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**‘Nature’s coyn must not be hoarded’:
Milton and the Economics of Salvation, 1634-1674**

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Abstract

Milton's use of economic tropes has attracted very little critical attention, and the connections between economics and theology in his thought have not yet been explored. Blair Hoxby's *Mammon's Music: Literature and Economics in the Age of Milton* (2002) focuses on the influence of economic ideas on Milton's political thought, arguing that the poet persistently associates trade monopolies with autocratic abuses of monarchical power. David Hawkes places Milton's lifelong professional usury at the centre of his 2009 biography, *John Milton: A Hero of Our Time*, and his 2011 essay, 'Milton and Usury,' fruitfully reads key passages from *Paradise Lost* in relation to contemporary tracts on usury. Hoxby and Hawkes have astutely highlighted the relationship between economics and Milton's thought, but neither scholar has pursued these connections into Milton's theology. Economic ideas lie at the very heart of Milton's soteriology, and my thesis offers a historicised investigation of Milton's corpus, demonstrating that the tropes of contemporary economic thought were crucial to his understanding of sin and, more importantly, salvation.

Chapter 1 traces the roots of this economic soteriology to the economic and theological treatises of the 1620s and early 1630s, which argued that money must be not stockpiled but circulated, and that salvation was a transaction between man and God. Chapter 2 considers how Ben Jonson and George Herbert, whose work Milton was familiar with in his youth, used *The Staple of Newes* (1626) and *The Temple* (1633) to respond to contemporary developments in economic and theological thought. Chapter 3 reads Milton's early works as studies of hoarding and consumption, traced through the debate over sexual stockpiling in *Comus* (1634), the sinfulness of a hoarding nation in the *History of Moscovia* (early 1640s), and the clergy torn between their compulsions to covet and consume in *Of Reformation* (1641). Chapter 4 finds in Gerrard Winstanley's *Fire in the Bush* (1650) an explicitly economic understanding of the Fall, and demonstrates how Milton's political and religious writings of the 1650s betray an anxiety that the English cannot govern their economic appetites and, therefore, themselves. Chapter 5 examines how Milton uses tropes of investment, profit, loss, and repayment in the *Christian Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost* (1667) to represent redemption as a transaction between Jesus and God on man's behalf. Chapter 6 reads the *History of Britain* (1670) as an indictment of isolationist economic policies, with Milton demonstrating that free interactions between peoples facilitate national refinement, and thus strangers become saviours.

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A Note on Editions

Milton's prose works are quoted from *Complete Prose Works*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953-82), and cited parenthetically as *CPW* by volume and page number.

Paradise Lost is quoted from *Paradise Lost*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), and cited parenthetically as *PL* by book and line number.

Milton's English poetry and *Comus* are quoted from *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Stella P. Revard (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), and cited parenthetically by title and line number.

Milton's Latin poetry is quoted from John Milton, *Milton's Latin Poems*, trans. David R. Slavitt (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), and cited parenthetically by title and line number.

Herbert's poetry is quoted from *The Temple: A Diplomatic Edition of the Bodleian Manuscript (Tanner 307)*, ed. Mario A. Di Cesare (Binghamton, NY: Renaissance English Text Society, 1995), and cited parenthetically by title and line number.

Jonson's *Staple of Newes* is quoted from *Works*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), and cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number.

Winstanley's works are quoted from *Complete Works*, ed. Thomas N. Corns, Ann Hughes, and David Loewenstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), and cited parenthetically as *WCW* by volume and page number.

All biblical quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from the Authorised Version.

Where possible, I have quoted primary texts from editions which preserve original spelling and punctuation, although for ease of transcription and reading I have silently modernised *i/j*, *v/u*, and *l/s*, and expanded superscript contractions.

