540s); and on a more national level in the Netherlands (1531), England (1531–1536), Brandenburg and Castile (1540), and France (1536).¹³⁵ Thus, Slack rightly suggests that the greater “similarities than contrasts between Catholic and Protestant countries” is evidence that more than Protestantism was at work here, offering Chris-

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 12–13 and 27.

¹³¹ Hill, *World*, 39 and 19–20.

¹³² Quoted in Guy, *Tudor*, 43.

¹³³ Slack, *Poverty*, 177 (Table 8).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

tian Humanism and the “social and economic environment” of the period as “more pervasive sources” of the desire to do something about poverty; where religious sectarianism had its greatest impact was in those efforts to restrict poor relief to “those who were of the household” of each sect’s particular faith.¹³⁶

Of the three most common early modern attitudes towards the poor—that of objects of charity useful to the souls of their richer brethren, that of a threat to public order, and that of a potential workforce—noted by Slack, it would seem that the Price Revolution caused the first attitude to be subsumed by the other two, especially as the working and non-working poor came more and more to be lumped together in the prescriptive literature.¹³⁷ These attitudes persisted well into the seventeenth century, equally supported by royal and quasi-republican regimes. Those who favored enclosure in 1607 called cottages and commons the “nurseries of beggars,” while James I more expansively believed they nursed “thieves, rogues and beggars.”¹³⁸ The *Book of Orders* (1631) required that all who “live idly and will not work for reasonable wages” be brought before the appropriate constable to be “punished as shall be found fit,” while Oliver Cromwell instructed his major-generals in 1655 to “inform themselves of all such idle and loose people” in their counties and “consider by what means they may be compelled to work, or be sent out of the Commonwealth.”¹³⁹

Those who put their own particular profit before that of the whole were also condemned, but these cases will taken up in the following chapters, which explore profit’s relationship to distributive and commutative justice as revealed in sixteenth and seventeenth century attempts to come to grips with the economic upheavals of the Price Revolution.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8–9 and 21.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 17, 21, and 91–107 (the “Dangerous Poor”).

¹³⁸ Hill, *World*, 50–51.

¹³⁹ Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, 501 and 504.

CHAPTER SIX

PROFIT AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE I: THE SINS OF THE BODY

*“La voie de la vérité est une et simple, celle du profit particulier ... double, inégale et fortuite.”*¹ The path of truth is one and simple, that of personal profit ... double, unequal, chancy.

Montaigne

If magistrates were the physicians charged with maintaining the health of the social body, the medicine they used was justice. For Dante, whoever willed “the good of the community” willed “the achievement of right,” for whenever “right” was “maintained,” society was “preserved,” but when right was “neglected” society was “corrupted.”² For Marsilius of Padua, the “principal end” of law was “civil justice and the common benefit.”³ For John Spelman, the “body politic” was “preserved solely by justice”; therefore as justice was so “*profitable pur le comen welle*,” wise magistrates would see that justice itself was “well preserved.”⁴ For Sir Thomas Elyot, justice was “so necessary and expedient for the governor of a public weal” that without it no other “virtue” could be “commendable,” nor “any manner of doctrine profitable.”⁵ For Bishop Bossuet, “the healthy constitution of the state’s body” was equally founded upon “religion and justice,” the one giving God “his due” and the other giving men “what suits them.”⁶ For Sir Thomas Smith, justice entailed commanding that which was “profitable” for a commonwealth: so as there was “likelyhoode of profite,” there was “likelyhoode of right.”⁷ This appears to be a variation of an argu-

¹ Montaigne, *Essais*, 3:34 [III.1].

² Dante, *Monarchy*, 38 [II.5].

³ Marsilius, *Defensor*, 37 [I.11.1].

⁴ Baker, *Spelman*, 76 [Lecture I (Text A)].

⁵ Elyot, *Governor*, 159 [III.1].

⁶ Bossuet, *Politics*, 191 [VII].

⁷ Smith, *Republica*, 10 [I.2].

ment found in Cicero's *De Officiis* (Book II), in which *utilitas* (usefulness) rested upon honesty, but which, in Nicholas Grimalde's sixteenth-century translation, became somewhat transformed because *utilitas* was rendered *profit*:

whatsoever is just, they also judge thesame to bee profitable: and likewise, whatso is honest, they take thesame to bee just; wherof is concluded, that whatsoever is honest, thesame is profitable.⁸

If justice was the mortar binding the body politic, the foundation of early modern Europe's understanding of justice was thoroughly classical. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates concluded that justice required that "no one shall have what belongs to others or be deprived of his own."⁹ Justice treated unequals unequally in order to ensure that each social organ had the resources necessary to its function and none of those needed by other organs; this was why farmers could have families and own land while guardians could not. When each group had the requisite resources, society had the products or services it needed, and social harmony was maintained: factions, those feverish symptoms of social imbalance, were first and foremost "the outcome of injustice."¹⁰ This proportional theory of justice was as basic to Aristotle's view of the body politic as to Plato's. In the *Politics*, Aristotle took justice as "a quality of a thing in relation to persons," such that "the thing must be equal" only for "persons that are equal," because, just as it was "harmful" for "unequal" persons "to have an equal amount of food or clothing," it was equally "wrong" for those who were "equal to have inequality" in "regard to honours."¹¹ In his *Rights of War and Peace* (1625), Hugo Grotius quoted Cicero's formulation (*De Officiis*, III) to the same effect:

if every member could have separate feeling, and imagine it could derive vigor from engrossing the strength of a neighboring part of the body, the whole frame would languish and perish. In the same manner if every one of us, for his own advantage, might rob another of what he pleased, there would be a total overthrow of human society and intercourse. For though it is allowed by nature for every one to give the preference to

⁸ Nicholas Grimalde, *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes Thre Bokes of Duties, to Marcus his Sonne Turned out of Latine into Englishe by Nicholas Grimalde* (1556), quoted in Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 141.

⁹ Plato, *Republic*, 371 [IV.10].

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 97 [I.23].

¹¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 231 [II.7.1] and 263 [III.11.2–3].

himself before another in the enjoyment of life and necessities, yet she does not permit us to increase our means and riches by the spoils of others.¹²

According to Justinian, law commanded us “live honorably; harm nobody; [and] give everyone his due.”¹³ For Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), “justice” was “that through which the harmony of the community” was “held together” because it did not “deny to each his merits.”¹⁴ For John of Salisbury, “equity” allotted “to each that which belongs to him.”¹⁵ For Bracton, “justice” was “the constant and unfailing will to give to each his right.”¹⁶ For Aquinas, “laws” were “said to be just” when “burdens” were “laid on the subjects, according to an equality of proportion and with a view to the common good.”¹⁷ Erasmus was certain that “equity” did “not lie in giving everyone the same reward, the same rights, [or] the same honors,” as that was “sometimes a mark of the greatest unfairness.”¹⁸ Sir Thomas Elyot remembered that “the ancient civilians” did “say justice is a will perpetual and constant, which giveth to every man his right.”¹⁹ 140 years later, Samuel Pufendorf still defined justice “as a constant and unremitting will to render to each his own.”²⁰ Christian tradition had only reinforced the classical view. For Calvin, the “purpose” of the commandment against stealing was that “since injustice” was “an abomination to God,” we were to “render to each man what belongs to him,” considering that a man’s possessions had not “come to him by mere chance but by the distribution of the supreme Lord of all,” and thus to “deprive anyone of his possessions” by “evil devices” was “fraudulently setting aside God’s dispensation.”²¹ Furthermore, obeying the eighth commandment entailed being “content with our lot” and being “zealous to make only honest and lawful gain,” which further required

¹² Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace* (1625), ed. And trans. A.C. Campbell (Washington, DC: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), 33 [I.2.1].

¹³ Justinian, *Institutes*, 37 [I.1].

¹⁴ John W. Baldwin, *The Medieval Theories of the Just Price: Romanists, Canonists, and Theologians in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society [*Transactions*, n.s. 49, pt. 4], 1959), 60 [*De fructibus*, 13].

¹⁵ John of Salisbury, *Statesman’s Book*, 6 [IV.2].

¹⁶ Bracton, *De Legibus*, 2:23.

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, 71 [*Summa Theologica*, I–II, Q96, A4].

¹⁸ Erasmus, *Education*, 212.

¹⁹ Elyot, *Governor*, 159 [III.1].

²⁰ Pufendorf, *Duty*, 30.

²¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:408–409 [II.8.45].

that “parents undertake to nourish, govern, and teach, their children” and children obey their parents, that “servants show themselves diligent and eager to obey their masters” and “masters not conduct themselves peevishly and intractably toward their servants.”²² This was the basic hierarchical reciprocity of the family extended to the definition of justice in the social organism as a whole. The role of justice in maintaining the social body was never severed from the idea that as the members of the social body were unequal, justice was never a matter of simple equality but always one of treating unequals unequally. Nonetheless, that inequality was never without an element of reciprocity. When Sir Roger Twysden (1597–1672), a constitutional royalist, approvingly cited Cicero’s view that commonwealths “were constituted that everyone might enjoy justice,” it was to follow it with the clarification that “the weaker” might not be oppressed by “the stronger.”²³

As justice meant rendering to each his or her own and justice entailed as much a likelihood of profit as of right, the question arises as to whether each, indeed, had some form of pecuniary profit that was rightly his or her own. While private correspondence was frequently peppered with profit, it also appeared more formally in wills, court reports, ordinances, and tax records. These, regardless of the social status of the testators, plaintiffs, taxpayers, and defendants, show a constant concern with one’s *proper* profit in both its proprietary senses.

According to the Ordinances of 1311, the “issues and profits” of the customs “together with all other issues and profits pertaining to the kingdom from any source whatsoever” should “come to the king’s exchequer” to be used “for maintaining the king’s household” so that the king might “live of his own.”²⁴ As a legal term, the basic meaning of “issues” was “produce, proceeds; profits arising from lands or tenements, amercements, or fines.”²⁵ Acting as reinforcing synonyms and catchall terms for any kind of income from land (including rent), *issues and profits* were a common pair in fifteenth-century documents. In 1474, Thomas Stoner’s will left the “issues and profetes, except wode” of several manors to pay off his debts and then for his execu-

²² *Ibid.*, 1:409–411 [II.8.46].

²³ Kemble, *Certain Considerations*, 1 [1.2].

²⁴ Stephenson and Marcham, *Sources*, 93.

²⁵ *O.E.D.* (1933), 5:512.

tors to use those same “issues and profetes” for the “marriage of his daughter.”²⁶ John Smyth of Bury was careful in 1480 to include “alle the issuez and pftyts of alle” his “londys and rentys.”²⁷

Two versions of Sir John Fastolf’s 1459 will survive. One gave several manors to John Paston, the other did not. The Paston family correspondence is full of references to warrants and court cases and appeals to greater lords to gain control of the manors in question. For example, the warrant attached to a letter of July 17, 1466, ordered “the whole issues and profits” of a disputed manor to be paid to Paston.²⁸ Both drafts of Fastolf’s will were effusive without managing to narrow the meaning of profit. The first draft left his executors “all the issews, avaylez, profitez, and emolwementes of all and sengular lordshepys, manerez, londes, tenementes, rentes, and servisez forseyd”; the second will left them “all the profitez and avaylez and emolwementes of the seyd maneris, londes, and tenementes, rentes, and servisez, with all othir comoditeez thereof comyng,” until they were sold, when “the mony of the profites and salis thereof comyng” were to be “disposed for the welfare” of his soul.²⁹ The slightly more succinct 1489 draft of John Trevelyan’s will referred to the “issues, profiets, rentes, and revenues, of al the manours, landes, and tenementes” discussed therein.³⁰

Such combinations of both generic and specific terms for income acted as insurance that the rights to no one type of income could be successfully contested by dissatisfied family members. However, while it was important legally to specify the types of property rights the testator was leaving a particular individual, the income from any and all sorts of property rights could simply be included in a generic “profit” without extensive amplification. The 1550 will of Trevelyan’s descendant, John Trevelyan of Nettlecomb set aside “the issues and proffettes” of some manors for the marriage of his daughter.³¹ “Issues and profits” continued as a catchall pair well into the eighteenth century. In 1765,

²⁶ Kingsford, *Stonor Letters*, 141–142.

²⁷ Tymms, *Wills*, 56.

²⁸ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 5:247 [#641]. For other instances of “issues and profits,” see *ibid.*, 4:308 [#692] and 5:173 [#824].

²⁹ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 3:150–151 [#385].

³⁰ J. Payne Collier, ed., *Trevelyan Papers prior to A.D. 1558*, Camden Society, o.s. 67 (1857), 90.

³¹ J. Payne Collier, ed., *Trevelyan Papers, Part II: A.D. 1446–1643*, Camden Society, o.s. 84 (1862), 39.

the preamble of 5 George III c. 26 referred to “all manner of issues, revenues, and profits of the said island.”³²

In fact, profit often appeared in such a sense without any modifier at all. One finds as many references in the Paston letters to the “profits” of a manor as one does to the “issues and profits.”³³ John Caryll’s court reports were littered with references to disputes over the profits of a manor whether the profits were rent or the actual farmer’s income. In Hilary Term, 1493, Sygmond complained that the Spensers had “continuously taken the profits (*contynualment prise les profits*)” of his father-in-law’s manor although they had been assigned to him on marrying the daughter of the house.³⁴ In Hilary Term, 1505, the Abbott of Glastonbury sued to “to take the profits (*prendre les profits*) of the manor of Widcombe ...in accordance with” a “deed of feoffment.”³⁵ Clearly as the sixteenth-century began, profit was as much the due of the landed gentry as of any shopkeeper. And so it continued. Christopher St. German’s *Doctor and Student* (1528) was a standard law text until the advent of Blackstone. In his discussion of property, St. German distinguished between possession (“frank-tenement, or the freehold,”) and the “authority to take thereby the profits of the land,,” as one could be assigned without assigning the other, but he felt no need to explain what the profits were.³⁶ The 1529 will of Dame Maud Parr, widow of Sir Thomas Parr of Kent, referred to the residue of her “goodes and cattall and the proffyttes” of all her “leases and farmes”³⁷ without distinction.

In the sixteenth century, however, profit’s meaning was hardly limited to income from land. The Poll Tax Act of 1512 demanded 4*d.* from “every servant taking any wages or other profits under the value of 20*s.*,”³⁸ making profit a synonym for everything from clothing to tips a servant was given in addition to a money wage, which was itself being considered as a type of profit. A memorandum of his sources of income drawn up for Henry VIII around 1531 referred to the

³² *O.E.D.* (1933), 5:512.

³³ See for example, Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 2:44 [#30] and 4:62 [#534].

³⁴ *Reports of Cases by John Caryll, Part I: 1485–1499*, ed. J.H. Baker (London: Selden Society #115, 1999), 132 [1493 #124]. See similarly, *ibid.*, 139 [1493 #128] and 195–196 [1493 #151].

³⁵ *Caryll’s Reports, Part I*, 446 [1505 #312].

³⁶ Christopher St. German, *Doctor and Student*, ed. William Muchall (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1874), 165 [II.22].

³⁷ *Wills from Doctors’ Commons*, 11.

³⁸ Tanner, *Tudor*, 608.

- (1) “yearly revenues and profits” or “profits and revenues” of the King’s “customs and subsidies,” “wards and of their lands and tenements,” “vacations of bishoprics, abbacies and priories,” and “statutes penal”;
- (2) “yearly profits” of his “butlerage,” mint, and “escheators for the profits coming of outlawries, instructions and other escheats of lands, tenements and movable goods and chattels”;
- (3) “issues, profits and sums of money” of his liveries;
- (4) “issues, profits and yearly revenues” from writs, fines, seals, and patents, and from the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, the Principality of Wales, and the Warwick, Spencer, and Buckingham lands;
- (5) “profits and revenues with the proffers of his sheriffs”;
- (6) the “sales” of wood from his woods.³⁹

The only item to which Cromwell did not apply the term “profits” in this list was the sale of wood.

A letter from Cromwell in 1532 seemed to distinguish the “rentes” from the “profites” from the lands of the bishopric of Coventry and Lichfield, and another in 1533 specifically referred to the “proffyttes growing” of the “demaynes” of the priory of Calwich,⁴⁰ but there was no consistent distinction of profits from rents. With the Act of Supremacy (1534) we are back to “all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities.”⁴¹ The Subsidy Act from that same year awards the King, for the “weal proffyte, commoditie and quietnes of his people,” a subsidy from all subjects or denizens owning, leasing or having a life interest “in execution or by title of wardshippe, by cotype of Court rolle or at will, any Honours, Castells, Manours, Londes, Tenementes, Rentes, servyces and Hereditamentes, fees, commodities or other proffytts to the clere yerly valewe of twentie pounds or above.”⁴² The Act establishing the Court of Augmentations (1536) aimed to make certain the king received the full “rents, farms, issues, revenues and profits” from the confiscated “manors, lands, tenements and other hereditaments before specified, as of the goods, chattels, plate, stuff of household, debts, money, stock, store and other whatsoever profit and commodity,” from the properties

³⁹ Elton, *Tudor Constitution*, 136–139.

⁴⁰ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 1:340 [#22] and 1:354 [#43].

⁴¹ Tanner, *Tudor*, 41.

⁴² Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:209–212.

already taken.⁴³ While another letter from Cromwell in 1537 concerned a prebend's "tythes and proffytes."⁴⁴

Henry's children were as inconsistent in their use of profit as their father had been. The Act Confiscating the Religious Property of Gilds (1547) assigned to Edward VI all "such sommes of moneye profittes commodities and emolumentes" the guilds enjoyed.⁴⁵ The Letters Patent dissolving the second Court of Augmentations under Mary I in 1554 referred to the "honours, manors, lands, tenements, farms, issues, revenues, profits and all other our hereditaments, of what nature, kind or quality so ever they be,"⁴⁶ making profit a sort of "etc." In 1571, the Marquis of Winchester assigned "all [the] messuages, landes, tenementes, profyttes, commodities, and hereditamentes," of some estates to cover a mortgage from Elizabeth.⁴⁷ The "Charges of the Diets" of Mary Queen of Scots in the last two years of her captivity were drawn against "the rentes and profittes of the late Lord Paget his landes."⁴⁸ And the Lay Subsidy Act of 1601 sought to tax "any honours, castles, manors, lands, tenements, rents, services, hereditaments, annuities, fees corrodies, or other yearly profits of the yearly value of 20s."⁴⁹

Profit continued as a catchall for any and all sorts of revenues well into the seventeenth century. In 1613, John Norden warned Lord Salisbury that his tenants had "little care to preserve his ... rentes, services, tenures, woodes, howses, customs, and other accidentall profittes."⁵⁰ Several yeoman's wills from Suffolk in the 1620s and 1630s simply assigned their executors the "profits" on their various lands, tenements, meadows, freeholds, and copyholds to use for their children's upbringing,⁵¹ but two from 1636 did specifically refer to "rents and profits,"⁵² and in

⁴³ Elton, *Tudor Constitution*, 139.

⁴⁴ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:52 [#184].

⁴⁵ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 1:117.

⁴⁶ Elton, *Tudor Constitution*, 144.

⁴⁷ Collier, *Trevelyan Papers II*, 76.

⁴⁸ Allan J. Crosby and John Bruce, eds., *Accounts and Papers Relating to Mary Queen of Scots*, Camden Society, o.s. 93 (1867), 1.

⁴⁹ Tanner, *Tudor*, 615.

⁵⁰ Sir Henry Ellis, ed., *Speculi Britanniae Pars: An Historical and Chorographical Description of the County of Essex, by John Norden, 1594*, Camden Society, o.s. 9 (1840), xli.

⁵¹ See, for example, Allen, *Wills*, 17–18 [#29]; and Nesta Evans, ed., *The Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1630–1635* (Woodbridge, GB: Boydell Press, 1987), 34 [#84].

⁵² See Nesta Evans, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1636–1638* (Woodbridge, GB: Boydell Press, 1993), 15 [#39] and 47 [#109].

at least one, profit was associated with revenue from a smith's shop as well as revenue from the testator's lands.⁵³

A 1636 lease to Oliver Cromwell of Ely Rectory and its surrounding property covered the "houses, barnes, stables, & other edifices" and "all other Tythes oblacions profittes Commodities & emoluments whatsoever."⁵⁴ The *Articles for the Good of the Commonwealth* drawn up by Richard Overton in 1647 proposed the restoration of the "franchise, profits or emoluments" once held by hospitals for the poor.⁵⁵ The 1643 Tax Ordinance could just as well have been copied from those of the previous century, covering "any honours, castles, manors, lands, tenements, rents, services, tithes, oblations, obventions, annuities, offices of profit, fees, corrodies, or other yearly profits or hereditaments," while a 1654 order from Oliver Cromwell for the restitution of Lady Tyringham's lands simply referred to the "profits thereof."⁵⁶ The list in the tax ordinance was intended to ensure no one escaped the tax net, while the simple profit in Cromwell's order was understood to cover everything from rent to sales of produce.

As seen in the 1634 Tax Ordinance, profit was also commonly used as a term to mean the revenues accruing to an office holder from his place in lieu of a salary as well as fees arising from government grants of privilege, patent or monopoly. The 1493 *Calendar of Ancient Records, Dublin*, mentioned "fees and wages and other profitees to the said offices perteynyng."⁵⁷ One fifteenth-century reading on *Magna Carta*, cap. 9, opined that "in every case where the king makes a general grant and is not certainly informed of his grant and the profit thereof (*de profit dicelle*), the grant is void" while another proposed that such privileges as "a view of frankpledge, waifs and strays, to hold plea, to have a market, fair, and such like" were "profits arising upon matters of fact (*profitz surdantz sur matter en fait*)" and thus claimable by "prescription."⁵⁸ Lord Broke's case (1514) involved a dispute over the profits appertaining to the office of bailiff.⁵⁹ Henry VIII ordered the Mayor of Lon-

⁵³ Evans, *Sudbury, 1630–1635*, 84–85 [#193].

⁵⁴ Cromwell, *Writings and Speeches*, 1:85–86.

⁵⁵ Aylmer, *Levellers*, 86.

⁵⁶ Kenyon, *Stuart*, 275–276, and Cromwell, *Writings and Speeches*, 3:350.

⁵⁷ *O.E.D.* (1933), 8:1433.

⁵⁸ J.H. Baker, ed., *John Spelman's Reading on Quo Warranto delivered in Gray's Inn* (London: Selden Society #113, 1997), 2 [Appendix I (A)], and 7 [Appendix I (A)].

⁵⁹ *Reports of Cases by John Caryl, Part II: 1501–1522*, ed. J.H. Baker (London: Selden Society #116, 2000), 633 [514 #469].

don to restore to William Blakenhall “all such profetts and sommes of money” as he had received from the office of the Mastership of Linen Cloth while holding it instead of Blakenhall.⁶⁰ Thomas Cromwell gave Richard Salway the office of the Clerk of the Peace in Worcester County in 1539 with all its “commodities and profites.”⁶¹ Lord Danvers’ Suit (1606) concerned the revoking of a royal patent awarding Danvers and Sir John Gilbert seventy-five percent of the king’s revenue from

fines, issues, amercements, forfeitures, &c., over and above the sum of £2,800, which sum is supposed to be the medium of those profits accruing in former years; although their profit was only to arise by such augmentations as should appear to be made in the Court of Exchequer.⁶²

Sir Lionel Cranfield requested a change in office from Buckingham in 1618 noting that this would not be an advancement because the old office equaled the new “in profit.”⁶³

This was a meaning of profit fast falling out of favor rather than use. Sir Thomas Chamberlain was careful to remind Buckingham in 1624 that he desired neither “place nor profit” from him.⁶⁴ In 1644, Oliver Cromwell wanted an ordinance making it “unlawful for any member in either House of Parliament to hold any office or command in the army, or any place of employment of profit in the State.”⁶⁵ And, in 1673, Henry Ball wrote to Sir Joseph Williamson, the plenipotentiary at the Congress of Cologne, that Sir Edward Bishe had been suspended from the “profitts and execution of his place” in the Herald’s office.⁶⁶ Sir John Bramston (1611–1699/1700) of Skreens wrote of his father that “besides what he gott by his gowne, reserved for him half the profits of the Clerke of the Warrants,” the rest going to one Jepson Towers who actually “executed the place.”⁶⁷ This particular type of profit was so universally disliked (at least by those in the opposition), that it led

⁶⁰ Sir Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 2nd Ser. (London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1969), 2:91 [#124].

⁶¹ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 2:179 [#290].

⁶² Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, 65 [*Commons Journals* I, 309].

⁶³ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, ed., *The Fortescue Papers*, Camden Society, n.s. 1 (1871), 42 [#20].

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 200 [#147].

⁶⁵ Cromwell, *Writings and Speeches*, 1:316.

⁶⁶ W.D. Christie, ed., *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson while plenipotentiary at the Congress of Cologne in the years 1673 and 1674, Volume I*, Camden Society, n.s. 8 (1874), 27 [#14].

⁶⁷ Braybrooke, *Bramston*, 17.

to the Place Act (1707), which barred those holding any “office or place of profit whatsoever under the crown” from serving in the House Commons.⁶⁸

A closer but less controversial linkage between profit and wages occurs in the *Travels* of Volkert Evertsz (1670). Evertsz explains how, lured by tales of wealth to be had, he left his job as a bookbinder in Holstein to “enlist in the service of the directors of the East-India Company and the more so, since I had no other means of earning a living than my job, which yielded little profit.”⁶⁹

Perhaps the most interesting innovation was the open use of profit as interest on invested money in the 1620 will of John Manthorpe, illiterate yeoman, who wanted his £20 “put out to some honest man at a reasonable rate ... so that the capital sum & profits accruing to the same” be paid to his children when they came of age.⁷⁰ That was a meaning of profit of which Samuel Pepys much approved forty years later, having been warned by a friend of the “danger” of meddling in “ships or merchandise” when he could put what he had “to keep at interest,” which was an “easy profit.”⁷¹

Taken as a whole, these citations demonstrate that profit as a generic term for revenue properly pertained to every level of society. If some form or amount of profit was proper to each social status, then justice demanded each have that profit. And as the status and functions differed, so did their just due. This idea of justice as treating unequals unequally went by the term distributive justice during the period in question, as it regulated the distribution of resources and rewards to the various organs of the body politic. But in order to understand how the complaints made against various groups during the Price Revolution were based on their violations of the principle of distributive justice, we need to understand how, in a finite cosmos, A's profit might not be B's loss. They all rested, certainly, on the idea of a finite cosmos. As John of Salisbury noted, “the deepest treasure chest has a bottom,” and Tomás de Mercado (*Tratos y contratos de mercaderes*, 1569) warned rulers not to allow the export of coin because “an abundance of gold and silver” was “one of the principal requisites for the prosperity and happiness of

⁶⁸ Adams and Stephens, *Documents*, 483–484.

⁶⁹ Quoted in C.R. Boxer, *Jan Compagnie in War and Peace, 1602–1799: A Short History of the Dutch East-India Company* (Hong Kong: Heineman Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1979), 6.

⁷⁰ Allen, *Wills, 1620–1624*, 4 [#3].

⁷¹ Pepys, *Diary*, 3:105 [May 6, 1663]; see similarly 5:242 [March 30, 1666].

a kingdom,” but “no fertility and plenty” could “be so great” that it would “not at last be exhausted” if it were “continually diminished.”⁷²

Mathematically speaking, any resource group A takes from a finite pool of resources is denied group B, making the zero-sum proposition that A’s profit is always B’s loss. But that mathematical truism does not apply to a society that believed that whatever prevented one from doing harm was not a limitation. Seyssel concluded that what he called the “three bridles” (natural law, religion, and policy) on the absolute power of kings increased (“*plus ample et absolue*”) rather than lessened that power by drawing on the idea that God’s inability to do evil was a strength rather than a limitation: “*la puissance de Dieu n’est point jugée moindre pour autant qu’il ne peut pécher ni mal faire; ains en est d’autant plus parfaite.*”⁷³ Erasmus took a similar stand, arguing that given the present state of “the affairs of men,” a “limited monarchy checked and lessened by aristocracy and democracy” in which “the elements balance each other,” “helped” rather than “checked” the power of any prince who had “the interests of the state at heart.”⁷⁴

If A takes only the resources it needs, B is not deprived of necessary resources but only of excessive or inappropriate resources that would harm B. Therefore B is not deprived at all. A’s profit is not B’s loss in this instance. It only becomes B’s loss if A takes more than A needs. The term “profit” is used advisedly here. Remembering that the evidence of wills, court cases, and laws demonstrates that “profit” was understood to mean any type of income—rents, farm revenues, manufacturing revenues, commercial revenues, interest income, tax revenues, investment income, payments in lieu of wages, and even wages themselves—each group had a just profit due it that enabled it to perform its function. Sir Francis Bacon held “every man a debtor to his profession, from the which, as men of course doe seeke to receive countenance & profit, so ought they of duty to endeavour themselves by way of amends to bee a helpe and ornament thereunto.”⁷⁵

With the exception of the view that simple population growth lay at the root of the inflation, the causal theories proposed during the

⁷² John of Salisbury, *Frivolities*, 191 [III.12], and Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson, *The School of Salamanca: Readings in Spanish Monetary Theory, 1544–1605* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 96.

⁷³ Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 120 [I.12].

⁷⁴ Erasmus, *Education*, 173–174.

⁷⁵ Francis Bacon, *The Elements of the Common Lawes of England* (London, 1630), facsimile reprint (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1969), Preface (B).

Price Revolution took the view that some group or other was trying to take more profit than its just share. In debasement views the government was the greedy party. In quantity views, the greedy party might be the government or the rulers of the exchange. In monopoly views, the monopolist. In enclosure views, the landlord, etc. In England, the earliest recognition that there was a problem appears to have occurred around 1515, dearth being a cause of An Act Avoiding Pulling Down of Towns (1515).⁷⁶ But a much more extensive treatment of the social dislocations already plaguing England came before the educated public the very next year in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. More's ideal solution to England's problems was laid out in Book Two's description of Utopia's Platonic communalism. More practical changes were proposed in Book One, in which Raphael, acting as the author's voice, explained what was wrong with England and what might be done about it. What then, was wrong?

For one thing, there were far too many soldiers hanging about and disturbing the peace when the country was not actually at war.⁷⁷ Little was made of this, as it was not More's main concern, but it does remind the modern reader that the frequency and rising cost of war during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a major factor in the increasing debt loads of early modern European governments, and thus a reason for their increasing inclination to debase their currencies. Unnecessary wars were seen as caused by kings greedy for glory and riches, for more than their fair share. Henry VIII's "Great Debasement" still lay in the future when *Utopia* was penned, but More was already condemning other unjust tactics resorted to by cash strapped monarchs: reviving "old and moth-eaten laws, annulled by long non-enforcement" in order to collect the fines for transgressing them, laying down unnecessary "prohibitions" to reap a "double profit" by collecting fines from the general public while giving dispensations to interested parties for a sufficient bribe, or issuing licences for monopolies for a fee "contrary to the public welfare."⁷⁸

However greedy kings might be, enclosure bore the main brunt of More's anger. It was his *causa causans* and it was fueled only by greed, by "noblemen, gentlemen, and even some abbots" who were

⁷⁶ A.E. Bland, P.A. Brown, and R.H. Tawney, eds., *English Economic History: Select Documents* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1914), 260–262.

⁷⁷ More, *Utopia*, 65.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

“not satisfied with the annual revenues and profits (*reditibus fructibusque annuis*) which their predecessors used to derive from their estates.” Given the presumed identity between the social body and the human, no greed on the part of one organ could fail to harm the whole: those enclosers were “not content, by leading an idle and sumptuous life, to do no good to their country; they must also do it positive harm.” This harm to the whole was accomplished by depriving other organs of needed resources: “men and women, husbands and wives, orphans and widows, [and] parents with little children” were compelled to abandon “the only homes familiar and known to them.” Result: “the price of food” and of “raw wools has climbed so high” that “great numbers are driven from work into idleness.”⁷⁹

More’s solutions to the unjust practices of enclosers and of sharp minded cattle dealers who created artificial scarcity by moving stock from market to market seeking the highest price were statutory rather than market based:

Make laws that destroyers of farmsteads and country villages should either restore them or hand them over to people who will restore them and who are ready to build. Restrict this right of rich individuals to buy up everything and this license to exercise a kind of monopoly for themselves. Let fewer be brought up in idleness. Let farming be resumed and let cloth-working be restored once more that there may be honest jobs to employ usefully that idle throng, whether those who hitherto pauperism has made thieves or those who, now being vagrants or lazy servants, in either case are likely to turn out thieves.⁸⁰

As much as he blamed the enclosers, Sir Thomas More did not think the moral rot was limited to the upper classes: “Not only the servants of noblemen but the craftsmen and almost the clophoppers themselves, in fact all classes alike, are given to ostentatious sumptuousness of dress (*insolentis apparatus in uestibus*) and to excessive indulgence at table.”⁸¹ The remark about apparel was bound to raise the hackles of the contemporary reader (and the Latin *insolentis* is more revealing than the translation) ever alert to signs that the lower organs were not content with their station in life. How could a body survive if the feet decided to be the arms?

⁷⁹ All the citations in this paragraph are from *ibid.*, 67. To describe the unjust concentration of supply into so few hands and the ability to dictate prices it created, More even coined a new word, *oligopoly*; for which, see *ibid.*, 69.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 69–71.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

More's *Utopia* did not cover every sore point the century would know; debasements and American silver were not yet on his horizon, but those on which he did touch—food prices, enclosure, unemployment, homelessness, greedy monarchs and traders, and organs not content with their allotted roles—would echo consistently down through his century and well into the next. Rather than attempt a chronological reconstruction, which would require us to jump from one type of complaint to another and back, the relationship between profit and justice will become clearer if we work from type to type. This chapter deals with complaints against (1) lawyers, (2) the church, and (3) the aristocracy before looking (4) at the population as a whole, while the following chapters explore specific complaints against kings, usurers, and merchants.

(1) *The Sins of the Bench*. The growth of the commercial sector and, in England, the battles over enclosure, meant more money was passing into the hands of lawyers, who, as the most visible arm of justice to the bewildered plaintiff or defendant, had the expense of law's delays laid at their door. As lawyers and judges were of one fraternity, both were smeared with the charge of seeking to profit at the public's expense. For Seyssel, "*la longeur*" of the legal system, "*une poison au royaume*" was entirely the fault of the administrators of "*la Justice*" who "*tendent principalement*" to "*enricher*" themselves instead of doing their assigned function.⁸² Thomas Starkey would allow that there was "some faut" in "the order of the law," but he was sure the main reason for lawsuits lasting year after year were the "hungry advocates and cormorants of the court" who studied "much to delay causes for their lucre and profit."⁸³ While Henry VIII's Reformation eliminated the need (and ability) to appeal ecclesiastical cases to Rome, simplifying one type of process, the overall state of the legal system seems to have changed little from Starkey's day to William Harrison's:

if I should set down how little law poor men can have for their small fees in these days and the great murmurings that are on all sides uttered against their [lawyers] excessive taking of money (for they can abide no small gain), I should extend this treatise into a far greater volume than is convenient for my purpose.⁸⁴

⁸² Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 151 [II.16].

⁸³ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 113 [IV]. See also, *ibid.*, 172 [VI]: "the avaricious minds and covetous[ness] of the proctors and attorneys."

⁸⁴ Harrison, *Description*, 174 [II.9].

Thomas Mun, who had successfully escaped prosecution in Italy over a youthful bankruptcy at the turn of the century, railed against the “Quillets, Delays and Charges” of lawyers.⁸⁵

As tensions heated up between Puritans and Anglicans, between Parliamentarians and Royalists in the seventeenth century, the complaints against various courts took on political overtones that did not necessarily abate with the removal of Charles I. A debater in Parliament in 1653 claimed that Chancery, “For dilatories, chargeableness, and a faculty of letting blood the people in the purse veine, even to their utter perishing and undoing” might “compare (if not surpass) any court in the world.”⁸⁶

(2) *The Sins of the “Right” Church*. Churchmen were caught in a double bind in the sixteenth century. An accumulation of dissatisfaction with its institutional behavior that had been building up since the days of the Black Death had led to the Reformation, while the rivalries between competing factions created by the Reformation led to an intensification of attacks on clerics of all sects as part of the ongoing propaganda war despite the universally held belief that the profit of the right church was synonymous with the profit of the commonwealth. Attacks on the currently established church as an institution took two basic forms. On the one hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, they were charged with idleness (failing to profit the whole), while on the other, as discussed below, they were also charged with greed (stealing from all or part of their flock). Of course, idleness was by itself, a kind of stealing from the whole. When John Bale (d. 1563) penned his play *Kynge Johan*, he attacked the clergy “which in ydelnes do lyve by other menns goodes.”⁸⁷

Judging by the timing of the rising tide of complaints in the Middle Ages, the roots of the charge seem to lie in what the laity no doubt saw as an insufficient response by the church as an institution to the Black Death. It also appears to be tied to the bewilderment Catholic Europeans felt at what seemed to them the unchristian behavior of the Orthodox Church they encountered during the Crusades, although

⁸⁵ Mun, *Englands Treasure*, 49, 53, and 60. For Mun’s financial troubles in Italy, see Raymond de Roover, “Thomas Mun in Italy,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 30 (1957), 81–83.

⁸⁶ Stuart E. Prall, “Chancery Reform and the Puritan Revolution,” *The American Journal of Legal History*, 6 #1 (January 1962), 29–30.

⁸⁷ J. Payne Collier, ed., *Kynge Johan, A Play in Two Parts by John Bale*, Camden Society o.s. 2 (1838), 2.

blaming the “other” Church may have been merely a safe way of highlighting the faults of ones own. The *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* was one of the most popular works of the later fourteenth and early fifteenth century. Leafing through it even the most casual reader would find that “although the Greeks are Christian,” they “sell benefices of Holy Church, and so do men in other places; and that is a great scandal and disgrace. For now is simony crowned like a king in Holy Church.”⁸⁸ Similar complaints echoed throughout the Reformation.

By 1511, John Colet was preaching sermons before Convocation warning the clergy of “Covetousness,” an “abominable pestilence hath” that had made them “blind to all things” except “those which seem to bring unto us some gains. For what other thing seek we now-a-days in the Church than fat benefices and high promotions?” Colet’s solution was legislative: laws against simony, laws against a cleric being also a merchant or usurer, and laws enjoining status-appropriate apparel.⁸⁹ By the time of Simon Fish’s *Supplication for the Beggars* (1528), the Reformation had raised the level of rhetoric: Catholic clergy were no longer just “idle” but “ravenous wolves going in [shep]herds’ clothing devouring the flock,” who had “gotten into their hands” the “goodliest lordships, manors, lands, and territories” in addition to their tithes, and looked so “narrowly upon their profits that the poor wives must be countable to them of every tenth egg” or be refused communion and risk accusations of heresy.⁹⁰ As Henry VIII transformed the English church, he no doubt found helpful such complaints against the Catholic Church as the Common’s Supplication against the Ordinaries (1532) whose “long delay” in filling positions in order to “have the profits of the benefice during vacation,” deprived the populous of spiritual sustenance.⁹¹ Looking back after Elizabeth had, it seemed, finally settled the church, William Harrison remarked on the “store of coin . . . transported out of the land unto papal uses” each year during the bad old days, and these “tenths” were not even “one quarter of his gains gotten by England”; why, adding in the funds raised in the ecclesiasti-

⁸⁸ John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, ed. and trans. C.W.R.D. Moseley (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983), 50–51 [III]. Mandeville evenhandedly found the morals of the enemy faith no better, noting that the Saracens looked after a chapel in Nazareth frequented by Christian pilgrims “very strictly because of the profitability of the alms-giving there.” For which, see *ibid.*, 94 [XIII].

⁸⁹ Tanner, *Tudor*, 70–72.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁹¹ Elton, *Tudor Constitution*, 326.

cal courts, at least “£1,200,000 went yearly from hence to Rome.”⁹² It was not long however, before the Puritans, at least, were crying *plus ça change*. Surveying the situation in Essex in 1586, they found that out of its 335 benefices, 173 were held by “ignorant and unpreaching ministers,” sixty-one clergymen had “two benefices apiece,” ten others had only one benefice but were still “non-residents,” and twelve led a “scandalous life.”⁹³ Sir Thomas Wilson, surveying *The State of England* in 1600, advised “keeping” the “clergy from being over rich,” for “that order of men have most damned England by their profuse spending upon their pleasures” and were “no way profitable” to the commonwealth.⁹⁴

(3) *The Sins of the Aristocracy*. Examining the vices and virtues of the estates of the realm, Seyssel lamented that the landowning aristocracy was often “convertit” into an “*Oligarchie*” or “*monopole*” by its own covetous (“*convoiteux*”) and “*ambiteux*” members who, instead of fulfilling their function of “*gouverner la chose publique*” well, looked only to their own “*profit particulier*.”⁹⁵ By this time in England, landlords pressed by rising prices and seeing the greater profits accruing to raising sheep than to farming, were evicting tenants, enclosing fields, and converting arable to pasture at an alarming rate. Not surprisingly, their actions were already being blamed for causing the price rises themselves. An Act Concerning Farms and Sheep (1533–1534) linked enclosure and conversion to the doubling of basic commodity prices, and, as a remedy, forbade any man to keep more than 2000 sheep while requiring that at least one-eighth of anyone’s land be kept in tillage. The wording of the act underscores the way in which enclosures violated distributive justice, asserting that, desiring to reap “the great profit that cometh of sheep,” some subjects had lately been studying how to

gather to together into few hands as well great multitudes of farms ... whereby they have ... enhanced the old rates of their rents ... [and imposed] such excessive fines ... have raised and enhanced the prices of all manner of corn, cattle, wool, pigs, geese ... almost double above the price which hath been accustomed, by reason whereby a marvelous multitude and number of people of this realm be not able to provide meat, drink and clothes necessary for themselves, their wives and children.⁹⁶

⁹² Harrison, *Description*, 61–62 [II.2].

⁹³ Elton, *Tudor Constitution*, 328.

⁹⁴ F.J. Fisher, ed., “The State of England (1600). By Sir Thomas Wilson,” *Camden Miscellany XVI*, Camden Society, 3rd ser. 52 (1936), 38.

⁹⁵ Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 104 [I.1].

⁹⁶ Bland *et al*, *English Economic History*, 264–266.