We must draw out the bill of our receipts and expences. The bills of receipt are framed thus: we must call to remembrance what graces, blessings, and gifts we have received of God, whether temporall or spirituall ... our bills of expences ... are nothing els, but large considerations of our owne sinnes ... Tradesmen for their temporal estates, keepe in their shoppes bookes of receipts and expences: shall not we then much more doe the like for our spirituall estates?

– William Perkins, *A Treatise of the Vocations, or, Callings of Men* (1603, 131)

Introduction

In the title of his 2004 essay, Paul Harrison asked ‘What Can We Learn for Today from 300-Year-Old Writings about Stock Markets?’ In a country which is lurching from one economic crisis to the next, where universities are run by economists and the government is rife with enough cronyism and financial mismanagement to make a Stuart monarch envious, the question is timely indeed.¹ The dire financial situation in Europe continues to provide a ready source of political capital for right-wing parties, and UKIP’s gains in the 2013 English local elections suggest that isolationist rhetoric is resonating with voters.² The idea that England’s interests must be protected was a recurrent trope of seventeenth-century political and economic discourse, and ailing economies have recently been buttressed with protectionist policies which would not have been out of place in the early modern period.³

The other end of the political spectrum is also finding inspiration in the seventeenth century. To mark both the first anniversary of the Occupy camp in St. Paul’s and the 365th anniversary of the Putney Debates, Occupy London organised a series of New Putney Debates, some of which took place in the same church as the original debates in 1647 (Buick 2012, 17). One of the debates on land and democracy took as its starting point Winstanley’s assertion that the ‘earth was a common storehouse for all’ (*WCW* 2:5), and Joad Raymond maintains that Winstanley ‘is important again in 2012 as a symbol of opposition to corporate irresponsibility, of the roots of socialism in the British labouring classes, of the affinity between communitarian sensibility and the protection of the environment, and of the indispensability of practical utopianism’ (2012, 429). While for Paul Stevens ‘one of the central present-day failings of our culture ... is its public sphere’s extraordinarily short memory span’ (2008, 27), it seems that some of us, at least, have flashes of recollection.

David Hawkes has recently attempted to jog our memory by opening his biography *John Milton: A Hero of Our Time* with the claim that ‘Milton should be judged by the

¹ I concur with Paul Stevens: ‘that scholarship is driven, at least in part, by present-day concerns is of course both inescapable and not necessarily a bad thing’ (2012, 152).

² However, Nigel Farage’s ignominious escape from protesters in Edinburgh in May and UKIP’s dismal results in the Aberdeen Donside by-election in June suggests that not everyone is convinced.

³ The *Wall Street Journal* reported that in 2009, to ‘protect against import surges,’ the U.S. levied ‘tariffs of up to 35% on Chinese tires.’ China responded by complaining to the WTO that the tariffs were ‘protectionist,’ before announcing ‘a series of duties on U.S. chicken, nylon, and other exports’ (Williamson and Barkley 2010). Dimitri Uzunidis and Blandine Laperche have recently argued that ‘the current economic crisis can be linked with mercantilist practices’ (2011, 373), while David F. Cwik describes twenty-first century currency manipulations as the ‘third wave’ of mercantilist protectionism (2011, 7).

standards of the twenty-first century' (2009, 3). 'Capitalist society,' Hawkes argues, 'is idolatrous to a degree surpassing the worst nightmares of seventeenth-century iconoclasts' (2009, 8). Moreover, we live in an age of ubiquitous wage slavery, which is 'not necessarily unpleasant, and ... can often be rather lucrative, but it is nevertheless piecemeal slavery, because it involves the alienation of our activity, albeit on a temporary and voluntary basis' (Hawkes 2009, 9). Milton believed that 'idolatry was slavery' and 'prescribe[d] iconoclasm as life's most basic principle' (Hawkes 2009, 9; 11). If these are the times, this, surely, is the man.

But we must remember that while Milton may offer a means of critiquing capitalist society, he was himself 'the most actively capitalist of any English poet' (Hawkes 2009, 260). Milton was an archetypal capitalist, living as he did throughout his life from the sweat of other men's brows. Usury was the family trade, practiced first by Milton's father and then by the poet himself. Hawkes observes the 'remarkable fact that both the towering geniuses of early modern English literature, Milton and Shakespeare, were the sons of usurers' (2009, 28), and the latter has attracted considerable attention from 'new economic criticism.'

New economic criticism is so named to distinguish itself from the 'first wave of economic criticism, which appeared during the late 1970s and early 1980s' and drew on 'deconstruction, semiotics, and the other formalist approaches that prevailed' during that period (Osteen and Woodmansee 1999, 2). Marc Shell's *The Economy of Literature* (1978) gestured towards the new economic criticism with its claim that 'literary works are composed of small tropic exchanges or metaphors, some of which can be analysed in terms of signified economic content and all of which can be analysed in terms of economic form' (1993, 7). Since then, the 'critical pendulum' of literary studies 'has decidedly swung back toward historicist methods,' and the early 1990s saw 'an emerging body of literary and cultural criticism founded upon economic paradigms, models and tropes' which began to identify itself as the 'new economic criticism' towards the end of the decade (Osteen and Woodmansee 1999, 2).

While ten years ago Ivo Kamps could say 'the nexus between economic and quantitative language and the language of literature continues to be neglected' (2003, vii), the past five years have been particularly productive in this regard.⁴ Recent new economic

⁴ See, for instance, Stephen Deng and Barbara Sebek, eds., *Global Traffic: Discourses and Practices of Trade in English Literature and Culture from 1500 to 1700* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), Peter F.

criticism has moved beyond merely unpicking images of commerce in literary texts and is becoming more acutely historicised, with scholars now exploring the manifestations of specific seventeenth-century economic theories in literary texts. This new approach appears particularly attractive to scholars of early modern tragicomedy, as Richard Kroll's *Restoration Drama and 'The Circle of Commerce': Tragicomedy, Politics, and Trade in the Seventeenth Century* (2007) and Valerie Forman's *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage* (2008) both examine tragicomic writers' engagement with the idea of the 'circle of commerce,' a concept advanced in the 1620s by the economic thinker Edward Misselden.

Barbara Sebek recently observed that 'economic activity can hardly be isolated from political, religious, and other discourses, especially in [the early modern] period' (2008, 4–5), and this is evident in the way the body politic was literalised in the economic debates of the 1620s, with the circulation of money and commodities occupying a central position in such discussions. Kroll's observation that the economic thinkers Edward Misselden and Thomas Mun agreed in the 1620s that 'the East India trade [was] no cause for alarm ... because to permit flows of goods in and out of the nation is to produce wealth' (2007, 45) makes explicit the 'physiological presumptions inhabiting the discourse of trade' (2007, 7).⁵ The idea that these debates literalised the body politic is perceptive, but Kroll's further assertion that Misselden and Mun's interest in 'systems of credit that bind ... traders in Europe, the Levant, India, and the Spice Islands ... clearly put pressure on physiology proper to develop a full theory of circulation' (2007, 7), implying as it does some causal link between these debates and William Harvey's 'announcing his discovery of the circulation of blood' (2007, 37) in *De moto cordis* (1628), seems tenuous. Nonetheless, Kroll's discussion ranges from Davenant to Dryden to convincingly connect economic circulation with tragicomic plots, which are often resolved 'by money or objects returning literally or symbolically to their point of origin' (2007, 1).

Forman develops these ideas of economic circulation further, arguing that tragicomedy is not just about reimbursement, but profit. Like Kroll, her starting point is the economic debates of the 1620s:

Grav, *Shakespeare and the Economic Imperative: "What's Aught But As 'Tis Valued?"* (London: Routledge, 2008), Vivian Thomas, *Shakespeare's Political and Economic Language: A Dictionary* (London: Continuum, 2008), and David Landreth, *The Face of Mammon: The Matter of Money in English Renaissance Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2012).