When Thomas Cromwell reported the passage of the Act through the House of Commons to Henry VIII, he said that if it passed the House of Lords as well, it would be the “most noble proffyttable and most benefycyall thing” that had been done for the commonwealth since the days of its founding.⁹⁷ Writing about the same time, Thomas Starkey thought any “ordinance” rolling back rents to what they were “when the people of England flourished” would be “profitable” all around, for if the “farmers pay much rent,” they “must needs sell dear” and “justly” so.⁹⁸ Henry Brinklow’s *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors* (1542) also laid the blame squarely on the enclosers, but expecting little redress from the landowners sitting in Parliament, Brinklow looked to the king to roll back his rents, rent out his parklands, compel his subjects to follow suit, and redistribute church lands to the poor.⁹⁹ For Commonwealth men such as Hugh Latimer and Thomas Becon, rent-racking was as much theft as was forestalling or usury.¹⁰⁰

While the author of the anonymous *Compendious or Brief Examination* believed debasement was the root cause of the age’s inflation, he paid considerable attention to the aggravating effects of rent racking. The husbandman complained that enclosures raised the price of land, gave “one man and his shepherd” the “livings” of “forty persons,” causing “uproars” by the unemployed, while the cap maker complained of having to give his “journeymen twopence in a day more” than he “was wont to do and yet they say they cannot sufficiently live thereon.”¹⁰¹ The uproar in question was Ket’s Rebellion (1549). Echoing sentiments previously voiced by the marchers of the Pilgrimage of Grace (1536), the rebels demanded the rolling back of copyhold rents to the rates of 1485 (the beginning of the Tudor era), in addition to being given assurances “that all freeholders and copyholders” and not the lords might “take the profits” of the common lands.¹⁰² Back in 1536 pop-

⁹⁷ Merriman, *Cromwell*, 1:373 [#67].

⁹⁸ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 159 [V].

⁹⁹ Henry Brinklow, *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors* (1542) and *The Lamentacyon of a Christen* (1545), ed. J.M. Cowper (London: Trübner/Early English text Society, 1874), 73, 10, 12–13, 17, and 50–53.

¹⁰⁰ Latimer, *Sermons* 1:98–99 and Becon, *Catechism*, 108, cited in Neal Wood, *Foundations of Political Economy: Some Early Tudor Views on State and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 175.

¹⁰¹ [Smith], *Discourse*, 17 [I].

¹⁰² Bland *et al.*, *English Economic History*, 247 [#7] and 248 [#8]. However, it is important to keep in mind that the rising of 1536 was not exclusively in response to economic pressures, but were also intended to express “a profound sense of disagreement” with

ular leaders had called the rent-racking and manipulation of tenants' rights "a great disprofit to all the commons" and condemned them as being "against the faith of Christ, the church profit and the commonwealth."¹⁰³ By 1549, the government was less willing to believe religion had anything to do with affairs. Describing the uproars in August, Protector Somerset wrote that "some crieth, pluck down enclosures and parks, some for their commons, others pretend religion," and the measure he decided upon before his overthrow a few months later was a rent rollback, hoping, as M.L. Bush put it, "to sustain a populous peasantry in a fit state to serve the king."¹⁰⁴ In other words, distributive justice demanded that the gentry bear a small loss in order that the populace and the crown have sufficient resources to perform their functions.

According to the *Compendious*, the sin enclosers and converters committed was trying to "purchase themselves profit" by methods that were "hurtful to others":

True it is that that thing which is profitable to each man by himself, so it be not prejudicial to any other, is profitable to the whole Commonweal and not otherwise; or else robbing and stealing which percase is profitable to some men were profitable to the Commonweal which no man will admit. But this feat of enclosing is so that where it is profitable to one man it is prejudicial to many.¹⁰⁵

That they owned the land was no defense, as "men may not abuse their own things to the damage of the Commonweal," but since "every man will seek where most advantage is," what was needed were laws to "make the profit of the plow" as "good" as that of the "grazier and sheep master."¹⁰⁶ The draft of a bill in 1547 did not attack new

the king's recent religious policies among all ranks; for which, see M.E. James, "Obedience and Dissent in Henrician England: The Lincolnshire Rebellion, 1536," *Past and Present* 48 (August 1970), 5.

¹⁰³ R.W. Hoyle and A.J.L. Winchester, "A Lost Source for the Rising of 1536 in north-west England," *English Historical Review*, 118 #475 (February 2003), 127–129 [#3, #8].

¹⁰⁴ M.L. Bush, "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: A Post-Revision Questioned," *The English Historical Review*, 115 #460 (February 2000) 107–109. To follow the debate over Somerset's intentions vis-a-vis crown-gentry/crown-populace alliances, begin with Shagan, "Protector Somerset," 34–63, and continue with G.W. Bernard, "New Perspectives or Old Complexities?," *The English Historical Review*, 115 #460 (February 2000): 113–120; Bush's article already cited in this note, and Ethan H. Shagan's response, "'Popularity' and the 1549 Rebellions Revisited," *The English Historical Review*, 115 #460 (February 2000): 121–133.

¹⁰⁵ [Smith], *Discourse*, 51–52 [II].

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 53–54 [III]. The author's emphasis on the importance of recognizing eco-

enclosures but only those who “reteyn and kepe” more than they needed, depriving others of tenancies,¹⁰⁷ carrying through the idea of the difference between a just and an unjust share.

Enclosure with conversion to sheep herding was not the only sin the landlord committed that raised the price of grain. According to William Harrison, “landlords do get licenses to carry corn out of the land only to keep up the prices for their own private gains and ruin of the commonwealth” driving the “artificer and poor laboring man ... to content himself with horse corn, I mean, beans, peason, oats, tares, and lentils.”¹⁰⁸ In the end, the economic argument that landowners raised rents to meet their ballooning expenses was drowned out by the moral one that they raised rents or enclosed grounds in order to live above their stations. For William Perkins, the cause of the “racking of rents, taking immoderate fines, [and] enclosing of grounds that have lain common time out of mind” was “want of sobriety and temperance in diet and apparel.”¹⁰⁹

Were the landlords to blame? Were they profiting at their tenants' expense? Ian Blanchard found a “continuous upward movement of rents” in areas in Cumberland, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire among other places from as early as 1478.¹¹⁰ Such increases, however, need to be indexed to prices to see if they were real or merely nominal. Comparing the movement of rents on the Herbert estates, wheat prices, and wool prices, using 1510–1519 as an index base, Eric Kerridge found that by the middle of the sixteenth century rents stood at 308 while wheat had only risen to 253 and wool to 171, and rent increases continued to outpace those for wheat and wool until the middle of the seventeenth century.¹¹¹ While data from one region cannot on its own stand in for a country as a whole, the

economic motivation in correcting the age's problems has led to much praise from historians of economic thought, but it seems imperative to read such remarks on profit-seeking with the understanding that the author clearly distinguished between individual profit-seeking that benefitted the whole and that which did not. Spiegel, for example, is clear on this, and on how Smith's “harmony” of interests differs from the automatic mechanism of Adam Smith. For which treatment, see Henry William Spiegel, *The Growth of Economic Thought*, rev. ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983), 84–85.

¹⁰⁷ Blanchard, “Population,” 439.

¹⁰⁸ Harrison, *Description*, 133 [II.6].

¹⁰⁹ Perkins, *Vocations*, 486.

¹¹⁰ Blanchard, “Population,” 434.

¹¹¹ Eric Kerridge, “The Movement of Rent, 1540–1640,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 6 #1 (August 1953), 28 (Table 4).

same widespread insecurity of tenure (with most copyholders not having the increase-proof combination of “a sound title, tenure by inheritance” and “fixed” rents and fines) that allowed enclosure to proceed apace throughout much of England made it easier for landowners to inflation-proof their income by increasing their entry fines.¹¹² However, not all members of the landowning classes were able apparently to take equal advantage. Looking at landownership in England and Wales between 1436 and 1690, Mark Overton found that the nobility’s percentage remained static as the gentry increased its holdings from 25 to between 45 and 50 percent, and even yeomen increased their share from 20 to between 25 and 33 percent.¹¹³ However, since the number of gentry families tripled over the same time period, a doubling of their land holdings meant the average gentry family now owned less land: the greatest gainers appear to have been the yeomen who, by moving up economically, were increasing the total number of gentry families.¹¹⁴ As will be seen in a later discussion of Lawrence Stone’s work, they were, however, only moving up the ranks of their own ladder.

How typical was the English experience? For the largest landholders in Spain, income from rents just about kept pace with inflation, but smaller landholders within the *hidalgo* class tended to find themselves in the same boat as the salaried professionals, losing more and more of their real income.¹¹⁵ With tenant-farming peasants making up 95 percent of Spain’s population and 95–97 percent of the land in the hands of the top two percent of the population, disparities between rents, wages, and prices were a constant source of trouble: the 1519–1524 rising of the guilds of Valencia and Mallorca being a case in point.¹¹⁶ In Spain half the national income went to a clergy that only numbered about 100,000 in the sixteenth century because of its “disproportionate” land holdings; such economic disparity contributed to the friction between the laity and the church: the primarily proletarian

¹¹² See Ramsey, *Tudor*, 33–35, on the insecurity of most copyholders as well as of tenants-at-will, and Kerridge, “Rent,” 19, to the effect that increased entry fines were the predominant form of rent increase in the period in question.

¹¹³ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, 169 [Table 4.9] and 168 [Table 4.8].

¹¹⁴ Guy, *Tudor*, 48–49.

¹¹⁵ Lynch, *Spain*, 104 and 127. However, Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 313, cites a study of thirteen ducal families whose annual incomes “barely” doubled over the course of the sixteenth century when prices, on average, quadrupled, so even some of the greatest aristocracy felt the pinch.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12–13 and 41.

Anabaptist movement in Spain had as much to do with Spain's economic woes as with doctrinal issues.¹¹⁷

In France a struggle over *dérogation* that developed over the course of the Price Revolution suggests that at least some elements of a suffering French nobility looked to trade to boost their incomes to the ire of a mercantile class not amused by the prospect of having to compete with noble traders whose income was not subject to royal taxation.¹¹⁸ In a study done by Gayle K. Brunelle, four points seem to stand out: (1) "the term *dérogance*" was "absent from law codes, royal edicts, cahiers of the provincial estates, and works of legal theorists until the early sixteenth century," (2) the "number of trials" for *dérogance* "mounted steadily after 1560," (3) nobles easily won such court cases at the beginning of the century, but by 1565 "required royal permission" for even "an infraction of little consequence," and (4) at least by the seventeenth century the monarchy tended to side with the merchants and against the nobles because of pressures on its own revenues.¹¹⁹ If the French nobility was finding it increasingly difficult to poach upon the traditional preserves of the Third Estate, it was also losing ground in its own preserves with the increasing military importance of the infantry, the increasing numbers of non-noble officers recruited by the crown, and the nobility's own increasing tendency to send money rather than to serve in person.¹²⁰ Complaints by the Third Estate in their *cahier* of 1560 "of nobles who were arbitrarily subjecting their peasants to greater demands, not only by requiring payment of old obligations ignored in the past, but also illicitly imposing many new ones"¹²¹ suggests that at least the older elements of the French nobility were feeling the pinch of the Price Revolution.

In North Holland, rents rose faster than prices during the last decades of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth,

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 109–110 and 97.

¹¹⁸ Holt, *Society*, 70.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 64–65 and 75–76. Brunelle's findings add complexity to but do not really overturn the modern traditional view of a noble "crisis," which tends to fault the nobility for not being willing enough to engage in commercial activity; for which, see Davis Bitton, *The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560–1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 45–59, 64, 66, and 71–73. Is the lack of court cases in the earlier period the result of a lack of concern or a lack of practice?

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 28–30, 32, and 34–35, especially on the attempts to require the reluctant nobility to serve in the *ban et arrière ban* in the last decades of the sixteenth century and Richelieu's revival attempts in the seventeenth.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

a fairly typical pattern for the United Netherlands, despite the fact that reclamation efforts brought over 3500 hectares of new farmland onto the market between 1565 and 1639.¹²² Land prices seem to have outpaced inflation by substantial margins in Belgium and Holstein as well.¹²³ It would appear that though renters somewhat overstated the case, their complaints against the landowners were not entirely without cause.

Enclosure was also having a profound effect on the structure of rural England. John Rouse could document 58 “depopulated villages” in Warwickshire before he died in 1491, and peaks in wool prices in the first third and last decade of the sixteenth century led to the enclosure and conversion to pasturage of tens of thousands of acres primarily by the squirearchy. In areas where the soil was more suited for growing grain than for herding sheep, enclosure was not accompanied by conversion to pasturage and thus did not lead to depopulation but still reconfigured the social structure of the countryside by turning many once independent copyholders and tenants-at-will into dependent rural wage-laborers. If the increasing productivity of English farms (from six to twelve bushels per acre in the thirteenth century to sixteen-plus by the second half of the sixteenth) is looked at in conjunction with the steep rise in the prices of agricultural products, a picture emerges of a widening gap between the landlord and the farm laborer.¹²⁴

(4) *The Sins of the Population*. In a finite world, the size of any state’s population was often directly equated with its strength. The memory of the social upheavals following the depopulation of western Europe during the Black Death provided a practical reminder that a social body could not survive without enough members to fulfill its needs. Machiavelli thought that “many parts of the world, and especially of Italy, have become deserted by comparison to ancient times.”¹²⁵ Thomas Starkey believed there was “a lack of people” in England, a “disease” in “our politic body” that might well “be compared to a consumption” of the body human.¹²⁶ The author of the manuscript entitled “Policies to reduce this realme of Englande unto a prosperus wealthe and estate”

¹²² Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 335.

¹²³ Fischer, *Great Wave*, 77.

¹²⁴ Ramsey, *Tudor*, 25–26, 30, 32–33, 45.

¹²⁵ Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, 53 [II.1].

¹²⁶ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 78 [III].

(1549) was certain that, following Solomon, “in the multitude of people is the state of a king: and in the Fewnes of Subjectes is the princes dishonour.”¹²⁷ But early modern theorists feared too large a population as much as they did the reverse. For Botero, “the weakness of small empires” exposed them to the “abuse of great ones which devour them and profit by their ruin,” while large states were “more susceptible to the internal causes of ruin” because riches increased “with greatness and vices with riches,” leaving “middle-sized” states the most viable, restrained as they were from folly by “fear of their neighbors” and the “less violent passions” of their smaller populations.¹²⁸ Within a few years of Starkey’s complaint of under population, Sebastian Franck (*Deutschen Chronik*, 1538) thought that there were “so many people everywhere, no one can move.”¹²⁹ When Nicholas Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury, penned his “Treatise on the Pretended Divorce Between Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon” during the reign of Mary I, he suggested a population could grow too quickly for its economy to keep pace, noting the aggravating effect of the dissolution of the monasteries on the population problem thusly:

Again, what is one of the causes of the great poverty and beggary of the people but the suppression of said Abbeyes? For whereas, in times, past, a great number of both sex and kind entered yearly into religion and there led a single chaste life, now all such being married, and they, their children, and their children’s children being multiplied in such an infinite number, neither farms sufficient for such a number can be conveniently provided, nor yet can they live by way of merchandizing or by occupying, but with the great hindrance of other occupiers and merchants.¹³⁰

By 1576 Alderman Box was writing to Lord Burghley that unlike the plague years when cultivated lands went to waste because of the “decaye or lacke of people,” causing food prices “to be so good cheape,” nowadays “the time is alterid,” for “the people are increassid and grounde for plowes dothe want,” making “victuall deare.”¹³¹ George Hakewill believed “The plenty of coin and multitude of men ... either

¹²⁷ Tawey and Power, *Tudor*, 3:314.

¹²⁸ Botero, *Reason of State*, 7–8 [I.6].

¹²⁹ Fischer, *Great Wave*, 73.

¹³⁰ Nicholas Pocock, ed., *A Treatise on the Pretended Divorce Between Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon*, by Nicholas Harpsfield LL.D., Archdeacon of Canterbury, Camden Society, n.s. 21 (1878), 299–300.

¹³¹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 1:74.

of which asunder, but much more both together, must needs be a means of raising prices of all things.”¹³²

Jean Bodin, as will be discussed later, decided that the influx of American silver was the main cause of the inflation, but still believed that a contributing factor was “*le peuple infini qui est multiplié*” in France since the end of the civil wars between the houses of Orleans and Burgundy.¹³³ France, whose pre-plague population of 19 million had dropped to 12 million by 1450, was still not back to full strength when the wars of religion began with about 17.5 million people.¹³⁴ Though Bodin had no way of knowing the extent to which the surge in population he noted had or had not repaired the damage done by the Plague, he apparently felt that, despite population’s contributing role in increasing prices, France still did not have enough people. Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger traced the similar condemnations of midwifery in Bodin’s anti-witchcraft tract (*De la démonomanie des sorciers*, 1580), Johann Christian Fromann’s *Tractatus de fascinatione novus et singularis* (1575), and the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) of Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer to “the memory” of the “demographic crisis” brought on by the Black Death. All three tracts emphasized the demonic power of midwives to prevent conception and/or abort unwanted fetuses.¹³⁵ Contraception was also newly defined as homicide by the new Roman Catholic Catechism of 1566.¹³⁶ Approaching the desire to increase the population from a different viewpoint, Georg Obrecht advised his monarch to be zealous in the promotion of trade and craft fairs, in order to increase the revenues from the “more populous and better appointed towns and territories” that would result.¹³⁷

If more was better in a general sense where the number of people was concerned, more was only better in a specific sense if the country maintained a due proportion of the number of people within in each social organ: so many feet to so many arms or the body could not function. Aristotle had warned that “revolutions” could as easily be caused by “disproportionate growth” as by factions,

for just as a body is composed of parts, and needs to grow proportionately in order that its symmetry may remain, and if it does not it is

¹³² Fischer, *Great Wave*, 85.

¹³³ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:429 [*Response*].

¹³⁴ Heinsohn and Steiger, “Birth Control,” 424.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 429–432.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 438.

¹³⁷ Small, *Cameralists*, 54.

spoiled, when the foot is four cubits long and the rest of the body two spans...., so also a state is composed of parts, one of which often grows without its being noticed, as for example the number of the poor in democracies and constitutional states.¹³⁸

Starkey was more concerned with the idleness of noblemen and churchmen than with overall population size, concluding that however necessary their roles, an “over-great number of them, without due proportion to the other parts of the body” was “superfluous in any commonalty.”¹³⁹ Campanella complained that there were “three hundred thousand souls in Naples and not fifty thousand of them work, and these work so hard that they destroy themselves.”¹⁴⁰ Raleigh complained that “two parts” of England’s population were “mere spenders and consumers” of the “commonwealth,” suggesting the crown back policies to “allure and encourage the people for their private gain, to be all workers and erecters” instead.¹⁴¹ Bacon observed that while “the population of a kingdom” should not “exceed” its “stock,” population could not

be reckoned only by number; for a smaller number, that spend more and earn less, do wear out an estate sooner than a greater number that live lower and gather more. Therefore the multiplying of nobility and other degrees of quality, in an overproportion to the common people, doth speedily bring a state to necessity.¹⁴²

An example of what the age considered a much healthier proportion of workers to drones occurs in *The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland* (1662) by Pieter de la Court, a textile manufacturer and attorney from Leiden, which was expanded and published by John de Witt. According to the *True Interest*, the population of the province of Holland had increased from 602,417 in 1622 to 2.4 million, broken down by source of income as follows:

¹³⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 383 [V.2.7].

¹³⁹ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 79–80 [III].

¹⁴⁰ Campanella, *City*, 63–65.

¹⁴¹ Walter Raleigh, *Observations touching Trade and Commerce With the Hollander, and other Nations...* in *A Select Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts on Commerce: From the Originals of Evelyn, Defoe, Richardson, Tucker, Temple, and others*, ed. John R. McCulloch (reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966), 26–27. Note, however, McCulloch’s “Preface” (v), that while it is “doubtful” whether Raleigh “was really its author,” the piece “certainly dates as far back as the reign” of James I.

¹⁴² Francis Bacon, *Essays and New Atlantis*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New York: Walter J. Black, 1942), 61 [#15].

450,000	“By the fisheries at sea” and the “materials, or instruments” they need,
200,000	“By agriculture, inland-fishing, herding, haymaking,” etc. turf-making,
650,000	“By making all manner of manufactures ... consumed abroad,”
250,000	“By navigation or sailing for freight and trade jointly”
650,000	in families “provided” for and “working” in domestic trades
200,000	“By the labour and care of all the above-mentioned persons, and being gentry without employment or calling, civil magistrates and officers, those that live upon their estates or money, soldiers, the poor in hospitals, beggars, &c.” ¹⁴³

By contrast, the “Scheme of the Income and Expence of the several Families of England, calculated in the Year 1688,” worked out by the herald and surveyor, Gregory King, presents a picture of how the population of a still primarily agricultural monarchy differed from that of a primarily commercial republic while opening a window into the how these socio-political differences affected attitudes towards different economic sectors. Dividing the population into two basic groups, King believed that the 2,675,520 people in the families of lords temporal and spiritual, the landed gentry, yeomanry, officeholders, import-export merchants, professionals, artisans, and military officers had a combined income of £34,488,800 and expenses of £31,465,100, netting the commonwealth an annual profit of £3,023,700, while the 2,825,000 people in the families of common seamen and soldiers, wage-laborers, out-servants, cottagers, paupers, and vagrants earned only £9,010,000 and spent £9,572,000, draining the commonwealth of £622,500 each year.¹⁴⁴

Even more important, perhaps, than the size of each social organ was the contentment of their individual cells with their assigned functions; if they started to behave like cells from other organs total collapse was imminent. Not surprisingly, much more ink was spilled during the century on the misbehavior of the organs than on the number of cells. Any organ of the body politic might be castigated for

¹⁴³ Court, *True Interest*, 34–36 [I.9].

¹⁴⁴ From King’s table as reproduced by Charles Davenant (1656–1714), *The Political and Commercial Works*, ed. Sir Charles Whitworth, facsimile reprint (Farnborough, GB: Gregg, 1967), 2:184 [*Probable Methods*]. This table varies somewhat from King’s final version, as found in *Two Tracts by Gregory King*, ed. George E. Barnett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), 31. Davenant may have altered the figures or had access to an earlier draft of King’s calculation.

being *uppity*. Fortescue, for example, made a point of warning that the king needed revenues “gretter than the livelod off the grettest lorde in Englande,” for it was not unheard of for a lord with as much or more than his king to aspire “to the estate of his prince,” and Thomas Starkey felt the problem ran through every class, remarking that “gentlemen and the nobility” were alike “oversumptuous” and built “commonly above their degree,” when it was “nothing convenient to his state and condition” for a “mean man” to “have a house meet for a prince.”¹⁴⁵ But for every complaint of over-reaching nobles or gentlemen, there were dozens more directed against the middling and lower classes. In his *Chronicle of the Crusade of St. Lewis*, Jean de Joinville (1224–1317) reprimanded Master Robert of Sorbon for his inappropriately rich costume with a reference to their respective social positions:

I do nothing blameworthy when I clothe myself in green cloth and fur, for this garment was left to me by my father and mother. But you are to blame, for you are the son of a common man and a common woman, and you have abandoned the vesture worn by your father and mother, and wear richer woollen cloth than the king himself.¹⁴⁶

And, in his *Chronicle of Florence*, Dino Compagni (c. 1260–1324) blamed that city’s troubles on “bold and arrogant *popolani*” who attacked their betters and used their victories not to better the city but to draw “large profits from the commune.”¹⁴⁷ While Christine de Pizan contrasted “the good old days” when “duchesses would not dare to put on the costume of queens, nor countesses wear duchesses’ robes, nor simple ladies dress in the clothes of countesses, nor demoiselles wear the garb of ladies” with the “chaos” of her own time when “no order” was “observed either in clothing or in ornaments,” and social climbers were so indebted to their “dressmakers,” they had to “pawn one gown in order to buy another.”¹⁴⁸ Women were also the target of the unknown “A.L.” who penned his “Relation of some abuses which are committed

¹⁴⁵ John Fortescue, *The Governance of England*, ed. Charles Plummer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926), 128 [IX], and Starkey, *Dialogue*, 94 [III].

¹⁴⁶ Jean de Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades by Villehardouin and de Joinville*, ed. and trans. Frank T. Marzials (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958), 143 [I].

¹⁴⁷ Dino Compagni, *Dino Compagni’s Chronicle of Florence*, ed. and trans. Daniel E. Bornstein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 64 [III.2].

¹⁴⁸ Christine de Pizan, *Medieval Woman*, 174–175 [II.11]. See also *ibid.*, 196 [III.3], to the effect that merchant’s wives should not be ashamed of wearing the costume of their class.

against the common-wealth” in 1629. He believed “every degree of men” ought to wear clothing that “might plainly distinguish (and manifest) the degree of the wearer;” which left him little patience for “every poore gentlewoman of twenty markes (or curates wife of ten pounce) a year who went about “in their jingle jangles and trinketts like so many ladies.” This was “so undecent,” he could not “overpasse it with silence.”¹⁴⁹ That the same complaint might be made as the Price Revolution wound down as was made at its beginning might also be taken as evidence that some among the middling sort found profit rather than loss in the escalating cost of living.

If the threat of social chaos always hovered over such denunciations of social climbing, it was far from an entirely imaginary threat. Lingering in the continent’s memory and forming a subtext for all such complaints in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the social upheavals attendant upon the century of plague. The Black Death of 1347–1351 and later outbreaks of plague in 1361, 1369, 1374–1379, and 1390–1393 had wiped out more than a third of the population of western Europe. An economy already showing signs of strain twenty years before the first outbreak nearly collapsed under the continuing onslaught, with populations in 1450 still below those of a century before.¹⁵⁰ Within months of the plague’s arrival in England in 1348, the chronicler of the *Historia Roffensis* (the Cathedral Priory of Rochester) lamented that

such a shortage of workers ensued that the humble turned up their noses at employment, and could scarcely be persuaded to serve the eminent unless for triple wages... thus the poor and servile have been enriched and the rich impoverished. As a result, churchmen, knights and other worthies have been forced to thresh their corn, plough the land and perform every other unskilled task if they are to make their own bread.¹⁵¹

How quickly the trouble was traced to its source can be seen in the first post-plague English legislation, the Ordinance of Laborers of 1349, which recognized that

¹⁴⁹ Sir Frederic Madden, ed., “A Relation of some abuses which are committed against the common-wealth,” *Camden Miscellany III*, Camden Society, o.s. 61 (1855), 26.

¹⁵⁰ For an excellent summary of the socio-economic problems of the decades immediately preceding the 1348 outbreak, see Harry A. Miskimin, *The Economy of Early Renaissance Europe, 1300–1460* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), 23–27.

¹⁵¹ Rosemary Horrox, ed. and trans., *The Black Death* (Manchester, GB: Manchester University Press, 1994), 70.

Since a great part of the population, and especially workers and employees [*serviens*], has now died in this pestilence many people, observing the needs of masters and the shortage of employees, are refusing to work unless they are paid an excessive salary.¹⁵²

Every conceivable step was taken to force the peasantry to remain on the land and, along with every manner of artificer or laborer, accept their traditional wages. The crown also attempted to restrain prices through the mediation of the seller's profit. Thus, according to the 1349 Ordinance,

butchers, fishmongers, innkeepers, brewers, bakers, poulteres, and all other dealers in foodstuffs should be bound to sell the food for a reasonable price, having regard to the price at which such food is sold in the neighborhood. The price should allow the seller a moderate, but not excessive, profit, taking reasonable account of the distance he has transported the goods.¹⁵³

Nor did it take very long before the crown felt sumptuary legislation was required. By 1363 it was a matter of law that to cure "the outrageous and excessive apparel of many people, contrary to their estate and degree, to the great destruction and impoverishment of the whole land" the amount of money anyone could spend on a length of cloth (or what type of cloth they could purchase) would be set by status, and "if anyone dresses or behaves contrary to this ordinance, he shall forfeit to the king all the clothing which breaches the ordinance."¹⁵⁴ The provisions of this ordinance contain a clue as to why merchants were so suspected by their social superiors. They did not fit neatly into the social hierarchy but reached instead from rung to rung. The Act provided that the merchants with a net worth of £100 might dress like gentlemen with similar annual rents, while merchants with a net worth of over £1000 might dress "in the same manner as esquires and gentlemen with land or rent worth more than £200."¹⁵⁵ In the Poll Tax of 1379, merchants appeared in six of the 32 different income categories listed.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Horrox, *Black Death*, 287–288. See, however, Sandy Bardsley, "Women's Work Reconsidered: Gender and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England," *Past and Present* 165 (November 1999): 3–29, on the constancy of female to male wage rates in the century after the Plague.

¹⁵³ Horrox, *Black Death*, 289.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 340–341.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 341–342.

¹⁵⁶ Stephenson and Adams, *English*, 14–17.

The sixteenth century was as much a time of economic dislocation as had been the later fourteenth. Sometimes it must have seemed as if for every family impoverished by enclosure another was enriched by opportunities within the growing commercial sector. George Rainsford's *Ritratto d'Inghilterra* (1556) noted the common habit of merchants who "when they have reached a comfortable standard of living," abandoned their professions to "buy property in the villages where they live happily, having everything they require both for necessity and for pleasure."¹⁵⁷ Bernard Palissy (1510–1590) blamed the poor state of French agriculture on the foolish laborers who, the moment they had a little wealth ("un peu de bien"), spent "une grande partie à faire son fils Monsieur," which newly minted Monsieurs quit the land and were soon very displeased to be reminded they were only laborers' sons.¹⁵⁸ By 1600, Olivier de Serres was blaming France's religious wars for making "hired workers ... all the more insolent and arrogant, because the length of time the wars have lasted has habituated them to idleness and to all kinds of vices and disorders."¹⁵⁹ In the same year, Sir Thomas Wilson lambasted the yeomen of England who "not contented with the states of their fathers ... skipp into ... velvet breches" and call themselves gentlemen.¹⁶⁰ England's lawmakers seem to have been thinking similar thoughts when they penned the Statute of Artificers in 1563. That statute, while admitting that wages too "small" in respect to the inflation, and limiting the ability of employers to dismiss their servants, went on to limit the ability of farm laborers and urban workers to quit their jobs, gave justices of the peace and sheriffs the ability to fix wages, and made it easier for farmers to take on apprentices and harder for merchants to do the same (lest farmers be deprived of an adequate labor supply).¹⁶¹ With underemployment a chronic problem of the age and waves of unemployment caused by enclosures and trade recessions, the state was hard pressed to find a job for everyone. Thus, in a later Memorandum on the statute, one finds the age's classic defense of the state's roll in maintaining distributive justice:

¹⁵⁷ George Rainsford, *Ritratto d'Inghilterra* (1556), ed. and trans. P.S. Donaldson, *Camden Miscellany* 27, Camden Society, 4th ser. 22 (1979), 92–93.

¹⁵⁸ Bernard Palissy, "Recette véritable par laquelle tous les hommes de la France peuvent apprendre à augmenter et multiplier leurs trésors," in *Oeuvres complètes de B. Palissy* (Paris, J.-J. Dubochet, 1844), 86–87.

¹⁵⁹ Salmon, "Venality," 43.

¹⁶⁰ Fisher, *State of England*, 19.

¹⁶¹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 1:338–347.

For one man to be both an husbandman and an Artificer is a gathering of divers mens livings into one mans hands, And therefore the lawe doth not allowe such a one to keppe or instruct Apprentices in any occupacion to withdrawe from Artificers the occasion of their livinges, which have no other trade to live by but only their occupacions.¹⁶²

It was, of course, impossible to turn back the tide of urbanization or to prevent individuals from seeking to better their condition. And, by the sixteenth century, those not in the topmost echelon were beginning to bite back. In the debates over the Subsidy of 1523, Cardinal Wolsey castigated the commons for begrudging their king funds they could obviously spare given their “sumptuous buildings, plate, rich apparel of men, women, children, and servants, fat feasts and delicate dishes,” only to have the members grouse behind his back that the “honest apparel of the commodities of the realm, abundance of plain and honest viands, were profitable to the realm and not prodigal.”¹⁶³

Other voices reasoned that the blame did not lie ultimately with the middling sort for they only aped the example set by their betters. William Harrison noted that the “gentility,” having developed a “loathing” for metal goblets due to the abundance of “gold and silver,” preferred to drink their “wine and beer” from “Venice glasses,” and, as a consequence, the “poorest also will have glass if they may, but sith the Venetian is somewhat too dear for them, they content themselves with such as are made at home.”¹⁶⁴ Sumptuary laws were often suggested as a cure for the unseemly extravagance of social inferiors. They were recommended by Erasmus, Melchior von Osse, and Sir Thomas Smith, among others.¹⁶⁵ There was no unanimity on this point, however. Botero thought sumptuary laws would work, but heavy tariffs would have the same effect and give the prince a profit as well.¹⁶⁶ Others, like Bodin, thought sumptuary legislation was useless. For Bodin, the fourth cause of the century’s inflation was the “*plaisir des Princes, qui donnent le prix aux choses*” by setting the fashion: France might have no shortage of “*beaux edits*,” but as long as prohibited goods were worn in court, they would be worn everywhere.¹⁶⁷ Montaigne also noted the uselessness of sumptuary laws when kings increased the prestige of vel-

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 1:353.

¹⁶³ Tanner, *Tudor*, 609.

¹⁶⁴ Harrison, *Description*, 128 [II.6].

¹⁶⁵ Erasmus, *Education*, 227; Small, *Cameralists*, 38; and [Smith] *Discourse*, 82.

¹⁶⁶ Botero, *Reason of State*, 72 [II.17].

¹⁶⁷ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:434 and 6:437.

vet and gold braid each time they wore it.¹⁶⁸ After all, when it came to living beyond one's rank if not necessarily beyond one's means, everyone was doing it. Robert Carey, Baron of Leppington and Earl of Monmouth, bragged in his *Memoirs*, that despite his "small means" he "kept men and horses far above" his "rank," for a considerable time during his early days at Elizabeth's court.¹⁶⁹ Some, like Montaigne despaired of finding a cure: it was all a whirlwind of profit and no "*profit*" was ever made except at the "*dommage*" of another: the merchant lived off "*la débauche de la jeunesse*," the farm laborer off the dearness of grain, the architect off "*la ruine des maisons*," the lawyer off the "*querelles*" of men, clergymen off our death and our "*vices*," and no doctor took "*plaisir*" at the health of his friends.¹⁷⁰ Thomas Mun cautioned his son against following the fashion of scorning his father's profession to ape his superiors and consume "his estate in dark ignorance and excess" instead of following in his father's footsteps and advancing "his Fortunes," but to no avail: John Mun lived off the estates his father had purchased for his retirement.¹⁷¹

Though this is an investigation of early modern perceptions rather than of early modern realities, it is only inevitable to wonder if these societies were as upwardly mobile as contemporaries feared. That thought, also perhaps inevitably, brings to mind the study done of the higher ranks of the British gentry (*An Open Elite? England, 1540–1880*) by Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone. The hypothesis that the Stones tested and found false was the willingness of the British squirearchy to recruit new blood from professional, mercantile, and industrial elites. Looking at both buyers and sellers, their immediate forebears, the origins of their wives, and even at the downward mobility of younger sons, the Stones found the volume of penetration disappointingly small and markedly biased in favor of recruitment from the lesser gentry rather than from business elites. Overall, the Stones found the squirearchy a group that used every legal strategy—from entails to fictitious adoptions—to preserve themselves, exercising strong social restraints on recalcitrant members to see they held the line. There appear to be serious problems, however, in treating the period from 1540 to 1880 as one of continuity. The slope of the "Frequency Count

¹⁶⁸ Montaigne, *Essais*, 377 [I.43].

¹⁶⁹ Carey, *Memoirs*, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Montaigne, *Essais*, 171 [I.22].

¹⁷¹ Mun, *England's Treasure*, 3–4.

of Houses in Sample” changes markedly in the middle third of the seventeenth century (about 1:1 before and 1:8 afterwards) as does that of “Owners with Family Ties to Business,” “County Endogamy,” “Male Nuptuality,” “Inheritances by Children as a Proportion of all Transfers by Inheritance,” and “Sales as Proportion of all Disposals,” etc.¹⁷² Some slopes change once again at the end of the demographic crisis of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As regards openness, there appear to be at least two distinct periods. Perhaps it was easier for professionals and commercial elites to enter the squirearchy before the Restoration than it was for financiers and industrialists to enter it later on.

The evidence of other researchers points to a much more mobile society. Andrew A. Chibi found that unlike “medieval English and contemporary European” church bureaucracies, Henry VIII’s “episcopacy was an avenue of social mobility,” an “open elite” that was “a representative microcosm of the social conditions of the country as a whole.”¹⁷³ Royalty and nobility monopolized a mere seven percent of Henry VIII’s appointments as opposed to 27 percent of those in Scotland, 35 percent of those in Italy, 43 percent of those in France, and 73 percent of those in Castile; gentlemen received 41 percent of Henry VIII’s appointments, 31 percent of those in Scotland, 48 percent of those in Italy, seventeen percent of those in France, and three percent of those in Castile; yeomen and other commoners garnered 52 percent of Henry VIII’s appointments, 42 percent of those in Scotland, and four percent of those in France.¹⁷⁴ Even allowing for the appointees whose social origins were unknown, there was considerably more mobility on one side of the Channel than on the other. It also seems pertinent that the church hierarchy next in ease of access to Protestant England was that of Protestant Scotland.

Looking at probate inventories in Lincolnshire, M.W. Barley found a slow but steady increase in the median value of the estates, which went from 18*l* 13*s* in 1540 to 19*l* 13*s* in 1572, 28*l* 16*s* in 1605, 34*l* 7*s* in

¹⁷² Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England, 1540–1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 38, 88, 102, 176, 224, 360. At certain points, the Stones seem themselves to acknowledge the problem, as for, example, when they speak of 1540–1660 as the period of the “formation of the elite.” For which, see *ibid.*, 397.

¹⁷³ Andrew A. Chibi, “The Social and Regional Origins of the Henrician Episcopacy,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29 #4 (Winter 1998), 956.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 961.

1635, and 56l 16s in 1669 after the inflation ended.¹⁷⁵ While some of this might merely represent a nominal change, what is more indicative of the growth of prosperous middling classes is the creep in percentages of wills up the ten-pound brackets. While about 20 percent remain in the under £10 group throughout the sixteenth century (dropping to ten percent in the seventeenth), the percentages in the £10–20 bracket drop from 33 to 20 percent over the course of the sixteenth century as those in the £30–40 and £40–50 climb from eight to ten percent, those in the £60–80 go from 2.2 to 5.9 percent and those in the £80–100 go from 1.1 to 3.5 percent, and those in the over £100 go from 4.4 to 8.2 percent by 1605 with greater upward mobility in the seventeenth century.¹⁷⁶ Ian Blanchard looked at the average number of freemen admitted per decade in York and Norwich to a wide variety of craft guilds, and found that the numbers increased over all between 1480–1499 and 1550–1559, and there was a steadier increase in crafts supplying town dwellers than in those supplying primarily rural customers.¹⁷⁷ A shifting population would favor some workers over others. Also indicative of a rising middle and bottom if not of movement from class to class is the evidence gathered by Craig Muldrew (*The Economy of Obligation*) of dramatic increases in internal shipping of consumer goods and in the number of alehouses, books published, and the overall number of goods per household found in postmortem inventories throughout the sixteenth century. For example, in Kings Lynn, “the amount of soap imported from London rose from 67.5 lasts in 1566 to 231.5 lasts in 1586”; “the number of alehouses in Shrewsbury rose more than threefold” between the 1560s and 1620s, “while the population went up by less than a half”; between three and four million ballad sheets were printed in the last half of the sixteenth century; and there was an 81 percent increase in the number of household goods and a 586 percent increase in shop goods in Lincoln and Boston between 1535–1549 and 1575–1599.¹⁷⁸ While increases in money-value of estate might have to be adjusted for inflation, increases in the number of goods in estates provides strong evidence of real rather than nominal growth.

¹⁷⁵ M.W. Barley, “Farmhouses and Cottages, 1550–1725,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 7 #3 (April 1955), 293 (Table 2).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹⁷⁷ Blanchard, “Population,” 445 (Appendix B).

¹⁷⁸ Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 11–32.

But, again, for this study, it is early modern perceptions of reality that count. And amidst all the contemporary concern for the extravagance and uppity behavior of the masses, one voice took a very different view. George Rainsford took this behavior as evidence of the greater wealth of England, and believed that nobles, gentlemen, farmers, and merchants had been enriched by the increase in prices as they could always pass along more of an increase than they paid. And if it were true that “the artisans, do not live in that delicacy to which they were formerly accustomed,” well, there was always public charity on the one hand, and on the other the truth that while it was “desirable to do everything in a commonwealth for the good of everyone,” but when that was “not possible” it was “enough if something benefits the majority of the people, as the price increase clearly does, increasing the wealth of the nobles and farmers.” Other causes for the general increase in wealth, according to Rainsford, included extensive land reclamation, which increased the supply of grain and wool for sale, and the sale and/or rental of church properties confiscated by Henry VIII, which despite “the infamy of the first usurper,” now added to the revenues of nobles, merchants, and farmers instead of “only the king and a few poor people.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Rainsford, *Ritratto*, 97–99.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PROFIT AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE II: THE SINS OF THE MONARCH

Many of the contemporary complaints centered around the sins and follies of monarchs because so many of their responsibilities—(1) defense, (2) taxation, (3) coinage, (4) colonies, (5) exchange, (6) foreign trade, and (7) freedom of market access—affected all their subjects in the pocket book.

(1) *Wars*. No one denied that the defense of the realm was the responsibility of the ruler; hence the universal agreement that rulers needed arms as well as laws. Published in 1521, Machiavelli's *Art of War* was translated into English in 1560 by Peter Whitehorne. In his dedicatory Epistle to Elizabeth I, Whitehorne used the axiom of arms and laws to maintain that nothing was "more profitable, necessarie, or more honourable" for peace, justice, or war.¹ But no one particularly liked to pay for those wars. And pay they did, for even in monarchies where the presumption was the king should live of his own, the income from his private lands was not expected to cover the extraordinary expenses of a war. Extraordinary expenses were to be met by some form of taxation. So it is not surprising to find considerable debate on whether or not wars were profitable to the commonwealth. Philippe de Commines was certain that princes caused "their noblemen endless travail and expenses on account of the wars which they undertake on an impulse," without even "taking advice" from the nobles who would "have to contribute their lives, their persons, and their possessions."² While Seyssel accepted the need for an immediate redress of insulted honor, conquests undertaken only "*pour le profit*," were another matter; there the ruler must avoid situations where the inevitable "*hasard*" outweighed any potential profit: better then to delay ten years than to "*avancer un jour*" too soon.³ Machiavelli urged a calculated approach, reason-

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, trans. Ellis Farnsworth, rev. Neal Wood (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 233 [Appendix II].

² Commines, *Memoirs*, 1:357–358.

³ Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 204–205 [V.2].

ing that rulers only started wars “to enrich themselves and impoverish the enemy... Hence, it follows that whenever your victory impoverishes you or acquisition weakens you, you must forgo it.”⁴ Martin Luther had no use for vainglorious wars whose “cost” was always “greater than the profit.”⁵ Calvin agreed, calling such rulers “insatiable as the pit of hell,” who put their own “profit” above the “the common good.”⁶ Montaigne put it most wittily, referring to Machiavelli’s *Prince* to aver that if “*la peau du lion*” did not suffice, one had better put on “*celle du renard*,” because the truth was, whoever had “*le profit*” of war had “*l’honneur*” as well.⁷ But of one thing there was no doubt, at least some contemporaries were aware that the increasing expense of war was tying fiscal matters in a knot. The war waged by Henry VIII against France between 1544 and 1546 had a disastrous effect on the English economy. Over 400,000 marks in debt before the end of 1545, Henry was reduced to selling the lead “stripped from the dissolved monasteries” and ended up dumping so much lead on the world market that he could not make a profit.⁸ His only remaining option was a “drastic debasement of the currency,”⁹ exactly the wrong policy in a period of rampant inflation. The war policy of Oliver Cromwell helped prolong the Price Revolution in England, with budgetary deficits ranging from £200,000 to £1.5 million between 1654 and 1658.¹⁰ Henri II needed 700,000 *livres* to fund troops in Champagne and Picardy merely for the month of September 1553.¹¹ In 1579, a *Brief Discourse on the Peace Negotiations ... between the king of Spain and the States of the Netherlands* was published in Leiden and Ghent. The author complained bitterly that the States General of the Netherlands “neither had nor have now any money in their hand of which to dispose for their own profit and advantage,” because “from the very beginning

⁴ Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, 230 [VI.1].

⁵ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:279.

⁶ Douglas Kelly, “Varied themes in Calvin’s 2 Samuel Sermons and the Development of His Thought,” in *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex [Calvin as Protector of the Purer Religion]*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser and Brian G. Armstrong (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1997), 218.

⁷ Montaigne, *Essais*, 74 [L.5].

⁸ W.C. Richardson, “Some Financial Expedients of Henry VIII,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 7 #1 (August 1954), 33, 36, and 39.

⁹ Richardson, “Some Financial Expedients,” 36.

¹⁰ Maurice Ashley, *Financial and Commercial Policy under the Cromwellian Protectorate*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1962), 196. See *ibid.*, 148, for the proportion of the total expenditures taken up by the military.

¹¹ Collins, *Fiscal Limits*, 35.

of the assembly the scarcity and need of money has continually been such that it has always been allocated for some necessity of war even before its receipt."¹² No wonder: Charles V's war costs for the first eight months of campaigning in the Netherlands topped 2.76 million pounds; fifteen years later six months of campaigning against the Valois cost more than 5.37 million.¹³ The cost of waging war was rising faster than monarchs could manage, and foreign wars were far from their only concern. During the second half of the sixteenth century, France was enmeshed in a series of religious wars (1562, 1567–1568, and 1568–1570) that ate further away at its resources while it continued to follow a belligerent foreign policy. At one point Henri IV owed his Swiss troops 35.8 million *livres*, 20 million of which were in arrears.¹⁴ For countries such as France that maintained large standing armies, military costs were prohibitive even in peacetime; whether fighting religious wars that year or not, the average annual military budget remained at about 4.6 million *livres* between 1560 and 1574, when "the gross annual revenues fluctuated between 10 and 13 million."¹⁵ In truth, it was difficult to speak of a peacetime army in France: before the religious wars came the campaigns of 1513, 1515, 1521, 1523, 1525, 1527, 1536, 1542, 1544, 1550, 1552, and 1556, most often in Italy; after the religious wars, the army was engaged in the Azores in 1582, in the War of the Three Henries in 1585, Henri IV's campaigns through 1594, and the last of the century's wars against Spain in 1595. Certain elements of the *noblesse d'épée* took to the field under Condé in 1614 and 1620, against Richelieu's policies between 1626–1632, and on "behalf" of Gaston d'Orléans between 1631 and 1634 and of Cinq Mars from 1641 to 1642, while the crown campaigned against the Huguénots in 1602 and 1626–1627. With the exception of a series of urban disorders in 1629–1630, most of the virtually annual tax revolts were easily put down.¹⁶ Still, peace budgets were difficult to distinguish from war budgets for the French crown.

¹² Gelderen, *Dutch Revolt*, 133.

¹³ James D. Tracy, *A Financial Revolution in the Habsburg Netherlands: Renten and Renteniers in the County of Holland, 1515–1565* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 43.

¹⁴ Collins, *Fiscal Limits*, 56.

¹⁵ Holt, *Society*, 21.

¹⁶ On France's internal disorders, see Robin Briggs, *Early Modern France, 1560–1715* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 87–88, 91–93, 98, 102–103, 107, and 113–123; and David Parker, *The Making of French Absolutism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 41 and 96–97.

In the end, wars could only be funded via taxes or borrowing. Borrowing on the international market was becoming more and more of a nightmare for sixteenth-century monarchs. Charged the highest rates going, because collection was so difficult to enforce, monarchs found themselves allocating more and more of their annual revenues to debt service. The approximately 6.8 million François I owed in 1547 was just “about one year’s regular disposable income.”¹⁷ The Spanish monarchies were no better off. Sporadic rebellions within the Spanish kingdoms, Charles V’s wars against the Turks, and Philip II’s armadas had a devastating effect on the economic health of the century’s greatest power. After a series of campaign in Algeria (1542), France (1543–1544), and the Empire (1546–1547), Charles found his revenues entailed for years in advance despite the silver pouring in from the Americas; in 1554, he faced a deficit of 4.3 million ducats.¹⁸ Incessant warfare was a major contributing cause to the Spanish bankruptcies of 1557, 1575, 1596, 1607, 1627, and 1647.¹⁹ Incessant borrowing also threatened to upset the balance of power within the state. A debt-ridden William IV of Bavaria found himself at least temporarily ceding control of his private revenues to the Bavarian Estates in 1543.²⁰ Pressure from the incessant inflation was forcing even the most traditionally minded to adopt new expedients. The financial revolution that had begun in the Italian city states during the fourteenth century was spreading. The change from short term debt personally guaranteed by the monarch to long term debt funded by the state was virtually complete in the Netherlands long before the sixteenth century was over. 41 percent of the total value of the *renten* sold in Holland to natives of the province between 1553 and 1565 was snapped up by ordinary citizens of both sexes, while the other 59 percent was purchased by institutions, office holders, and the church.²¹ Borrowing could be avoided by resorting to taxation, but that brought its own problems.

(2) *Taxes*. In the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century political anatomy, the nerves or sinews were most often associated with money, unlike all the other organs whose roles were filled by human beings.

¹⁷ Collins, *Fiscal Limits*, 58.

¹⁸ Lynch, *Spain*, 56–57.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

²⁰ Tracy, *Financial Revolution*, 20. Compare W. Fritschy’s “tax revolution,” in “A ‘financial revolution’ revisited: public finance in Holland during the Dutch Revolt, 1568–1648,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 56 #1 (February 2003), 58.

²¹ Tracy, *Financial*, 145.

According to the Estates General of 1484, money was “in the body politic what blood is in the human body.”²² Seyssel condemned “*des grands pompes*” of the nobility because the excessive expenditure needed to pay for them bled the kingdom of money, the blood and nerves (“*le sang et le nerf*”) of the commonwealth.²³ This was almost straight out of Cicero’s *Pro Lege Manilia*: “we have always held that revenues are the sinews of the commonwealth (*Vectigalia nervos esse rei publicae semper duximus*)”²⁴ Rather than call on Cicero by name, Bodin referred to an “*ancient Orateur*” to make the claim that “*finances*” were “*les nerfs de la Republique*.”²⁵ Botero drew on a Latin translation of Dio to call money the sinews of empire (“*nervos imperii*”) as a preface to his advice to raise money by taxes rather than by borrowing at interest.²⁶ Obrecht made a case for a salaried civil service with the claim that money was the “vital force of governments” (“*nervi prima animalis sensus et motus instruments*”).²⁷ Richelieu took note of the ubiquity of the expression while simultaneously bringing it back to Cicero’s more narrow definition: “*On a toujours dit que les finances sont les nerfs de l’état*.”²⁸ Not money in general, but state revenues, were the sinews of the state. The source of all this seems to be Bion (c. 325–c. 255 BC), “τὸν πλοῦτον νεῦρα πραγμάτων (Wealth is the sinews of affairs).”²⁹ A variant was the saying, borrowed from Cicero’s *Philippics*, that “infinite treasure” was “the sinews of war (*nervos belli, pecuniam infinitam*).”³⁰ This turns up, for example, in the *Compendious or Brief Explanation*: “And therefore these coins and treasure be not without cause called of wise men *nervi bellorum*, that is to say, ‘the

²² Charles Woolsey Cole, *Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 1:4.

²³ Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 160 [II.21].

²⁴ Cicero, *The Speeches*, bilingual ed., trans. H. Grose Hodge (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1966), 29 [*Pro Lege Manilia*, 7.17].

²⁵ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:35 [VI.2].

²⁶ Botero, *Reason of State*, 135 [VII.2], citing Dio’s *Historia Romana*. The original Greek can be found in Cassius Dio Cocceianus, *Dio’s Roman History*, bilingual ed., trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1961), 8:260–261 (65.5): “He [Vespasian] was forever delaring that money was the sinews of sovereignty (Τῆς ἡγεμονίας τὰ χρήματα αἰεὶ ποτε εἶναι ἔλεγε).”

²⁷ Small, *Camealists*, 50–51.

²⁸ Richelieu, *Testament*, 372 [II.9].

²⁹ Quoted in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1999), 1:291 [IV.48].

³⁰ Cicero, *Philippics*, bilingual ed., trans. Walter C.A. Kerr (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1969), 260–261 [V.5]. See also *Plutarch’s Lives*, 4:550 [*Cleomenes* 27]: “But he that first said that money was the sinews of affairs, seems especially in that saying to refer to war.”

sinews of war.”³¹ And when Rabelais’ *Gargantua* was published in 1542, the reader would find that “*Les nerfs des batailles sont les pecunes* (coins are the sinews of battles).”³² In 1658, Richard Hawkins could conclude in *A Discourse of the Nationall Excellencies of England* that while “arms are the strength of a nation, money” was “the maintainer of them,” the want of which “doth ever bereave” the state “of its very nerves.”³³ Machiavelli’s was the rare opposing voice. In his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, Machiavelli, having traced the variant back to Quintus Curtius, maintained that “contrary to the general opinion,” the “sinews of war” were “not gold, but good soldiers,” for “gold alone will not procure good soldiers, but good soldiers will always procure gold.”³⁴ Bacon agreed with Machiavelli, averring that “Neither is money the sinews of war (as it is trivially said), where the sinews of men’s arms, in base and effeminate people, are failing.”³⁵ But weapons and ammunition cost money and soldiers had to be paid.

Government as a whole was becoming more expensive. In 1551, the English crown could boast of £271,912 in “certain” as opposed to “irregular” revenues as against £235,398 in ordinary expenses; by 1600 it was looking at £374,000 in certain revenues and £459,840 in ordinary expenses.³⁶ With its larger armies and grander spending habits, the French government fell into trouble earlier than the English. In 1549, French royal income topped 8.3 million *livres*; expenditures, however, exceeded 11.4 million.³⁷ Whether for war or for peace, every one agreed that monarchs, like any other social organ, were entitled to the revenues needed to perform their functions; without adequate revenue the regime collapsed. Fortescue believed no country could prosper under a poor king; poor kings had no choice but to live by borrowing, which only increased their poverty, tempting their subjects to desert them for

³¹ [Smith], *Discourse*, 86 [II].

³² Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 46, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Mireille Huchon and François Moreau (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 126.

³³ Quoted in Steve Pincus, “Neither Machiavellian Moment nor Possessive Individualism; Commercial Society and the Defenders of the English Commonwealth,” *American Historical Review*, 103 #3 (June 1998), 718.

³⁴ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First ten Books of Titus Livius* [II.10], trans. Christian E. Detmold, in *The Prince and the Discourses* (New York: Modern Library, 1950) 310. For the reference to Quintus Curtius, see *ibid.*, 308–309.

³⁵ Bacon, *Essays*, 124 [#29].

³⁶ Elton, *Tudor Constitution*, 44–47.

³⁷ Collins, *Fiscal Limits*, 51 (Table I).

richer lords.³⁸ Not surprisingly, absolutists like Filmer were in wholehearted agreement, but even as ardent a constitutionalist as François de Hotman did not deny that “contributions in the form of a subsidy” were appropriate when the king’s ordinary revenues were not “adequate because of the necessity of wars”; he just believed they had to be determined by “the common decision of the estates in a public council of the whole people” rather than by the king alone.³⁹ Tyrants profited themselves at the expense of their realms while kings put their people’s profit ahead of their own, but kings were not expected to beggar themselves in the process. Polydore Vergil had no complaints against Edward IV for seeking “busily his owne profyt,” because he proved to be a “lyberall, bowntyfull, and profytable prince to the commonwealth” once his own coffers were filled.⁴⁰

But no one ever enjoyed paying taxes, and sixteenth-century monarchs could not tax at will. The French crown had gained the right to impose the *taille* without legislative consent in 1439, but when it came time to set or collect its imposts, the crown had to negotiate separately with each of its provinces. Collection was most effective in the *pays d’élection*, but in the *pays d’état* each Estates-General had a stronger bargaining position, and some provinces were a mixture of the two basic types of tax administration. The French crown had also given away its ability to tax most of the income of the nobility in return for their military support; those exemptions would remain in place until 1789. Tax farming and the nobility’s right to collect fees on its own account from its tenants seemed to do nothing but insure that half the tax revenue never reached the crown. Certainly the crown got most of its requests in the end, but could neither impose uniform control throughout the realm, nor tap all its resources, nor control its spending to avoid having to bargain away future revenues to cover current needs.⁴¹

Spain was not really one kingdom for tax purposes, but four, for to raise taxes in Aragon one had to negotiate with the *cortes* of Catalonia, Valencia, and Aragon, while in Castille one had to contend with *grandees* determined to win back control of the towns lost dur-

³⁸ Fortescue, *Governance*, 118–120 [V].

³⁹ Filmer, *Patriarcha*, 97 [XXIII]; and Hotman, *Francogallia*, 257 [IX].

⁴⁰ Ellis, *Three Books*, 167 [Book 24].

⁴¹ J. Russell Major, *Representative Government in Early Modern France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 52, 55, 99, 126, 135, and 156; and Parker, *Making of French Absolutism*, 9–10, 16–20–24, 63–64, and 71–72. According to Parker (p. 64), “less than one-sixth of the amount levied found its way to the treasury” in 1635.

ing the days of Ferdinand and Isabella as well as with the traditions of semi-autonomous Navarre.⁴² Castile's increasing wealth, fed by its exclusive right to the American trade, had not endeared it to Aragon, but Castile's perpetual war footing took its toll on the Spanish crown; the twelve-year truce in the Dutch rebellion was the result of the second royal bankruptcy in two years. Olivares's plans for a Union of Arms to create a national feeling among the provinces came too late: *un rey, una ley, y una moneda* stood only, in provincial minds, for a Castilian conspiracy to take over the rest of Spain. Catalonia refused the requested money and men for the union in 1626, and remained recalcitrant throughout the 1630s only to break out in open rebellion in the 1640s. The price of Barcelona's eventual capitulation in 1652 was the retention of all its traditional liberties.⁴³ The cash strapped crown kept Catalonia but lost Portugal and the Northern Netherlands.

From the very first, the struggle between the tax payer and the tax collector was framed in terms of the conflict between public and private profit. Title X of the *Novels of the Sainted Valentinian Augustus* found in the fifth century *Theodosian Code* could just as easily have been penned in the sixteenth:

Justice must be preserved both publically and privately in all matters and transactions, and We must adhere to it especially in those measures that sustain the sinews of the public revenues, since such measures come to the aid of the attenuated resources of Our loyal taxpayers with useful equity. Very many persons reject this idea, since they serve only their domestic profits and deprive the common good wherein is contained their true and substantial welfare, when it profits all persons, especially since this necessity for tribute so demands, and without such tribute nothing can be provided in peace or in war.⁴⁴

Thus, When Elizabeth I wanted to justify an Act against Smuggling (1559), she castigated customs evaders as "greedy and covetous persons" who respected "more their private gain and commodity than their duty and allegiance or the common profit of the realm."⁴⁵

In order for the taxes to be just they had to be no greater than necessary (hence the calls for monarchs to curb "useless extravagances,"), and matched to the ability of different subjects to pay. Erasmus ex-

⁴² Elliot, *Imperial Spain*, 28–29, 34–35, 82, 84–85, and 140–141; Lynch, *Spain*, 4–5, 8–9; Koenigsberger, *Habsburgs*, 7.

⁴³ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 169, 207, 256–257, 329–330, 332, and 351–354.

⁴⁴ White, *Medieval History*, 20.

⁴⁵ Tanner, *Tudor*, 602.

plained to any *Christian Prince* who would listen that while it might be “desirable to bring the wealthy to a simple life,” it was “dangerous” as well as “inhuman” to “reduce the poor to starvation.”⁴⁶ In Cromwellian England, Puritan pamphlets such as *A Mite to the Treasury* (1653) stressed the social justice of taxing only luxury imports, while even Richelieu, who believed that if “*les peuples*” had too much “*aise*” it would be “*impossible*” to keep them to their duties and felt that they were like mules (“*mulets*”) accustomed to their “*charge*” who suffered more from “*un long repos*” than from “*le travail*,” conceded that they were unjustly treated if their burdens were not “*proportionnée à leur force*.”⁴⁷ The danger was not only one of rebellion, the inability of a starving laboring class to feed the rest of the nation threatened the welfare of all.

But if the goal was not to burden some subjects unfairly, that still left open the question of what to tax. Erasmus suggested taxing “barbarous and foreign goods” because they were “not the essentials of livelihood but the extravagant luxuries and delicacies which only the wealthy enjoy”; this would have the added benefit of making the wealthy “more moderate in their desires so that the loss of money may be replaced by a change for the better in their habits.”⁴⁸ Thus it would act to keep those uppity nouveau riche middling classes in their places. In 1559 John Hales warned Secretary Cecil against imposing a new export duty on woolen cloth on that grounds that merchants worked for “gayne and when gayne ceaseth” they work no more; the only way to advance the “profet” of the Crown was to respect the just profit of the part.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Bodin interpreted the reciprocal obligation from the reverse direction. He believed duties on both imports and exports were founded “*en equité*” because those who would “*gagner sur les subjects*” of another country owed some right (“*droit*”) to their own “*Prince*” or “*Public*.”⁵⁰ While Botero agreed with Bodin that taxes on imports and exports were just because “it is reasonable that whoever makes a profit on and by your possessions should make some kind of payment,” he disagreed with idea that native merchants should pay the same tax as did foreigners on the grounds that a ruler’s responsibility was to care for his own people, not the members of a foreign body.⁵¹ The

⁴⁶ Erasmus, *Education*, 215–216.

⁴⁷ Ashley, *Financial*, 136; Richelieu, *Testament*, 253–254 [I.4–5].

⁴⁸ Erasmus, *Education*, 218.

⁴⁹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:225.

⁵⁰ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:63 [VI.2].

⁵¹ Botero, *Reason of State*, 136 [VII.4].

key question was justice. Obrecht's vision of "*bona oikonomia*" required a ruler to impose only "non-burdensome" taxes (those which left the citizen's "means of livelihood intact but might theoretically absorb all increments of profit" above that level), distinguishing them from "burdensome" taxes ("which impaired the citizen's means of maintaining his standard of life").⁵² *A Defence and true Declaration of the things lately done in the lowe Country* (1571), an English translation of a rebel pamphlet published in the Netherlands the year before, accused the Duke of Alba of "tyranny" or imposing a sales tax in addition to the traditional tax on capital assets on the grounds that it reduced the just income of merchants by diminishing their trade.⁵³

(3) *The Coin of the Realm*. Taxes were paid in coin, as were rents, salaries, and most accounts. While international trade (and even some domestic trade) relied upon bills of exchange, these too, were turned into coin in the end. Thus, one of the monarch's primary responsibilities was regulation of the coinage. Even after the adoption of the milled edge in the seventeenth century made coin clipping less of a problem, the royal stamp was the only assurance the subject had of the ratio of precious to base metal in the coin. With money understood to be the measure of value as well as the medium of exchange, counterfeit coin, and debasement were equally feared as possessing the power to overthrow the established order. Back in 1101, Henry I's coronation charter threatened all counterfeiters with "strict justice," while Bracton considered counterfeiting as much a form of "lese-majesty" as was assassination.⁵⁴ Not surprisingly, counterfeiting was included in the crimes punishable under the Statute of Treasons in 1352.⁵⁵

While just monarchs sought to protect the quality of the coin current in their realm, unjust monarchs had the power to manipulate the value of their coin at will. The most common form of manipulation was debasement, issuing coin with less precious metal than before in order to increase the nominal value of their assets. The classic medieval treatment of debasement occurs in the *De Moneta* of Nicholas Oresme (c. 1320–1382). He depicted debasement as theft of the subject's substance. Taking the usual Aristotelian line that money was created "*pro bono communitatis*" in order to overcome the inconveniences of barter

⁵² Small, *Camerlists*, 49.

⁵³ Gelderen, *Dutch Revolt*, 62.

⁵⁴ Adams and Stephens, *Documents*, 5; and Bracton, *De Legibus*, 2:334–335.

⁵⁵ Adams and Stephens, *Documents*, 121.

and exchanging unmarked metal, Oresme claimed that while it was “the duty of the prince to put his stamp on the money for the common good,” he was not “the owner of the money current in his principality”; that ownership rested individually in those people whose wealth it was and collectively in the community as a whole.⁵⁶ Oresme recognized only two reasons why monarchs might want to alter the coin, those reasons being either to “have no other name” than their own “inscribed on the coins” out of “empty ambition,” or to “get a larger profit (*plus de lucro*) by coining more money” which was “covetousness and to the prejudice and loss (*preiudicium et damnum*) of the whole community,” because the ruler would “unfairly draw to himself his subject’s money.”⁵⁷ The amount of the monarch’s unjust profit (*lucro*) was “necessarily that of the community’s loss (*damno*),” a worse crime even than usury because usury was the result of “free contract,” but a prince debased money “against” his subject’s “will.”⁵⁸

This was a sentiment echoed by John Warkworth, D.D., writing his *Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward IV* in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, lambasting Edward’s debasement measures “by which he hadde grete getyngge ... to the grete harme of the comene peple.”⁵⁹ For Erasmus, there were four ways of “robbing the people” in minting coin: debasing “the coinage with alloys,” making the coins “short weight,” clipping them, and bringing about “intentional fluctuation of value to suit the needs of the prince’s treasury.”⁶⁰ However, it was always possible that one royal responsibility might conflict with another. As good fathers of their subjects and good heads of

⁵⁶ Oresme, *De Moneta*, 5 and 8–11 [I, II, IV, VI, and VII]. Oresme’s remarks concerning the prince’s stamp bring up the distinction between views of coins as having value because of their metallic content and those which see the value as arising from the denominational stamp itself: after all, under a denominational view, changes in the metal content would not affect the purchasing power of the coin. Until very late in the seventeenth century the metallic view as almost universally subscribed to; for which, see Andrea Finkelstein, *Harmony and the Balance: An Intellectual History of Seventeenth-Century English Economic Thought* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 150–155 and 206–208. For a very early example of a denominational view, see the discussion of François Grimaudet’s *Des Monnoyes* (1576) in Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, ed. Elizabeth Boddy Schumpeter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 100n.

⁵⁷ Oresme, *De Moneta*, 14–15 [X].

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 [XV] and 28 [XVII].

⁵⁹ James Orchard Halliwell, ed., *A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth by John Warkworth D.D.*, Camden Society, o.s. 10 (1839), 4.

⁶⁰ Erasmus, *Education*, 218.

their bodies politic, medieval monarchs also attempted to prevent silver from leaving their realms and depriving their subjects/bodies of sustenance. The 1343 Act Regulating the Coinage only allowed coin to leave England in return for equally fine Flemish groats so that “no silver” was carried out of the realm.⁶¹ Thus, in 1526, Henry VIII believed he could justify debasing the English coinage because higher bullion prices in France and the Netherlands were encouraging both subjects and foreigners to export coin from England to “their particular gayne” and the impoverishment of the realm.⁶² Since 1464, the standard of fineness in English coin had been eleven ounces two pennyweight of pure silver per troy pound sterling, coined into 450 pennies, or 1*£* 17*s.* 6*d.* By the time Henry VIII was through reducing the amount of silver in the sterling alloy and reducing the amount of sterling in the coins themselves, the mint could coin 7*£* 4*s.* out of one troy pound of pure silver. By the middle of Edward VI’s reign, further reductions in purity and content enabled the mint to churn out coins totaling 14*£* 8*s.* from a single troy pound of pure silver.⁶³

It did not take long before two types of violations of the principle of distributive justice were noted: the ability of the rich to hoard their good coin because their rank gave them foreknowledge of the recoinage while the poor could not and the soaring prices that oppressed the poor above all.⁶⁴ The results of debasement could also be condemned by praising the opposite policy, as did Osse, who felt Saxony’s “good and proper coinage” enhanced the prince’s revenues, for where there was “good coinage there is much trade, and where there is much trade and people.”⁶⁵

The most comprehensive discussion of the problems caused by the debasements in England was that found in the anonymously published dialogue, the *Compendious or Brief Examination Certain Ordinary Complaints of Divers of Our Countrymen in These Our Days* (1581), various ascribed to Sir Thomas Smith or John Hales. When the book appeared in print in 1581, the influx of American treasure was blamed for the age’s inflation, but, as originally written in 1549, debasement was the *causa cau-*

⁶¹ Adams and Stephens, *Documents*, 109–110.

⁶² Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:176–177.

⁶³ Raymond de Roover, *Gresham on Foreign Exchange* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 34 and 54.

⁶⁴ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:187.

⁶⁵ Small, *Cameralists*, 29.

sans.⁶⁶ Time and again, the author stressed the fact that debasement harmed some groups more than others: lords and laborers alike suffered in comparison with merchants who could pass price increases onto their customers while the rents received by the aristocracy and the pay received by workers remained fixed by custom or contract.⁶⁷ To the argument that the king, at least, could make up “his losses” in rent by imposing subsidies, the author countered that subsidies could not “be large when the subjects have little to depart with” and that “the profits of such subsidies” usually ended up having to be “spent in the appeasing of the people that are moved to sedition partly by occasion of the same.”⁶⁸ Keeping in mind that the century’s main definition of a tyrant was a king who took his people’s profit for his own, debasement was presented as tyrannical strategy that did not even work. The emptiness of the short-term profit the monarch made by debasement was underlined in Sir Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum* (1583):

For whom should the people trust more in that matter than their prince, seeing the coine is only to certifie the goodnes of the mettall and the weight, which is affirmed by the princes image and marke? But if the prince will deceave them and given them copper for silver or golde, or enhance his coyne more than it is worth, he is deceived himselfe, aswell as he doth goe about to deceave his subjectes. For in the same sort they pay the prince his rentes and customes. And in time they will make him pay rateably or more for meate, drinke and victualles for him and his, and for their labour.⁶⁹

Not everyone agreed that debasement was the cause of the price rise even though accepting it as a heinous crime against the welfare of the commonwealth. About the same time that the author of the *Compendious or Brief Examination* was attacking debasement, another anonymous manuscript (“Policies to reduce this realme of Englande unto a prosperous wealthe and estate,” 1549) attacked that argument on the grounds that the increase in prices over the last twenty years was nowhere near as severe as the degree of debasement.⁷⁰ While the proliferation of

⁶⁶ For a discussion of the work’s authorship and composition dates, see Mary Dewar, “The Authorship of the ‘Discourse of the Commonweal’,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 19 #2 (August 1966): 388–400.

⁶⁷ [Smith], *Discourse*, 35 [I].

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 36 [I].

⁶⁹ Smith, *Republica*, 60 [II.3].

⁷⁰ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 2:315–316.

monopolies and the shortages caused by enclosure and the conversion from tillage to pasturage played a supporting role, this author blamed the inflation primarily on a falling exchange, which he attributed to an increase in minting charges.⁷¹

Inflation was not a problem limited to England and neither was debasement. In 1566, the Seigneur de Malestroit, controller of the royal mint in Paris, published a little pamphlet of *Paradoxes*, blaming the price rises in France on the royal habit of debasing the coinage. The result was that goods which used to cost 20 *sous* now cost 50, but their true price had not increased because 50 *sous* contained as much precious metal now as had 20 before.⁷² Once again, the stress was on the loss the community suffered through the change. It was “*le grand encherissement*” felt in “*toutes choses*” that caused “*une pauvreté generale à tout ce Royaume*.”⁷³ Malestroit’s analysis focused on the harm done to the landowners, greatest among whom was the monarch himself. The landowner’s income had decreased because the 50 *sous* he received in rent was longer worth what it had been when the lease was written; the king received less income from his private lands and thus he could less afford to carry out his royal responsibilities.⁷⁴ Whether Malestroit concentrated on the damage debasement did to the ruling classes out of concern for his own peers or because he felt that was the best way to ensure a change in policy cannot be known, but rulers were feeling the pinch and paying attention. While the sterling standard was brought back to near 1464 levels by Edward VI and Mary I, neither monarch did anything about the masses of debased coins still in circulation. That was left to Elizabeth I whose recoinage at the old standard in 1561 meant one pound troy weight pure silver would now yield only 3*£* 5*s*. The standard remained the same until the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century although from the last years of Elizabeth’s reign on, the troy pound pure silver was pushed to mint coins worth 3*£* 7*s*.⁷⁵ Admitting that there was nothing “so profitable” for all manner of people as to have a constant currency, the *Proclamation* announcing the recoinage stressed the injustice caused by debasement, especially to those on fixed wages:

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 2:317–322.

⁷² Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:495–498 [Paradox 1].

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 6:503.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6:499–500 and 503.

⁷⁵ Roover, *Gresham*, 54.

the riche marchaundise of the Realme is transported and dayly caryed out of the same, to the impoverishyng therof, and enrychyng of others. And finally hereby all maner of prices of thynges in this realme, necessarye for sustentacion of the people, growly dayly excessive to the lamentable and manifeste hurte and oppression of the state, speciallye of Pensioners, souldyers, and all hyred servauntes, and other meane people that lyve by any kynde of wages, and not by rentes of landes, or trade of marchaundyse.⁷⁶

(4) *Colonies and Treasure*. As colonization was a royal policy, any ill effects felt by the mother country from the planting of colonies might be considered an injustice against the realm perpetrated by the monarch. The main effect noticed by the mid-sixteenth century was the influx of gold and silver from the Spanish Americas, and deciding who was the first to link the quantity of coin to the price rise has become something of a favorite pastime of economic historians, with candidates ranging from Copernicus to Bodin and beyond. Copernicus noted in 1517 that “money can lose its value also through excessive abundance.”⁷⁷ Stanislas Taro, the Bishop of Przemysl, told Duke Albert of Brandenburg in 1542 that the “immeasurable multitude” of silver money “ruins the goods” people “must needs buy.”⁷⁸ William Lane wrote Cecil in 1551, blaming the inflation on both “the plentifulness of the money and the baseness thereof.”⁷⁹ In his *Historia General de las Indias* (1552), López de Gómara noted that “the price of things grew dear with the amount of money there was” as a result of Incan wealth passing into Spanish hands.⁸⁰ Martín de Azpilcueta Navarro (*Comentario resolutorio de usuras*, 1556), averred that

money is worth more when and where it is scarce than where it is abundant... in France, where money is scarcer than in Spain, bread, wine, cloth, and labour are worth much less. And even in Spain, in

⁷⁶ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 2:196.

⁷⁷ Volckart, “Early beginnings,” 435. Because Copernicus used an example in which the value of bars of silver bullion was contrasted with the value of silver coin, it is possible that Copernicus was only discussing the relationship between quantity and the commodity value of the metal rather than changes in the purchasing power of the coin, and thus was not constructing a general quantity theory.

⁷⁸ Volckart, “Early beginnings,” 433. Vockart’s thesis is that such writings taken in conjunction with King Sigismund’s attempts to limit the coinage show a more sophisticated understanding of the quantity theory money than that put forward by Copernicus. For which, see *ibid.*, 430–431 and 435.

⁷⁹ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 2:183.

⁸⁰ J.H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 62.

times when money was scarcer, saleable goods and labour were given for very much less than after the discovery of the Indies, which flooded the country with gold and silver.⁸¹

Two years after Malestroit blamed debasement for the inflation, Jean Bodin published a *Response* (1568) elevating the millions in gold and silver imported from Peru since 1533 to the *causa causans* of the prices that were treble those of fifty years ago, rejecting debasement because the rise in prices had far outstripped the change in the coins' metallic content.⁸² While Bodin considered debasement only an aggravating factor, he still believed the coinage should be kept constantly pure as possible in order to avoid the chaos that ensued when no one could trust it.⁸³

We are concerned here not with the origins of the quantity theory of money, but with what these analysts reveal about their understanding of society. What elevated Bodin's analysis over a simple adumbration of the quantity theory of money was his understanding that it was Spain's dependence on the manufactured goods of countries such as France that drew Spanish wealth across Europe's borders.⁸⁴ Balance of trade theory had as yet no formal name, but Bodin was already linking it to quantity theory. In addition to treasure, debasement, increased population, and habit of aping their betters' finery already discussed, Bodin recognized several other factors roiling the economy: the French crown's propensity to finance their governments by borrowing funds brought "*une infinité d'or et d'argent en France*" into the hands of foreign

⁸¹ Grice-Hutchinson, *School of Salamanca*, 94–95.

⁸² Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:427. For the reference to land prices being treble what they were fifty years ago, see *ibid.*, 6:419. See also *ibid.*, 6:450 for his conclusions on the disparity between the degree of debasement and the amount of the price rise. Schumpeter, *History*, 311–314, accepted Bodin's work as more "theoretically satisfactory" than that which may have preceded it, but did not think highly of Bodin's treatment, finding Davanzati's 1588 formulation "superior" if still "primitive." Denis P. O'Brien, "Bodin's Analysis of Inflation," *History of Political Economy*, 32 #2 (Summer 2000), 268–269, wishes to restore Bodin's "priority" in formulating quantity theory based on what he sees as the inadequacy of earlier attempts, finding only in Bodin the "five generally accepted propositions associated with" the theory: "(1) there is a *demand for money*, dependent primarily on the existing price and income levels; (2) there is a *supply of money*—in the historical context we are discussing this means specie; (3) the *money market clears*, with demand for money equal to its supply; (4) a disturbance to *either* demand or supply requires as adjustment in the price (or income) level to enable the money market to clear; (5) the direction of *causality* is from changes in the money supply to changes in the price level."

⁸³ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:463–466.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 6:429.

bankers who were tempted by “*la grandeur du profit*” to be made from loaning money to French kings; the “*traffique*” in money diminished trade and the mechanical arts; exporting wheat was causing shortages at home; and the monopolistic practices of France’s guilds also played their part in pushing up prices.⁸⁵ Most revealing, however, were Bodin’s proposed solutions, for, despite his insistence that “*le cours de la traffique*” should remain free (“*franche et libre*”) for “*la richesse et grandeur*” of France, what Bodin wanted were good laws (“*belles ordonnances*”) to restrict exports of grain, to restrict import and wearing of frivolous fashions, and to restrict immigration of bankrupt (though not of fiscally solid) foreigners.⁸⁶ Since these seeming limitations on the freedom of trade would create a healthier France, they would not be considered actual infringements, following the same line of reasoning used by Seyssel in discussing the bridles on French royal power. As to those good laws, however, Bodin was well aware no sumptuary law or import prohibition would work unless the monarch not only set the example but also compelled his courtiers to follow suit, because there never was a “*Republique*” in which health or disease (“*la santé ou la maladie*”) did not flow down from the “*chef*” to the “*membres*” of the body politic.⁸⁷ When the *Compendious or Brief Examination* finally appeared in print in 1581, passages were added to argue that while debasement had caused extensive damage, a further cause of the price increases was the influx of American treasure, helping the author to explain why prices had not fallen back to their old level after Elizabeth’s recoinage.⁸⁸ While the root cause (debasement) no longer existed, the country was still suffering from the affects of its ill-thought out efforts (rent-racking, etc.) to cope with it.⁸⁹ As the treasure raised prices throughout Europe, it was neither “profitable” nor “convenient” to “revoke or call back again all our English wares unto their old prices”: to export English wares “good cheap to strangers” and buy theirs “dear” would only lead to the “great impoverishing of the Commonweal in a very short time.”⁹⁰ By

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 6:422, 6:429–430, and 6:432. When Bodin enumerated his “five” causes of the inflation (p. 422), he listed them as an influx of money (the primary cause), guilds, scarcity, the fashions of the nobles, and the debasement of the currency, but he later added (p. 429) that an increase in population was a contributing factor, making six causes in all, one star and five supporting players.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6:451–456.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 6:452.

⁸⁸ [Smith], *Discourse*, 143 and 145 [Appendix A.2, additions to the Third Dialogue].

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

the century's end, if not before, at least some Spaniards believed that it was not so much the amount of money coming in as why even more was going out that they had to watch. Martín González de Cellorigo (*Memorial de la política necesaria y útil restauración a la República de España*, 1600) believed that "Spanish prices are high on account of our large circulation," but the real problem was the "great quantities" of "gold and silver taken out of this Realm" because "we choose not to make the goods which our manufacturers might give us already wrought," but export raw materials and buy back manufactured goods, enabling foreigners to "wrest from us all the gold, silver, and money we produce."⁹¹

(5) *Balancing Money*. Henry VIII's rationale for debasing the coin was to prevent exchange rates from drawing coin out of the realm. Coin was wealth. Coin was necessary for the proper circulation of trade. Coin was *nervi bellorum*. So, despite what an excess of coin might do to prices, keeping coin within the realm was a key concern of monarchs. As Vitoria explained, monarchs needed to prohibit "the export of money" because "although a single infringement" was "of little damage to the commonwealth, if it were to become general the kingdom would be wasted away."⁹² Seyssel praised those countries that, unlike France, enforced laws to "garder" their coin and keep it from leaving their "terre."⁹³ Botero was equally convinced that "above all ... a ruler must ensure that money does not leave his country" needlessly, for "once money is sent out of the country it is lost and its potentialities are lost too."⁹⁴ On the other hand, like any merchant engaged in trading with countries that purchased little of one's own products, Pieter de la Court defended the necessity of paying for them with exported bullion and wondered "at the ignorance, or ill conduct of the states-general" of the Netherlands that "in the years 1606, 1610, 1611, 1612, 1613, 1621, &c. prohibited the exportation of coined or uncoined gold and silver."⁹⁵

The need to maintain a supply of coin made exchange rates a perennial thorn in the side of those policy makers who believed coin was the lifeblood of the realm. In 1551 William Lane was certain "the father" of the increasing prices was the fall of the exchange rates.⁹⁶ Similar

⁹¹ Grice-Hutchinson, *School of Salamanca*, 109–111.

⁹² Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 38 [*On Civil Power*, 3.7 §24].

⁹³ Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 162 [II.22].

⁹⁴ Botero, *Reason of State*, 150 [VIII.2].

⁹⁵ Court, *True Interest*, 83 [I.23].

⁹⁶ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:183.

complaints appear in exchange memoranda from 1559 and 1560.⁹⁷ The author of a Memorandum from 1564 explained that exchange rates governed prices of imported and exported goods because merchants included gains to be made from taking advantage of the varying rates in the prices they charged for such goods.⁹⁸ One unusual argument against the exchange rates being the cause of the inflation was made by one William Cholmeley, a London grocer specializing in spices whose unpublished *Request and Suite of a True-Hearted Englishman* (1553) found its way into the library of Edward VI. Cholmeley argued that the exchange rate did hurt “somewhat,” but bolstered his counter-claim that it was the “exalting” of the prices of imported finished foreign goods over the flat prices of exported unfinished English woolens that was the main culprit by pointing to the doubled and trebled prices of goods in Spain and Antwerp.⁹⁹ If those places in whose favor the exchange rate ran were suffering inflation, how could the converse exchange rates be the cause of inflation at home?

As Sir Thomas Gresham pointed out in 1558, debasement of the coinage by Henry VIII had played havoc with its exchange value and financing his wars had made matters worse, as had the freedoms granted foreign merchants; therefore any measure that raised the exchange value of English coin would help lower the price level within England and draw in money.¹⁰⁰ As a mercer, Gresham knew well the loss he suffered when foreign merchants made a profit. But when a Royal Exchanger was set up by proclamation in 1576, those foreign merchants claimed the regulations would cause them to bring fewer goods into England to the “great diminishinge of the Queen’s custome inwardes,” an increase in the prices of imported goods, and an increase in the fraud that would occur to get around the restrictions; therefore a reversal of this policy would clearly be to “the commen proffit and wealth of this realme.”¹⁰¹ The Royal Exchanger would not appear again until 1627.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of which, see T.H. Lloyd, “Early Elizabethan investigations into exchange and the value of sterling, 1558–1568,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 53 #1 (February 2000), 65–67.

⁹⁸ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 3:347.

⁹⁹ W.J. Thoms, ed., “The Request and Suite of a True-Hearted Englishman, written by William Cholmeley, Londyner, in the year 1553,” in *Camden Miscellany II*, Camden Society, o.s. 55 (1853), 18. To the manuscript’s being in Edward VI’s library, see, the editor’s introduction to *ibid.*, iii.

¹⁰⁰ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 2:147–149.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 2:170–173.

When the exchange rates were not in a country's favor, the usual conclusion was fraud. Obrecht blamed "certain mammon brothers," who "in search of selfish gain" sought "all sorts of private advantage with the different coins ... contrary to all laws," and bringing with it "beyond all doubt the curse of God and temporal punishment."¹⁰² Rare was the sixteenth-century voice such as Tomás de Mercado's accepting the fluctuations as the result of merely mechanical cause and effect. Mercado (*Tratos y contratos de mercaderes*, 1569) may have believed that nothing destroyed a country's "abundance" as did "the export of money when this is permitted," but he recognized that "the value and price of money" were "not the same thing as its estimation," which was a result of local variations in the "abundance or scarcity of these metals," just as "a basket of olives in Valladolid may be exchanged for four in Manzanilla, and yet the barter will be just and equal."¹⁰³ Even in the forward looking University of Salamanca, mechanical explanations were more commonly not divorced from the moral. Martín de Azpilcueta Navarro (*Comentario resolutorio de usuras*, 1556) accepted that "the art of giving and taking one kind of money in exchange for another," and moving it "from places where it was worth less to those where it was worth more" could be both beneficial and lawful, but only "provided it is conducted as it should be, in order to earn a moderate living."¹⁰⁴

(6) *Balancing Trade*. Controlling foreign trade—what goods might be imported or exported in what quantities by whom and at what rate of tariff—so that the country might profit was another key royal responsibility, and an increasingly vital one in an era when a whole new hemisphere was being opened up to European exploitation, and trade with the East and Africa was growing as well. The increasing volume of trade was fueling an increasing sophistication in the commercial and financial sectors. Double entry bookkeeping and Italian innovations in banking and credit were making their way across the continent of Europe. In some countries, private royal borrowing was already being converted into public debt. And all the while the price levels of agricultural and manufactured goods continued to rise. Little wonder that more and more ink was spilled pushing one trade policy or another. Since trade policies were the prerogative of monarchs, the justice or

¹⁰² Small, *Camerlists*, 52.