⁵ I discuss Misselden and Mun's ideas at length in Chapter 1.

new economic practices required the English to reconceptualise loss itself as something productive. Early modern economic theories are thus somewhat Janus-faced. They seriously engage with loss, but they also imagine those losses to be only temporary and ultimately transformable. Moreover, in these theories losses are re-envisioned as the source of something beneficial and positively valenced. (2008, 1)

Tragicomedy as a genre ‘is the product of a relationship between two potentially opposing genres – one that foregrounds loss, and the other resolution,’ and Forman argues that ‘tragicomedy finds its narrative and structural basis in Christian redemption (the *felix culpa*), in which the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve produces the coming and sacrifice of Christ’ (2008, 1; 7). The common ground between Christian redemption and economic investment is that ‘the beginning (loss/expenditure) transforms into a different ending (profit/capital accumulation)’ (Forman 2008, 15). However, Forman maintains there is a crucial difference: economic investment imagines the transformation of loss into profit from the very beginning, and the investment is carried out with the expectation that the profit can be reinvested in the future. The Fall, conversely, ‘is fortunate retroactively, that is, when viewed from an end point, and it is not to be repeated’ (Forman 2008, 15). While this may indeed be the case in the biblical account of the Fall, we shall see that in *Paradise Lost* Eve ‘invests only because [she] anticipates a profit (in part because such an event has been repeated before,’ a description Forman reserves for the ‘strictly economic version’ alone (2008, 15).

While new economic criticism is proving useful to scholars of both tragicomedy and Shakespeare, what of that other usurer’s son, Milton? Critical discussions of Milton and economic matters have been scant until relatively recently. Peter Lindenbaum’s articles on the details of Milton’s contract with Samuel Simmons for the publication of *Paradise Lost* (1992; 1997) provide insight into the practical side of Milton’s economic life, and since the contract is ‘the first such formal contract between author and publisher on record’ (Lewalski 2003, 453), Milton ‘has claim to be considered our earliest modern professional author’ (Lindenbaum 1992, 454).⁶ Since the eighteenth century Miltonists have considered the terms of the *Paradise Lost* contract – that Milton was to receive £5 initially and £5 more at the end of each of the first three editions – to be ‘a poor

⁶ For a recent, detailed discussion of Milton’s contract for *Paradise Lost*, see Kerry MacLennan, “John Milton’s Contract for *Paradise Lost*: A Commercial Reading,” *Milton Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2010): 221–230.

consideration ... for such an inestimable performance' (Newton 1749, 1:xxxvii, quoted in Lindenbaum 1997, 9). But Lindenbaum's unpicking of the contract reveals that Milton was actually a canny negotiator. The contract includes stipulations which ensured that Simmons did not gain profits disproportionate to Milton's royalties, and Milton was entitled to request accounts of Simmons's sales, with a £5 forfeit due from Simmons if these were not provided (Lindenbaum 1997, 14–15). Contrary to the image of Milton constructed in the eighteenth century as an otherworldly artist disconnected from daily life, Lindenbaum demonstrates that he was 'firmly attached to life in this physical world' and 'a poet fully immersed in the material culture of his time' (Lindenbaum 1997, 15).

While Lindenbaum established that Milton was attuned to the realities of economic life, it was Blair Hoxby who first looked at the poet's engagement with contemporary economic debates. Gordon Campbell has rightly said that 'Milton scholarship is a cumulative enterprise, and any scholar who seeks to see further than his predecessors is conscious that he must construct his vantage point on the work of others' (1997, ix). If I have been able to see a little further, it is because I have been standing on Hoxby's shoulders. Hoxby begins his economic analysis of Milton by arguing that 'we cannot fully understand [*Areopagitica*'s] model of intellectual exchange without accounting for its debt to economic discourse', and he sees the tract as a 'fine example of the way pleading for an open market ... provided a model for libertarian thought' (1998, 178). In *Areopagitica*, Milton is an intellectual antimonopolist, opposed to any impediment to the 'free and open marketplace of ideas [which] is the best way of ensuring that the truth is enlarged and that men are diligent and ingenious in its production' (Hoxby 1998, 186).