¹⁰³ Grice-Hutchinson, *School of Salamanca*, 96, 98–99, 102.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 90–91.

injustice of such policies was laid at their door. Greedy merchants who tempted buyers with foreign wares might be the immediate villains, but monarchs were responsible for controlling the activities of those merchants. The most succinct expression of this view is probably that made by Baron Fleming in Bate's case (1606):

All customs, be they old or new, are no other but the effects and issues of trade and commerce with foreign nations; but all commerce and affairs with foreigners, all wars and peace, all acceptance and admitting for current, foreign coin, all parties and treaties whatsoever, are made by the absolute power of the King; and he who hath power of causes hath power also of effects. No exportation or importation can be but at the King's ports, they are the gates of the King, and he hath absolute power by them to include or exclude whom he shall please; and ports to merchants are their harbours and repose, and for their better security he is compelled to provide bulwarks and fortresses.¹⁰⁵

Few people in the sixteenth century would have disagreed with the notion that a nation should export more than it imported even if balance of trade theory had not yet been formally articulated; the distributive justice that applied within each realm no longer applied from realm to realm after the dismemberment of the corps of Christendom.¹⁰⁶ Richard Hooker's view that "as civil law, being the act of a whole body politic, doth therefore overrule each several part of the same body," so to there was "no reason that any one commonwealth of itself should to the prejudice of another annihilate that whereupon the whole world hath agreed," was increasingly a minority viewpoint.¹⁰⁷ As Burghley advised Elizabeth in 1581, "nothyng robbeth the realm of England, but whan moore marchandisees is brought in to the realme than is carryed forth," for the imbalance "must be payd with monny," and it was the monarch's job to nourish her own body politic, not another's (especially not that of England's old enemy France, "whose power" England ought not increase).¹⁰⁸ During a debate in the House of Commons in 1593, Sir Henry Knivet voiced a similar sentiment, proclaiming that the "principal reason of our poverty" was "because we brought in more Foreign Wares than we vented Commodities, and

¹⁰⁵ Kenyon, *Stuart*, 363.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the formal naming of the theory, see Finkelstein, *Harmony*, 89–90.

¹⁰⁷ Hooker, *Works*, 1:196 [*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I.10.13].

¹⁰⁸ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 2:124.

so by this means out money was carried out of our Country.”¹⁰⁹ In the *Compendious or Brief Examination* a nation was compared to a family:

we must always take heed that we buy no more of strangers than we do sell them; for so we should impoverish ourselves and enrich them. For he were no good husband, that had no other yearly revenues but of his husbandry to live on, that would buy more in the market than he sells again.¹¹⁰

This particular rationale for trade balance theory harked back to a remark in Cato’s *De Agri Cultura* (II.7), as cited below by John Wheeler, Secretary to the Merchant Adventurers, in his 1601 defense of that company (*A treatise of Commerce*) against the charge of reducing the wealth of England by carrying out silver to purchase foreign wares:

Marcus Cato, a prudent Councillour and a good husband in deed, saith: *Quod oportet Patremfamilias vendacem esse non emacem*... Nowe to vent the superfluities of our Countrie, and bring in the the Commodities of others, there is no readier or better meane then by merchandize; and seeing we have no way to increase our treasure by mynes of golde and silver at home, and can have nothing from abroad without monie or ware, it followeth necessarilie that the abovesaid good councill of Cato to be sellers and not buyers is to be followed; yet so, that we carrie not out more in valew over the seas then we bring home from thence, or transporte thinges hurtfull to the State, for this were no good husbandry, but tendeth to the subversion of the lande and deminishing of the treasure therof; whereas by the other wee shall greatlie increase it, the trade being carried and managed under a convenient Gouvernement and orders, and not in a dispersed, loose, and stragling manner.¹¹¹

As might be expected, Wheeler did not hesitate to remind his readers that such was “the valew, profite and goodnes of the English Commodities, that all nations of thee partes of Europe and elsewhere desire them,” making a positive trade balance easy to accomplish if the Merchant Adventurers were left alone to carry out business as usual.¹¹² Wheeler’s citation of Cato was hardly novel; it had turned up in family manuals long before it turned up in economic tracts. Alberti’s mid-fifteenth century *paterfamilias* explained that it had “always been a good

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:237. See, similarly, 3:267 and 3:321.

¹¹⁰ [Smith], *Discourse*, 63 [2nd Dialogue].

¹¹¹ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 3:280. For other citations of Cato to this effect in, for example, the works of Malynes, Misselden, and Locke, see Finkelstein, *Harmony*, 91, and 155.

¹¹² Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 3:282.

thing for the whole family, if the father sells rather than buys.”¹¹³ In this realm as in so many others, the family was the model for the community as a whole. As the political struggles of the seventeenth century intensified, the models of the family and the body so congenial to absolutist views fell out of favor with constitutionalists, but changes in metaphors did not necessarily mean changes in trade policies. Commonwealth men with one foot in the older analogies and one in the newer, science-inspired, such as Slingsby Bethel might call money both the “*primum mobile* which moves the spheres” and “the sovereign cordial,” but this did not mean they had abandoned the view that “every nation is more or less considerable, according to the proportion it hath of trade.”¹¹⁴

But if it was generally held that exports should exceed imports in value, there was far less agreement over how to accomplish that goal: prohibit the export of bullion or coin, prohibit the import of luxury goods, prohibit the export of raw materials or unfinished goods, regulate these imports and exports through tariff levels instead of prohibitions, or resort to sumptuary laws to curtail consumption of foreign luxury goods. The disagreements arose, at least in part, from the fact that merely balancing trade was far from the sole problem to be solved. The socioeconomic dislocations—underemployment, inflation, recessions, poverty, crime—accompanying the economic transformations of the age were actually of far greater concern to monarchs trying to keep the internal peace, fight their religious wars, and balance their budgets. The crown tended to take the most basic approach: if foodstuffs and fuel were in short supply and their prices high, the first thing to be done was to prevent them from leaving the kingdom to feed alien bodies. The Act to Restrain Carrying of Corn, Victuals and Wood over the Sea (1555) blamed those “covetous and unsatiable persons seeking onely lucers and gaynes” for exporting so much food and fuel that they were “growen unto a wonderfull dearthe and extreame pyres.”¹¹⁵ Moralists tended to look at the effects of certain types of goods. Martin Luther felt “foreign trade,” which only brought “wares like costly silks, articles of gold, and spices” that ministered “only to ostentation” and

¹¹³ Alberti, *Family*, 195 [III].

¹¹⁴ Slingsby Bethel, *An Account of the French Usurpation upon the Trade of England* (London, 1679), 3–4, and Bethel, *The Present Interest of England Stated* (London, 1671), 8, 1–2, quoted in Pincus, “Neither Machiavellian Moment,” 717.

¹¹⁵ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 1:150–152.

“drain[ed] away the money of land and people,” would “not be permitted if we had [proper] government and princes.”¹¹⁶ Thomas Starkey was certain “all these marchands and artificers of vanity should utterly perish with their crafts, if they were not maintained by this idle sort which be they haunters of these vain pleasures and trifling things.”¹¹⁷ For William Perkins, the domestic “artificers of vanity” were as guilty as were the import-export merchants. “First” among the abusers of God’s divinely ordained “vocations” for Perkins was “the tradesman that getteth his living by making foreign and fond fashions of attire, which serve for no use but to be displayed flags and banners either of folly, or pride, or wantonness.”¹¹⁸ Milton worried that unbridled, trade would grown so “importunate” that “nothing” but the “luxurious expences of nation” could “support it,” and people fear “frugality” as leading to a “mutiny” of “tradesmen,” the country’s condition might be too “rotten” to remedy.¹¹⁹ Others accepted that foreign goods were here to stay, but looked at who reaped the profit of them, foreign or native merchants. Edward VI’s advisors decided to revoke the trading privileges of the Hansards in 1552 because they had abused privileges originally “profitable” to both parties: the king lost customs revenue when the Hansards brought in goods in violation of their grants and the “laudable order” of the king’s “subjects” was subverted when the Hansards exported goods the English either needed themselves or could have exported themselves.¹²⁰ On the other hand, the Russian Emperor granted trading rights to English merchants in 1555 because, considering how “needful” and “profitable” merchandise was to humanity, God had blessed each realm with different commodities, so their need of each other’s goods increased the intercourse and amity between them.¹²¹ Others worried about which goods to favor. Woolen cloth was England’s main export, but the money to be made in it and the greater labor costs of farming were prompting many a landowner in England to enclosure and the conversion of their acreage from farming to sheep herding, leaving many of the evicted tenants unemployed. Therefore, secretary Cecil advised Elizabeth in 1564, not to re-establish

¹¹⁶ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:246.

¹¹⁷ Starkey, *Dialogue*, 143–144 [V].

¹¹⁸ Perkins, *Vocations*, 462.

¹¹⁹ John Milton, “The Readie and Easie Way to establish a free Commonwealth,” quoted in Pincus, “Neither Machiavellian Moment,” 713.

¹²⁰ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 2:35–36.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 2:37.

the woolen trade with Antwerp: less woolen cloth exported would be more “proffitable,” because the concomitant reduction in tillage was causing England to have to import foreign coin, because cloth workers were more difficult to govern than were farmers, and because the lure of jobs in the cloth trades was depriving the realm of workers in other needed trades.¹²² Still others thought the balance between the value of the goods entering and leaving the kingdom could be controlled by manipulating import and export duties. For Bodin, the higher the export duties, the higher the realm’s profit (*proffit*), and if foreigners bought less as a result, the French would have it all the better, or as Knolles translated, be able to buy their goods “better cheape.”¹²³ Equally vital were low import duties on foreign raw materials and prohibiting the export of domestic so that the French might “*gaigne le profit*” of the manufacturing while the ruler gained that on the “*imposition foraine*.”¹²⁴ On a less sophisticated level, Nicholas Fuller, Member of Parliament for the City of London in 1610, believed “a resumption” of the tariffs which were “very proffitable” to the customs farmers would benefit the commonwealth as the king would reap more income without “further hurte” to his subjects.¹²⁵ Taking one’s profit at another country’s loss was one way around the potential conflict between the zero-sum universe and a king’s need for revenue.

Bodin was far from the only one to recognize that the traffic in manufactured goods played a larger part in the trade equation than did the raw materials of which those goods were made. Manufactured foreign goods might deprive subjects of jobs and the profit attending upon them. The 1563 Act for the Avoiding of Foreign Wares made by Handicraftsmen beyond the Seas prohibited importing ready-made leather, metal, and lace goods for resale in England because the abundance of these goods not only “impoverished” England’s craftsmen but also deprived its youth of training in such profitable skills.¹²⁶ William Harrison was certain that “the commonwealth of England” would “flourish again in her old rate” if only her woolens were “fully wrought at home ... and not carried out to be shorn and dressed abroad, while our clothworkers here do starve and beg their bread and for lack of

¹²² *Ibid.*, 2:45–46.

¹²³ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:66 [VI.2], and Knolles, *Six Bookes*, 662.

¹²⁴ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:66–67 [VI.2].

¹²⁵ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, ed., *Parliamentary Debates in 1610, Edited from the notes of a member of the House of Commons*, Camden Society, o.s. 81 (1862), 10.

¹²⁶ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 1:126–127.

daily practice utterly neglect to be skillful in this science!”¹²⁷ The author of the *Compendious or Brief Examination* agreed that both jobs and money were lost when goods were exported in an unfinished state, even if consumers would have to pay a little more for native manufactures, for “how much soever the gains” that passed from “one of us to another” was “all saved within the realm” where it would “grow to the profit of the subjects” and “also to the profit of the king.”¹²⁸ At the Estates General of 1576, the Third Estate “insisted that the best method of feeding and supporting the population” of France “was to employ them on manufactures, rather than to allow the foreigners to manufacture the French raw materials and thus draw ‘great amounts of money’ from the kingdom.”¹²⁹ Back in 1553, William Cholmeley’s *Request and Suite* was actually a proposal that the government adopt a method of enhancing employment and the balance of trade he had personally found profitable. The combination of English “vanities” and the inability of the English to finish their woolen cloth before they exported it had led to more expensive foreign goods being imported than cheap English woolens exported, “enpoveryshyng” his majesty’s “poore commons” to the enrichment only of foreign merchants and those English “marchauntis, dyars, and drapers” who put their private “commoditie of profit and gayne” before the “general good.”¹³⁰ Branching out from his main line in spices, Cholmeley had found his income increased when he imported a foreign dyer to finish cloth for sale; now he felt it was his “dutie” to bring that suggestion before the king: let foreigners be imported to set up the works and teach the skills to the English and there would soon be no need for the foreign teachers. Furthermore, the “dyars, clothworkers, and drapers” who would gain the greatest profit from exporting the finished cloths were the most suited to bear the start-up costs of the enterprise. The crown could just sit back and reap the benefits.¹³¹

A new hierarchy was beginning to be constructed within the middling and working classes, one in which those professions that created goods for export (and thus brought money into the body) were to be favored over those that operated only within the domestic sphere,

¹²⁷ Harrison, *Description*, 362 [III.10].

¹²⁸ [Smith], *Discourse*, 64–67.

¹²⁹ Cole, *Colbert*, 9–10.

¹³⁰ Thoms, *Request*, 6, 8, 18, and 20.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 3–5 and 20.

and especially over those that only imported goods. The author of the *Compendious* thought that the “shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, masons, tilers, butchers, brewers, bakers, and victualers of all sorts” who got and spent their living within the country were alright, but the “mercers, grocers, vintners, haberdashers, milliners” who imported foreign goods and “fetch out our treasure for the same” were “not necessary in a Commonweal,” and “tolerable” only when offset by the “clothiers, tanners, cappers, and worsted makers” who brought in “treasure” by making wares for export and so should be well cherished for it.¹³² In a similar fashion, Pieter de la Court proposed that members of crafts whose goods had only a domestic circulation and producers of food for domestic consumption should be taxed more heavily than those producing goods for export, whether the individuals in question were natives or resident foreigners.¹³³ Merchants could defend their profession by pointing out the profit it brought to other social organs (in addition to any overall increase in national wealth achieved through a positive trade balance); John Brown’s *Marchants Aviso* included a poem pointing out that “every art in his degree” profited from the export trade: “the marchant made the Clothier rich,” by venting his cloth; the clothier in turn employed many workers and enriched the spinners, weavers, and shearmen, while profiting the owners of the land who passed the wealth on to the grocers and bakers who supplied them.¹³⁴

The balance of trade was clearly the skeleton upholding this body politic, but could the balance of trade upset the balance of population? Following the money trail, contemporary observers were taking a novel look at the relationship between agriculture and industry in their countries. While Cecil worried about the difficulties in governing an urban proletariat compared to those of governing tenant-farmers with ancestral ties to the land, Botero was among those who were beginning to overturn the Aristotelian prejudice against the artificial. He believed “nothing” was “of greater importance” for “increasing” the “power” and “wealth” of a state than “industry” because “the products of the manual skill of man” were “more in number and of greater worth than the produce of nature,” more people lived “by industry than by rents,” the “revenues derived” from processing iron were greater than those from mining it, and the greater cost of manufactured goods

¹³² [Smith], *Discourse*, 90.

¹³³ Court, *True Interest*, 90–100 [I.24].

¹³⁴ Brown, *Marchants Aviso*, Aiii.

meant greater tax revenue for the ruler; in fact such was “the power of industry that no mine of silver or gold in New Spain or in Peru” could “compare with it.”¹³⁵ Just about the same time Antonio Serra (*A Brief Treatise on the causes which can make gold and silver plentiful in kingdoms where there are no mines*) was also reaching the conclusion that industry added much more to a country’s wealth than did “surplus” agricultural produce for a number of reasons: 1) artisanal profit was “more certain” than agricultural through being less dependent “upon the nature of the weather,” 2) artisanal profit was, unlike crop yield “capable of increase” as no one could reap 150 “*tomola* of wheat” from a 100 *tomola* “territory,” 3) profit from trade was also surer because the market was surer, the goods not being subject to “spoiling,” and 4) the profit margin from industry was greater than that from farming.¹³⁶

(8) *Patent Monopolies*. As father of the political family and head of the body politic, it was also the monarch’s job above all to regulate the circulation of wealth within the body or family to the adequate nourishment of all its members. This task entailed two forms of royal regulation that remained controversial throughout the era, the exclusive trade rights issued to regulated and joint stock companies and the awarding of patents (often in lieu of salaries) to the monarch’s supporters and functionaries. Both of these were frequently condemned under the heading of *monopolies*. Complaints about the actions of the regulated or joint-stock companies will be covered under the heading of merchants rather than that of monarchs, because these complaints really centered on the behavior of their trading members, patents will be covered here because these were truly royal warrants.

The terminology used in these condemnations was borrowed from that used to characterize crimes committed by domestic traders: accusations of forestalling, engrossing, and regrating, but most commonly that of engrossing. Forestalling was the act of buying up goods privately

¹³⁵ Botero, *Reason of State*, 151–152 [VIII.3].

¹³⁶ Antonio Serra, *Breve Trattato delle cause che possono far abbondare li regni d’oror e d’argento dove non sono miniere* (1613), in *Early Economic Thought: Selections from Economic Literature prior to Adam Smith*, ed. Arthur Eli Monroe (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 146–148. See also Annalisa Rosselli, “Early Views on Monetary Policy: The Neapolitan Debate on the Theory of Exchange,” *History of Political Economy*, 32 #1 (Spring 2000), 61–82, for an analysis of the contrast between Serra’s “real” theory of the balance of payments and the much more widely accepted in the seventeenth-century “monetary” theory put forward by Marc’Antonio De Santis (*Discorso di Marc’antonio de Santis intorno all’effetto che fa in regni il cambio*, 1605) which leaned heavily on the idea that greedy merchant manipulators of exchange rates were behind the shortage of coin.

before they reached the public market in order to sell them at that market for a higher price by means of controlling the local supply; regrating was the act of buying up the commodity after it reached the market in order to resell it locally or elsewhere at a higher price by cornering the local supply; and engrossing was the crime of buying up as much of the stock of some commodity as possible (“in the gross”) in order to regrade it, resell it elsewhere at a monopoly price.¹³⁷ Engrossing was essentially forestalling on a much larger scale. When a group of London brokers and notaries wanted to protest the royal grant of a monopoly in the registration of insurance policies in 1574, they complained that it was “not good that one man should have an office of diverse mens livinges and ... and make of many mens livinges a private gaine to him self and all other in that facte his inferiours or servauntes.”¹³⁸ William Harrison not only believed that monopolists “embase, corrupt, and yet raise the prices of things at their own pleasures,” but that those deprived of their rightful incomes by such practices “shift soil and seek unto other countries” for sustenance.¹³⁹ When Mr. Martin wanted to object to the monopolies created by the awarding of royal patents in Parliament in 1601, he naturally complained that “the Principal Commodities” of his town and his country were being “ingrossed into the Hands of these Blood-Suckers of the Common-Wealth,” asking “If a Body, Mr. Speaker, being Let Blood, be left still Languishing without any Remedy, How can the Good Estate of that Body long remain?”¹⁴⁰ In the same debate, Mr. Francis Moore grieved for “the great grievances” his country sustained by “these monopolies” that “bringeth the general profit into a private hand and the end of all is beggary and bondage to the subject.”¹⁴¹ Elizabeth I’s defense of her actions rested on the self-same distinction. She averred that like any good prince,

My heart was never set on worldly goods, but only for my subjects’ good. What you bestow on me, I will not hoard it up, but receive it to bestow on you again. Yea, my own properties I account yours to be expended for your good... For had I not received a knowledge from you [of abused monopolies], I might have fallen into the lapse of an error only for lack of true information. Since I was queen yet did I never put my pen to any grant but that upon pretext and semblance made unto me, it was both

¹³⁷ *O.E.D.* (1933), 4:443, 8:375, and 3:184.

¹³⁸ Tawney & Power, *Tudor*, 2:247.

¹³⁹ Harrison, *Description*, 257 [II.19].

¹⁴⁰ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:274–275.

¹⁴¹ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 346.

good and beneficial to the subject in general, though a private profit to some of my ancient servants who had deserved well.¹⁴²

No debate on commercial matters could long continue without reference to the dictum that the end result of failure to favor the profit of the whole over that of the part was to deprive the some or all the organs of the body of their necessary sustenance.

While monarchs might use patents to reward favorites who did no work at all, patents were still a practical way of securing incomes to members of the administration in the absence of adequate government funding or a civil service act. Elizabeth was not about to abolish them all despite her speech, and her successors took the same position. While the 1624 Act Against Monopolies averred that it was declaring void the monopolies granted “upon misinformations and untrue pretences of public good” to “the great grievance and inconvenience of your Majesty’s subjects,” it managed to exempt not only limited duration patents but the trading company monopolies as well.¹⁴³ So, not surprisingly, the writers of *The Heads of the Proposals* in 1647 were still agitating for the removal of “all monopolies (old or new) and restraints on the freedom of trade.”¹⁴⁴

While the executive, alone or with the legislature, set fiscal, trade, and monetary policy, the responsibility for how those policies were carried out or evaded was laid at the door of the commercial and financial classes—the retailers, the wholesalers, the import-export merchants, and the bankers—whose actions were usually referred to under the heading of commutative justice, the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 338.

¹⁴³ Adams and Stephens, *Documents*, 337–339.

¹⁴⁴ Kenyon, *Stuart*, 307.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PROFIT AND COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE

*“Jamais mal acquest ne prouffite (Ill-gotten gain comes to no good).”*¹

François Villon

The more detailed treatment of justice in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* appears, at first, to diverge from the simple principle of hierarchical proportionality established in the *Politics*. According to the *Ethics*, “distributive justice,” the type of “particular” justice “exercised in the distribution of honor, wealth and the other divisible assets of the community,” required “the same equality between the shares as between the persons,” so that unequal persons did not end up with “equal shares.”² This was the same idea borrowed from Plato in the *Politics*. However, a second type of “particular justice,” called “corrective justice” supplied the equalizing principle in “private transactions,” whether “voluntary” (sales and loans) or “involuntary” (robbery and homicide), without respect of personal status, looking only “at the nature of the damage” and taking away “the criminal’s gain to offset the victim’s loss.”³ Although Aristotle explained that the terms “loss” and “gain” in this discussion were borrowed from the vocabulary of “voluntary exchange,” the only examples he gave under the heading of “corrective justice” concerned “involuntary” transactions.⁴ His discussion of “voluntary” transactions was prefaced instead by the introduction of a third term, the Pythagorean concept of “reciprocity,” which he believed did not “coincide either with Distributive or with Corrective Justice,” but was (“in the interchange of services” and “on the basis of proportion”

¹ François Villon, *The Poems of François Villon*, rev. bilingual ed., ed. and trans. Galway Kinnell (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1977), 132–133 [*Le Testament*, line 1691].

² Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, bilingual ed., ed. and trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1990), 267 [V.2.12–13] and 269 [V.3.6]; the term “distributive justice” appears on page 271.

³ *Ibid.*, 267 [V.2.12–13] and 275 [V.4.3–6].

⁴ *Ibid.*, 279 [V.4.13].

rather than “on the basis of equality”) “the bond” that maintained society.⁵ However the “proportionate reciprocity” was not that of the individuals doing the exchanging, but of the goods to be exchanged. Houses and shoes were proportionately unequal, so they could not be exchanged on a one-to-one basis. If one house was equal to “x” pairs of shoes, then it could only be exchanged for “x” number of pairs. This example led to a discussion of the invention of money as a way of removing the inconvenience involved in exchanging unequal goods via barter, and the conclusion that the amount of money changing hands had to be equal to a “demand” (or “estimation”) based determination of the proportionate value of the items exchanged.⁶ In other words, if a house was equal in worth to one hundred pairs of shoes, the price of a house should be one hundred times as great as that of a pair shoes.

How many types of justice had Aristotle described? We have two basic types— “distributive” (political and socioeconomic) and “corrective” justice—and two sub-types of corrective, involuntary/criminal and voluntary/commercial justice. Then we have “reciprocity,” which is either a third type altogether or another name for the as yet undiscussed voluntary/commercial division of corrective justice.⁷ Regardless of what Aristotle meant, medieval and early modern interpreters took reciprocity as synonymous with voluntary corrective justice, although some, like Thomas Elyot were aware that their translations were inexact in this regard:

Justice although it be but one entire virtue, yet it is described as two kinds or species. The one is named justice distributive, which is in distribution of honor, money, benefit, or other thing semblance; the other is called commutative or by exchange, and of Aristotle it is named in Greek *diorthotice*, which is in English corrective.⁸

And distributive and commutative justice they remained throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, still taking their traditional form in Pufendorf’s view that “distributive justice” rested “on an agreement between society and its members about pro rata sharing in loss

⁵ *Ibid.*, 279 [V.5.2] and 281 [V.5.4].

⁶ *Ibid.*, 281–291 [V.5.8–18].

⁷ For the view that it was, in fact, intended to be seen as a third form of justice, and thus its equation with voluntary corrective justice by medieval authorities was an interpretive error, see Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 11. Also, Odd Langholm, *Price and Value in the Aristotelian Tradition: A study in scholastic economic sources* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1979), 14.

⁸ Elyot, *Governor*, 159 [III.1].

and gain,” while “commutative justice” rested “on a bilateral contract particularly concerned with things and actions relevant to commerce.”⁹

We appear, then, to have two different types of justice operating according to two incompatible rules. In distributive justice, persons of unequal status were to be treated unequally, while in corrective justice, persons of unequal status were to be treated equally with a proportionate equality established between the goods they exchanged. However, both the logical principle of non-contradiction (a proposition and its opposite cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time) and the belief in justice’s role as society’s chief harmonizer universally subscribed to by early modern theorists require that there be some way to harmonize the two principles of particular justice with each other. One approach might be made by looking at the era’s understanding of law (*lex*) as the embodiment of justice (*ius*).

It was probably as common in medieval and early modern political theory to speak of the necessity of having “arms and laws” as it was to speak of the necessity of maintaining justice. Justinian was of the opinion that “Imperial Majesty should not only be graced with arms but also armed with laws, so that good government may prevail in time of war and peace.”¹⁰ Bracton claimed that arms and laws did not merely reinforce each other (“the achievement of arms” being “conserved” by the laws, while “the laws themselves” were “preserved by the support of arms”), they were actually “synonymous,” for law was the human embodiment of divine justice.¹¹ Aquinas was more careful to distinguish between the prescriptive intent (that law should embody justice) and the descriptive actuality (laws might be just or unjust). Prescriptively, laws were “ordained to the common good” and intended to instruct citizens “in the upholding of the common good of justice and peace,” but, descriptively, human laws might be unjust by violating higher sanctions, as, for example, “the laws of tyrants inducing to idolatry or to anything else contrary to the divine law,” although, if instituted as intended, laws embodied justice, acting as a guide to its principles.¹² The same attitude underlay Fortescue’s view that justice was to law as “as genus to species,” justice being “everything which is equal and good,” and law

⁹ Pufendorf, *Duty*, 31 [I.2].

¹⁰ Justinian, *Institutes*, 33 [Introduction].

¹¹ Bracton, *De Legibus*, 2:19 and 2:22.

¹² Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, 70–72 [*Summa Theologica*, I–II, Q96, A3–A4].

not always so, but “all law ought to be equal and good, otherwise it would not be a species of *ius*.”¹³ Osse felt that it was “among all wise people beyond dispute,” that the proofs of a magistracy’s “virtue and aptitude” were its “manly deeds” and “sagacious projects” in war and its “good godly righteous government, judiciary and *Policy*” in peace.¹⁴ Even Machiavelli’s *Prince* needed to know that “the chief foundations of all states, whether new, old, or mixed,” were “good laws and good arms,” although there could not “be good laws where there” were “not good arms.”¹⁵ Grotius maintained that law, “taken in its most extensive sense,” was one “signification of the word Right,” denoting “a rule of moral action, obliging us to do what is proper.”¹⁶

This prescriptive identity between law and justice and the necessity of justice to the continued existence of society underlay the common assertion that changing laws, even bad laws, was dangerous because of the threat posed to the delicate balance of the social organism by any disturbance. For Aristotle, law had “no power to compel obedience beside the force of custom,” and custom only grew up “in long lapse of time, so that lightly to change from the existing laws to other new laws” was “to weaken the power of the law” itself.¹⁷ Montaigne doubted that one could find as much “*évident profit*” in changing any sort of accepted law as there was “*mal*” in stirring it up because policy was such an “*ensemble*” of “*diverses pièces*,” that it was “*impossible*” to dislodge any single “*pièce*” without “*tou le corps*” feeling it.¹⁸ Sir Thomas Smith was equally “*certaine*” that it was “*alwayes a doubtfulle and hasardous matter to meddle with the chaunging of the lawes and government ... alreadie established.*”¹⁹

In early modern Europe, however, the word “law” did not refer to a single entity but to an entire hierarchy of regulations, each element of which existed within the compass of a greater type of law, just as the spheres of the cosmos nested within each other. For Justinian the encompassing sphere was a universally innate, divinely sanctioned, eternal “law of nature,” within which nested the lesser sphere of the

¹³ Fortescue, *De Natura*, 1:222 [I.30].

¹⁴ Small, *Camerallists*, 25–26.

¹⁵ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Luigi Ricci, rev. E.R.P. Vincent, in *The Prince and the Discourses*, 44 [XII].

¹⁶ Grotius, *Rights*, 20 [I.1.9].

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 131 [II.5.14].

¹⁸ Montaigne, *Essais*, 1:186 [I.23].

¹⁹ Smith, *Republica*, 13 [I.5].

law of nations (*ius gentium*: “the law which natural reason makes for all mankind”), and within it, the sphere of state laws further divided into the spheres of “public law” (concerned “with the organization of the Roman state”) and “private law” (concerned with “the well-being of individuals”).²⁰ As usual Bracton followed Justinian, finding *ius gentium* both subordinate to “natural law” (that which “God himself, taught all living things”) and divided into “public law” (pertaining “to the common welfare”) and “private law” (pertaining “primarily to the welfare of individuals and secondarily to the *res publica*”), all bound together by the threefold “*praecepta iuris*” (“to live virtuously, to injure no one, [and] to give to each man his right”).²¹ For St. German, the “wisdom of God” was the “law eternal” or the “first law,” made “known to creatures reasonable” three ways: “by the light of natural reason [“law of reason”] ... by heavenly revelation [“law of God”] ... [and] by the order of a prince [“law of man”],” with the “law of reason” being a special division of the “law of nature” pertaining only to “creatures reasonable” and being “always good and righteous, stirring and inclining man to good, and abhorring evil,” against which neither “prescription, statute nor custom” might “prevail.”²² The possibility of an actual divergence between human and divine law was acknowledged in the caveat that although the “law of man” was intended to follow the laws of reason and God, a lawmaker required “wisdom and authority” to accomplish this: “Wisdom that he may judge after reason what is to be done for the commonalty” and “authority, that he have authority to make laws.”²³

The key relationship between the nested spheres of this hierarchy of laws was that each sphere further particularized the one in which it nested while operating within the encompassing sphere’s guidelines. The part followed the principle of the whole, not the reverse, or as St. German put it, “the inferior may not judge upon the superior.”²⁴ Hooker used the same principle to explain why “no particular nation” could “lawfully prejudice” the law of nations:

For as civil law, being the act of a whole body politic, doth therefore overrule each several part of the same body; so there is no reason

²⁰ Justinian, *Institutes*, 37–39 [I.1–2].

²¹ Bracton, *De Legibus*, 2:25–27.

²² St. German, *Doctor and Student*, 3–5 [I.1–2].

²³ *Ibid.*, 9–10 [I.4].

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 304 [*Additions to the 2nd Dialogue*, I].

that any one commonwealth of itself should to the prejudice of another annihilate that whereupon the whole world hath agreed.²⁵

A similar hierarchical relationship might be posited to exist between distributive and commutative justice. Aristotle had opened the *Politics* with the observation that “all the actions of all mankind” were “done with a view to what they think to be good,” but the state was the “supreme” organization because it aimed “at the most supreme of all goods.”²⁶ The whole had a higher function than did the part; the whole was therefore more important than the part; therefore, the justice of the whole was more important than the justice of part to part. Equality in Corrective justice could not violate equality in Distributive justice even though they applied to different fields of action: the interaction between parts (covered by Corrective Justice) could not operate upon a principle in contradiction to that upon which the whole (covered by Distributive Justice) operated. This was the same relationship presumed to exist between private and public law. Without this hierarchy of justice, Aristotle’s classification of the various types of justice resolves itself into a logical contradiction. Do we then have to resurrect the discredited theory of the “just price?” If we leave that particular question to last and look instead at the complaints made of violations of commutative justice against lenders, merchants, and domestic traders, we should be able to see that they, like the social climbers, lawyers, churchmen, landowners, and monarchs, violated distributive justice as well.

(A) *The Sins of the Usurer*. Lending money at interest was condemned as usury in both Biblical and classical sources, whether or not the interest was taken openly or under the guise of some sort of fee. *Leviticus* 26:35–37 commanded that both strangers sojourning in the land and brothers in distress be relieved without usury. In the *Politics*, Aristotle distinguished the acquisition involved in using the bounty of nature to sustain a household from the “artificial” acquisition of money (“wealth-getting”) by drawing an analogy to the distinction between the natural use of a thing (wearing a shoe) and the artificial or secondary use (selling the shoe for goods).²⁷ As Aristotle explained in the *Ethics*, the natural use of money was to provide a means of equalizing the values of disparate things, to match houses against pairs of shoes.²⁸

²⁵ Hooker, *Works*, 1:196 [*Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, I.10§13].

²⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 3 [I.1.1].

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31–41 [I.3.1–11].

²⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 281–291 [V.5.8–18].

To use it to make more money was only a secondary or artificial use; thus to use money to make money, whether through exchange or usury was “justly discredited” and “reasonably hated” because this was a perversion of the purpose for which money was invented.²⁹ Furthermore, for Aristotle, the distinction between natural and artificial was that between animate and inanimate, for matter was, of itself, dead without a psyche to animate it. Humans, animals, and plants had psyches. Rocks and minerals did not. Gold and silver were inanimate. Money was both inanimate (because it was made of gold and silver) and artificial (forged by humans rather than created by nature). Animate things were fertile, whereas inanimate were sterile because increase was a form of animation. Money was sterile. It could not make itself.

Justinian recognized two different types of loans—the *mutuum* and the *commodatum*—based upon whether or not the goods loaned were or were not used up by the borrower. In the case of a *commodatum*, where goods such as a “house” were not consumed, the borrower was obligated to “restore the very thing borrowed,” whereas in a *mutuum*, where goods such as “wine” or “money” were used up, the borrower was obligated to return “others of the same kind and quality,” but in both instances, no more was returned than was loaned: there was “no charge paid or agreed.” If one charged for things not consumed by use, the transaction was a “hire” rather than a *commodatum*, but the rules for a “hire” did not apply to the consumable goods covered by the *mutuum* contract.³⁰

According to Glanvill, lenders of a “loan for consumption” committed usury if they received “more in return.” Although the technical term was “mortgage,” lenders committed usury as well, if in loaning “an immovable” for a “fixed term,” they did not allow the creditor to count “the profits and rents accruing ... towards repayment.” The penalties for usury were severe. Although “no living person” could be “convicted of the crime of usury,” because one could always do “penance” before one’s death, if the crime was proved by royal inquest after the person’s death, “the heirs of the usurer” were “disinherited”: “all the movables and chattels” that “belonged to the dead usurer” went to the king.³¹

²⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 51 [I.3.23].

³⁰ Justinian, *Institutes*, 105–107 [III.14]. Similarly, Norman Jones, *God and the Moneylenders: Usury and Law in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 8–9, on Aquinas and the *mutuum*.

³¹ *Glanvill*, 117 [X.3], 124 [X.8], and 89 [VII.16].

The same distinction between the loan for consumption and the rental of property governed payment for money in Aquinas's treatment of usury [*Summa Theologica* II.II, Q.78]. To loan something consumable was, in effect, to sell it; to get back both its equivalent and a charge for its use was to sell "the same thing twice," in effect, selling "what does not exist." To rent out the use of house did not transfer its ownership because the house still existed when the handed back to its owner, so getting back both the house and a fee for its use did not involve selling the house twice; one was only "selling" the use. Citing Aristotle, Aquinas maintained that as money was invented "chiefly for the purpose of exchange," it was consumed or alienated when exchanged for goods; thus it came under the rule of the loan for consumption. Ownership of the actual coins changed hands at the time of the loan, and all that could be returned was an equivalent value: the lender was "repaid according to equality of justice" if he was "repaid as much" as he had lent. The demands of commutative justice were met as equal value was returned for equal value. Complications arose when the question was not one of a straight fee for use, but of compensation for a loss occurred or a gratuity for a favor rendered. A lender "lost" the use of his money, but could not demand compensation in advance for two reasons: there was no guarantee that he would have made "profit out of his money" if he had retained it, and he certainly could "not sell that which he has not yet." A favor was properly measured by the depth of the "feeling" rather than the value of the favor; nor was it a favor if bound in law. A subsidiary issue was the injunction in *Deuteronomy* 23:20 ("Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury.") which appeared to allow usury in some instances. To this Aquinas answered that while Jews had been allowed to charge interest to foreigners to prevent them from falling into the greater sin of avarice, Christians took all men to be brothers and thus could not charge interest on a loan (for consumption) under any circumstances.³²

In dealing with medieval and early modern tracts on lending, one needs to keep certain vocabulary distinctions in mind. It was not actually possible in Aquinas's day to speak of lending money at interest, because *interesse* meant damages due one party to a contract when the other party defaulted; it was compensation for the loss caused by the

³² Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, 148–153 [*Summa Theologica* II.II, Q.78, A.1–2].

default. *Interesse* came from *quod interest* (what is the difference); it was the difference between what the party should have received and did receive. Thus it was only equal to the actual loss. In the case of default on a loan of money, the *interesse* that the lender claimed was simply the original amount of money lent. The view that Aquinas took, that lenders could not demand payment for the investment profit foregone by lending money, would today be justified as demanding payment for the “opportunity cost” incurred by lending the money. What Aquinas was condemning, however, was a practice already making much headway among Italian traders, albeit under a different vocabulary. Repayment above the original amount of the loan was being demanded for *damnum emergens* (“loss or damage incurred”) and *lucrum cessans* (“profit ceasing or lost”). But this practice seemed to violate Aristotle’s dictum that money, as an artificial thing, could not grow, a concept of its “sterility” that passed from Aristotle through Roman Law to church law, ending up in the twelfth century *Decreti Gratiani*. However, the concept of “intention” enabled the papacy to incorporate some of the commercial innovations within the theology of the church. In 1516, Pope Leo X issued the bull *Inter multiplices* giving formal approval to the *montes pietatis* (“mounts of piety”), public pawn shops that charged low fees (usually six percent) designed to protect the poorer classes from the 32.5 to 43.5 per cent charged by public usurers in Italy. In 1542, Pope Paul III also sanctioned their paying four to six per cent on the deposits they used to supplement their own capital. The *montes pietatis* were now banks, and “charity,” the original justification for their existence, was fast fading from the picture.³³

In this area, too, the Reformation splintered European unity. The willingness of the papacy to accommodate human weakness, to suffer the lesser evil to avoid the greater, did not sit well with reformers such as Martin Luther. According to Luther, the four “Christian” ways of exchanging goods were gift-giving, lending, selling, and letting oneself be robbed, but “he who lends expecting to get back something more or something better than he has loaned is nothing but an open and condemned usurer.”³⁴ The terms used in Germany to cover

³³ This summarization of the complex history of lending is taken from Nelson, *Idea of Usury*, 32–34, 38–39, 106, 115, 121, 233–234, 252–255, 258, 269–279, and 295. Interest could also be taken to mean a lender’s or investor’s interest in the success of the venture, a complementary sense; for which, see Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 140.

³⁴ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:256–260.

that “something more” were *Zins* and *Zinskauf*, originally meaning *taxes* and derived from the tribute Rome collected from its subject provinces through the *census*, but by the fourteenth century *Zins* and *Zinskauf* were “used interchangeably” with *Rente* and *Rentenkauf* (“purchase of rent”) and recognized by the landowning church as “a delayed cash payment on a purchase made for credit rather than as an interest payment on a loan.”³⁵ As this transaction concerned leased land it could easily be seen as coming under the rules of the *commodatum*, but by Luther’s day it was being applied to the loan of money which was traditionally considered a consumable and thus covered by the rules of the *mutuum*. Not surprisingly, Luther condemned the practice of taking compensation for *lucrum cessans* or *interesse* on the grounds that the lender would “have to lose the *interesse* and the profit anyway if the sum” were “taken away” or given “outright,” and therefore merely “lending” it did not alter the case.³⁶ His linking of *interesse* to *Zins* is interesting for what it reveals about sixteenth-century business practices and thought, for it is a case of “opportunity cost” before the coining of the phrase. According to Luther,

There is in Latin a little word called *interesse*. This noble, precious, tender little word may be translated into German this way, ‘I have a hundred gulden with which I could go into business and by my care and effort make five or six gulden more a year. Instead, I place it with someone else on a productive property, so that not I but he can put it to work there. In return for doing this I take from him five gulden, the amount which I might otherwise have earned. Thus, he is selling me the *zins*—five gulden for a hundred—and I am the buyer and he the seller.’³⁷

For Luther, such a contract was usurious because it did not allow for the possible loss the lender might have incurred had he gone “into business” with that money, and such lenders were “worse than usurers,” for they were “buying the interest of profit and paying for it with the interest of loss ... making their gains at the expense of other people’s losses.”³⁸ In other words, they were simultaneously violating commutative and distributive justice, because to gain at another’s loss

³⁵ Walther I. Brandt, “Introduction to *Trade and Usury*,” in *ibid.*, 45:235–237.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 45:294.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 45:298–299. Note, however, Jones, *God*, 12–14, on the increasing acceptance of interest to cover what we would now call opportunity cost among the Catholic “Tübingen school”—Gabriel Biel, Johann Eck, and Conrad Summenhart—who were already moving towards the importance of intent over action.