Hoxby discusses Milton's use of economic ideas more fully in *Mammon's Music: Literature and Economics in the Age of Milton* (2002), the only book published on the topic to date. Hoxby's essential point is simple, but has wide-ranging implications: Milton 'chose to apply his mastery of economic logic as often as not to problems (like intellectual exchange or the preservation of choice in the polity) that were not on the face of it economic' (2002, 238). In his survey of the relationship between economic ideas and the development of Milton's thought, Hoxby offers a number of astute readings. I agree with his suggestions that *Areopagitica* is 'indebted to earlier defences of free trade, which provided a model argument for the circulation of ideas,' that in the *Readie and Easie Way* Milton 'advocated a federalist model that was informed by contemporary arrangements in the United Provinces,' and that in *Paradise Lost* Satan and the devils are represented as

unscrupulous merchants (Hoxby 2002, 11; 62; 157). But there is little need to devote much space to rehearsing where Hoxby and I agree, since where we disagree is much more important.

While Hoxby's readings are generally sound, there are a number of points where he tends towards oversimplification. Milton's attitudes towards the Lady's doctrine of abstinence vacillate throughout his life, and Hoxby's assessment of the poet's beliefs regarding abstinence at various points provide an ideal index to the trajectory of *Mammon's Music*. Hoxby is right to identify *Comus* as instancing Milton's 'first cautious interest in the new economic reasoning of the 1620s,' but his conclusion that 'the overarching logic of the masque leaves little doubt that the Lady is right to hoard' (Hoxby 2002, 17; 24) is unconvincing. It is only in the divorce tracts, Hoxby maintains, that we find Milton 'no longer content with the Lady's ideal of stoic self-mastery' and consequently 'reconceiv[ing] autonomy in more social terms as the power to enter and dissolve contracts and thus, potentially, to circulate sexually' (2002, 58). But as I show in Chapter 3, Milton questions the tenability of the Lady's stoicism in *Comus* itself, constructing instead a pragmatically-minded model of sexual and economic circulation.⁷

Hoxby claims that after expressing an 'increasing interest' during the 1640s in *Comus's* ideas on circulation, by the *Readie and Easie Way* Milton had returned 'to the purity of the Lady's doctrine of abstention,' which is evidence of a 'deep intellectual crisis that would have consequences for *Paradise Lost*' (2002, 87). For Hoxby, '*Paradise Lost's* engagement with the theme of trade is largely negative' (2002, 177), and he believes the great epic marks the final stage of Milton's movement back towards the Lady's abstention. The flourishing long-distance trade of the Restoration period renders 'plenty rather than scarcity ... the real threat,' and Hoxby maintains that 'the crucial moral response will not be the redistribution that the Lady advocated but the abstention that she practiced' (2002, 175). Hoxby's suggestion that after the Restoration Milton solely engages with economic ideas in a negative way is, as I will demonstrate, problematic.

Hoxby is generally attuned to Milton's adaptation of economic ideas to various ends, and at the outset of *Mammon's Music* he observes that

⁷ Interestingly, Ruth Mohl dates the three entries on polygamy in Milton's commonplace book to between 1634 and 1637 (*CPW* 1:397; 400). Leo Miller dates them between 1635 and 1641, while Thomas Corns recently dated one of the polygamy entries to the late 1630s (L. Miller 1974, 5; 6; Corns 2012, 288).

the religious beliefs of authors like Worsley, Robinson, and Petty, who still figure in histories of economic thought, were neither in conflict with nor irrelevant to their tracts on trade. Indeed, their faith may actually have helped them to conceive of trade's abstract operations. It is not a very long step from continuing revelation to the elasticity of wealth, from the workings of providence to the invisible course of trade. (2002, 6)

He continues that 'the contiguity between various kinds of commerce – economic, cultural, and spiritual – had long been celebrated in London's mayoral shows,' and even mentions a few Puritans who 'made the imaginative leap from economic to spiritual commerce' and cites examples of the profusion of economic imagery in sermons of this period (Hoxby 2002, 31–33).⁸ It is all the more surprising, then, to see Hoxby fail to consider this aspect of Milton's thought more fully, and this is one of the main oversights my thesis addresses.

Mammon's Music has a number of deftly historicised flourishes, such as Hoxby's observation during his discussion of Adam's vision from Speculation that 'the word *speculation* was just taking on its economic meanings as prospective investment: the *OED*'s first recorded use in that sense is by John Evelyn in 1666' (2002, 169). But there is nevertheless a sense that Hoxby's argument could be more firmly supported by references to biographical context; while he often shows that Milton was interested in economic ideas, he rarely suggests *why* this might be the case.

This shortcoming has been remedied by David Hawkes, whose 2009 biography traces Milton's lifelong engagement with economic ideas. In a recent article, Hawkes pinpoints Milton senior's usury as a formative influence on his son, and this proves to be an astute point of reference. Milton's connection to usury did not end with him taking on the family business but is likely to be a major factor in his marriage to Mary Powell in 1642 (Hawkes 2011, 508). For Hawkes, usury 'insistently insinuates itself into Milton's

⁸ I discuss the prevalence of economic imagery in seventeenth-century theological tracts at length in Chapter 1. As an example of such a mayoral pageant, Hoxby cites the King's speech in Middleton's *The Triumphes of Truth* (1613):

My queen and people all, at one time won
By the religious conversation
Of English merchants, factors, travellers,
Whose truth did with our spirits hold commerce,
As their affairs with us; following their path,
We all were brought to the true Christian faith. (Middleton 2007, p.973, ll.435–440)

work' (2011, 509), and it is indeed a recognisable strand running through Milton's corpus.⁹ Usury is the key to unpicking the perplexing final couplet of 'How Soon Hath Time' (1632), which urges a shift from evaluating human life as a tally of achievements to seeing it as a qualitative essence, and 'the means to that end is a revised and corrected understanding of usury' (Hawkes 2011, 521). Hawkes's analysis comes alive in his discussion of Salmasius, whom he identifies as being famed across Europe for his publication of a number of eloquent defences of usury, *De usuria* (1638), *De modo usurarum* (1639), and *Foenore trapezítico* (1640) (2011, 508–509). It is true that Salmasius convincingly demonstrated that money was a commodity 'which could be rented and traded just like any other thing,' but Hawkes's assertion that this was an 'epochal breakthrough' should be qualified with the observation that it was perhaps only the first such observation to be published.¹⁰ Hawkes notes that although there is no proof that Milton read Salmasius on usury, a 'resounding vindication of his family business by one of the most famous Protestant scholars in Europe cannot have escaped his attention' (2011, 513).¹¹

Hawkes's reading of usury in *Paradise Lost* is particularly effective, in which he follows Claire Colebrook (2008, 58) in finding Satan espousing the erroneously quantitative view of life present in 'How Soon Hath Time' (Hawkes 2011, 517). Satan vainly hopes that rebellion would free him from the debt he owes God (*PL* 4.51-57), which he thinks can never be paid since gratitude is like 'compound interest, a never-ending, always increasing burden exacted on a regular temporal basis' (Hawkes 2011, 517). He fails to realise that his 'status as a debtor is not temporary or temporal, but inherent in his essential nature,' and that the only way this debt can be paid is through changing his understanding of his essence by acknowledging that his 'very existence is a loan from God' (Hawkes 2011, 517). But far from God being 'a cruel and unjust usurer' (Hawkes 2011, 517), as Satan maintains, the Son praises 'the Father for His genuinely productive

⁹ David Urban fruitfully reads Milton's enduring fascination with the parables of the labourers (Matt. 20:1-16) and of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) in relation to usury. Milton exhibits an enduring anxiety that both his father and his Father will consider him to have squandered their gifts. Instead, he wishes to be seen as 'a wise investment' (Urban 2004, 9).