³⁸ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:299–300.

was to deprive another of their just share of the body's resources. Luther was equally adamant that the arrangement was usurious even when it involved land, "for in that way one would be equating a particular sum of money with a fixed land value, which is impossible."³⁹ Luther's objection in both cases rested in part on the way the contracts allowed the "selling" party to evade the "power of God" manifested in the natural risks of earthly life, "death, illness, flood, fire, wind, hail, lightening, rain, wolves, wild beasts, and the manifold losses inflicted by wicked men."⁴⁰

A mercantile practice condemned on the same grounds as demanding interest on a loan was charging a higher price for delayed payment than when selling goods for cash in hand. According to Luther, those who sold "their goods on time and credit for a higher price than if they were sold for cash" violated "divine law" by not considering their neighbor's "loss" in their own "lust for profits."⁴¹ Thomas Wilson believed setting "wares at an hygh pryce in consideration of tyme, demanding great gayne for the tyme onelye" was usury.⁴² So did Miles Mosse:

I sell wares, I give three months day of payment, and for that I am to forbear my money so long, I sell above mine ordinarie price, and above a reasonable gaine: herein (no question) I commit usurie. For I sell the time, and make gaine of lending.⁴³

These condemnations have to be set against the realities of economic life in a society in which most transactions were conducted on a credit rather than a cash and carry basis (given that marketing had to be done more frequently than the quarterly payment of rent), and against the disruptive effect of the inflation to which a rising tide of nonpayment litigation and testators' debts provide eloquent evidence.⁴⁴ The need to maintain an accurate record of their debts (and repayments) was as

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45:301.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 45:303. This was also the basis of his objection to the purchase of insurance. For Luther, "standing surety" for another was "too lofty" a work "for a man," a "presumptuous encroachment upon the work of God," and, in fact, making oneself God for "whatever a man trusts in and relies upon is his god." For which, see *ibid.*, 45:253–254.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 45:261.

⁴² Wilson, *Usurye*, 223.

⁴³ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 3:381.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Muldrew, *Economy*, 96–97, for a sample of the debts remaining unpaid at the deaths of members of all classes of society, and *ibid.*, 201–203, on the relevant litigation.

least as great a motivator behind the growth of bookkeeping in England as was the desire to determine the profitability of any particular enterprise because of the importance of trustworthiness in its twinned moral and financial senses.⁴⁵

There were dissenting voices. One of the more controversial was that of Charles Dumoulin whose a justification of usury as charity in *Tractatus Contractuum et Usurarum* (1546) helped make it necessary for him to flee France for Germany where his unconventional opinions earned him opprobrium from Catholic and Protestant churches alike. According to Dumoulin, “mutual charity” arose when a merchant borrowed “money in order to make a profit from legitimate business” and promised to “pay usury monthly or annually, instead of a portion of the expected profit,” because it was “plain” that one granted “the favor of a loan from his property” while the other remunerated “his benefactor with a part of the gain derived therefrom, without suffering any loss.” The key was that one profited while the other suffered no loss; thus, there was no violation of distributive justice: “the debtor” made “a greater profit out of the loan, even with his burden, than if he had not had the loan,” so it was “plain that the loan with this burden” was “an advantage to the debtor” and not “a disadvantage.” As for the Aristotelian truism that “money by itself does not fructify,” Dumoulin rejected it with the comment that “even fields do not fructify by themselves, without expense, labor, & the industry of men,” and “money, likewise, even when it has to be returned after a time, yields meanwhile a considerable product through the industry of man.”⁴⁶

While Dumoulin was clearly in the minority, sixteenth-century governments still had to find a way to accommodate the practices of the day. Whether lending was in private or public hands, lending at interest was an increasingly important means of financing business investment, especially in international trade, and international trade was increasingly important to government budgets and national economies. In 1571, the English Parliament was debating the bill that would eventually become 13 Elizabeth I, c. 8, the statute effectively legalizing interest by setting a maximum rate of ten percent. Speaking for the bill, one Mr. Molley averred that only “excessive” interest rates caused harm; rea-

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 128–129.

⁴⁶ Charles Dumoulin, *Tractatus contractuum et usurarum redituumque pecunia constitutorum* (1546), in Monroe, *Early Economic Thought*, 106–107 and 113. Note, however, Jones, *God*, 17–18, on the possible influence of Dumoulin on Calvin.

sonable rates performed a useful service: men with business “skill” but no money received funds from those who had money but were not in business, facilitating “good Trades.”⁴⁷ In other words, if money was the blood of the body, lending at interest kept it circulating to the advantage of all the members, maintaining distributive justice. Just six years after the passage of the act, William Harrison remarked that while the older generation still complained about usury, a man was nowadays “accounted but for a fool that doth lend his money for nothing.”⁴⁸ Not everyone agreed that loaning at interest was beneficial. During the 1571 debates, one Dr. Wilson suggested that just the opposite was true, that usury would starve the body of sustenance, as everyone rushed to lend out their money at interest instead of investing it in business:

loss may grow by Usury; first, to the Queen, then to the Common-Wealth. To the Queen in that, that men not using their own money, but finding great gain in Usury, do employ the same that way; so that her Customs must decrease: To the Common-Wealth, for that who so shall give hire for money, is to raise the same in the sale of his Commodity. All Trades shall be taken away, all occupations lost; for most men seeking most ease, and greatest gain, without hazard or venture, will forthwith employ their money to such use.⁴⁹

If this were true then lending at interest violated the rules of distributive justice by starving the head (and the body as a whole) to the gain of a few who also guilty of failing to perform a function profitable to the whole.

The Doctor Wilson in question was the civilian Thomas Wilson who carried his fight against lending at interest to the literate populace by publishing *A Discourse uppon Usuerye By waye of Dialogue* (1572) less than a year after the passage of the statute setting the ten percent cap. Much of the book elaborated the argument set out in the debate. For Wilson, “next to Idolatric,” there was no sin more “heynous,” “offensive,” or “hurtfull to any well governed common weale” than usury, under whose rule no commonwealth could “longe continue in prosperous wellfare,” because

⁴⁷ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:155.

⁴⁸ Harrison, *Description*, 202–203 [II.12].

⁴⁹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:156. Note the similar emphasis on the violation of distributive justice in the arguments of Bishop John Jewel, who felt usury drove the families of tradesmen to beggary because usurers stole from workers without doing anything to benefit the country in return. For which, see Jones, *God*, 27. Note also, the complaint in many of the attacks against lending at interest, that it allowed usurers to usurp the rightful places their betters on the social ladder; for which, see *ibid.*, 45.

yf all shoulde doe as the usurer doth, the ground shoulde lye untilled, no trade of merchandise shoulde bee used, not yet occupiying maynteyned for the use of mankynde. For what follye weare it for a man eyther to delve or digge, to passe the seas with perill, to woorke in anye mysterie or handie crafte, when hee maye with ease, lying on the one syde, without labour, toyle or daunger, gete more unto hym with ease and certaintie than the best labouring man with all his travayle.⁵⁰

The simultaneous violation of commutative and distributive justice was underlined by the equating of usury with theft. Wilson asked what was usury but “a fraudulent and crafty stealing of another mans goodes, under the colour of lawe, againste the owners wil? For I pray you, who doth willingly borrow to pay more than he received?”⁵¹ Usurers “doe gather the goodes of infynite persones into their owne hands.”⁵² Distributive and commutative justice merged as well in Wilson’s idea of a commonwealth as a garden. Remembering that as head of the family, the monarch must be a good husbandman, Wilson maintained that

in al common weales it is as great a blame not to cherishe and maintaine the good and godly, as it is a great shame to suffer the offendor and wicked man to goe unpunished. For both must have their desertes, or else the state is not justly governed. And as weedes are to be rooted out of every gardeine, so are good herbes to be often watred and cherished stil with good earth, or els they will perish and wyther soone away.⁵³

In addition, Wilson believed that usury was a key cause of the inflation under which England was suffering. While he made mention of the conversion of arable to pasture that was helping usury bring the country to “greate ruyn and decay,” his main concern was the economic impact of lending at interest: the usurer raised prices overall because “when hee taketh so deare for hys moneye, yt must needes followe that, as others do buy, so they muste sell... gette some what over, to maintaine him selfe and hys familie.”⁵⁴ All that was missing was the analogy of usury as a fever wasting away the body’s substance. In actuality, the

⁵⁰ Wilson, *Usuerie*, 177 and 283–284.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 216. For a more explicit treatment of usury as violating commutative justice, see *ibid.*, 266–267 and 287, on the lack of equality between the greedy and the starving or in getting back more than one lent.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 286. For Wilson, the worst kind of usury was lending to a prince at interest on the grounds that it was the ultimate violation of distributive justice. Such usurers were “unnatural subjects” to draw to themselves the wealth that the ruler needed “for the welfare and safety” of all, the usurers included. For which, see *ibid.*, 269.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 286 and 284.

situation was rather more complex, with the rates on some types of loans dropping over the course of the Price Revolution as others rose and with rates on the same type of loan varying from place to place at the same time. Italian bankers tended to charge princes anywhere from 42 to 100 percent on short term loans in 1494; English monarchs could pick up similar loans domestically at anywhere from ten to fourteen percent during the sixteenth century and six to twelve percent during the seventeenth (although emergency loans might go for 20 to 30 percent). During the fifteenth century mortgages ranged from five percent in Germany and Italy to ten percent in France; then during the sixteenth, they ranged from four to ten percent in Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, but might go as high as ten to fourteen percent in England, dropping in England from ten to five or six percent over the course of the seventeenth century.⁵⁵ Except for rates on short-term emergency loans to monarchs, interest rates were inching up far more slowly than prices, due in part to the increasing legalization of interest and, in England, to the gradual lowering of the state-set maximum rate during the seventeenth century (dropping to eight percent in 1624 and six percent in 1651).

For Wilson, usury was usury no matter the amount or the intent, he even condemned the fees charged by the *montes pietatis* in Italy as usury though intended for the relief of the poor.⁵⁶ Wilson did accept that *interest* in its older sense of damages for late payment or forfeiture was not usury, as long as “there was no bargain for any overplus to be had for the receipt of that money if it were paid at the daye” and the penalty (which could be stipulated in advance) imposed be “not excessive.”⁵⁷ Unlike Luther, Wilson accepted the different rules for the *mutuum* and the *commodatum*, and was willing to accept a “present” at repayment as long as no contract demanded such a present be made.⁵⁸ Like Luther, Wilson objected on moral grounds to the certainty involved in interest. He would allow that it was no usury to loan money to another for a business and “reape in common the gayne that they might make by their industrie and travayle” as long as you were “aswel contented

⁵⁵ Sidney Homer and Richard Sylla, *A History of Interest Rates*, rev. 3rd. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 110 [Table 8], 120–121 [Table 9], and 131 [Table 10].

⁵⁶ Wilson, *Usurye*, 288.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 265; see also, *ibid.*, 253, 315, and 319 in this regard.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 255–257; see similarly, *ibid.*, 276–278 on the classic understanding of the difference between the *mutuum* and the *commodatum*.

to beare with all losses that might happen,” but to demand certainty where “gayne is uncertaine” was to commit usury: a claim of *lucrum cessans* for a loan repaid on time was but a “cloke” for usury.⁵⁹ A more important departure on Wilson’s part was his acceptance, by extension of the risk in investment principle, of interest on bank deposits as long as the depositor was not insured against possible loss of the deposit:

You say further, if one deposite his money to another man, and the same man doth encrease it, without your knowledge, that then it is reason you shoulde have the gayne. I do grant this to be true, and verve reasonable also: for as master Civilian knoweth better then I do, the moneye that was put in an other mans hand to keepe is his that deposit it, and not his that hath the keeping of it. So that if the money had been lost by some great mishappe without anye playne negligence, or knowen follye of the keeper, the owner should have borne the losse, and not the keeper of the sayd money.⁶⁰

In Miles Mosse’s *Arraignment and Conviction of Usurie* (1595), we still find that “the world” was “wont to confound the names of Interest and usurie,” applying the name of “interest” (“recompence demaunded and due for the damage that is taken, or the gaine that is hindered” through late repayment) to usury (“an overplus or gaine” over the principal due from “the day of borrowing”).⁶¹ The distinction, which may seem illogical to a modern reader—why not accept the profit lost the lender from day one but accept the profit lost after the due date—was actually based on the difference between a voluntary and involuntary action. *Lucrum cessans* was not a justification of receiving money beyond the principal because the lender voluntarily accepted that loss by lending the money; it was a justifiable fee for late payment because the lender had not agreed to accept the loss beyond a certain date.

Botero used some of the same arguments as had Thomas Wilson to explain the harm usury did to the body politic, condemning “the avarice of money-lenders” who consumed “the resources of their

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 254 and 257.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 263. Deposit interest seems to have flattened out over the course of the Price Revolution, with the Medici Bank paying from five to ten percent on various types of demand deposits in the fifteenth century, the Fugers paying between four and five percent and Italian *Montes pietatis* paying between four and six percent in the sixteenth, English goldsmiths offering between four and six percent in the seventeenth, and the amount paid by the City of Amsterdam only three to four percent in the second half of the seventeenth century but twice that in the first half. For which, see Homer and Sylla, *Interest Rates*, 110, 120–121, and 131.

⁶¹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, III:378–379.

fellow-citizens without working or doing anything of benefit to the state,” and, accumulating money by fraud, deprived others of “the means of trading.”⁶² Thus this violation of commutative justice (receiving back more than the value of the loan) was also a violation of distributive justice (depriving other organs of their equitable and necessary share of the body’s resources). Furthermore, as it was only human nature to wish to “gain without labor,” the effortless gains from usury enticed “the craftsman” to “leave his workshop” and “the peasant his plough” in order to set up stock as usurers, “drying-up” commerce itself as well as “the public revenues” that would accrue from it.⁶³ Usury, then, sapped the strength of the body like a debilitating fever.

With the state accepting (if not approving of) lending at interest by setting the maximum rate, it was perhaps only a matter of time before the moral debate over usury evolved into an economic debate over the best rate of interest and whether it could be set by the state or left to the market, but that evolution was a slow one. Roger Fenton (*A Treatise of Usury*, 1612) was still contrasting the unjust gain (“without labour, without costs, without peril”) of usury with the just profits of the gentleman who “liveth upon his rents; the poore laborer upon the sweat of his browes; the Merchant and Tradesman upon their adventures, skill, and industrie; [and] the Husbandman and Grasier upon theincrease of the earth, and breed of catell.”⁶⁴ The standards that Fenton used to judge what was and was not usury were traditional as well: the element of uncertainty or shared risk made it “partnership” and not usury to receive part of a merchant’s gain for advancing him money to invest if, and only if, the investor bore as great a share of any loss as of any gain; a late fee was not usurious because the lender’s money was “retained longer against his will.”⁶⁵ But, as much as he did not like it, Fenton had to admit that usury was “so woven and twisted into every trade and commerce,” that “the verie frame and course of traffick must needs be altered before this can be reformed.”⁶⁶ The anonymous author of *Usurie Araigned and Condemned* (1625) also used the analogy of the body politic to condemn usury as a violation of distributive justice:

⁶² Botero, *Reason of State*, 20–21 [I.15].

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 20–21 [I.15].

⁶⁴ Fenton, *Usurie*, 2 and 5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 19–20.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

Is not money minted by politicke Princes, out of their owne Bullion to bee employed to the publike good of their publike Common-wealths, both in trading for the whole bodies maintenance, as also in Warres for the whole bodies defence. How graciously doe they disperse it in favours and rewards, that it may runne as charitably from member to member ... throughout those politike bodies, like bloud in the naturall, in the veines of trading, for all and every ones maintenance, and retire to those royall centres againe, by many just rights for all and every ones defence...

So long as money mooveth in the ordained use, doth it not yield to every member a competet private gaine which is the least good, yet that private good like a poyse keepeth continually stirring for the whole Countries good, which is the maine good...

Now if Traders and others which have estates in goods shall transport the same into monie, to eat up by Usury, such as have estates in Lands. And landed men on the other side, sell their Lands to eate up Traders and Farmers, whose estates are in goods, do they not between them both spoil (if not grind) the poore which depend on them for employment, year, and also spoile their Countrie by devouring one another.⁶⁷

But, by 1625, Grotius could echo Dumoulin and maintain that there was no “weight in the objection to taking interest for the use of money” because it “in its own nature is barren and unproductive” when “the same may be said of houses and other things, which are unproductive and unprofitable without the industry of man,” and go on to proclaim that “a person” who kept “certain sums of cash in his hands” to lend it “to many individuals” was entitled “to have some indemnity for the continual loss of interest upon those sums, which may be considered as so much dead stock.”⁶⁸ By 1653, one would find even as politically conservative a figure as Robert Filmer (*Quaestio Quodlibetica; Or a Discourse, whether it may be lawfull to take use for Money*) making the same point:

[Dr. Fenton] cannot endure to hear that usury should be called letting of money... ‘Hiring or letting (they say) is of such things as are not spent in the use, but have a fruitful use in themselves naturally’... I confess things hired are not to be spent in their use. Neither is money properly said to be spent in the use... at the most it is but said to be spent to him that hath made no profitable use of it, in itself it remains unspent and useful to others... [and] What fruitful use hath a house naturally? doth

⁶⁷ [Anonymous], *Usury Araigned*, 1–2, 3, and 14.

⁶⁸ Grotius, *Rights*, 154 [II.12.11] and 156 [II.12.20].

one house beget another or bring forth another? is it not an artificial thing, as tools, instruments, and furniture? all of which are lawfully let, although they have no more fruitful use by nature than money hath.⁶⁹

For Filmer, money was just another commodity to be traded for the best price one could get. None of that splitting hairs of risk or voluntary loss of profit versus the involuntary loss in late payment. “If such things as are bought this day for ten pound may be sold tomorrow for eleven pound,” Filmer saw no reason why the “same ten pound” might not earn another by being let for “a whole year,” unless one wanted to condemn “all gain of merchandizing” which was “ordinarily far greater than that of ten in the hundred.”⁷⁰ The Right Reverend Joseph Hall (1574–1656), Bishop of Exeter and afterwards of Norwich was not much more conservative. He believed one should “not expect any profit” from a loan to a “poor neighbor” in need, but as God “hath not commanded” us “to love any man more than” ourselves, there was no reason to forego our “own just profit” on loans to business men or “wanton” spendthrifts; nor was it just a case of reimbursement for profit lost because of “delayed payment,” we had a right to contract for “a moderate sum” for the “gain” we “forego” during the life of the loan itself.⁷¹ A moderate preset interest rate upon a commercial loan was no longer usury. Europe, it seemed, was coming around to Dumoulin’s point of view. Hence, as we have seen, yeoman John Manthorpe’s request in his will (1620) that his £20 be “put out to some honest man at a reasonable rate ... so that the capital sum & profits accruing to the same” be paid to his children when they came of age.⁷²

What caused the gradual change from a universal acceptance of usury as sin and crime to a debate over whether interest rates should be set by the government or the market? Certainly lending at interest had become an increasingly vital part of every-day economic activity with the expansion of trade and markets over the course of the Price Revolution, and certainly that inflation had helped increase the need for credit, but changes in the economy might not, by themselves, had produced such a reversal in attitude. In *God and the Moneylenders*, Norman Jones suggests the change was both more and less than it seemed: *less* in

⁶⁹ Robert Filmer, *Quaestio Quodlibetica; Or a Discourse, whether it may be lawfull to take use for Money* (1653), in *The Usury Debate*, 127–128.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 135–136.

⁷¹ Hall, *Works*, 7:271–274.

⁷² Allen, *Wills, 1620–1624*, 4 [#3].

the sense that the charge of “sin” was not intentionally separated from lending at interest and *more* because the affect of a particular change in religious attitudes was greater than intended. According to Jones, it was not so much the definition of usury that changed but a key part of the definition of sin: Protestantism’s re-emphasis on justification through faith changed the operative focus of sin from *action* to *intent*. Since the law judges action and not intent, whether a loan involved usury was really matter between one’s conscience and God and not a matter for the courts. This change was gradual, though Jones has pinned it down somewhat in England by carefully examining the different terms of the debates over the 1571 Act against Usury (which sought to “match” secular to religious law) and the 1624 Usury Act (which was essentially a debate over economic policy).⁷³

Money lending was far from the only problem. Accusations of usury were also aimed at any form of international currency exchange or trade through bills of exchange in which the rate of exchange was not that of *par pro pari*. Two features of such transactions made such an analogy possible: the profit to be made on them and the fact that they routinely involved a passage of time as did any ordinary loan. For this reason, they are treated here, under usury, even though they were most commonly laid at the feet of merchants whose operations are the subject of the next section.

In 1601, Gerard de Malynes, a Belgian merchant who had immigrated to England some years before, published *A Treatise on the Canker of England’s Commonwealth*. His traditional understanding of the body politic was proclaimed in the rest of the title: *Wherein the Author imitating the rule of good Physicians, First, declareth the disease. Secondly, sheweth the efficient cause thereof. Lastly, a remedy for the same.* The disease in question was what he called the “Marchandizing Exchange.”⁷⁴ It was caused by merchants who prevented money from being exchanged in international markets at “*par pro pari*” (their equivalent amounts of pure silver or gold) in order to make a profit.⁷⁵ For Malynes, as for most of his sixteenth and seventeenth century contemporaries, a “merchant” was someone who “continually dealeth in buying and selling of commodities, or by way of permutation of wares both at home and abroad in

⁷³ Jones, *God*, 1.

⁷⁴ Gerard de Malynes, *A Treatise on the Canker of England’s Common Wealth*. (London, 1601), 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

forreine parts.”⁷⁶ Unlike domestic traders, merchants were importers and exporters, and to avoid both the inconveniences of moving large amounts of coin and the occasional legal restraints on the same, merchants had long ago created the “bill of exchange.” The basic procedure was simple enough. A French merchant selling silk in England for £100 might find that English law forbade him to export English coin. If he happened to purchase English tin worth £60 to sell back in France, he would take a bill for the difference to be reconverted into coin back home. Two problems arose. The first was that the bill of exchange was, in fact, a credit instrument payable after some lapse of time, and theologians aside, lenders did not willingly forego the profit of their money for free. This problem was met by the custom of discounting such bills in advance for “usance” (30 days) or “double usance” (60 days). The other problem was that it was possible to float bills back and forth fictitiously (that is, without any goods being purchased) to take advantage of the differences between exchange rates in various trading centers. This was called “dry exchange.” It was a problem because the individual indulging in it was, in fact, using credit instruments to buy and sell money and he was making a profit at it. Both mechanisms looked an awful lot like usury to contemporary moralists.

When the merchant asked how “great masses of money” could “be carried to farre countries” without “billes of exchange,”⁷⁷ Thomas Wilson’s preacher had no complaint with using bills as long as they were not made “a cloake for usurie, geving a good name to a naughty dede.”⁷⁸ Wilson felt the standard practice of charging or discounting for “discrepance and distance” at the rate of “usance” or “double usance” caused “men to pay in respect of the moneth more than they should doe to receyve upon the sight within three or fowr daies after the exchange is made,” violating the “just proporcion” demanded by commutative justice because “money was first devised ... to be the measure wherby the price of all thinges might bee set,” in order to “mayntayne a certayne evenhode or equality in buying and selling”; purchasing a £100 three-month bill for £95 was usury plain and simple.⁷⁹ Dry exchange was doubly usury as it not only violated the

⁷⁶ Malynes, *Lex Mercatoria*, 5.

⁷⁷ Wilson, *Usuerye*, 250.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 271, 294, and 301.

getting more than one lent rule, but involved an ungodly certainty, all parties being well aware of the differences in exchange rates; in fact, for Wilson, any form of currency speculation was usury.⁸⁰ Like all other forms of usury, these practices violated distributive as well as commutative justice in the particular sense, by drawing one individual's just profit into another's hands, but the manipulation of the exchange for profit also violated distributive justice in the general sense. By manipulating the price of money, these merchants "enhanced" "the pryce of all wares," making "the poore chapman" carry the cost of the exchange as well as what the "the seller will make for hys owne lyvyng." ⁸¹

Even those not concerned with identifying attempts to mask usury recognized a danger to the welfare of the body politic in the merchant's ability to manipulate the exchange. The author of a late sixteenth century memorandum on the exchange, usually identified as Sir Thomas Gresham though he was most likely not its author, positively fulminated over merchants' violations of distributive justice committed through exchange; it enabled merchants "to by eny Princes commodities and never bring peny or penyes worth into his realme but to bye the same with his owne subiectes money," "to hide their caryng away of any Princes money," and "make others travayle" for the scheming merchant's "gayne."⁸² Merchants were as much if not even more often blamed for the presumed effects of negative trade balances than were monarchs. In his *Mich wundert das kein gelt ihm land ist* (1524), Johan Eberlin von Günzburg claimed merchants who tempted honest Germans with foreign goods led them into "usury, theft, and prostitution," while the anonymous *Minter's Reply* [c. 1530] tagged merchants who drained currency from the country by selling "foreign and useless wares" as one of the top "three enemies" of the people (the other two being the pope and new customs).⁸³

(B) *The Sins of the Merchant*. When it came to actual buying and selling of goods, rather than of money, the problem was not how much money

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 305–307 (dry exchange) and 294 (currency speculation).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 312–313.

⁸² Roover, *Gresham*, 298–301.

⁸³ Pia F. Cuneo, "Constructing the Boundaries of Community: Nationalism, Protestantism, and economics in a Sixteenth-century broadsheet," in *Infinite Boundaries: Order, Disorder, and Reorder in Early Modern German Culture*, ed. Max Reinhart (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1998), 175–176 and 181.

the trade made, but how the trader made it and at whose expense. A purveyor of smelts for Elizabeth I found himself spending three days in the pillory at Cheapside with a “bawdricke of smelts about his necke” for reselling some of the Queen’s smelts to the public at a profit.⁸⁴ But even Calvin saw no reason in and of itself “why the income from business should not be larger than that from land-owning? Whence do the merchant’s profits (*lucrum*) come, except from his own diligence and industry (*diligentia et industria*).”⁸⁵ This was profit as a merchant’s wage, a legitimate reward for labor. The trouble was that most people tended to assume a trader gained through illicit means and at their expense. That merchants were wont to put their private gain ahead of the good of the whole was an old charge. Perhaps the most blatant example of mercantile temerity was the diversion of the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) by the merchants of Venice. According to Robert de Clari, the Doge of Venice would only give the crusaders passage to the Holy Land if the crusaders would 1) give the Venetians “half of all the gains” that were “made there,” 2) first assist the Venetians in putting down rival Zara (in Christian Hungary) to make up some of the money due the Venetians for the promised ships, and then 3) raid Constantinople to make up the rest of the debt.⁸⁶ The crusaders never reached Palestine, although the Venetians reaped a handsome profit.

Certain accusations were laid equally at the door of merchants and domestic traders alike though the terminology varied from case to case. One such common accusation was artificially enhancing the price of some commodity by cornering the market, either through a government-sanctioned or self-created monopoly or oligopoly (corporations, or trading companies and guilds) or by the practices of forestalling, regrating, and engrossing. The other common accusation was attempting to ensure a profit in every transaction by violating the “just price.”

⁸⁴ John Bruce, ed., *Annals of the First Four Years of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* by Sir John Heyward, *Knt. D.C.L.*, Camden Society, o.s. 70 (1840), 29–30.

⁸⁵ R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1962), 305 [Latin], 105 [English].

⁸⁶ Robert de Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, ed. and trans. Edgar Holmes McNeal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 37, 41–42, 45–46, and 467–468. The incident and its aftermath were recounted in nearly identical fashion by Geffroi de Villehardouin; for which, see Geffroi de Villehardouin, *Chronicle of the Fourth Crusade and the Conquest of Constantinople* in Marzials, *Memoirs*, 6 and 16.

1. *Cornering the Market*

a) *Corporations*. Graft guilds and state-sanctioned trading companies were both called corporations. They usually possessed exclusive rights to trade with a particular foreign region or to trade in a particular commodity either locally or nationally. To accomplish this they often had some authority to regulate their own membership, making it as easy or as difficult as they wished to join their corporation or move up through its ranks. Those on the outside might accuse them of engrossing many men's livings into a few men's hands by restricting what was called the "natural freedom of trade" but actually meant "freedom of entry" into the trade, or they might accuse them of enhancing prices, or, in the case of the overseas trading companies, of draining the realm of money, that nourishing blood of the body politic and its sinews of war. All three were as much crimes against distributive justice as they were crimes against commutative justice. In the end, they all caused goods to be sold for more than they were worth, destroying the equality between buyer and seller required by commutative justice, while they all violated distributive justice by transferring the resources needed by one (or all) of the body's organs into another organ's hands.

In 1437, the English government passed an act subjecting guild ordinances to local administrative review. The Act Concerning Corporations (1504) changed that to review by "the Chancellor, treasurer of England, and Chief Justices of either Bench, or three of them, or before both Justices of Assizes" to ensure that guilds made no regulations harming "the prerogative of the King" or "the common profit of the people."⁸⁷

The growing importance of London versus the outports, and the rivalries between corporations whose spheres of influence overlapped created a considerable volume of complaints. In 1478 northern mercers complained of the monopoly power of the London Merchant Adventurers, whose agent was restricting their traditional "liberties" and assigning them to "places inconvenyent and not profitable."⁸⁸ In 1497, the English government passed an act restricting fees to be charged by the Merchant Adventurers (12 Henry VII, c. 6) because, although they had been given exclusive rights to trade with certain foreign markets "for their profite and the weale of the Contrey," they were now

⁸⁷ Tanner, *Tudor*, 7.

⁸⁸ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 2:2.

interfering with the rights of domestic traders “by confederacie made amonge theym self of their uncharitable and inordinate covetise for their singuler profite and lucre, contrarie to every Englishshemanes libertie.”⁸⁹ In 1550, as the minutes of the Privy Council reveal, the clothiers were accusing the Merchant Adventurers of setting “such a price upon their cloths that, without the loss of 20s. in a piece, they could not utter them,” while simultaneously complaining that the mercers’ lack of monopoly privileges in return was causing prices to decay due to over production and lack of quality control.⁹⁰

In fact, it is difficult to find a single session of Parliament in which there was no call for “free trade,” but these turn out to be demands for a greater say for the outport members in some company’s activities or for making it easier for non-Merchants to garner their share of these monopolistic profits. Whether we look at the “Free Trade” Bill of 1604 that excluded “clothiers, retailers, innholders, farmers, mariners and handicraftsmen” from its benefits or 1621 provincial “free-traders” who wanted a larger piece of the pie for themselves but not for London “interlopers,” *Free trade* (or even a domestic *free market*) as we understand it was never on the line.⁹¹ Controlling entry into trade was a high stakes game. English woolen cloths went for a gross profit of between twenty and twenty-five percent in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and Thomas Gresham moved his more varied goods at almost fifteen percent net profit mid-century.⁹² What spurred the debate was that more and more of the trade (and the profit) being concentrated in the hands of the comparatively few traders in the upper ranks of the regulated and stock companies.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:16–17.

⁹⁰ Stephenson and Marcham, *Sources*, 1:333–334.

⁹¹ For examples of complaints during Elizabeth’s reign, see, J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 1584–1604* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1958), 370 and 384–388. For the 1604 debates, see Robert Ashton, “The Parliamentary Agitation for Free Trade in the opening years of the Reign of James I,” *Past and Present* 38 (December 1967): 43 and 41. The controversy over whether this was mainly a center-provincial or a stock-regulated conflict can be followed if one begins with Theodore K. Rabb, “Sir Edwin Sandys and the Parliament of 1604,” *American Historical Review* 69 #3 (April 1964): 646–670, and then continues with the Ashton article cited above, Rabb’s rejoinder, “Free Trade and the Gentry in the Parliament of 1604,” *Past and Present* 40 (July 1968): 165–173, and Ashton’s response, “Jacobean Free Trade Again,” *Past and Present* 43 (May 1969): 151–157.

⁹² Ramsey, *Tudor*, 64.

Accusations that guilds combined to raise their prices to the public's loss were a common feature of early modern legislation outside of England, as well. In France, one finds them issued by Louis XII, François I, Charles IX, and Henri III.⁹³ In the German states, the Diets grappled unsuccessfully with monopolies in 1512, 1522, 1523, 1524, and 1530.⁹⁴

To prevent foreign countries from profiting from the carrying trade, 5 Elizabeth 1, c. 5, forbade the importation of French wines unless carried in English ships, but this created an import monopoly whose end result, according to William Harrison, was “the exceeding prices of foreign wares, which otherwise, when every nation was permitted to bring in her own commodities, were far better cheap and more plentifully to be had.” He was certain the merchants were behind it all, for while they carried out English goods to “the great gain and commodity” of the merchants themselves, the prices of things at home were not “any whit abated.”⁹⁵ The only possible conclusion was that the people of England were not receiving a just share of the merchant's profits.

Of course, not everyone agreed as to which corporations were harmful. The author of manuscript entitled “A Discourse of Corporations” from the 1580s was certain that guilds were “profitable” to the commonwealth because they kept wares from being made by “unskilled men.”⁹⁶ On the other hand, Bodin was just as certain that “*les monopoles des marchans, artisans, et gaigne-deniers* (wage earners)” who conspired to fix “*le pris des marchandises*” in order to “*encherir*” their sales and wages, were one of the causes behind the inflation.⁹⁷ To Martin Luther, merchants who had “in their control one or two kinds of goods which others do not have” and “join[ed] forces” in trading companies to hold their goods “at such and such a price,” ensuring a “safe, certain, and continual profit” from “unsafe, uncertain, and perishable goods” even if “all the world must be sucked dry and all the money sink and swim in their gullets” were “such a bottomless pit of avarice and wrongdoing” that there was nothing in them that could even “be discussed

⁹³ Roover, *Business*, 284.

⁹⁴ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:241–242; and Reinhart, *Infinite Boundaries*, 179–180.

⁹⁵ Harrison, *Description*, 115–117 [II.5].

⁹⁶ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 3:275–276.

⁹⁷ Bodin, *Six Livres*, 6:431.

with a good conscience.”⁹⁸ Pieter de la Court insisted that “fishery” had “increased from one to ten” since the Greenland company lost its fishing monopoly.⁹⁹

As foreign trade was more important to the English economy in the seventeenth century than in the sixteenth, there was far more ink spilled in the latter century than in the former over the sins or virtues of regulated and joint stock companies. Much of the debate was more partisan than analytical. Older corporations attacked the newer ones that were crowding them out of the market. Independents attacked them all. Company directors mounted the defense. But most of the complaints took basically the same form they had in the sixteenth century, the draining of bullion and the importing of luxury goods upset the delicate balance of the social body, while the defenses emphasized the economic and social profit to the whole of the jobs they created. Lewes Roberts, who rose to be a director of the East India Company and worked as well for the Levant Company, vigorously defended their actions in his *Merchants Mappe of Commerce* (1638), claiming these companies were “so profitable to these *Kingdomes*” because the “poor” found jobs making goods to export or building the “many brave Ships” needed to carry out the goods and bring back “sundry necessities both for use and ornament,” that the total “benefit thereof” could not even be “expressed,” although Roberts did not fail to mention that the Levant Company employed “about 4000 or 5000 Sailers yeerly, besides Porters, Weighers, Bargmen, Lightermen, Carmen, which cannot be lesse then 2000 or 3000 persons more” while paying “50000 li. yeerly” in customs on their exports and imports.¹⁰⁰ The sticking point was the complicated relationship between private and public profit. The trade recession of the 1620s especially pitted the advocates of the newer joint stock companies against independent traders and members of the older regulated companies. Edward Misselden of the Merchant Adventurers (a regulated company) but soon to be co-opted by the East India Company (a joint-stock venture), would have it in 1622 that it was “lawfull for Merchants to seeke their Privatum Commodum in the exercise of their calling,” because the public and pri-

⁹⁸ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:266 and 45:270–271.

⁹⁹ Court, *True Interest*, 24 [I.6]; see similarly, *ibid.*, 26–28 [I.7] for the “profit” that would accrue to the Netherlands if the monopoly powers of the East India and West India companies were ended.

¹⁰⁰ Roberts, *Merchants Mappe*, 236.

vate were intertwined, the sum of “the private-wealth” of all its members being the real “Common-wealth,” for “when trade flourisheth, the Kings revenue is augmented, Lands and Rents improved, Navigation is encreased” and “the poore employed.”¹⁰¹ On the other hand, the independent trader Gerard de Malynes, warned the government to keep a stricter eye on trade because merchants looked to whatever “yieldeth them the most benefit and gaine,” respecting “their particular profit” more than they did “the generall good of the common-wealth,” importing “corruptible and unnecessarie commodities” that drained kingdoms of “staples” and wealth.¹⁰² The stakes were high, the earliest voyages of the East India Company had brought in profits averaging 155 %, only dropping to 87 % between 1613 and 1623 as England slid into a trade depression, to climb up to over 200 % on average in later voyages.¹⁰³

b) *Forestalling, regrating, and engrossing.* To review what was discussed in the last chapter, forestalling was the act of buying up goods privately before they reached the public market in order to sell them at that market for a higher price by means of controlling the local supply, regrating was the act of buying up the commodity after it reached the market in order to resell it locally or elsewhere at a higher price by cornering the local supply, and engrossing was the crime of buying up as much of the stock of some commodity as possible (“in the gross”) in order to regrade it.¹⁰⁴ Engrossing was essentially forestalling on a much larger scale. Since all three of these practices artificially raised prices above the going rate, they violated both commutative justice and distributive justice in the same fashion as did greedy corporations. Forestalling, regrating, and engrossing destroyed the equality between buyer and seller demanded by commutative justice while violating distributive justice by depriving various organs of the body politic of their just resources. According to William Perkins there was no limit to how far merchants and tradesmen would go to violate the justice of their callings; their sins against included “false weights and false measures, divers weights and divers measures, ingrossing, mingling, changing, setting a gloss on wares by powdering, starching, blow-

¹⁰¹ Edward Misselden, *The Circle of Commerce, Or The Ballance of Trade* (London, 1623), 17; and *Free Trade. Or, The Meanes to Make Trade Flourish*, 2nd ed. (London, 1622), 4.

¹⁰² Malynes, *Lex Mercatoria*, 59.

¹⁰³ K.N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600–1640* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), 22 and 209.

¹⁰⁴ *O.E.D.* (1933), 4:443, 8:375, and 3:184.

ing, dark shops, glozing [shining], smoothing, lying, swearing and all manner of bad dealing” in order to sell a thing for more than it was worth.¹⁰⁵

In 1463 John Paston asked his wife Margaret to warn his servants not to disclose how much malt he had for sale because “there is gret spies leid her at london for ingrossers of malt to heyghne the prise,” even though Paston could not rightly be accused of doing this because what he was selling was only “of myn owne growyng and my tenauntis.”¹⁰⁶ The Venetians came in for a good deal of monopoly bashing for their hold on the spice trade, and not merely from non-Italians: other Italian city states resented Venice’s primacy even more than did foreigners. Guicciardini accused Venetian merchants of supplying “all Christendom, to their own very great profits,” because “the Venetians, having the spice trade entirely in their hands, could set the prices as they wished.”¹⁰⁷ Thomas Wilson believed engrossers, forestallers, and regraters were out and out usurers because they ensured themselves a profit.¹⁰⁸ So did Miles Mosse.¹⁰⁹ William Harrison blamed them for the rampant inflation.¹¹⁰ In order to prevent those “Drones, idle members, and evil weedes” known as “yarne Choppers or Jobbers” or “Regrators of yarne” who put “their owne private gayne” above the “maintenance of the comon wealthe” from gathering into their hands “so great quantities of woollen yarne” to the hindering of the “Clothiers” who were forced to buy the wool at “unreasonable prices,” the government drafted a bill in 1593 to set minimum rates for the spinners and weavers that the choppers and jobbers would have to pay.¹¹¹ In the Book of Orders for January 5, 1631, local magistrates still had to be reminded to watch out for “forestallers and regraters” and “tradesmen of all sorts” who sold at “underweights or at excessive prices,” lumping them together with “common thieves.”¹¹² Nor was this a vice limited to the marketplace; Oliver Cromwell complained in 1652 of the “Pride, and Ambition, and Self-seeking” of the Parliament, “ingross-

¹⁰⁵ Perkins, *Vocations*, 467–468.

¹⁰⁶ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 4:64 [#535].

¹⁰⁷ Francesco Guicciardini, *The History of Italy* (1561), ed. and trans. Sidney Alexander (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 178 [VI].

¹⁰⁸ Wilson, *Userye*, 221 and 293.

¹⁰⁹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 3:381.

¹¹⁰ Harrison, *Description*, 246–248 [II.18].

¹¹¹ Tawney and Power, *Tudor*, 1:375.

¹¹² Kenyon, *Stuart*, 500.

ing all Places of Honour and Profit to themselves and their Friends.”¹¹³ Nations might be guilty of it as well. Still smarting over the execution of English merchants in the Dutch factory of Amboyna half a century before, John Dryden (*Amboyna: A Tragedy*, 1673) had the Dutch governor of Amboyna boast of delaying English merchants on various pretexts while the Dutch went “on before, and still forestall their Markets.”¹¹⁴

2) *Profit and the Just Price*. While it is clear that violations of commutative justice were simultaneously violations of distributive justice, that in and of itself does not explain how preserving a certain equality between buyer and seller (commutative justice) worked to preserve the socio-political inequality of the organs of the body politic (distributive justice). In order to determine how this occurred we need to investigate the vehicle understood in both medieval and early modern times to maintain commutative justice, the vehicle referred to as the “just price.” The body of Medieval literature dealing with affairs of buyers and sellers is replete with references to a just price that maintained a certain equality between the two. The just price of a commodity represented what it was worth. But what, at any given point in time, did theologians and canonists and civilians understand the just price to be? What was any thing worth?

In 1958, Raymond de Roover attacked the “widespread belief” that “linked to the medieval concept of a social hierarchy,” the just price “corresponded to a reasonable charge which would enable the producer to live and to support his family on a scale suitable to his station in life,” when, in reality,

The scholastics were more favorable to freedom or competition that is generally assumed... they certainly did not rely on the price system to maintain the social hierarchy. As a matter of fact, small masters operating under conditions of competition were not likely to accumulate great wealth. Social status in the Middle Ages depended chiefly on inequality in the distribution of property, mainly land, and the levying of dues (feudal payments or tithes) for the benefit of the ruling classes.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Cromwell, *Writings and Speeches*, 2:588–589.

¹¹⁴ John Dryden, *Amboyna: A Tragedy. As it is Acted At the Theatre-Royal* (1673), in *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 12:12.

¹¹⁵ Raymond de Roover, “The Concept of Just Price: Theory and Economic Policy,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 18 #4 (December 1958): 418–434, reprinted in *Readings in the History of Economic Theory*, ed. Ingrid H. Rima (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), 10 and 21.

In fact, his article is studded with remarks to the effect that scholastics understood the “just price” to be nothing more than a competitive “market price.”¹¹⁶

I am going to argue that the marketplace in question was neither as free nor as competitive as de Roover presumed and thus the scholastics had a considerably different idea of what a “market price” was than he thought. In fact, I am going to suggest that, even if for the wrong reasons, the earlier interpretation would be the more correct in the sense that there was an underlying assumption that the mixture of regulated, partially-market and fully-market prices in existence did, in fact, work *indirectly* to support the social hierarchy through the presumed inter-relationship between commutative and distributive justice. Given that, as Diana Wood put it (*Medieval Economic Thought*, 2002), (1) “the labour of a craftsman or merchant was one of the factors taken into account when prices were fixed,” guilds “affected both the current price and the current wage” through their “specific responsibility to fix wages,” (2) many towns fixed prices “for all goods” instead of merely for staples, and (3) status was “central in determining the price of labor” even if only a “marginal factor” in setting prices,¹¹⁷ it seems inconceivable to assume that public authorities were unconcerned with the distributive justice of the average price levels of most goods. Nor does their understanding that changes in supply or demand might temporarily affect prices negate such a conclusion. Even if we just look at de Roover’s conclusion, one inconsistency is glaring apparent. Even if the market and the theory were as free and competitive as he claimed, how was it that this competition worked (as he said in his next sentence) to keep the “small master” in his place? Isn’t it interesting that a system not designed to preserve the social hierarchy helped to do just that, even if it was neither the only nor even the main mechanism for doing so? Why should a market price be incompatible with a distributively just price in the long run? Why assume the two views are irreconcilable opposites? Odd Langholm wrote (*Price and Value in the Aristotelian Tradition*, 1979) that “we can rule out” the idea that “exchange rates of

¹¹⁶ See, for example, *ibid.*, 12. Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 135–136, believed Roover somewhat overstated his case because 1) it was clear that medieval authorities did not think market prices were automatically just, and 2) he did not pay enough attention to the fact that *common* meant *communal* (belonging to the community) as well as *usual* in extrapolating from references to the justness of a *common* price.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 132, 141–143, and 153.

products depend” directly on the “‘status’ of the producer,” but that a modern casting of scholastic theory (as inherited from the *Nichomachean Ethics*) might say that “just terms of exchange must be such as ensure that the different arts subsist to produce what society needs,” which is “in modern terms a general equilibrium condition of industries.”¹¹⁸ In modern society that equilibrium is value and status neutral. However, in medieval or early modern society, dependent as they were upon the organic analogy, that equilibrium was neither value nor status neutral.

In order to clear the ground for his own interpretation, de Roover attempted to undercut the older theory by setting up and knocking down a straw man—a remark made by Henry of Langenstein, the Elder (1325–1397)—that turned up in the arguments of many of de Roover’s predecessors. In his *Tractatus bipartus de contractibus emptiois et venditionis* [I.12], Heinrich von Langenstein said that

if the public authorities fail to fix a price, the produced may set it himself, but should not charge more for his labor and expenses than would enable him to maintain his status (... *per quanto res suas vendendo statum suum continuare possit*).¹¹⁹

According to Roover however, while many modern authorities cited Langenstein in support of their interpretation of the just price, most medieval authorities did not, Langenstein being of the nominalist school of Buridan and William of Ockham, “tainted with heresy” and “opposed both by the Scotists and the Thomists.”¹²⁰ However, Langenstein’s remarks are not needed to make the case for a meaningful just price. De Roover’s own argument rested on 1) Thomist rejection of a cost-plus price determinant in favor of an “estimation” determinant, 2) medieval recognition of variations in estimation over time and place, 3) medieval recognition of the role of supply and demand in pricing, and 4) the relegation of a legally set price to “cases of collusion or emergency.” So, for example, in the *Corpus juris canonici, Decretales* X,III,17,1, “parish priests should admonish their flocks not to charge wayfarers more than the price obtainable in the local market (*quam in mercato vendere possint*); Otherwise, the wayfarers can complain to the priest, who is then required to set a price with ‘humanity.’”¹²¹ To de Roover, “this

¹¹⁸ Langholm, *Price*, 50 and 35.

¹¹⁹ Roover, “Concept,” 10–11.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11. Langenstein was used by Wilhelm Roscher, Rudolf Kanula, Sir William Ashley, R.H. Tawney, Amintore Fanfani, and Werner Sombart.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 12–13.

text ... clearly equates just price with market price and does not lend itself to a different interpretation."¹²² In his *Commentarii in IV sententiarum Petri Lomdardi* [Dist. 16, art. 46], Albertus Magnus defined the just price as "What goods are worth according to the estimation of the market (*secundum aestimationem fori*) at the time of the sale."¹²³ However, neither citation explains how that estimation was created—how one product was estimated as worth more than another—and without such an estimation, we have no way of knowing why the just and market prices were linked by his authorities, nor which term (just or market) was the dependent and which the independent in the linkage.

De Roover finds it "strange" that "although," in his view, "the whole discussion of the just price assumed the existence of competitive conditions," the "word 'competition' never occurs in scholastic treatises until the end of the sixteenth century, when it is used by Luis de Molina (1535–1601)."¹²⁴ Arguing from the absence of evidence is a tricky business: competition might not appear because it was so well understood as not to need mentioning, because it was accepted but not the primary concern, or because it was not what was meant at all. As neither medieval nor early modern commentators tend to fail to belabor the obvious, the second or third possibilities seem more likely than the first, but a closer examination is needed to be certain, especially to avoid de Roover's tendency to look at the span of time from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries as a changeless whole resulting in such overarching conclusions as

The history of price regulation remains to be written, but we know it to be a tale of woe. In the absence of a well-organized system of allocation and rationing, price controls were bound to break down, and it is not surprising that previous to 1800 their administration was often haphazard, vexatious, inefficient, and arbitrary.¹²⁵

¹²² *Ibid.*, 12. Schumpeter had taken a similar position some years before Roover; for which see, Schumpeter, *History*, 93, but note that Schumpeter also did not question to what extent the "market" so embraced by the scholastics was actually competitive. Schumpeter (pp. 98–99), also drew a time distinction, believing that earlier scholastics accepted only a "normal competitive price" as just while later (fifteenth- or sixteenth-century) scholastics accepted "any" competitive market price as just regardless of whether it led to a gain or loss for a trader. Langholm also believes that the scholastic writers "were nearly unanimous in embracing the justice of the competitive market price." For which, see Odd Langholm, *The Legacy of Scholasticism in Economic Thought; antecedents of choice and power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 125.

¹²³ Roover, "Concept," 13.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

For, while de Roover accuses those modern commentators attempting to put Aquinas *et al* in a Marxist vein of overlooking the evidence that does not fit their theories,¹²⁶ he himself pays much more attention to regulations aimed at curbing engrossing, forestalling, regrating, and monopolies than to those fixing prices and wages, and tends to assume that the first type of regulation must have worked, while the second type must have failed.¹²⁷ One has to wonder why the authorities were so “inefficient” in the latter instance and not in the former. Certainly in looking at England we have seen as much legislation attack one problem as the other and the volume of surviving post-plague court cases shows the authorities actively enforcing both wage and price regulations as best they could.¹²⁸ Cases against engrossers resound through the courts well into the seventeenth century.¹²⁹

De Roover felt “medieval price regulation usually embraced only a few basic necessities, such as wheat, bread, wine, and beer,” sometimes setting “ceiling prices,” and sometimes “minima.”¹³⁰ Perhaps the most effective revision of the specifics of his history has been done by Gwen Seabourne (*Royal Regulation of Loans and Sales in Medieval England*), who demonstrated the existence of a far more extensive network of national, local, state, and private (guild) regulations that “impinged[d] on the lives of virtually all English men, women and children.”¹³¹ While attempts at regulating wheat, bread, beer, and wine (which was a luxury rather than a necessity), were most consistent, there were frequent royal attempts to regulate the prices of meat, poultry, iron, fish, horse feed, “luxuries such as mustard and ginger,” the products of “small-scale craftsmen,” and wool, with municipalities and guilds regulating the prices of many raw ingredients.¹³² Furthermore, the high num-

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Horrox, *Black Death*, 317–322 [#s113–116], for cases from 1350, 1352, 1360, 1372, and 1374 of price gouging involving wine, fish, oil, wheat, and wool, as well as wages for servants, threshers, wavers, ploughmen, and refusal to work. Also Wood, *Medieval*, 140–141, for a 1381 case of forestalling applied to labor in the instance of an employment agency.

¹²⁹ See, for example, Bland *et al*, *English Economic History*, 386 [#16] and 391 [#20] for cases heard in 1631, the second of which went to the Star Chamber.

¹³⁰ Roover, “Concept,” 15. For Roover’s source, see Herbert Heaton, *Economic History of Europe*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1948), 194–195.

¹³¹ Gwen Seabourne, *Royal Regulation of Loans and Sales in Medieval England: ‘Monkish Superstition and Civil Tyranny’* (Woodbridge, GB: Boydell Press, 2003), 71.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 77–88.

bers of cases indicate considerable and considerably successful efforts at enforcement, and the considerable number of cases in which fines were not the only punishment imposed indicate that more was at work here than a simple desire to raise revenue.¹³³

Returning to the broad view for a moment, let us consider the ripple effect of merely staple price regulation. If one sets ceiling prices on the commodities that make up the overwhelming majority of laborers' purchases and then one fixes their wages, one has not only predetermined their standard of living (and differentiated it from the standard of those classes with access to less price-regulated luxury goods), but also, in effect, fixed the most expensive factor prices for the laborers' employers, tending to limit the prices of the goods the laborers' produced. In a world of extensive, if admittedly inconsistent price regulation, legal prices and market prices (at least those not created by short term shortages) would be little different from each other. Statutes regulating the number of apprentices, whether made by states, localities or guilds, restricted competition as much as statutes against forestalling encouraged it, and moderated against sudden changes in quantities available for sale by regulating quantities produced. In a different work, de Roover himself noted a very interesting 1332 statute of the Florentine merchant guild (*Arte di Calamala*), forbidding "conspiracies" by its own members to increase prices while simultaneously threatening workers with "blacklisting" if they tried to form their own leagues.¹³⁴ Very little was truly "free and competitive" in these markets.

In a much more measured treatment, John W. Baldwin looked at similarities in and variations between the Romanist, Canonist, and Theological traditions feeding into *The Medieval Theories of the Just Price* in 1959, concluding that a key difference between the traditions was on how strictly to enforce the just price, that is, on when restitution was required. Romanists and Canonists accepted some "freedom of bargaining," allowing a sale to be rescinded only if either "less than one-half the just price" or "twice" the just price changed hands, while the theologians believed that despite the limits set by human law, "divine law demanded restitution" even if the just price was evaded by "a mere

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 95–115. And, as Seabourne points out (p. 108), seeking profit from the administration of justice "was by no means peculiar to pricing" regulations. See the treatment of the forestalling and regrating, *ibid.*, 135–151, which show the considerable government comfort with restraint of competition in and of itself.

¹³⁴ Roover, *Business*, 284–285.

penny.”¹³⁵ The Canonists also paid more attention to “just profit” but separated this issue from “just price” by considering price a matter for the “external forum” (the market and the state) and profit a matter for the “internal” (the conscience of the seller).¹³⁶ For Baldwin, while the just price was the “current price,” that current price “would include both free competitive prices and legal prices regulated by justly constituted officials” on a regular rather than an emergency basis while excluding “prices determined artificially through private monopolistic practices such as forestalling, engrossing, and regrating.”¹³⁷ Taking a restraint of competition stand similar to Hoover’s, Baldwin pointed out “patristic writings vigorously attacked the trader’s taking advantage of monopoly conditions to raise prices,” citing for example, the *De officiis ministrorum* [III.6] of Saint Ambrose of Milan, denouncing “the merchant who ‘farmed the farmer’” and committed “‘robbery and usury’” because his “‘gain is the public’s loss.’”¹³⁸ Baldwin’s citation, however, shows Ambrose explicitly objecting to the taking of that which belonged to others, a violation of distributive justice, without any mention of a violation of some right to a competitive market. One cannot explain a medieval source by reference to an early modern, but looking at a passage in Grotius’s *Rights of War and Peace* does indicate one way of harmonizing an interpretation based on concern for competition with one concerned with distributive justice. Grotius maintained that “a free passage [between nations] ought to be allowed not only to persons, but to merchandise,” finding that no “one is injured by it. For though he may be thereby deprived of an exclusive gain, yet the loss of what is not his due, as a MATTER OF RIGHT, can never be considered as a damage or the violation of a claim.”¹³⁹ Grotius was using a justification well known and accepted in Ambrose’s day that loss of what was not yours by right was no true loss; for one organ only to be deprived of that which belonged to another organ followed the rules of both commutative and distributive justice. Thus Grotius could say “St. Ambrose calls a fraudulent conduct of that kind, an attempt to deprive men of

¹³⁵ Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 8, 23, 52–53, 58, and 69. This distinction and the same grounds for it (the difference between the intentions of divine and human law) was also picked up by Spiegel, *Growth*, 61.

¹³⁶ Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 58.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29 and 14–15.

¹³⁹ Grotius, *Rights*, 97 [II.2.13].

their share in the goods of a common parent.”¹⁴⁰ It might not have been competition or the lack thereof that mattered in and of itself, but the distributive result of its presence or lack that caused the complaints.

However, we still need to know how a determination was made that the just price had been violated. The standard formula applied by such Romanists as Azo, Placentius, Odofredus, and Accursius was that if the judge “did not feel competent to discover” the “information,” he “referred the matter to the judgment of a ‘good man’ (*recurritur ad arbitrium boni viri*),” with “little explanation” of “the actual mechanism of estimating a just price” beyond the standard formula that “a thing was valued at that for which it could be commonly sold,” that standard mix of “free competitive and officially regulated prices.”¹⁴¹

In *Ennarratio in Psalmum LXX*, 17, Saint Augustine accepted the merchant’s claim that he “deserved a certain amount of profit as compensation for his labor and sustenance for his living” on the grounds that 1) “the Christian principle” was “that ‘a laborer is worthy of his hire,’” and 2) the merchant performed “a beneficial service in transporting goods from long distances.”¹⁴² Rufinus (*Summa to the Decretum*, to *causa*, XIV, q. 3,) distinguished between two different types of buying cheap to sell dear, allowing that the “higher price” for which “artisans and craftsmen” sell their goods was “justified by both the expenses (*impensum*) and the labor (*labor*)” they “expended upon the goods in order to improve them, while anyone who bought goods “cheap with the sole motive of selling them later at a higher price for profit without having changed the form of the goods through added expenses or labor and without being compelled to by necessity or expediency” was “immoral.”¹⁴³ Huguccio, Laurentius Hispanus, Raymond of Peñafort, and William of Rennes all allowed that laymen might buy cheap and sell dear if they used “the profits to maintain themselves in an honest living.”¹⁴⁴ In his *Gloss* (1241–1250) to Raymond of Peñafort’s *Summa*, William of Rennes also allowed the merchant “a moderate profit (*lucrum moderatum*) from their wares for the maintenance of themselves and their families” because “they work for all” by “transporting merchandise back and forth between fairs” and so “should not be held to pay

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 100 [II.2.18].

¹⁴¹ Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 27–29.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

their own wages,” but that “moderate profit” should be “regulated by the judgment of a good man, because the amount of profit permitted cannot be exactly determined in shillings, pounds, or pennies.”¹⁴⁵

Profit and price seemed to be equated here, both being what a good man judged fair. Did the good man assume the current price normally and justly included an appropriate profit or wage for each seller? Without an example of such an exact formulation, we might be reduced to that tricky business of arguing from the absence of evidence, except for the constant theme running through all the citations that a laborer was worth his hire. After all, that was why Rufinus was so worried about wares resold unchanged: there seemed to be no labor to be worth the hire added to the goods. The theologians were as concerned with the use to which the profits were put as they were with their size or origin. Since Thomas Chabham, Albertus Magnus, Peter of Tarentaise, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas all “insisted on the essential utility of merchants to society,” they could not, and did not, deny “the merchant the right of maintaining himself with profits gained from his services.”¹⁴⁶ Roover accepted that “both Albertus and Aquinas insist[ed] that arts and crafts would be doomed to destruction if the producer did not recover his outlays in the sale of his product” and thus accepted that “the market price could not fall permanently below cost.”¹⁴⁷ However, remembering that even as late as Luca Pacioli’s 1494 double-entry bookkeeping textbook, household expenses were not segregated from business expenses,¹⁴⁸ those outlays might be assumed to include those for food, clothing, and shelter during the manufacturing period. Baldwin pointed out that Thomas Chabham “stated that merchants could claim a return for expenses and labor they had contributed”; Augustine “had originally justified the merchant’s profit on the basis of labor”; Radulphus Ardens believed “wages were the reward” for a hireling’s labor; Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* I,II.q. 114, a.1) “made fair compensa-

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 48 [*Glossa*, II.8. par.5]. Placing great importance on medieval and early modern acknowledgments of the uncertainty of mercantile profit, Langholm (*Legacy*, 125–127) took such formulations to mean that scholastics “allowed” a “merchant’s ‘family wage’” only as an “upper limit” designed to restrain them from misusing their advantageous positions (*vis-a-vis* the buyer) in any exchange. However, one can also take the upper limit view as merely an acknowledgment of the fact that prices had to maintain distributive as well as commutative justice, with a merchant who took too high a ‘family wage’ as depriving the buyer of his just profits (income).

¹⁴⁶ Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 65.

¹⁴⁷ Roover, “Concept,” 12–13.

¹⁴⁸ *Paciolo on Accounting*, 46 [XII] and 72–72 [XXII].

tion of labor one of the positive acts of justice” and believed that in computing the “just wages of medical doctors,” one had to consider “the condition of the person, the occupation, the labor, and the customs of the land (*Summa Theologica* II.,II q. 71, a.4).”¹⁴⁹ This was a view echoed by John of Ardenne in a medical treatise (c. 1376) averring that doctors should “boldly adjust” their fees to the patient’s “status in life,” while the canonist Godfrey of Trani (d. 1245) believed “scholars should pay their teachers according to their own means and social status.”¹⁵⁰ In fact, Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* II, II, q. 77, a.4) “termed mercantile gain a stipend for labor (*quasi stipendium laboris*).”¹⁵¹ A common complaint against usurers was that they made money without working.¹⁵² We seem to have the beginnings of a cost-plus theory of price determination.

However, in the same question, Aquinas did not present a cost-plus theory of price. Selling (q. 77.a.1) was “established for the common advantage of both parties,” but involved “need” and “the just price of a thing” was “not fixed with mathematical precision, but” depended “on a kind of estimate”; later in the same discussion Aquinas added that in a friendship based on utility, “the recompense should depend upon the usefulness accruing, whereas in buying it should be equal to the thing bought.”¹⁵³ These words—advantage, estimate, need, utility—suggest that Aquinas was working toward a theory of price determination based on common estimations of utility.¹⁵⁴ Whether these two theories were compatible or not, and, if not, one was moral while the other was not, was not actually a question fully addressed in scholastic theory until the sixteenth century. Two opposing trends might be noted in earlier works.

One occurs in the *Summa* [X.18] of Robert of Coruçon, the English Canon of Noyon and Paris who died in the siege of Damietta during

¹⁴⁹ Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 66.

¹⁵⁰ Wood, *Medieval*, 154.

¹⁵¹ Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 67.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 66–67, citations to Thomas Chabham (*Poenitentiale*, c. 118), Peter Cantor (*Distinctiones Abel*, v), and Giles of Lessines (*De Usuris*).

¹⁵³ Aquinas, *Political Ideas*, 143–146.

¹⁵⁴ Wood (*Medieval Theory*, 138) takes the view that “the scholastics seemed to equate the current price” with one simultaneously determined by “supply and demand” and by “labour and cost,” while Langholm (*Price*, 35–36) finds both costs and “want” theories in the “originators” of each scholastic school with the subsequent differences being more in “emphasis” than in fact and caused by the “circumstances” addressed by a particular work.

the Fifth Crusade (1218–1221). Coruçon explored the case of a merchant with goods “valued at ten shillings” on which his “own labor was estimated at twelve pennies.” According to Coruçon, the merchant “was permitted to wait” until he “discovered a market on which he could sell his goods for eleven shillings,” since “that market price was presumably the just price which compensated him for his labor (*laborem*).”¹⁵⁵ This was the view we have already seen taken by the English crown in the price regulations found in the 1349 Ordinance of Labourers requiring “dealers in foodstuffs” to sell “the food for a reasonable price, having regard to the price at which such food is sold in the neighborhood,” but requiring that the “price should allow the seller a moderate, but not excessive, profit, taking reasonable account of the distance he has transported the goods.”¹⁵⁶ A seemingly opposite trend can be found in the work of San Bernardino of Sienna (d. 1444), vicar general of the Friars of the Strict Observance in Tuscany. Taking prices as a “social phenomenon” set “*communitèr* (by the community),” San Bernardino (*De evangelico aeterno*, sermon 33, 2.7.2§5 and sermon 35,2.2) believed they could be “fixed either by the public authorities for the common good, or by the estimation currently arrived at in the market (*secundum aestimationem fori occurrentis*)” and had “to be accepted by the producer” as “fair whether he gains or loses.”¹⁵⁷

By the sixteenth century, these two trends appeared to have hardened into opposing schools of thought, one holding price to be determined by common estimation, the other by a cost plus profit calculation. An intermediate model for sixteenth century cost-plus views can be found in Alberti’s *Della Famiglia* (1445), in which those who disapprove of “all mercenary activity” were reproved because sellers “serve the needs of the buyer” who “pay” them for their “labor”:

You gain your reward by demanding more of others than you paid for the things they buy. Essentially, then, you sell not the commodity but your labor. For the commodity you receive the equivalent in money, and for your work you receive the profit.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Baldwin, *Medieval Theories*, 70–71. Schumpeter (*History*, 93) credited Duns Scotus with “having discovered the condition of competitive equilibrium which came to be known in the nineteenth century as the Law of Cost” based on his treatment of the role the producer’s (or merchant’s) “expenditure of money and effort (*expensae et labores*).”

¹⁵⁶ Horrox, *Black Death*, 289.

¹⁵⁷ Roover, “Concept,” 14.

¹⁵⁸ Alberti, *Family*, 142 [II].

Martin Luther took a cost-plus approach. According to Luther, a merchant who aimed to sell his goods “as dear as” he could was “stealing the property of others,” but like any other laborer, the merchant “deserves his wages (*Luke* 10:7),” and thus should “take as much profit on his wares as will reimburse him for their cost and compensate him for his trouble, his labor, and his risk” seeking in his “trading only an adequate living,” although

the best and safest way would be to have the temporal authorities appoint in this matter wise and honest men to compute the costs of all sorts of wares and accordingly set prices which would enable the merchant to get along and provide for him an adequate living, as is being done at certain places with respect to wine, fish, bread, and the like.¹⁵⁹

But as “this kind of ordinance ... is not to be expected, the next best thing is to let goods be valued at the price for which they are bought and sold in the common market, or in the land generally.”¹⁶⁰ Luther’s suggestions as to how the cost computation might be made equate a merchant’s worth with a laborer’s:

In determining how much profit you ought to take on your business and your labor, there is no better way to reckon it than by computing the amount of time and labor you have put into it, and comparing that with the effort of a day laborer who works as some other occupation and seeing how much he earns in a day. On that basis figure out how many days you have spent in getting your wares and bringing them to your place of business, and how much labor and risk was involved; for a great amount of labor and time ought to have a correspondingly greater return.¹⁶¹

A status-conscious cost-plus rule seems also to underlie Pedro de Valencia’s *Discurso sobre el precio del trigo* (1605). Maintaining that “no price is just or should be regarded as current if it is against the public interest, which is the first and principal consideration in justifying the price of things,” Pedro advised the king of Spain that the best way to eliminate price increases caused by grain hoarding was “to set upon corn a just price that may never be exceeded,” calculated by considering

only how many working days ought to be in justice to be given for a measure of corn, so that the laborer may support himself, however poorly and roughly, and may eat, drink, and clothe himself, keep a roof

¹⁵⁹ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:247–251.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 45:251.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 45:251.

over his head, marry and beget children and support them while they are little, and not have to work every day, because sometimes there will be no work for him, and because there are days of tempest, and of sickness, and of rejoicing.¹⁶²

On the other hand, Luís Saravia de la Calle (*Instrucción de mercaderes*, 1544) illustrated his view that those who measured the just price by “labor, costs, and risk incurred” were “greatly in error,” because “no merchant would ever suffer loss” in such a case, “nor would abundance or scarcity of goods and money enter into the question,” with some interesting examples, asking why “a bale of linen brought overland from Brittany at great expense” should “be worth more than one which is transported cheaply by sea?” or why “a book written out by hand be worth more than one which is printed, when the latter is better though it costs less to produce?”¹⁶³ Deciding that there was no reason for this because “the just price is found not by counting the cost but by the common estimation,” it was a matter of what an item “commonly”

fetches at the time and place of the deal, in cash, and bearing in mind the particular circumstances and manner of the sale, the abundance of goods and money, the number of buyers and sellers, the difficulty of procuring the goods, and the benefit to be enjoyed by their use, according to the judgement of an honest man.¹⁶⁴

He seems not to have realized how close he came to uncovering the level of “ordinary” profit a seller/producer needed to recover to decide to remain in the marketplace; there was a reason, after all, printed books were slowly putting copyists out of business.

A basically estimation-based but somewhat mixed view was presented by Domingo de Soto (*De Justitia et Jure*, Salamanca, 1553) who believed “the price of goods” was “determined” by “the measure in which they serve the needs of mankind,” modified by the “abundance or scarcity” of the article and the buyers, and the “labor, trouble, and risk which the transaction involves,” but having let in labor by one door, he cast it out by the other, maintaining that

it would be a most fallacious rule if, whenever a merchant bought an article, he added on to its price the value of his labor and risk, and then expected to sell it at this increased value. In fact, if a merchant ignorantly buys some article at more than the proper price, or if he suffers ill

¹⁶² Grice-Hutchinson, *School of Salamanca*, 116–119.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 81–82.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 82 and 79.

fortune (for instance, if the goods he has bought unexpectedly become abundant), he cannot justly extort the costs which he has incurred. ... or perhaps he has been lucky enough to see the goods come into short supply after he has bought them. Yet it will hardly be lawful for him to sell more dearly on the same day or in the same place, and he certainly may not do so merely because the goods have increased in value.¹⁶⁵

However, this seems to be less a condemnation of using a cost-plus method in determining price than a restriction of who should do the totting up, because this example was prefaced by the remark that the “natural price is not determined by the judgement of the individual merchant, but by the opinion of prudent and fair-minded men.”¹⁶⁶ Domingo de Soto was certainly as comfortable, however, with a legally set price as with a market one, asserting that when “the price is fixed by law ... it is not lawful to increase this price by even a single farthing,” and maintaining that it was “necessary for prices to be controlled” and in an ideal world the state would “fix the price of every article.”¹⁶⁷

Thus we have a situation in which a market price, even in as highly regulated a market as that of the sixteenth century, was thought to be second best to a legally fixed price, both by those who believed prices were cost determined and those who believed prices arose from common estimation. But there are actually two ways to resolve this seeming opposition.

1) What almost never seems to have been expressed explicitly by either medieval or sixteenth centuries analysts was that these two price theories were interrelated. If one begins with the idea that although temporary fluctuations in supply might vary them, prices basically arise from a community’s common or traditional estimation of an item’s utility, one can extend this to say the traditional estimation must apply as well to factor prices (labor, transport, raw materials, etc.). In such a case, a guild master who tried to set a price based on a cost-plus analysis (including the cost of his own labor) was doing no more than toting up the components of the final price estimation. In fact, the Romanist Rolandino Passageri had made considerable progress toward such a view in the thirteenth century (*Summa totius Artis Notariae*) when he used *estimation* for both product and labor, maintaining that “a price

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 84 and 87.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

is given according to the estimate of a thing, but a wage according to the estimation of the *use* of a thing.¹⁶⁸

That sixteenth-century society set different prices on different kinds of labor is evidenced not just by wage legislation but also by their loud complaints when members of one group made enough money to eat or dress like their social betters. If the normal, non-scarcity non-plenty, prices of sellers' wares did not include a status-based estimation of the differing worth of their labor, many of the intermediate steps in the social hierarchy would disappear. But that would be leveling; it would violate distributive justice. It would seem that whether a contemporary observer thought prices were set by estimation or cost-plus calculations, they did assume that somehow those prices would work to maintain the social order as well as guarantee that things sold for so much and no more than they were worth.

2) We might also reconcile these theories by returning to the complaints against the *certainty* of gains in usury, insurance, and dry exchange and applying them as a subtext when commentators such as William of Rennes or Domingo de Soto or Luís Saravia de la Calle denied merchants the right to add a *fixed* profit percentage onto the costs of their goods. Given the medieval and early modern understanding that temporary changes in availability created short-term price fluctuations and that the best laid plans of artisans and merchants were subject to acts of God, it was only natural to conclude that although sellers were entitled to receive back their labor in their prices, it was impossible that they should and impious that they should even attempt to receive it back in every case. State regulation, church oversight, and the common estimation of the community would work to see that they received back a fair share overall. Again, remembering that the volume of complaints tended to rise and the state tended to intervene when prices resulted in disruptions in (or merely threatened to disrupt) the social status quo, rejection of a fixed profit margin was not necessarily a rejection of a distributively biased price structure.

In a practical sense, the two approaches were often reconciled in advance of sales in sixteenth-century England with magistrates soliciting expert advice in order to post "common estimations" of non-regulated prices before the market opened, thus providing guidelines for buyers and sellers attempting to strike fair bargains, so that when

¹⁶⁸ Wood, *Medieval*, 132. Passageri's *Summa* was first published in Venice in 1546.

the anonymous author of *A Godlie Treatise Concerning the Lawful Use of Riches* (1578) explained that only prices “appointed by indifferent and wisemen in auctoritie, or paied according to the common estimation of the thng, at such tyme as the bargaine is made,” were lawful, he was not talking about a free-market price (or else he would not had prefaced his verdict by claiming that “every price agreed upon betwene the buyer and seller, is not a due or lawfull price”) but adhering to a pre-set official guideline.¹⁶⁹

On a more formal note, cost-plus and estimation theories began to merge in the seventeenth century. Grotius held that “if I engage a goldsmith to make me any article with his own materials, the price which I give will be partly a purchase, and partly wages,” and, while accepting that “the prices of things do not depend upon the humors and interest of individuals, but upon common estimation,” he found that in “the common price of articles, the labor and expense of the merchant in procuring them” was “taken into the account.”¹⁷⁰ Trying to answer the old question of “Whether I may not sell my wares as dear as I can, and get what I may of every buyer?,” Bishop Hall began in traditional fashion, maintaining that there was “a due price” for “every saleable commodity” that “cuts equally and indifferently betwixt the buyer and seller,” which, when “set by public authority ... well expedited” commerce, but if not should be limited to “the ordinary received proportion of price, current in the several countries wherein” the item was “sold” according to “the judgment of discreet, wise, experienced, and unconcerned persons.”¹⁷¹ The “rareness of the commodity” or the “paucity” of buyers might affect the price somewhat, but could not be excessively taken “advantage of ... to enhance the price to an unreasonable height.”¹⁷² As to the determinants of those ordinary prices, Hall seems to accept estimation in one sense, since he gives an example of how it is a much more individualized form of estimation in reference to non-utilitarian goods:

Those things whose end is only pleasure or ornament, as a jewel, an hawk, or an hound, can admit of no certain value. The owner’s affection

¹⁶⁹ *A Godlie Treatise Concerning the Lawful Use of Riches* (1578), 7v. quoted in Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 45, which page also discusses the practice of posting guidelines at the opening of markets.

¹⁷⁰ Grotius, *Rights*, 146–147 [II.12.6] and 151 [II.12.14].

¹⁷¹ Hall, *Works*, 5:275–276. See also *ibid.*, 277, for a restatement of his preference for legally fixed prices.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 276.

must estimate it, and the buyer's desire must make up an illimited bargain: but even in these, and all other commodities that carry the face of unnecessary, conscience must be the clerk of the market.¹⁷³

However, he also included a cost-plus element that linked "just gain" to the "due price" already mentioned:

It is lawful for the seller, in his price, to have regard, not to his rents and disbursements only, but to his labor and cost, to his delay of benefit, to his loss in managing, to his hazard or difficulty in conveyance; but all these in such moderation as that he may be a just gainer by the bargain ... not making too much haste to be rich by the secret spoils of an oppressed neighbor... [if you take] above the due price which would make you a just and rightly moderate gainer ... all that you willingly do this way is but a better colored picking of purses.¹⁷⁴

As for the rest of the seventeenth century, by its midpoint Thomas Hobbes could venture (*De Cive*) that "neither if I sell my goods for as much as I can get for them, do I injure the buyer, who sought and desired them of me,"¹⁷⁵ an opinion that could scarcely have been held a century before. And by the seventeenth century's end, Samuel Pufendorf (*On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law*) took "scarcity" to be the "primary factor in raising values," although things as varied as "subtlety and elegance," or the "fame of the artist," affected value as well. However, in contrasting the legal and market prices, Pufendorf explained that "in the market account is normally taken of the labor and expense which merchants are put to in transporting and handling their goods, as well as of how the item is bought or sold, whether in bulk or by retail" in addition to the issues of "glut or shortage" and "whether one is offering cash or deferring payment, since time too is part of the price."¹⁷⁶ In the last, at least, the world of the sixteenth century was only a distant echo.

The problem for the sixteenth-century analyst was not how the two forms of justice were related but why prices did not maintain an even keel. Like the medieval, the sixteenth century marketplace was a mix of floating prices, and fixed end prices, fixed factor prices (including labor), restricted entry laws, competition, oligopoly, monopoly, sumptuary laws, quality regulations, import-export restrictions, and currency

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 276.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 277.

¹⁷⁵ Hobbes, *De Cive*, 139 [III.6].

¹⁷⁶ Pufendorf, *Duty*, 94–95 [I.14]. Note, "*de pretio*" can mean either value or price.

restrictions designed as much to prevent changes in the relationship between social organs as to keep the peace, provision the populace, or fund the state. It was not that the tradition they inherited did not allow for variation due to bad harvests or other temporary causes of plenty or scarcity, it was that they expected the price to return to its previous level when the temporary plenty or scarcity abated. If they understood a trend line, they would draw it perfectly horizontally, a difficult inheritance in an age when the trend only went up.

CHAPTER NINE

THE MODERN PROBLEM OF PROFIT: A PARADOX BY WAY OF A DIGRESSION

In dealing with a word whose history stretches as far back as does that of *profit*, it is often wise to begin with a brief treatment of its current meaning in order to make modern readers aware of the baggage they bring to their interpretations of any past text. If *profit* caused as simple a set of reactions as its modern definitions seem to presuppose, that might work. But once one tries to pin down exactly what we mean by *profit*, to unlock its connotations as well as its varying denotations in accounting and economics textbooks, one uncovers such a complex web of meanings that it seems best to postpone the discussion until after perusal of profit in the early modern era has awakened in readers the suspicion that their own ideas about profit are not so clear cut as they thought. Then the modern debates may actually cast light upon the early modern by letting us see how the earlier paradoxes have evolved into the later.

Certainly, when dealing with profit *vis a vis* capitalism, the later debate is directly dependent upon the earlier.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber reached into the days of the Price Revolution and the Reformation to find the origins of the mind set he believed had created capitalism, an economic system synonymous in his view with an endlessly acquisitive but ascetic profit-seeking. According to Weber,

Unlimited greed for gain is not in the least identical with capitalism, and is still less its spirit. Capitalism *may* even be identical with the restraint, or at least a rational tempering, of this irrational impulse. But capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever *renewed* profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise... [defined as one] adapted to a systematic utilization of goods or personal services as means of acquisition in such a way that, at the close of a business period, the balance of the enterprise in money assets ... exceeds the capital.¹

¹ Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 17–18, 24, 27, and 51–53. A good summary of the varying definitions of capitalism, organized into three main types—an acquisitive spirit, a commercial system, and a specific relationship between owners and producers—can

C.B. Macpherson's "Possessive Individualism" was probably as influential in the field of British history as Weber's capitalist *Geist* was in the social sciences more generally, and profit-seeking was as central to Macpherson's vision as to Weber's. In fact, for Macpherson, it forged an entirely different definition of justice from that which this study posits as dominating European thought well into the Price Revolution. According to Macpherson, the "bourgeois society" created by "Possessive Individualism" was

a society in which the relations between men are dominated by the market; in which, that is to say, land and labour, as well as moveable wealth and goods made for consumption, are treated as commodities to be bought and sold and contracted for with a view to profit and accumulation, and where men's relations to others are set largely by their ownership of these commodities and the success with which they utilize that ownership to their own profit. Alternatively, bourgeois society may be defined in terms of prevalent moral values, for a society cannot be dominated by the market unless the appropriate moral values are widely accepted. So defined, bourgeois society is one in which accumulation of wealth through the market (in the broad sense, including the market for land and labour) is regarded as honourable or even natural, and in which justice is the performance of contract rather than commutative or distributive justice.²

For Karl Marx, however, the defining "matrix" of capitalism was not profit-seeking but the existence of a free market in labor—laborers free to sell their labor and free of (in the sense of lacking) any other goods to sell except their labor—because capital itself could not be created without it, so that it was "nonsense" to speak of "capital" as "fully developed" in any world of slave labor, slaves being commodities rather than sellers of commodities.³ Marx's definition made full-blown capitalism the child of the Industrial Revolution, creating problems for historians of early modern Europe trying to push back the horizon of capitalism into an era in which the dominant forms of production were the family enterprise (most commonly the family farm) or, in parts of eastern Europe, the serf-powered estate. Macpherson's emphasis on

be found in Maurice Dobb's *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, rev. ed. (New York: International Publishers Co., Inc., 1963), 1–11.

² C.B. Macpherson, "Harrington's 'Opportunity State.'" *Past and Present* 17 (April 1960): 46.

³ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume 1: *The Process of Capitalist Production*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 165n. and 166.

“possessive individualism” did not entirely solve the problem, for his view of bourgeois society still required that free market in labor. A more recent attempt has been to posit the existence of a unique, early-modern stage usually termed *Agrarian Capitalism* by resetting the focus on the profit motive, as here in Keith Tribe’s definition:

Capitalism can be briefly summarized as a form of economy in which consumption is separated from production, enterprises are separated and in a state of competition, and the national economy is co-ordinated according to the profitability of the commodities sold by enterprises. In the context under consideration here, this means that the capitalist farm, leased from a landlord by a farmer who supervises the labourers who work it, is an enterprise whose continued existence depends on the profitability of the commodities that it sells... In principle then, the ‘capitalist farm’ could be either a large farm in which a farmer supervises wage-labourers, or a family farm in which family labour is supervised by a household head: the absence of wage-labourers does not mean that a farm is non-capitalist.⁴

This, then, leads us to our first paradox. Capitalism and profit are as virtually synonymous in the popular mind as in the historical, but in accounting and economics, the two disciplines most closely connected with both profit and the development of capitalism, this is not the case. Not one of the eight accounting textbooks chosen at random for this chapter even has an entry for capitalism in its glossary, and two of the nine economics texts used are equally silent upon the subject.⁵ In five of the remaining economics texts *profit* is conspicuously absent from the definitions of capitalism. For Martin Bronfenbrenner, Werner Sichel, and Wayland Gardner (*Economics*, 1987), capitalism is simply “an economic system in which most physical instruments of production are owned by private individuals and business firms,” as opposed to socialism, “an economic system in which land and physical instruments of production are largely or completely owned by the state,”⁶ making the name on the title deed the sole difference between the two. For

⁴ Keith Tribe, *Genealogies of Capitalism* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981), 38.

⁵ See, for example, the glossary in Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Economics*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc, 1996). The glossary has an entry (A3) for *capital* “funds used for investment”, but none for capitalism. Also Vicky Allsopp, *Understanding Economics* (London: Routledge, 1995); though this proclaims itself an explanation of economics for the general public rather than a textbook per se, it covers the same ground.

⁶ Martin Bronfenbrenner, Werner Sichel, and Wayland Gardner, *Economics*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), G-4 and G-31.

Irvin B. Tucker (*Survey of Economics*, 1998), capitalism is the “economic system characterized by private ownership of resources and markets.”⁷ In George Leland Bach’s slightly more expansive treatment (*Economics: Analysis, Decision Making, and Policy*, 1987), “private-enterprise capitalism” is a system in which “most productive resources are privately owned, and economic activity is largely directed by the interaction of supply and demand in the market in response to individual interests,”⁸ but in what those individuals were interested is left entirely to the reader’s imagination. Similarly, Edwin Mansfield (*Economics: Principles, Problems, Decisions*, 1980) contends that the four “principle characteristics” of capitalism are “private ownership,” “freedom of choice and enterprise,” “competition,” and “reliance on markets.”⁹ Some economists can go on for paragraphs without mentioning profit. According to Sir Alec Cairncross and Peter Sinclair (*Introduction to Economics*, 1982),

The two main features of capitalism are the private ownership of property and freedom of enterprise. In capitalist societies men have the right to accumulate property without limit for their exclusive use, and the right to dispose of it as they choose so long as they keep within the law. They have also the right to lend their capital or adventure it in any business, subject to such restrictions as the state imposes. These are not absolute rights; they rest upon the law, altering when the law alters. The state can tax transfers of capital, set a maximum to the property that can be owned by one man, lay down the terms on which money can be lent or invested, and so on. Rights of property and freedom of enterprise can be made to wither away until capitalism is no longer recognisable as such.

In the capitalist system as it exists at present these two features are associated with others; above all, with class divisions, and inequality of income and wealth. The ownership and control of property is heavily concentrated in few hands; on the other hand, the mass of the population owns little or no property and depends for its income on working for a weekly wage. There are also other classes to some extent intermediate between these two: for example, the self-employed, the salaried workers and small property-owners. While there is no clear line of division, however, between the various classes, there is no blinking the fact that for some people income comes mainly from work while for others an impor-

⁷ Irvin B. Tucker, *Survey of Economics*, 2nd ed. (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing, 1998), 505.

⁸ George Leland Bach, Robert Flanagan, James Howell, Ferdinand Levy, and Anthony Lima, *Economics: Analysis, Decision Making, and Policy*, 11th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1987), 694.

⁹ Edwin Mansfield, *Economics: Principles, Problems, Decisions*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980), 51–53.

tant, sometimes a major, contribution comes from property. Income from work varies widely, according to seniority, age, hours of work, extent and type of skill; and also by region and industry. The system of taxes and benefits makes the distribution of incomes less unequal after tax than before it.¹⁰

Those economics textbooks that do include profit in their definitions of capitalism tend to offer minimalist summations intended to sidestep political debate, so, for example, for Spencer I. Amos (*Contemporary Economics*, 1993), capitalism is just the “economic system characterized by the private ownership of the factors of production and their operation for profit under predominantly competitive conditions.”¹¹

Textbooks produced during the Cold War offer a significant exception to the minimalist rule as they build a defense of capitalism into its definition. According to W. Nelson Peach (*Principles of Economics*, 1960), the six “pillars” of capitalism are “private ownership of the means of production,” “production for profit,” “competition between individuals and between business firms,” “freedom of contract,” “the limited role of government,” and the principle that “each individual, each business firm, each factor of production (land, labor, capital, entrepreneur) receives an income which (when the economy is in equilibrium) exactly measures that factor’s contribution to the total output of goods and services in the economy.”¹²

One reason for the omission or cursory treatment of profit is that both accounting and economics see themselves as all-purpose aids suitable for any form of economic organization. Standard definitions of accounting call it the “system that measures business activities, processes that information into reports and financial statements, and communicates the findings to decision makers,”¹³ while economics becomes “the social science concerned with using or administering scarce resources so as to attain the greatest or maximum fulfillment of soci-

¹⁰ Sir Alec Cairncross and Peter Sinclair, *Introduction to Economics*, 6th ed. (London: Butterworth, 1982), 136.

¹¹ Spencer I. Amos, *Contemporary Economics*, 8th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 1993), D-6.

¹² W. Nelson Peach, *Principles of Economics*, rev. ed. (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1960), 673–674.

¹³ Charles T. Horngren and Walter T. Harrison, Jr., *Accounting*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1992), G-1. Similarly, Paul R. Berney and Stanley J. Garstka, *Accounting: Concepts and Applications* (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1984), 1.

ety's wants; a method rather than a doctrine."¹⁴ True, but as even Robert L. Heilbroner and Lester G. Thurow admitted in a work written for popular consumption (*Economics Explained*), the "imperative of profits" is "central to capitalism."¹⁵

All basic economics textbooks do, of course, get around to discussing profit, but as they usually begin by explaining how their treatment of profit differs from that in accounting, a small detour through accounting seems in order. Profit is not an analytical category in accounting (as are assets and expenses); it is a remainder, "the difference between the price a seller receives for goods or services and the total cost to the seller of all resources consumed in developing, producing, and selling those goods or services during a particular period."¹⁶ In popular parlance, it is *profit* when revenues are greater than expenses and *loss* when expenses exceed revenues, but in accounting, the preferred term is not *profit* but *net income*, it may be negative or positive, and it represents nothing more mysterious than an increase (or decrease) in the *owners' equity* in the business. As James J. Benjamin *et al* explain, "Owners' Equity represents the claims of the owners against the net assets of a firm," and can be "divided into two major classifications based on the source of the equity: direct investments made by the owner and profits retained in the business."¹⁷ Even authors of accounting textbooks occasionally substitute the vernacular *profit* for the professional *net income*. The term *Gross Profit* does appear in basic accounting texts (as a synonym for *gross margin*), but this is simply an intermediate remainder indicating the dif-

¹⁴ Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, G-9.

¹⁵ Robert L. Heilbroner and Lester G. Thurow, *Economics Explained, Updated* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1987), 92.

¹⁶ Robert W. Ingram, Thomas L. Albright, Bruce A. Baldwin, and John W. Hill, *Accounting: Information for Decisions* (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing, 1999), 1021. Some accounting texts offer less expansive definitions than others. For R.J. Bull, *Accounting in Business*, 4th ed. (London: Butterworth, 1980), 28: "*Income* (or *profit*) is the difference between revenue and expense." Similarly Horngren and Harrison, *Accounting*, G-10: "Net Income" is nothing more than the "excess of total revenues over total expenses." Penne Ainsworth, Dan Deines, R. David Plumlee, and Cathy Xanthaky Larron, *Introduction to Accounting: An Integrated Approach*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Irwin/McGraw-Hill, 2000), 81: "the difference between revenue and expenses in a certain time period." Similarly, James J. Benjamin, Arthur J. Francia, and Robert H. Strawser, *Principles of Accounting* (Houston: Dame Publications, 1981), 34: "Net Income is the excess of revenues earned over the related expenses incurred for an accounting period." Or, Sidney Davidson, Clyde P. Stickney, and Roman L. Weil, *Intermediate Accounting: Concepts, Methods, and Uses*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Dryden Press, 1982), 2-31: "Net income for a period is the excess of revenues and gains over expenses and losses."

¹⁷ Benjamin et al, *Accounting*, 24.

ference between sales revenues and the materials cost of the product sold.¹⁸ Gross margin does not include a deduction for labor costs. It merely represents the difference between the price the producer pays for its inventory (raw materials) and the price the producer gets for the finished goods, but it affords a quick and useful (albeit rough) guide to the profitability of a product. And, finally, those who labor under the misapprehension that *income* is a synonym for *revenue*, are told that “revenue is measured by (but must not be confused with) the cash and other assets given by customers in exchange for the sales of commodities or services,” whereas income “emerges after all costs applicable to the revenue of the fiscal period are deducted.”¹⁹

But none of this will get us anywhere unless we know what is and what is not included under the heading of *expenses*. In order to understand the accounting approach, let us create an imaginary business, *World Wide Widgets*, which, despite its grandiose name, will be a small, individually-owned firm that rents all its equipment (eliminating the need for depreciation schedules), makes only one product (in one model), and has no other revenue source than the sale of its widgets. A very simplified Income Statement for World Wide Widgets might look something like this:

Sales:		100,000	Total Revenues: 100,000
Expenses:	Materials	10,000	
	Labor	70,000	
	Factory Rent	5,000	
	Equipment Rent	5,000	Total Expenses: 90,000
			Net Income: 10,000

While the owner of World Wide Widgets might speak of \$10,000 profit for the period and the accountant of \$10,000 net income, the economist would speak of \$10,000 *ordinary* (or *normal*) *profit* in order to contrast it with something called *economic profit*.²⁰ In economics textbooks, *profit* also

¹⁸ Horngren and Harrison, *Accounting*, G-7 (gross margin), G-4 (cost of goods sold) and 209. See similarly, Berney and Garstka, *Accounting*, 13, on the difference between gross profit and net income.

¹⁹ Raymond W. Coleman, *Elements of Accounting* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1941), 18n3, albeit admitting that “the terms ‘revenue’ and ‘income’ are commonly used interchangeably.”

²⁰ Analogous variants include *economic earnings* (“the part of the earnings of a resource that is not required to keep that resource at its present use”; Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, G-9) and *economic rents* (“payments made to a factor of production that are in excess of what is required to elicit the supply of that factor”; Stiglitz, *Economics*, A-6).

appears as a remainder (“total revenues minus total costs”²¹) rather than as an analytical category, but these textbooks distinguish between two very different remainders based on the expenses included in their calculation. In the Income Statement of World Wide Widgets shown above, the term *Labor* encompasses only the wages, benefits, and payroll taxes paid to (or on behalf of) the employees. No money taken by the owner appears in the Income Statement. Funds removed from a business by the owners are Capital Withdrawals (or Distributions), and, as such, would appear on the firm’s Balance Sheet.²² They do not figure into any calculation of Net Income (“Profit”). In the modern accounting model, a business belongs to, but its operations are analytically separate from, its owners. Economists work from a different perspective. They seek to account for the prevailing rates of profit and the conditions under which these rates increase/decrease and tend towards uniformity. When economists label the *Net Income* of the accounting model *Ordinary, Accounting* or *Business Profit*, they are making one practical claim (this is the way profit is ordinarily calculated) and two conceptual claims: (1) investors would not normally enter into a business unless they could expect to make at least this much, and (2) this represents the *ordinary* rate of profit at economic equilibrium under conditions of perfect competition (not necessarily what actually occurs in any one industry or firm). While the practical claim is self-explanatory, the conceptual claims take a bit of explanation.

(1) *Owners’ Expectations*. To understand the difference between the economist’s *ordinary* and *economic* profit, we need to the return to the expenses listed on our Income Statement for World Wide Widgets. To an economist, materials, labor, factory rent, and equipment rent are not *expenses* but *explicit costs*, “money payments by firms for the use of inputs to production.”²³ But these explicit costs do not by themselves represent the true cost to the owner of doing business. Modern economics holds that there are other, *implicit costs*, so called because, representing the use

There are also geographic variants: where American authors tend to contrast *ordinary* (or *normal*) with *economic* profit, British authors may contrast *normal* with *supernormal* (Allsopp, *Economics*, 420 and 436) or *gross* profit with *net* (Cairncross and Sinclair, *Economics*, 267).

²¹ Stiglitz, *Economics*, A18. This is another geographic variation: British tradition usually contrasts *revenue* with *expenses* while the American prefers to contrast *revenue* with *costs*.

²² Horngren and Harrison, *Accounting*, 48.

²³ Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, G-11.

of the owner's own "resources," no money changes hands for them, hence, no entry in a firm's ledger or journal *explicitly* records them.²⁴ The three basic implicit costs relate to the owners' capital, labor, and land and they represent the cost of choosing one use over some available alternative.²⁵ The capital risked in the business by the owner could have been bringing in a steady source of income if invested elsewhere, say, in U.S. Treasury Bonds. The loss of that potential income is one of the *implicit* costs of doing business. Most often referred to as *opportunity cost*, it is simply the return the individual would have received had the capital been invested elsewhere.²⁶ While owners do not necessarily work alongside their employees on the assembly line, many do perform services—negotiating, purchasing, selling, supervising, planning—for which they would receive wages if performed as employees of other firms. This lost *wage* is really just another form of *opportunity cost*. The *opportunity cost of the owners' land* may be of less concern in contemporary industrial society (where businesses are established more often than not on rented land) than formerly, but remains of vital importance to anyone looking at early modern theory. It refers to the income the land would have brought to the owner if put to some other use.²⁷ Even if the land on which a building stands is rented, a firm may still incur an *opportunity cost* with reference to an owned building.

A key foundation of modern economics is the concept of *economic rationality*, the assumption that "people can and will take actions that will make them better off or will prevent them from becoming worse off."²⁸ If this is accepted, then it seems only *normal* that individuals will not put their time and money into creating a business unless they can reasonably expect to receive the at least as much compensation as they

²⁴ See, for example, Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, G-14 (implicit costs): "costs incurred by firms for which no money payment is made, usually because the firms are using resources which they own themselves."

²⁵ Mansfield, *Economics*, 692. Also Cairncross and Sinclair, *Economics*, 267–268; Peach, *Economics*, 487.

²⁶ See, for example, Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, G-24 (opportunity cost): "the true cost of choosing one alternative over another; that which is given up when a choice is made." Similarly Allsopp, *Economics*, 430.

²⁷ See, for example, Cairncross and Sinclair, *Economics*, 268: "A farmer, for example, might fail to reckon the rentable value of his land as a business expense in arriving at his profit on the year's working." Contemporary British texts seem to pay more attention to this cost than do American. Though some American texts mention land, others do not; see for example, Bach et al, *Economics*, 304–305; their illustrations of opportunity cost include labor and interest but not land.

²⁸ Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, G-9.

would for taking a job and buying some stocks or bonds. Hence the definition of *ordinary profit* is “the return to enterprise that is necessary for a firm to receive in order for it to be willing to continue its operation in the long run.”²⁹

(2) *Profit and Competition*. Modern economic orthodoxy asserts that what society *normally* allows to the business owner is no more than the usual rate of return for the invested capital (including land), and the usual wage for the services performed. *Ordinary profit* = *opportunity costs* (on land, labor, and capital).³⁰ Anything more is termed *economic profit*, “total revenue minus explicit and implicit costs,” or, somewhat more transparently, “an amount of accounting profit that is greater than normal profit.”³¹ Anything more (*economic profit*) is an exception to the norm that needs to be explained.

Economists classify market structures under such headings as *perfect competition*, *monopolistic competition*, *oligopoly*, and *monopoly* based on the number of firms in the market, the ease of entry into/exit from the market, and the degree of product standardization. Some economists also distinguish a system of *pure competition* from one of *perfect competition* according to the amount of information each individual/firm has about the market. For these economists, *perfect competition* differs from *pure competition* only in assuming that all “buyers and sellers in a perfectly competitive market also have complete and continuous knowledge of all bids and offers made in the market and the full mobility to take immediate action.”³² However, in most of the literature, *perfect competition* and *pure competition* are treated as the same state. What is important for our purposes is understanding that each type of market produces different results when the same economic variables are called into play, reaching equilibrium at different price levels. In a perfectly or purely competitive market (the basis from which all other market types are said to deviate), there are so many firms in any industry that no one firm can affect the prices its products receive by increasing or decreasing its output.³³ If, in the long run, a single firm made less than normal profit, it would close up shop. But, if some special set of conditions allowed it to make more

²⁹ *Ibid.*, G-23.

³⁰ See, for example, Allsopp, *Economics*, 430 (normal profit): “This is the profit which is what could be earned in the best alternative forgone. The firm just covers all opportunity costs.”

³¹ Tucker, *Economics*, 506; Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, G-9.

³² Bronfenbrenner et al, *Economics*, 485.

³³ *Ibid.*, 484–485.

than normal profit, more firms would seek to enter the market and the increased competition would eat away the economic profit until all returned to normal.³⁴ The more the marketplace deviates from this ideal of pure/perfect competition, the easier it becomes for firms to sell their products at prices that produce higher than normal profit (in other words, at prices that more than pay them back for their opportunity costs). However, the assumption is that, left in play, market forces will always tend to drive profits down to that normal level, which, to an economist (who deducts implicit/opportunity costs) is no profit at all. Introductory textbooks tend to straddle the unresolved debate over the source or sources of *economic* profit by offering a list of possible causes including contrived scarcity (monopolistic or oligopolistic tactics), risk, uncertainty (time lags and uninsurable risks), rewards for innovation, or a motivating carrot (the hope of economic profit).³⁵ But that which can be self-causing or attributable to a multitude of causes seems to have no real cause at all.

This is not a lack of clarity that can be easily rectified by turning from basic economic textbooks to the theories from which they have been constructed. Instead of a definition of profit, the history of economic theory offers a debate over profit that is as political as it is analytical. It not only colors how each commentator views earlier works but also opens up the question of whether any consensus exists as to whether *normal* or *economic* profit should be labeled just or unjust.

the Classical Surplus

About one third of the way through his magnum opus, Adam Smith remarked that the “consideration of his own private profit is the sole motive which determines the owner of any capital to employ it either in agriculture, in manufactures, or in some particular branch of the

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 492–493. Also Mansfield, *Economics*, 693; and Allsopp, *Economics*, 213.

³⁵ Mansfield, *Economics*, 693–694, includes all those reasons listed plus a claim that “Profits and losses are the mainsprings” of capitalism because they function as “signals that indicate where resources are needed and where they are too abundant,” “important incentives for innovation and for betting on the future,” and “society’s reward for efficiency.” The social motivator approach is stressed more exclusively in Bach et al, *Economics*, 498–499, and Peach, *Economics*, 487–489. Amos, *Economics*, D-41, gives two definitions of *profit*, both of which stress a return “to those who perform the entrepreneurial function.” Bronfenbrenner’s stress (*Economics*, 502) on research and development as funded by economic profit would seem to place him in the entrepreneurial camp as well.

wholesale or retail trade.”³⁶ More than merely a particular case of self-interest, this description led Smith several steps along the road to the opportunity cost view of normal profit found in perfect competition theory. Smith suggested that industries (and societies) possessed a “natural” (“ordinary or average”) rate of wages, profit and rent, and that the corresponding “natural price” of any commodity was that which would yield these “natural rates.”³⁷ Furthermore, this natural-rate-yielding price was the “lowest” at which dealers were “likely to sell” their goods “for any considerable time” where they were “at perfect liberty” to leave the market.³⁸ This natural profit was an implicit (opportunity) cost of doing business clearly distinguishable from the accountant’s reckoning. At the “natural” price,

The commodity is then sold precisely for what it is worth, or for what it really costs the person who brings it to market; for though in common language what is called the prime cost of any commodity does not comprehend the profit of the person who is to sell it again, yet if he sells it at a price which does not allow him the ordinary rate of profit in his neighborhood, he is evidently a loser by the trade; since by employing his stock in some other way he might have made that profit... [unless the sale of these commodities yields] him this profit, therefore, they do not repay him what they may very properly be said to have really cost him.³⁹

The expected ordinary rate of profit, however, was not determined by but rather helped determine the prevailing interest rate: “wherever a great deal can be made by the use of money, a great deal will commonly be given for the use of it; and that wherever little can be made by it, less will commonly be given for it.”⁴⁰

This was also a production-factor theory of profit. Allowing for variations due to trade and technological level, Smith held that there were

³⁶ Smith, *Wealth*, 396 [II.5].

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 62 [I.7].

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 63 [I.7]. Mill moved this closer to a normal v. economic profit analysis when he discussed the causes of “permanently higher” rates of profit, including “a compensation for superior risk, trouble and disagreeableness” and for “time” in a more systematic fashion than Smith. For which see John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with Some of their Applications to Social Philosophy* [1848], ed. Sir William Ashley (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909), 462–463; also *ibid.*, 478–479 (monopoly prices). Most forward looking is Mill’s treatment of patents and “talent” (see under Schumpeter’s entrepreneurial treatment below).

³⁹ Smith, *Wealth*, 63 [I.7].

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 99 [I.9]. Smith’s handling of this cause-effect relationship is not consistent; for profit-rate as dependent on interest and wage rates, see *ibid.*, 102 [I.9].

three “primary” factors involved in the production of commodities (land, stock, and labor) held by three different classes (land-owners, stock-owners, and labor-owners) to which were due the “revenues” generated by the commodity.⁴¹ In this theory, profits (“the proper fund” of the stock-owners’ “subsistence”) were a percentage return “regulated altogether by the value of the stock employed” rather than a wage (for “the labour of inspection and direction”).⁴² This percentage return was analogous to interest because wages were loans from stock-owners to workers (advances against the workers’ share of the produced commodity’s sales).⁴³ Rent, on the other hand, was “naturally a monopoly price” involving differentials for fertility and “situation,” but “not at all proportioned to what the landlord may have laid out upon” its “improvement.”⁴⁴ Stock also bore the additional “hazard” of physical loss; a landlord’s risk was entirely pecuniary.⁴⁵ However, Smith sometimes treated profit as independent of wages and rent, sometimes as inversely proportional to both, and sometimes as directly proportional to one and inversely to the other, making profit simultaneously (and inconsistently) an independent factor of production and an appropriation.⁴⁶

Lying behind the inconsistency in the relationships between Smith’s “prime” components of price were two interrelated value theories: (1)

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 53–59 [I.6]. An example of an occupational exception would be fishing, in which no rent was normally involved (*ibid.*, 58). In the most primitive societies, labor was the sole production factor (*ibid.*, 53).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 54 [I.6] and 63 [I.7]. This could be seen (*ibid.*, 55 [I.6]) in the disparate total profit expected (at the same “natural” return) by £7,300 and £1,000 investor-manufacturers despite “very nearly the same” labor of “inspection and direction.” Factors that did affect wage and profit rates in identical fashion included such things as the disagreeableness of the profession (*ibid.*, 113 [I.10.1]). In Mill (*Political Economy*, 32), profits were also a reward for “abstinence” (as contrasted to a wage), for foregoing “the application of it [stock], when accumulated, to his personal use or satisfaction.”

⁴³ Smith, *Wealth*, 72 [I.8].

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 164 [I.11.1] and 162 [I.11.1].

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, and 54 [I.6]. There is, however, no one-to-one relationship between profit and risk (*ibid.*, 124 [I.10.1]).

⁴⁶ See, for example, *ibid.*, 57 [I.6] (wages and profit v. rent); 74–77 [I.8], 98 [I.9], and 109 [I.9] (wages v. stock); and 103 [I.9] (wages, interest and profits increase conjointly). There is also a hint of a wages-fund theory (“funds which are destined for the payment of wages”), *ibid.*, 77 [I.8], but it is barely developed. See also the treatment of Smith in Mark Obrinsky, *Profit Theory and Capitalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 12–15. Obrinsky provides a critique/survey of profit treatments from Smith through Bronfenbrenner, primarily directed against what Obrinsky sees as an “antithetical” relationship between “mainstream neoclassical economic theory” and “a meaningful notion of profit” (*ibid.*, xi–xii).

the “surplus product” of nature and (2) a “surplus value” imparted by labor.⁴⁷ These theories were behind such remarks in the *Wealth of Nations* as “land, in almost any situation, produces a greater quantity of food than what is sufficient to maintain all the labour necessary for bringing it to market, in the most liberal way in which that labour is ever maintained” or “what their labour adds to the value of the materials.”⁴⁸

(1) *Surplus Product*. The eighteenth-century French economic writers known as the Physiocrats were fascinated by the ability of farmland to produce crops greater than needed to replace the resources (materials and labor) used in their creation. The source of this surplus product (*le produit net*) seemed, self-evidently, to be nature itself, in the form of the land. So, just as self-evidently, the money for which the surplus was sold belonged to the landowner. Trade multiplied “sales and purchases without multiplying things,” manufacturing was “sterile,” only agriculture was “productive.”⁴⁹ The English word *gain*, often a synonym for profit, comes from the Frankish, and, as we have seen also meant cultivated land, crop, or harvest. A good part of the reason why Physiocratic theory seems so odd to the twenty-first century mind is that we think of value in an abstract sense while the Physiocrats thought of *concrete* things.⁵⁰ Concretely speaking, when a human being turns a tree into cut lumber, there is still no more wood than there was before, while any one who has ever dealt with weeds knows that nature can cause increase without human intervention.

⁴⁷ The oldest “modern” economic school has developed into one of the newest. A group of economists, disenchanted with what they see as the circularity of marginalist reasoning, have used the work of Piero Sraffa to rebuild economics on a modified-Ricardian surplus. Sraffa’s method can be found in *The Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities: Prelude to a Critique of Economic Reasoning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

⁴⁸ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 164 [I.11.1] and 54 [I.6].

⁴⁹ François Quesnay, *Tableau Économique*, ed. and trans. Marguerite Kuczynski and Ronald L. Meek (London: Macmillan, 1972), i and v. But see Mill, *Political Economy*, 26: “the part which nature has in any work of man, is indefinite and incommensurable” and playing the land-labor game is “like attempting to decide which half of a pair of scissors has most to do in the act of cutting.” Mill (*ibid.*) attributed the problem in Quesnay and Smith to a “misconception over the nature of rent,” a mistake of assuming that if a price was paid it must be for a service. For Mill, (*ibid.*, 422) rent resulted from the monopolization of land, but Smith, as we have seen, was aware of this.

⁵⁰ See Eric Roll, *A History of Economic Thought*, 4th ed. (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1973), 129.

(2) *Labor and Surplus Value*. A labor theory of value, on the other hand, is actually a *utility* theory: cut lumber sells for more than would a tree because it is more useful (i.e., laborsaving) in that state. Since labor adds the utility (labor in = labor saved), labor adds the value.⁵¹ While Smith believed the Physiocrats were wrong to devalue manufacturing labor, he still subscribed to the concept of a divide between productive and unproductive labor that reveals the *concrete* bias of the age. For Smith, labor used in manufacturing was “productive” because it added “to the value of the materials” worked upon, but the labor “of a menial servant” was “unproductive” because it added “to the value of nothing.”⁵² The service sector consumed, rather than added to, the “wealth” of the nation.

But even if limited to commodities, such a view created the question of why labor did not receive all the remuneration from this added value. Smith retreated to the position that, outside of primitive societies, it was stock “employed for the sake of profit” that put “into motion the greater part of the useful labour of every society,” and so stock-owners were entitled to a share of the remuneration for the added value.⁵³ And, of course, land-owners were also entitled to their proportionate share.

But not all classical economists were pleased with such a distribution. For Karl Marx, the tripartite residuum (profit, rent, and interest) left after deducting production expenses did not represent three analytic categories but three historically evolving social relations: the “laws” that governed them were not *natural* but *political*. If the capitalist system did not alienate labor from the means of production, the so-called *surplus* would be part and parcel of labor’s recompense, and the profit problem would disappear. Under the capitalist mode of production, the laborer was “free” in a “double sense”: juridically free to “dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity” and bound to do so because

⁵¹ See David Ricardo, *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, ed. Donald Winch (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973), 5: “The value of a commodity, or the quantity of any other commodity for which it will exchange, depends on the relative quality of labour which is necessary for its production.” Also Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 34: “The real price of everything, what every thing really costs to man who wants to acquire it, is the toil and trouble of acquiring... What is bought with money or with goods is purchased by labour, as much as what we acquire by the toil of our own body. That money or those goods save us this toil.”

⁵² *Ibid.*, 351 [II.3]; the discussion of the Physiocratic error in devaluing manufacturing labor can be found in 182–189 [IV.9].

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 277 [I.11.conc.].

he was free of “of everything necessary for the realisation of his labour-power.”⁵⁴ Thus the “whole system” was based upon labor’s need to sell its “labour-power” as a “commodity.”⁵⁵

In classical economic theory, the “exchange-value” of any commodity was directly related to the amount of labor needed to produce it, so, under capitalism, labor’s “exchange-value” was its “subsistence.”⁵⁶ The *surplus* (or “use-value”) was just the technologically determined amount labor could produce over that subsistence minimum in a given period of time; it was appropriated by the capitalist in the same manner as the purchaser/consumer of any commodity appropriated its “use-value.”⁵⁷ The capitalist could not create value: “the ownership of past unpaid labour is ... the sole condition for the appropriation of living unpaid labour on a constantly increasing scale.”⁵⁸ Smith *et al* mistook form for function and transposed “a definite social relation between men” into “the fantastic form of a relation between things.”⁵⁹ Under capitalism, then commodity values were “only definite masses of congealed labour-time,”⁶⁰ and profit was simply political exploitation. Theft.

The Profitless Equilibrium

The analytical model of the perfectly competitive market derives from the economists known generally as the “Neoclassical” or “Marginalist” school. For Léon Walras, “*pure economics*” was “in essence, the theory of the determination of prices under a hypothetical regime of free competition.”⁶¹ For Alfred Marshall, the values of all the factors of production (from raw materials to labor, land, money-capital, physical-capital, and management) were not directly set but indirectly “derived” from the values of the end-products to which they contributed: the demand

⁵⁴ Marx, *Capital*, 166.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 470.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 189–190.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 197 and 215–216. For Marx (*ibid.*, 43–45), use-values were “the material depositories of exchange value,” transformed into these “exchange values” through the quantification of the labor consumed in making them: “How then, is the magnitude of this value to be measured? Plainly, by the quantity of the value-creating substance, the labour, contained in the article.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 638.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶¹ Léon Walras, *Elements of Pure Economics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954), 40.

for bricks and bricklayers derived from the demand for buildings (not vice versa) and so must their prices.⁶² *Profit* was simply the name for the return to management for “organization” and “business ability” (as *interest* was the return to money-capital for “waiting,” and *rent* the return to land for temporary alienation):

When a man is engaged in business, his PROFITS for the year are the excess of his receipts from his business during the year over his outlay for his business; the difference between the value of his stock and plant at the end and at the beginning of the year being taken as part of his receipts or as part of his outlay, according as there has been an increase or decrease in value. What remains of his profits after deducting interest on his capital at the current rate may be called his EARNING OF UNDERTAKING OF MANAGEMENT.⁶³

This returned *profit* to the status of a non-contractual/remainder wage. Its *normal* level was set by derived demand, but its actual amount could only be determined after the fact.⁶⁴ It was earned by the entrepreneur/manager/owner for the skillful use of “non-specialized” skills “capable of being transferred from one occupation to another.”⁶⁵ Beyond this, the entrepreneur received nothing under *normal* circumstances.

At equilibrium all the factors of production received returns equal to their values, leaving no remainder (i.e., no *economic* profit) to analyze.⁶⁶ Many things might rock the boat. An

increase of normal demand, or rising of the demand schedule, may be caused by the commodity’s coming more into fashion, by the opening out of a new use for it or of new markets for it, by the permanent falling off in the supply of some commodity for which it can be used as a substitute, by a permanent increase in the wealth and general purchasing power of the community, and so on.⁶⁷

But, whether the commodity followed “the Law of Constant or of Diminishing or of Increasing Returns” it returned to equilibrium prices

⁶² Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1890), 430–431.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 644.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 643. William Stanley Jevons saw the entrepreneur’s wage as “wages of superintendence, insurance against risk, and interest.” For which, see *The Theory of Political Economy* (Middlesex, GB: Penguin Books, 1970), 256. Marshall’s treatment of uninsured risk (*Principles*, 525–526) appears to involve an escrow return than a distribution: a businessman either purchased insurance or built up “an insurance fund of his own.”

⁶⁶ Walras, *Pure Economics*, 225.

⁶⁷ Marshall, *Principles*, 442. Monopolies created more pernicious exceptions (*ibid.*, 465–478).

in the long run.⁶⁸ As economic profit depended on “exceptional” circumstances, “it ought to be left to one side” theoretically speaking.⁶⁹ The important case remained the normal (and normative) state of equilibrium, despite its “ideal” nature:

Equilibrium in production, like equilibrium in exchange, is an ideal and not a real state. It never happens in the real world... Yet equilibrium is the normal state in the sense that it is the state towards which things spontaneously tend under a regime of free competition in exchange and production.⁷⁰

We are back in the world where existence of that extraordinary (*economic*) profit draws in as many new firms as it will take to reduce that *economic* profit to zero.

From Static Economies to Dynamic

Two of the numerous “non-specialized” functions provided by management became the basis of competing explanations of the persistence of economic profit: the entrepreneurial innovation theory of Joseph A. Schumpeter and the uncertainty theory of Frank H. Knight.

To understand Schumpeter’s theory, we might first look at the work of John Bates Clark. At the end of the nineteenth century, Clark put forward a neoclassical theory contrasting *dynamic* with *static* economies. In the *static* economy (analogous to equilibrium under perfect competition), the price of any “article” was stabilized at the sum of its explicit and implicit costs (*normal* profit): the two productive factors, capital (including land) and labor, earned the income (interest or wages) equal to the cost of their use.⁷¹

Five exogenous factors might move an economy from a static to a dynamic state, dislocating the static equilibrium and making *economic* profit possible:

1. Population is increasing.
2. Capital is increasing.
3. Methods of production are improving.

⁶⁸ Marshall, *Principles*, 443.

⁶⁹ Walras, *Pure Economics*, 423.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁷¹ John Bates Clark, *The Distribution of Wealth: A Theory of Wages, Interest and Profits* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927; originally 1899), 79, 201 ff and 331.

4. The forms of industrial establishments are changing: the less efficient shops, etc., are passing from the field, and the more efficient are surviving.
5. The wants of consumers are multiplying.⁷²

The “static state” was merely a model (“imaginary”); at least one of the five above-named factors was always in operation: “natural societies” were “dynamic.”⁷³ Nonetheless, for Clark, the static case remained normative because “All the forces that would work in the unchanging world are not only working in the changeful one, but are even the dominant forces in it”: “Dynamic forces” merely created “oscillations of prices about the natural standards”; they created the situations “in which static forces work.”⁷⁴ Joseph A. Schumpeter substituted an economic actor shaping the market for the impersonal forces pulling on the market in Clark’s view. For Schumpeter, the *entrepreneur* brought technological change and organizational innovation into the market to satisfy (or even create) new wants, luring new capital into the market in the process. Economic profit was the entrepreneur’s reward, not the “mere” inventor’s or producer’s.⁷⁵ While Schumpeter wished to assign a particular cause to economic profit as understood in neoclassical theory, he did not dispute the temporary nature of economic profit in that theory. For Schumpeter, the entrepreneur’s “new combinations” created economic profit because they were more cost efficient than “the old,” but the lure of economic profit always attracted enough competitors to drive prices back down to equilibrium, a state in which “the total receipts of a business—abstracting from monopoly—are just big enough to cover outlays” (*normal* profit levels).⁷⁶

⁷² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 30 and 32–33.

⁷⁵ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle*, trans. Redvers Opie (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 128 and 132. His preferred term was “entrepreneurial profit,” defined as a “surplus over costs” including “an appropriate wage for labor performed by the entrepreneur, an appropriate rent for any land which may chance to belong to him,” “a premium for risk,” and “interest on capital.” Marshall’s *equilibrium* was Clark’s *static state* and Schumpeter’s *circular flow*.

⁷⁶ Schumpeter, *Economic Development*, 129–131. Compare this with Mill, *Political Economy*, 476–477: “Cases of extra profit analogous to rent... Take the case, for example, of a patent, or exclusive privilege for the use of a process by which cost of production is lessened. If the value of the product continues to be regulated by what it costs to those who are obliged to persist in the old process, the patentee will make an extra

If, in Schumpeter's treatment, entrepreneurial profit was essentially a reward for innovation and efficiency (a "new [and better] employment of existing production goods"), it did not, however, include a premium for risk:

The entrepreneur is never the risk bearer... The one who gives credit comes to grief if the undertaking fails. For although any property possessed by the entrepreneur may be liable, yet such possession of wealth is not essential, even though advantageous. But even if the entrepreneur finances himself out of former profits, or if he contributes the means of production belonging to his 'static' business, the risk falls on him as capitalist or possessor of goods, not as entrepreneur. Risk-taking is in no case an element of the entrepreneurial function. Even though he may risk his reputation, the direct economic responsibility of failure never falls on him.⁷⁷

Separating the roles of provider of capital (capitalist) from provider of innovation (entrepreneur) even if played by the same individual, Schumpeter concluded that the entrepreneur "must still pay interest on capital," hence his separation of interest (defined as "a premium on present over future purchasing power") from wages and rent in the calculation of opportunity costs.⁷⁸

From Risk to Uncertainty

But risk-taking had earlier been seen by Wilhelm Roscher as the entrepreneur's unique claim to that strange residuum known as profit: "The essence of an enterprise or undertaking, in the politico-economic sense of the word, consists in this, that the undertaking party engages in production for the purpose of commerce, at his own risk."⁷⁹ Hence, the wage portion of his "net income" (as distinct from its rent and interest components) included a premium for undertaking the whole "care and responsibility" of a venture in addition to payment for "organizing

profit equal to the advantage which his process possesses over theirs... The extra gains which any producer or dealer obtains through superior talents for business, or superior business arrangements, are very much of a similar kind... because he is able to bring his commodity to market at a lower cost, while its value is determined by a higher."

⁷⁷ Schumpeter, *Economic Development*, 136–137.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 154 and 157 (definition of interest).

⁷⁹ Wilhelm Roscher, *Principles of Political Economy* [1854], trans. John J. Lalor (Chicago: Callaghan and Co., 1882), 2:145.

and inspecting the work.”⁸⁰ Because this risk-wage was calculable only after all contractual obligations had been met, it was a remainder in form but not in substance.⁸¹ Still, for Roscher, this risk-wage was still eliminated by the competition it generated:

In the higher stages of civilization, the undertaker’s profit has, like the rate of interest, a tendency to decline. This decline is, indeed, in part, only an apparent one, caused by the decreased risk and the smaller indemnity premium. But it is, in part, a real one, produced by the increased competition of undertakers.⁸²

Frank H. Knight believed that it was only the unforeseeability of change and not change itself that created economic profit: “The effect of any change which can be foreseen will be adequately discounted in advance.”⁸³ *Risk*, at least as used by economists such as Roscher, was the wrong word for the challenge of unforeseen change. *Risk* referred to a statistically predictable and hence insurable probability; *uncertainty* was the better term for the unpredictable (hence uninsurable) possibility.⁸⁴ *Risk* was a cost (whether or not an insurance policy was taken out) factored into price. As an illustration, Knight used the tendency of champagne bottles to burst during the wine’s aging process: the breakage “proportion” was expected, quantified, and “passed on to the consumer” in the same manner as were the producer’s “outlays for labor and materials.”⁸⁵ *Uncertainty*, by contrast, referred to a true absence of knowledge: competitors might bring the product to market before you, undercutting your expected sales (thus increasing your per unit cost/decreasing your profit).

While it might be argued that uncertainty being ever present in innovation, Knight’s theory was no more than a special case of Schumpeter’s, Knight took the opposite position: innovation was only a particular form of uncertainty. For Knight, the key to uncertainty’s role in economic activity was the element of *time*:

At the bottom of the uncertainty problem in economics is the forward-looking character of the economic process itself. Goods are produced to satisfy wants; the production of goods requires time... The producer,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:146–148.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 2:148.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 2:151.

⁸³ Frank H. Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971; originally 1921), 36.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

then, must estimate (1) the future demand which he is striving to satisfy and (2) the future results of his operations in attempting to satisfy that demand.⁸⁶

Profit took the form of a remainder because, being based upon an uncertain outcome, it could not be contracted for in advance, but in substance profit was a return to the producer *earned* for the ability to forecast outcomes (and earned in addition to any compensation for routine superintendence).⁸⁷ Because “the existence of a problem of knowledge depends on the future being different from the past, while the possibility of the solution of the problem depends on the future being like the past,” *economic* profit was a normal feature of economic life.⁸⁸

Monopolistic Competition

The ability of monopolies to raise prices (creating larger than normal profits) was far from a novel concept even in Adam Smith’s day, but monopolies had always been considered exceptions that proved the rule. Edward H. Chamberlin believed that in order to create models reflecting the actual functioning of capitalist economies, monopolies (or at least partial monopolies) had to be moved from the exceptional to the normal column. What was needed was a “fusion of the hitherto separate theories of monopoly and competition,” a theory of “monopolistic competition.”⁸⁹

For Chamberlin, the perfect competition model of equilibrium developed in neoclassical theory contained numerous fatal flaws. In the first place competition could never be *perfect* because economic actors never possessed total knowledge of the market. Secondly, competition could not be *pure* because there were always obstacles to entry into (and exit from) the market. Thirdly, competition could not be *pure* because the items produced by different firms in the same market were not identical but differentiated, making it impossible for them to act as per-

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 237–238.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 227, 271, and 306 (though the actual amount of the uncertainty-profit was not measurable separate from the other wage elements).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 19, 51, and 313.

⁸⁹ Edward H. Chamberlin, *The Theory of Monopolistic Competition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958; originally 1933), ix.

fect substitutes for each other. Therefore, each firm functioned as a partial monopoly, receiving monopolistic profits.⁹⁰ *Economic* profit, then, became the rule rather than the exception requiring explanation.

The Keynesian Revolution

Profit analysis is not a matter of primary concern in macroeconomic theory, where the main focus is the effect on the overall economy of interaction between businesses, banks, consumers, and government; effective demand takes pride of place instead. But John Maynard Keynes did discuss profit in his *General Theory* from both a functional and a structural point of view.

That Keynes saw profit's function as a concrete (calculable) economic motivator can be seen from his discussion of the "marginal efficiency of capital." The most basic determinant of investment was its "prospective yield":

When a man buys an investment or capital asset, he purchases the right to a series of prospective returns, which he expects to obtain from selling its output, after deducting the running expenses of obtaining that output, during the life of the output.⁹¹

The asset's "supply price" (a.k.a. "replacement cost") was "the price which would just induce a manufacturer to produce an additional unit of it."⁹² What linked cost to price was the asset's "marginal efficiency":

The relation between the prospective yield of a capital-asset and its supply price or replacement cost, i.e. the relation between the prospective yield of one more unit of that type of capital and the cost of producing that unit, furnishes us with the *marginal efficiency of capital* of that type [of asset].⁹³

For Keynes, magnitude of this "marginal efficiency of capital" ("much more than" the interest rate) was the "fundamental" force in bringing

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21–22 and 111.

⁹¹ John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* [1936]; Volume 7 of *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973), 135. See Mohammad Nejatullah Siddiqi, *Recent Theories of Profit: A Critical Examination* (Bombay, India: Asia Publishing House, 1971), 114–149 for a detailed survey of post-Keynesian macroeconomic theories. Siddiqi's critique gets less in the way of his explanation of the theories than does Obrinsky's.

⁹² Keynes, *General Theory*, 135.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 135.

capital into the market.⁹⁴ In other words, an individual expecting a marginal efficiency (yield over cost) greater than one (> 1) would invest in an additional unit of the asset, whereas an individual expecting a marginal efficiency of less than one (< 1) would seek disinvestment. A marginal efficiency of one was the zero *economic* profit equilibrium point.

Structurally, Keynes equated *normal* profit with an opportunity cost of capital (hence the *normal rate* approximated the prevailing interest rate): “in order to yield a normal profit, the long-period supply price must exceed the long-period cost ... by an amount determined by the current rate of interest on loans of comparable term and risk, reckoned as a percentage of the cost of the equipment.”⁹⁵ The “long-period cost” included a specific deduction for *depreciation*,⁹⁶ the one form of economist’s *implicit* cost universally included in the accountant’s calculation of Net Income. Depreciation, for the uninitiated, is not a cash outlay, but a way of recording the declining usefulness of a capital asset (such as a piece of machinery) due to wear and tear.⁹⁷ But the “long-period cost” included no mention of a manager’s wage.⁹⁸ In its place, Keynes proposed a risk-return component to the special interest rate discussed above (i.e., the one “reckoned as a percentage of the cost of the equipment”): “if we prefer to take a standard ‘pure’ rate of interest, we must include in the long-period costs a third term which we might call the *risk-cost* to cover the unknown possibilities of the actual yield differing from the expected yield.”⁹⁹ Thus, Keynes broke down *normal profit* into an opportunity cost of capital (tied to the prevailing interest rate) and a risk-return (instead of a service-wage).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁹⁷ Horngren and Harrison, *Accounting*, 107.

⁹⁸ It is possible but unlikely that a manager’s wage was implicitly included in the “factor costs.” Keynes only remarked (*General Theory*, 53) that factor costs were the “amount paid out by the entrepreneur to the other factors of production in return for their services.” The “other” referred to factors other than inventory costs and asset “user costs” (*Ibid.*, 52).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 68. Later on (*ibid.*, 144–145), Keynes enumerated three special categories of risk affecting the marginal efficiency of capital by affecting some combination of the volume and cost of investment. The three categories were borrower’s risk (self-doubt “as to the probability of his actually earning the prospective yield for which he hopes”), lender’s risk (the possibility of the borrower’s default not adequately discounted for in the loan’s built-in “margin of security”), and the risk of a “change in the monetary standard which renders a money-loan to this extent less secure than a real asset.”

What, then, of *economic profit*? For Keynes *economic profit* was still the result of disequilibrium, but a disequilibrium caused by the interplay of changes in effective demand and contractual *stickiness*. Because factor costs (rent, wages, inventory purchases, etc.) were contractual, they could not adjust instantaneously to other changes in the economy, but variations in effective demand could keep the price level in constant motion. In the simplest terms, if an increase in effective demand boosted the price level, producers would reap a windfall profit until factor prices caught up to consumer prices. Rents would have the least impact on this windfall profit because they were contracted for longer terms than were other factors. Inventory costs were the least sticky, because when manufacturers boosted production to maximize their gain from rising prices, they would increase the effective demand for the parts they purchased, raising those prices as well (albeit still not immediately). Labor had the greatest effect on profit because labor generally made up a far greater portion of production costs than did raw materials. Thus labor, stickier than inventory and less sticky than rent, was the key: “Changes in profits are related directly to changes in prices and inversely to changes in money wages.”¹⁰⁰ Since stickiness was a permanent feature of economic life, so was *economic profit*.

By any other name

If even macroeconomic theory finds it necessary to take notice of profit, how is it that introductory economics textbooks (which generally include microeconomic and macroeconomic perspectives) do not uniformly see profit and capitalism as conjoined twins? Some prominent economists have certainly argued the case for an inseparable bond. Joan Robinson saw no “distinct category of income” called profit in either pre-industrial or socialist economies:

In an economy where manufacture is carried on by artisans, the earnings of labor, capital, and enterprise cannot be distinguished as separate sources of income... When employment for wages becomes the main form of production, the division [of labor] is horizontal, between income from work and income from property. Profit as a distinct category of income is a characteristic of industrial capitalism.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 301; see also *ibid.*, 285, on the relationship between money wages and effective demand.

¹⁰¹ Joan Robinson, *Economic Heresies: Some old fashioned questions in economic theory* (New

[In a cooperative society] the current output of consumption goods, and the future benefit of higher consumption or more leisure, will be distributed among its members on some principle or other; the means of production belong to the community as a whole and the distinction between income from work and income from property has no meaning for them.¹⁰²

The incomes conflated in artisanal and socialist economies took on distinct analytical identities *only* in capitalist economies because *only* in capitalist societies were they distributable (and distributed) to separable classes:

in a capitalist economy, property is owned by a small number of individuals who hire the labour of a large number at agreed wage rates and organize their work (directly or through hired managers). The excess of the product over the wages bill then appears as income from property.¹⁰³

In this context, wages were “contractual payments for work of all kinds,” rent “a contractual payment for the hire of land and buildings,” and interest “a contractual payment for the loan (at first or thousandth hand) of finance.”¹⁰⁴ Even wages were technically payment for a loan:

The workers whom he takes on lend him work, but since they have little or no property and must live from their earnings, the amount of work he can borrow from any one man is limited, and usually he pays off the loan at the end of a week by distributing wages from his fund of finance.¹⁰⁵

Rent being a fee received for the loan of a resource, what businesses received in a *normal* sense was a *quasi-rent*¹⁰⁶ made possible by a system (capitalism) in which “anyone who can command finance can employ factors of production in such a way as to produce a selling value of product that exceeds the wages and rent bill involved in employing them.”¹⁰⁷

York: Basic Books, 1971), 25. Robinson’s *The Economics of Imperfect Competition* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1960) covered much the same ground as Chamberlin’s *Monopolistic Competition*.

¹⁰² Robinson, *Economic Heresies*, 33.

¹⁰³ Joan Robinson, *Accumulation of Capital*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1966),

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¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰⁵ For which, see *ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Technically, for Robinson (*ibid.*, 13), profit was “the excess of quasi-rent over rent and the amortisation required to maintain the capital of the business.” As that still makes it a form of quasi-rent, the more general term is used here.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 311.

But even this analytical identification of profit with capitalism has been challenged and by an economist of no less distinction than Joseph A. Schumpeter, who believed entrepreneurial profit could be found in every kind of economy from the “manorial estate” to the “communist society” even though there might be no instantly recognizable entrepreneur.¹⁰⁸ In such economies, when an innovative change in the “employment of goods” was “prescribed by the leader or leading organ of the system,” the “new products” would still be “of higher value than those produced previously by the same quantities of means of production.”¹⁰⁹ This higher value would not be immediately offset by higher costs for labor or land because of their “customary” nature, whereas “the values of the new products” stood “just as much outside the existing value system as the prices of new products in the capitalist system.”¹¹⁰ In other words, the discrepancy between the higher-value products created by innovation and the existing factor costs was *entrepreneurial profit* no matter what the system called it or how the system distributed it.

This, therefore, is the modern definition of profit: an error caused by accountants omitting to deduct opportunity cost from their Net Income reckonings, an aberration caused by monopolistic dislocations of economic equilibrium, a result of intermittent economic dynamism, a temporary reward for innovation, a permanent feature of a quasi-monopolistic system, a result of the time lag between plan and execution, a non-contractual and sometimes negative wage, a return for value added, theft from labor, an elusive motivator, a unique byproduct of the social relations in a capitalist society, or something found in every society no matter how primitive or sophisticated its production and regardless of its socio-political structure. However we look at it, we toil at answering some of the very same questions as did our ancestors. We struggle to discover what *profit* is and whence it comes at least partly in order to know how much is too much because we cannot let go of the idea that there is a “too much,” there is a just and an unjust profit. If that idea has no meaning because, as was the case with the “just price” it cannot be exactly calculated, then why can we not let it rest?

¹⁰⁸ Schumpeter, *Economic Development*, 138.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 139 and 141.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION: THE GRAMMAR OF PROFIT IN AN AGE OF REVOLUTIONS

Drawing on the tensions between the social dislocations of the Price Revolution and age's inherited reliance on *distributive justice* as a social harmonizer, Neal Wood concluded in 1994 (*Foundations of Political Economy: Some Early Tudor Views on State and Society*) that “from the standpoint of the emergence of political economy, the early sixteenth-century, *not* the seventeenth, probably marked the great divide” as Tudor reformers

began to weld politics to economics in such a way that the state was eventually conceived primarily as a mechanism through which diverse economic interests could be promoted and protected and their conflicts reconciled, all for the material well-being and security of the individuals constituting society

while preserving a hierarchically organized, “inegalitarian” society that subordinated “particular advantage to the promotion of the common interest.”¹ Wood's words could, in large part, stand as a fair conclusion to this work, though I would probably draw that “eventually” out over a longer period and cast it back a bit farther, moderating the impact of that “great divide.” It seems clear that the adjustments to their Biblical, Classical, and Medieval inheritance were made by those alive during the Price Revolution more slowly, more unconsciously, and, where observed, perhaps more grudgingly than we once supposed. Yet there were adjustments.

While the previous chapters demonstrate the persistence of profit as a metaphor for comprehending social relationships, they also evoke a world view that seems far too static for a society undergoing the combined strains of the Price Revolution, the Reformation, and the intellectual and political Crisis of the Seventeenth Century. That may be an unavoidable effect of subordinating a chronological to a topical organization, but it is one this chapter seeks to modify. There is no doubt that, during the Price Revolution, the English tried to hold on to

¹ Neal Wood, *Foundations*, 1–4.

their inherited value system just as much as they tried to hold on to the language in which they had been accustomed to express it. But there is also no doubt that subtle changes were beginning to occur, some of which are revealed by tracing the evolving grammar of profit: the ways in which it was proper to use “profit” outside of an accounting ledger.

Delving into this question involves us in matters of both quality and quantity. There is a shift in the *quality* of the usage when Pepys writes of the “honour and profit” he will gain from building a “stable and coach-house.”² This is easily a case of an individual grafting onto himself the airs and language of a higher status: he uses the compound phrase precisely because he knows his social betters believe he acts only out of profit. This is a cry of “not just profit.”

Shifts in quantity go hand in hand with shifts in quality. While for the copious examples of reciprocal profit being prescribed by some pundit for husband and wife, parent and child, or master and servant in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, one can find at least one parallel example in the seventeenth, they are no longer nearly so copious. Only, in fact, in the realm of politics does profit play as prolific a role throughout the seventeenth century as it did throughout the sixteenth. The reason for the lack of change in the use of profit therein is the continuing conflict between political organs for control of the state. The idea that a just monarch seeks the profit of the commonwealth while a tyrant seeks personal profit at the expense of the commonwealth survives the transition from organic to contractual views of the body politic because it fits both: one need only substitute “government” for “monarch” and the old saw provides just as efficient a shorthand for the need to curtail government power. It survives, as well, because the idea of a contractual society, a society that was only an aggregation of individuals in which the whole was never more than and actually subservient to the needs of the parts, was too new for most of its connotations to find acceptance in seventeenth-century minds. But this, too, was changing. When Edward Misselden claimed it was “lawfull for Merchants to seeke their Privatum Commodum in the exercise of their calling” because “gaine” was the proper “end of trade,” and “What else” made “a Common-wealth, but the private-wealth ... of the members thereof,”³ he was not, in fact, seeking to upset the organic

² Pepys, *Diary*, 4:326 [June 1, 1667].

³ Misselden, *Circle of Commerce*, 17.

social order. If he had been, he would not have bemoaned all those who “now a dayes ... live above their callings, and promiscuously step forth Vice versa, into one anothers Rankes. The Countrey mans Eie is upon the Citizen: the Citizen upon the Gentleman: the Gentleman upon the Nobleman” or called for “lawes Vestiary and Sumptuary” as a cure.⁴ Yet he was using a vocabulary that could easily be read in an opposite sense by generations to whom his complaints about social climbing made a much shallower impression than his seeming inversion of the private and the public, when Misselden, who relied so closely on Aristotle was simply acknowledging the historical “truth” of humanity’s earliest history. Hobbes, too, as we have seen, saw society as formed by an aggregation, but precisely for that reason needed to place the good of the whole above that of the individual by creating an artificial organicism. Because the public had been created out of the aggregation of the private, it was dependent upon it, so pursuit of the private was justified, but only in so far as it furthered rather than harmed the whole. After all, so much of Misselden’s work is taken up with castigating those private practices he saw as enriching the person and impoverishing the nation. The most radical among the Levelers, Ranters, and Diggers pushed aggregation into proto-communism, wishing to restore the common ownership of the state of nature that society and private property had abolished, not create a self-centered free-for-all despite the anti-social brush with which their opponents tarred them.

As the Price Revolution gave way to cycles of growth and recession with the increasing quantity and sophistication of international trade in the seventeenth century, and commentators struggled with the problems of balance of trade, balance of payments, interest rates, exchange rates, and paper currency, the scales do begin to tip, but we are still almost a century away from Adam Smith’s confidence on the ability of the “invisible hand” to ensure that every private profit increases the *Wealth of Nations*. Perhaps we can see an intermediate step in the national accounting schemes of Sir William Petty, Gregory King, and Charles Davenant: when they try to compute the wealth of their nation, they do it by adding up the incomes or holdings of its component strata. If they do not tote up individual net worth data as we might, they do tote up net worth by lord, gentleman, merchant, artisan, etc. Though

⁴ Misselden, *Free Trade*, 12 and 109.

how far they are from a truly aggregate view might be seen by their usual contention that artisans impoverish a nation while landowners enrich it.⁵

Changes in quantity and quality can be seen as well in the smaller organisms. In the last decades of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth, children and dependents almost never speak of working to the “worship and profit” or “pleasure and profit” or “honor and profit” of their parents and superiors though they certainly understand their obligations in this regard. All that seems to remain is a ghost of the old phrase in the occasional use of “pleasure” where earlier writers would have tagged on profit. George Montgomery reports to his brother-in-law John Willoughby in 1608 on a place “of credit” gained for John that he might use “to doe” himself “pleasure thereby,” just as in 1603 George had earlier thanked John for his willingness to “pleasure” George with some funds.⁶ Profit permeates the marriage and family manuals of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but when Dod and Cleaver described the same reciprocity in their *Godlie Forme of Housholde Government* (1612), “honor” turned up much more often than “profit.”⁷ In William Gouge’s *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), profit does not appear at all in the senses discussed. In fact, the most common term by the 1630s was “love.” A separation was beginning between the domestic and commercial spheres even though the workplace was yet far from completely removed from house to factory. That separation required a different vocabulary in which to express the obligations of family members to each other, especially perhaps in a time when the rising tide of attempts to explain the ongoing and increasing economic change threatened to make “profit” a dirty word. The separation of the family from the workplace, in spirit if not in fact, seems most marked in the changing view of inter-generational profit. Seventeenth-century pundits did not follow Tyndale’s view that the commandment to honor one’s parents was synonymous with profiting them.⁸ More suggestive, however, is the change in what the parent owed the child and why. Fifteenth and early sixteenth century sources closely follow their classical

⁵ Petty might be considered an exception to this, as he included the value of labor, but still tended to think of people as assets of some preeminent whole. For Petty’s version of national net worth, see Finkelstein *Harmony*, 119–120 and 124; for Davenant, see *ibid.*, 229–230 and 238–241; for Gregory King, see *ibid.*, 241–242.

⁶ Trevelyan, *Trevelyan Papers*, 106 and 44.

⁷ See, for example, Dod and Cleaver, *Godlie*, 167–168.

⁸ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 168.

models (Xenophon and Aristotle) in accepting that parents profit their young children in order to profit from them in their age. If chronology permitted, John Paston's 1465 complaint that he had never profited from Margaret's son whom he had helped "forthward," might have been made just after reading in Gentian Hervet's 1550 translation of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* that parents brought children up for the "profyttes" of being nourished by those children later on.⁹ Common assumptions underlay both remarks. But Martin Luther's admonition that lending could only be from one's superfluity because one could not divert from one's spouse and children what was owed them, he wrote of "obligation" without delineating any future personal return.¹⁰ A minor note in the sixteenth century, this becomes a major chord by the middle of the seventeenth in the works of the Quaker preacher James Naylor, the nonconforming minister Henry Newcombe, and the Anglican Joseph Hall and all without the word *profit*; for these writers parents must "provide for" and "leave" something to their families.¹¹ When Mathieu Molé opined in 1634 that marriages were not made for the personal considerations of the couple but for "*l'honneur et l'avantage des familles*" he cast the alliances' advantages forward in time as much as if not more than backwards.¹² When *profit* makes its reappearance as a parental duty in A. Marsh's *Confession of the newly married couple* (1683), a work specifically directed at the commercial classes who might not be expected to squirm at its use, *profit* has taken on this unselfish sense: the newlyweds must use their fund to the "best profit" so their children might "find that they had frugal Parents."¹³

What is most interesting in all this is that profit tends to fade from the family sphere not just as it is heating up in the political but also as it is becoming embedded in the spiritual. In chapter two of this study, I highlighted the extensive chronological foundations of the seventeenth century obsession with "spiritual profit," but that does not negate the fact that far more was heard about it in the seventeenth century than in the sixteenth nor the fact that Seventeenth-century Royalists and Anglicans were as comfortable with it as were contemporary Puritans. Had profit left the personal sphere by the front door only to re-enter

⁹ Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, 4:157 [#591], and Hervet, *Xenophon*, 22.

¹⁰ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:259.

¹¹ Hill, *World*, 235 (Naylor and Newcombe); and Hall, *Works*, 5:125.

¹² Gibson, *Women*, 43.

¹³ A. Marsh, *Confession*, 9–10.

via the window? If the still small but growing split between profit and honor that marked the turn of the century was an indicator of the narrowing of *profit* (outside of its legal meanings) to the baser spheres of endeavor (despite the age's insistence on the holiness of all callings) and, hence, an indicator of its lack of place in the sanctuary of the family, perhaps the worldliness of *honor* made that term equally unsuitable for describing spiritual matters leaving *profit* (in its merely mathematical sense) in place by default? Or, perhaps, the growth of the affective family simply ran on a separate course from the fusion of capitalism and the soul. To further muddy the waters, the waxing of *profit* in individual spirituality nearly parallels although it slightly precedes a waning of *profit* in discussions of institutional religion. Once one church was established for good without the chance of a Stuart *volte face* there was less and less discussion of the relationship between the profit of the church and the profit of the commonwealth, once so handy a weapon in the hands of those who wished to change the commonwealth's church. Was this a result simply of their being less need to defend a well-established church or of a reluctance to mention God and Mammon in the same sentence except to praise the one and excoriate the other? Not, seemingly, on the part of those like Joseph Hall who delivered sermons on the "Righteous Mammon."¹⁴

This study was not really intended to solve such questions, merely to point them out. Based on the evidence observed it would certainly appear that, in a period of transition, resistance to change leads to inconsistent vocabularies, as words take on connotations in one context they do not possess in another. If there were changes over time in the "grammar" of profit, they seem to have been the result rather than the cause of deeper social changes that moved in complex and possibly contradictory directions.

Wills and court cases document the continuing use of profit as a catchall for any type of gross revenue throughout the period, and justifications of mercantile profit continued to rely (albeit not exclusively) on a conflation of profit and wages though it is clear that in the work of such men as Sir William Petty (1627–1687) that conflation no longer existed.¹⁵ The growing distinction between profit and wages might be an indicator of the growing numbers of landless wage laborers resulting

¹⁴ Hall, *Works*, 5:125.

¹⁵ See, Finkelstein, *Harmony*, 123–124 on Petty and wages, as an example of the greater distinctions made in the second half of the seventeenth century.

from the long process of enclosure and the growth and increasing organization of the mercantile and, to a lesser extent, the manufacturing sectors.

The “grammar” of profit seems least affected by the evolving conflict between the organic and contractual visions of society perhaps in part because it was just as common during the period to hold a hierarchical as an egalitarian contractual view and perhaps because during the upheavals of both the Reformation of the sixteenth century and the “Crisis” of the seventeenth it was the hierarchical views that triumphed in the short run. But this study does not claim that examining the “grammar” of profit reveals why that grammar or that society was changing, only that it does open up a window into *how* that society was and was not changing, into *how* it was trying to preserve its intellectual inheritance during a period of intense social and intellectual change.

As the Price Revolution began, “profit” used in any positive sense meant a “just profit,” a share of a finite resource pool proportionate to one’s social function. This sharing out always favored the needs of the whole over the desires of the part, the good of the greater over the lesser, the long term over the short. The underlying view of society was not of an aggregation of independent individuals but of an organic whole of which the individual was a dependent part. Nonetheless, a reciprocity was built into the intellectual foundation—and into the system it supported—that recognized that aggregate element. Because the whole was in some sense the sum of its parts, the whole worked for the good of the parts in order to sustain itself: the monarch sought the people’s profit, the master the servant’s, the parent the child’s, the soul the mind’s, as much out of self-interest as out of duty. However, while that reciprocity was an acknowledgment of the aggregate or contractual elements within the social order, it was not an acceptance of the independence of the individual. Contracts existed within an overriding organic framework, they were intended to bolster it rather than to replace it, which was why the age was so divided over the conditions under which political contracts could be broken and still debated just and unjust prices.

As the Price Revolution wound down, the English people were in the middle of a great experiment in fashioning their own government, practicing the “social contract” whose theory would not reach its basic modern shape until after their second seventeenth century experiment in monarch deposition. “Profit” used in a positive sense still meant a “just profit,” but this was less clearly defined than before and more fre-

quently contrasted in public debates with profit as the preserve of the commercial classes (in contrast to honor as the preserve of the aristocratic classes). Yet, even such a contrast seems too simple, recalling John Locke's advice to "gentlemen" to master bookkeeping:

Merchants accounts, though a science not likely to help a gentleman to get an estate, yet possibly there is not any thing of more use and efficacy to make him preserve the estate he has. It is seldom observed, that he who keeps an account of his income and expenses, and thereby has constantly under view the course of his domestic affairs, lets them run to ruin... I would therefore advise all gentlemen to learn perfectly merchants accounts, and not to think it is a skill that belongs not to them, because it has received its name from, and has been chiefly practised by, men of traffic.¹⁶

It would seem that the better accounting profit was understood the greater the dissonance between aristocratic practice and aristocratic discourse, but that would be the subject of a different study.

The modern acceptance of the opportunity cost of land, capital, and labor as a necessary return to businesses makes it impossible to compare the modern concept of *ordinary* or *normal* profit with the early modern concept of *just* profit without carefully delimiting the time frame of the comparison. Throughout the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth, for example, most sources still condemned lending money at interest as usury. Most of those same sources accepted opportunity cost on land (putting it under the *commodatum* contract instead of the *mutuum*) and, under the idea that the laborer was worthy of his hire, accepted some form of opportunity cost on labor, even if these items were not analytically recognized under that heading, but the rejection of interest was, in fact, an outright rejection of the opportunity cost of money-capital. While this rejection rested on a number of specific grounds—Biblical injunctions against usury, Aristotelian concepts of money as sterile—the ground most closely related to opportunity costs involved the challenge to divine authority in the presumption of certainty. Martin Luther, for one, was adamant that charging for “the amount which I might otherwise have earned” was usurious because it did not allow for the possible loss the lender might have incurred had he gone “into business” with that money, allowing the “selling” party to evade the “power of God” manifested in the natural risks

¹⁶ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, in *The Works of John Locke* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1823), 9:199–200.

of earthly life, “death, illness, flood, fire, wind, hail, lightning, rain, wolves, wild beasts, and the manifold losses inflicted by wicked men.”¹⁷ Luther was looking at the possible result—loss—of any single business venture, while the modern conception of opportunity cost looks at an investor’s overall expectation as motivation: investors will accept the occasional loss, but no one goes into or remains in a particular business unless they can expect (and, in fact, experience) a minimum level of profit over all. However, even if this difference were explained to Martin Luther, it seems clear he would still have rejected it as a justification for demanding interest (despite his view that laborers were worthy of their hire) because of the challenge to divine authority in presuming a “certain” return.

If we step away from interest for a moment to re-examine Luís Saravia de la Calle’s view (*Instrucción de mercaderes*, 1544) that those who measured the just price by “labour, costs, and risk incurred” were “greatly in error,” because “no merchant would ever suffer loss” in such a case, we find that he did not believe “a bale of linen brought overland from Brittany at great expense” should “be worth more than one which is transported cheaply by sea” or “a book written out by hand be worth more than one which is printed, when the latter is better though it costs less to produce” even though, when he turned to how the “common estimation” of value was arrived at, that estimation included “the difficulty of procuring the goods” as well as “the benefit to be enjoyed by their use.”¹⁸ If he had stopped at “the difficulty of procuring the goods,” his conclusion would have been incoherent as hand-made books and land-transported goods were procured at a greater difficulty as thus would commonly have demanded a higher price, but, if both hand-made and machine-made books or land-transported and water-transported goods offered users equal benefit, no account would logically be made for the greater difficulty of procurement. Yet, this analysis remained a key step away from being a recognition of opportunity cost as no attempt was made to ask what effect on the procurer/maker’s behavior this difference in profitability would have. This is not a criticism of his analytical acuity but a recognition that issues of opportunity cost were not important to the behavior he was trying to foster.

In Thomas Wilson’s *Discourse uppon Usurye* (1572), the lawyer suggested that the poor be given money, while merchants should be

¹⁷ Luther, *Trade and Usury*, in *Works*, 45:298–303.

¹⁸ Grice-Hutchinson, *Salamanca*, 81–82 and 79.

charged a profitable rate of interest before accepting the preacher's view that sin was sin regardless of the wealth of the borrower.¹⁹ Wilson was attacking the recently passed statute setting a maximum legal interest rate of ten percent. By the time Gerard de Malynes was writing his *Lex Mercatoria* (1623), Wilson's was no longer the prevailing view. Malynes borrowed numerous passages from Wilson in order to reach a different conclusion, that while charging the poor interest was despicable, there was really no sin in taking "tenne or twelve upon the hundredth of a Merchant, who maketh a greater gain thereby."²⁰ The justification relied upon the distinction between the results of consumer and commercial loans. In some respects this was opportunity cost through the back door: it was not the profit forgone by the lender that justified interest, but the opportunity for profit afforded the borrower that justified the lender's interest.

The greater acceptance of interest seen by the middle of the seventeenth century pushed *just* profit much closer to the concept of *ordinary* profit in a mechanical sense but not as close conceptually: the definitions of ordinary or normal profit in a modern economics textbook carry neither a moral charge nor a hierarchical one. They do not concern themselves with whether those ordinary profits allow business owners to live as well as lords, and they do not ask whether the level of ordinary profit is so high that it deprives laborers or landlords of their due. The difference between the view embodied in the modern textbook and the early modern mind can easily be seen by looking at an argument made by John Locke during the debate over lowering the statutory maximum interest rate in the 1690s. Having moved beyond a debate over the morality of charging any interest at all, the debate now raged over whether there was a better legal rate than the six percent set by statute in 1651 or whether the marketplace or the government was a better regulator of rates. Locke use a claim of the superiority of a market-set rate to argue against lowering the legal rate, asserting that when the two roughly coincided, men would rather loan funds to their neighbors than deposit them in banks, but when the legal rate fell below the market, bankers (using their monopoly to refrain from paying more than four percent on deposits while using the borrower's need to get six percent or greater on their loans) would "be content to

¹⁹ Wilson, *Usurye*, 236, 253.

²⁰ Malynes, *Lex Mercatoria*, 329–330. For a discussion of his "plagiarism" with respect to Wilson, see Finkelstein, *Harmony*, 49–50.

have more Money lye dead by them ... [by] which means there would be less Money stirring in Trade, and a greater Scarcity [of money].²¹ Locke knew full well that bankers made no money unless they lent out funds, so the *deadness* under discussion was the failure to take a *just* circuit through society:

multiplying of Brokers hinders the Trade of any Country, by making the Circuit, which the Money goes, larger, and in that Circuit more stops, so that the Returns must necessarily be slower and scantier, to the prejudice of Trade: Besides that, they Eat up too great a share of the Gains of Trade, by that means Starving the Landholder, whose interest is chiefly to be taken care of, it being a settled unmoveable Concernment in the Commonwealth.²²

Thus, even though Locke might include opportunity cost of money in a calculation of profit, it would not be a calculation of *just* profit if the interest earned by the banker starved the landlord or the merchant of the resources needed to perform their economic function. Once again the results of the analysis have to be measured against the goals. If the overriding goal is to look at the distributive justice of a particular economic behavior, there is no need to go beyond “greed” as a behavior motivator. We might think of this as the differing results of focusing through a macro- or micro-economic lens, but most sixteenth and seventeenth century “analysts,” retaining their hierarchical view of justice, would be shocked that we should presume the lenses lead to different conclusions. During the Price Revolution, *normal* profit (allowing that word its prescriptive sense rather than its merely descriptive) was the status-differentiated revenue necessary to perform one’s particular social function, the *just* share of the social body’s goods.

How then was the gap closed? Well, one might speculate that the closing of the gap is essentially an eighteenth and nineteenth-century story, requiring, it would seem, a new view of human nature and society to be built up during the Enlightenment on the foundations of Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government* and his *Essay on Human Understanding* and owing far more to the views of Thomas Hobbes that it would ever admit. But it is important to remember that today’s textbook treatments of ordinary and economic profit are not the only possible results of the evolution from organic to contractual views of society, or from religious

²¹ John Locke, *Some Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest, and Raising the Value of Money*, 2nd ed. (London, 1691), 7–9.

²² *Ibid.*, 42.

to mechanical views of human nature. Countenancing the opportunity costs of land and capital as “normal” profit was as anathema to Karl Marx as it would have been to Martin Luther, because, for Marx, that land and capital were the results of the unjust appropriation of the profits of labor. The classical socialist school of economics may have had a more egalitarian view of distributive justice than did the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it still played an overriding role in its economic thought.

And what of “just price” and competition? Sixteenth-century analysts followed their medieval forbears in condemning certain market-cornering practices (forestalling, regrating, and engrossing) that did result in a lessening of competition. They worried, as well, about royal grants of patent monopolies and the exclusive rights granted to chartered companies or the ability of guild masters to fix prices. These also lessened competition. But they ranged from silent to enthusiastic about laws and guild practices that fixed wages, measures which equally restrained competition but from a different social perspective. Nor, when they spoke out in favor of legally set prices, did they mention how those acted to restrain competition. Thus one cannot really say that competition *per se* was their holy grail; competition or the lack thereof was only important insofar as it helped or hindered a more important goal, the maintenance of the social order. The end result of the condemned practices was to raise the price of goods without adjusting the consumer’s ability to pay for them; the practices violated commutative justice because they destroyed the equality between buyer and seller and violated distributive justice because they moved resources away from organs that need them to create an excess of resources in another organ. What then of their support for uncompetitive wages? Surely wages that floated with prices would redress the imbalance caused by inflation? Perhaps, if inflation was taken as the norm, but it was not, and perhaps, if it did not move resources down the social scale instead of up. Employers were higher up on the social scale than their employees: higher wages might result in the dreaded leveling. Buyers and sellers might be social equals, but sellers were generally depicted in the literature as merchants, traders, or artisans. Buyers, on the other hand, fell all along the scale, with aristocrats buying more *per capita* than peasants and therefore gaining a greater advantage from lower prices. Regrating, forestalling, engrossing, and monopolies gave the middling classes an advantage over their social betters—leveling!

Much of what was written about “just price” by medieval analysts was written during the thirteenth-century Price Revolution and the medieval world view was as—if not even more—static than the early modern. Faced with ever rising prices, sixteenth-century analysts were as certain as their forbears that this should not be happening, and generally put it down in the end to human greed. Even those who looked to the influx of American treasure understood greed as the motivation behind the search for treasure. A few among those who looked to the balance of trade came the closest perhaps to breaking out of the mold: while most were content to talk of the pernicious effects of luxury goods, a few looked to the difference between the prices garnered by manufactured goods and raw materials, raising the question of value added. Value added would eventually prove to be the link between the sixteenth-century idea of a “just profit” and the surplus value and labor theories of value contending for acceptance in the eighteenth-century, but that link had certainly not been made when prices leveled off in the middle of the seventeenth century. Why not? What this study suggests is that questions of value added, like questions of how interest rates actually worked, and what velocity or credit did to the money supply, raised the bewildering possibility that economies grew—not necessarily at the expense of other economies in some zero-sum world—but could grow overall, could “create” wealth. Such a possibility was bewildering because it negated almost every single premise of the sixteenth century’s inherited world view requiring the construction of a new one—a feat that not only took considerable time but required a willingness to step off a considerable precipice.

In truth, that new world view was already under construction. Though it is not the place of this study to chart it, a brief survey of some of the other currents roiling early modern society seems to be in order.

Sometimes a *Weltanschauung* is literally a view of the world. In the Middle Ages, such *mappae mundi* often took the form of a circle whose the upper hemisphere was occupied by Asia while the lower was roughly divided between Europe and Africa, and all was surrounded by a “boundless ocean.”²³ The center of this God-planned world was Jerusalem, for: “Thus saith the Lord God: this is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her

²³ Michael T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers, 1066–1272: Foreign Lordship and National Identity* (Totowa NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983), 20–21.

(*Ezekiel* 5:5).” William and Carla Phillips, in their *Worlds of Christopher Columbus*, reproduced a very different map from about 1544.²⁴ Produced in Venice by Battista Agnese for the Emperor Charles V and showing Magellan’s route, this map used the latest scientific advances to map the advance of science itself. The continents appeared according to the latest information from the explorers while its center was the intersection between the equator and a line of longitude just off the west coast of Africa, balancing the world between its two great landmasses. The projection itself relied on that brand new science of perspective to reproduce a spherical surface on a flat plane: hence the curved meridians of longitude. Unexplored regions were left blank, perhaps because Battista Agnese was so confident of exploration’s ability to fill in the rest that he disdained covering over the gaps with *a priori* speculation. The map, the prominent place assigned to Magellan’s circumnavigation, the use of perspective: these represent symbolic and actual conquests of the world, conquests of Knowledge and of Nature. And that such an attitude should be celebrated at all was, in itself, a revolution.

In “High and Low: the Theme of Forbidden Knowledge in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” Carlo Ginzburg looked at the evidence for a change in Europe’s attitude toward knowledge that could be garnered from the emblem books so popular during the period. The change he depicted was hard won. Despite the interpretive insights of humanists like Valla and Erasmus, most of their contemporaries still understood the Pauline admonition *noli altium sapere* to forbid intellectual rather than moral pride: Cosmos, State, and Church were privileged spheres in which independent intellectual exploration was forbidden, and woodcuts of Prometheus and Icarus provided even the least literate reader with exemplars of the path best not taken.²⁵ Ginzburg found little evidence for any establishment acceptance of such exploration until the mid-seventeenth century, and even then, the appearance of “a more flexible attitude toward scientific progress” was accompanied by a continued insistence on the special nature of “the secrets of power”; Prometheus the scientist had been set free from his chains and Icarus the explorer flew free in the air, but there were no emblems toppling crown or mitre.²⁶ Not everyone accepted even this narrow a

²⁴ William D. Phillips, Jr. and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 255.

²⁵ Ginzburg, “High and Low,” 29 and 33–34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37–38.

reappraisal of the hierarchy of knowledge; Ginzburg quoted a passage from John Donne's *Ignatius his Conclave* that likened scientific endeavor to the erection of a new tower of Babel.²⁷

This particular article by Carlo Ginzburg dealt with the establishment's reaction to a challenge rather than with that complex challenge—that mix of price revolution, peasant risings, religious wars, constitutional crises, international trade wars, and cosmological and epistemological upheavals—itsself. Winding through them all is “profit,” a word that implies mastery for profit's central meaning is advantage, and one gains advantage from something by mastering it. To master, one must be capable of mastering. Perhaps what is common to the intellectual currents roiling the age is a reappraisal upward of a human being's ability to master the world viewed, to take personal control (as opposed to the priest's ritual control) of one's spiritual progress, of one's estate, and even one's polity, even if that reappraisal was as much a product as a cause of the upheavals of the day, as often unintended as intentional, and as often fought against as championed by the “revolutionaries” of the day.

Leonardo Bruni called the *studia humanitatis*, “knowledge of those things which concern life and morality,” that “perfect and elevate man.”²⁸ But even as a literary endeavor the Renaissance obsession with drawing “from everywhere” opened sources whose ideas could rock the foundations of Latin Christendom: “a heightened respect for human dignity” that, although “rooted in the achievements of the Classical past” could be “preserved from arrogance by a constant awareness of man's dependence on God.”²⁹ But could such a balance be preserved when the ideas of the republic and the citizen's role in it, of the role of learning itself were imported from a civilization whose very virtues—pride, civic courage, worldly dignity, and secular ambition—were vices in the Christian schema?

Leonardo Bruni was one of the earliest pupils of Manuel Chrysoloras, whose appointment to the University in Florence in 1397 opened up the new field of Greek studies. Perhaps the greatest student of Greek studies in the fifteenth century was Bruni's fellow Florentine, Marsilio

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁸ Leonardo Bruni's *Epistolarum Libri* quoted in Giuseppe Toffanin's *History of Humanism*, trans. Elio Gianturco (New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1954), 156.

²⁹ A.J. Kraisheimer, *Studies in Self-Interest, From Descartes to La Bruyère* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 14.

Ficino. He, too, believed in drawing wisdom “from everywhere” as his translations into Latin of the Hermetic corpus attest. What would prove to be its most telling legacy was its picture of Man as Magus, the healer of the world.³⁰ A Hermetic-tinged Neo-Platonism was equally visible in the cosmology of Copernicus with his emphasis on the “supreme perfection and value” of the sun so appropriate to the still center of the universe.³¹ Yet, although he admitted that we “do not and cannot know the limit, the dimension of the world,” he was only one in a long line of scientists depicted by Alexandre Koyré as reluctant to apply the term “infinite” to the universe because of the valueless cosmos to which that would lead.³²

Still, these ideas seemed destined to lead to ever greater rebellions. For Ficino’s concept of man as the “center” and “bond” of the universe, Pico substituted man as Proteus, the free creator of his own nature.³³ Pico’s studies led to propositions condemned by the Inquisition. Giordano Bruno interpreted the Copernican cosmos as a “Hermetic seal” hiding the “potent divine mysteries” that he, as the father of a new religion, would unseal for all mankind.³⁴ Such a challenge to the authority of Christianity brought him to the stake.

In the *Twelve Articles* (1525), the peasants’ demand to be instructed in “the holy gospel purely and clearly, without human additions” turned into a demand that they themselves “elect and appoint” their pastors. After all, if Luther’s conscience was bound only to the word of God and not to any church hierarchy, why not theirs? The scriptural obligation to pay a tithe turned into a demand to oversee its collection and use. The Christian freedom they found in the Bible led to a demand that their lords neither treat them as chattel nor subject them to arbitrary punishment under the law. The dominion over nature given man in Genesis led to demands for rescinding game and enclosure laws. According to their *leveling* reading of Scripture: “Christ redeemed and bought us all with his precious blood, the lowliest shepherd as well as the greatest lord with no exceptions.”³⁵

³⁰ Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) 28.

³¹ Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957) 30.

³² *Ibid.*, 32.

³³ *Ibid.*, 61 and 98.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 241.

³⁵ Blickle, *Revolution*, 197.

In the cities, artisans and para-professionals such as the potter Bernard Palissy and the midwife Louise Bourgeois pushed against the walls of various medieval hierarchies using the same technological innovation—the printing press—that had begun life producing imitation handwritten books only to so swiftly become a propaganda vehicle in the Reformation. That the danger of the new medium was known is easily seen in the institution of the Index of Banned Books by the Church and the licensing laws imposed on printers by the State. One of the eventual effects of print culture may have been uniformity: the Church, for example, could finally have identical catechisms and liturgies dispersed to all its parishes. But the first effects of print culture were disuniformity. When the ideas in those books interacted with the independent strains of thought long present in town and country, nothing remained sacred.³⁶ Paracelsus presented a world in which everything was created in an imperfect state (*materia prima*) and given a sovereign (man) whose mission it is to perfect it (*materia ultima*) as he perfects himself.³⁷ A far cry from Biblical Fall! As to the means by which God expects man to do this, Paracelsus wrote in terms that transcended the magical operations of the Physician-Magus proposed by Ficino and came closer to the work ethic later to be seen in Bernard Palissy (who had, in fact, read Paracelsus):³⁸

For although iron is iron, it is not of itself a plowshare... So it is with all products; God has given them to us that through them we may preserve ourselves, and He has also given us the arts that we need to this end... Let us not be idlers or dreamers, but always at work, both physically and spiritually, so that no part of us remains inactive.³⁹

According to Paracelsus, those who go about their tasks “in the proper way,” who “know” what they are doing, who display “diligence and care,” move “ahead,” *profiting* themselves and their world.⁴⁰

The methodology Paracelsus suggested was revolutionary as well:

Not even a dog killer can learn his trade from books... Theory and practice should together form one ... [but] practice should not be based on

³⁶ That complex interaction is the subject of Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Seventeenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Penguin Books Ltd. 1982), xii–xxiv.

³⁷ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, xlvi and 109.

³⁸ Paolo Rossi, *Philosophy, Technology, and the Arts in the Early Modern Era*, trans. Salvador Attanasio (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), 3.

³⁹ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, 111.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 204.

speculative theory; theory should be derived from practice. Experience is the judge; if a thing stands the test of experience, it should be accepted; if it does not stand this test, it should be rejected.⁴¹

Is this modern empiricism? No. Our preferred experimental aid is statistical analysis, not Pythagorean numerology. But this was still a challenge to an order in which physicians who had never touched a corpse instructed students in anatomy from authorized texts while the assisting butchers who had never read Galen were without the technical vocabulary to explain what was actually happening in their demonstrations.⁴² Millenarian crusades are revolutionary by default: no establishment wishes to be pushed into reform as fast as a utopian crusader wants it to go.

Challenges to various hierarchies of knowledge—religious, political, scientific—turned into challenges to the possibility of knowledge itself before the Price Revolution wound down. Richard H. Popkin explored this challenge through the lens of “the intellectual crisis of the Reformation” that began at the Leipzig Disputation of 1519 when Luther moved from arguing in terms of the accepted “standard of religious knowledge”—“the rule of faith”—to a new standard based on the compelling effect of Scripture on conscience.⁴³ But without agreement on a standard by which to measure the truth or falsity of any statement, no universally acceptable conclusion as to that truth or falsity of any proposition can be reached: knowledge becomes impossible.⁴⁴ Popkin tied this into the position of Sextus Empiricus whose work, recovered and published in 1562, had the effect of crystallizing the problem of the possibility of knowledge in a world of warring criteria for an entire generation of intellectuals, and leading ultimately to the *esprit systématique* otherwise known as modern science.⁴⁵

The seventeenth century was a century of re-alignment and casting off. In one sense, the *esprit de système* and the *esprit systématique* both worked to the same end: order. The Baconians drew up grand charts fitting every type of knowledge into its proper place. The Cartesians

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 50–52. See also Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 2–4, on the “magical” traditions underpinning the conclusions reached by Paracelsus.

⁴² Rossi, *Philosophy*, 8, discussing Vesalius’s complaints.

⁴³ Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. N.V., 1960), 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1–3 and 187–179.

sought to rebuild the universe from one *causa causans*. Both factions seem to have believed they had discovered a unified field theory even if reading their manifestos now we wonder if they, like Shakespeare's lady, reveal some hidden doubt as they "doth protest too much." Whether they succeeded or not, the order they sought was one stripped clean of any taint of that enthusiasm that had proved so explosive for over a century. The forces let loose in the sixteenth century—Magic, medicine, religious enthusiasm, technology, humanism, experimentalism, perspective, exploration, cultural relativism, the emergence of ascetic diligence, dogmatism, skepticism, pragmatism—proved too rich a brew as the seventeenth progressed. In England, profit began to be used less and less often to describe institutional religious and familial relations at roughly the same time (the middle decades of the seventeenth century) it became most noticeable in charting individual spiritual progress and most contentious in the political arena, despite the ongoing fusion of the family and business in the art (bookkeeping) of tracking "estate management." The river of profit seems to have been rerouted by the general "Crisis" of the seventeenth century. Usury became interest, the "fertility" of money grudgingly gained acceptance, contractualism gained political ground. Bacon's *New Atlantis* depicted a "utopian" existence made possible by the miracles of a science. It was not just a matter of health and ease, however, but of a whole society cured of its rancor. Men trained to the intellectual and physical rigors of the new science would have a new respect for order.⁴⁶ The note struck by Bacon was picked up by the Hartlib Circle as well as the Royal Society and independently reinforced by figures as disparate as Galileo and Campanella.⁴⁷ Why? Well, in England, as James Jacob put it, "its discipline tempers religious passion and helps men avoid the two enemies of true religion, the enthusiasm of the sects and the wholesale submission of the Catholics."⁴⁸ Science was struck off the list of forbidden knowledge because of its powers to preserve church and state. Something so powerful had to be controlled, a less than benign purpose behind the organization of Science into Royal Societies and Royal Academies. The

⁴⁶ Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum, with other parts of the Great Instauration*, trans. Peter Urbach and John Gibson (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1994), 128, 130.

⁴⁷ James R. Jacob, "'By an Orphean Charm': Science and the Two Cultures in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of H.G. Koenigsberger*, ed. Phyllis Mack and Margaret C. Jacob (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 239–242.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

profitability of knowledge, of education, was perhaps never so strongly acknowledged as when restricted. Thomas Hobbes revived Plato's old trick to transform *Leviathan* from mere government to mind control, proposing that the state educate young and old alike, not to prefer their neighbor's form of government to their own, nor to let their admiration wander from its proper sun (the Sovereign) to any lesser orb, to mistrust the singularizing intention as well as the act, and to see a necessary connection between Obedience, Concord and their own Prosperity.⁴⁹

Sometimes a *mappa mundi* is not as accurate a guide as it seems to a *Weltanschauung*. Nothing is all that it seems in Battista Agnese's map. In one sense its modernity is less an accomplished fact than a battle just beginning to be fought, while, in another, less a conclusion consciously pursued than the chance result of a very different campaign, one from which we still reap the profit.

⁴⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 380–383 [XXX]. Johnston suggested that the reason Hobbes switched from a scientific tone to a rhetorical one in his later works was an increasing awareness in Hobbes of the role played by appearance and opinion (as opposed to reality and science) in determining humanity's actions and the concomitant need for some secular force in society to educate and channel this opinion. For which, see David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 85, 106, 119–136.

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