¹⁰ As we shall see in Chapter 1, Thomas Mun recognised that money was essentially a commodity in *England's Treasure by Forraigne Trade*, written in the late 1620s but not published until 1664.

¹¹ This is borne out by the fact that Milton is curiously silent in the *First Defence* on Salmasius's ideas about usury, and Milton's longest discussion of usury, in the *Christian Doctrine*, 'follows [Salmasius's] reasoning closely' (Hawkes 2011, 513).

usury, which uses even Satan's own activities for creative ends: "his evil / Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good" (Hawkes 2011, 517; 518, quoting *PL* 7.615–16).¹²

Hoxby makes general observations about potential connections between economic ideas and Milton's theology, and Hawkes's readings of usury in *Paradise Lost* show that these links both exist and are worth pursuing. But there is much more to be said, since economic ideas lie at the very heart of Milton's understanding of salvation. Throughout his life, Milton 'resolutely defended the forensic theory of the atonement,' which

understands the atonement as a legal transaction, which was typically described as a compact or the discharging of a debt. In this doctrine, ... God the Father is the judge and Jesus is the advocate of fallen humankind who decides to bear the penalty on behalf of his client, so satisfying the requirement of an angry God for satisfaction and the necessity that humankind be punished for sin. (Campbell et al. 2007a, 112–113)

A range of supporting evidence for Campbell's reading will be adduced throughout this thesis, but a representative example is the Son's recognition in *Paradise Regained* that 'Ere I the promis'd Kingdom can attain, / Or work Redemption for mankind, whose sins' / Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head' (*PR* 1.265-267).

To see how Milton got to this economic understanding of the atonement, we must return to the beginning. The Geneva Bible's argument for the Book of Genesis describes 'man being placed in this great tabernacle of the worlde to behold Gods wonderful works, and to praise his Name for the infinite graces, wherewith he had endued him.' These are the conditions of man's contract with God. The greatest of these 'infinite graces' given by God to man is free will, without which 'he had bin ... a meer artificiall *Adam*' (*CPW* 2:527). To use the analogy so often on Milton's mind, free will was the talent given to Adam by his master, not to be buried in the ground like cloistered virtue, but to be used, and used in the right way. God therefore 'set before [man] a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit' (*CPW* 2:527). If man could use his free will to resist temptation, remain faithful and thereby praise God, God's investment would be recouped with interest as man's talent was multiplied, rendering unto 'God more glory' (*PL* 12.476).

¹² Just as Satan creates a distorted image of God, Scott Cohen offers an economic reading of *Eikonoklastes* in terms of counterfeiting. For Cohen, Milton argues that 'in creating his own image, an image that fails to correspond to the image shaped under the authority of the people, Charles has counterfeited kingship itself' (2010, 168).

As Milton repeatedly reminds us, there was nothing inevitable about the Fall; man was ‘sufficient to have stood’ (*PL* 3.99), like Abdiel, who ‘shows that it can be done; obedience can be achieved, even under severe temptation’ (Danielson 1982, 118).

So how did it happen? Essentially, the Fall was a bad investment of the capital (free will) given to man by God. As we have seen, Forman maintains that the Fall cannot be considered an investment since there is no expectation of profit, and the event has not been repeated before. This is indeed true of the biblical version, but not of *Paradise Lost*. The serpent convinces Eve that in eating from the Tree he not only gained immense knowledge, but escaped death (*PL* 9.679-688). Hawkes has noted Satan’s use of usurious imagery in the temptation scene (2011, 518; *PL* 9.718-722), and Eve wonders ‘if Death / Bind us with after-bands, what profits / Then our inward freedom?’ (*PL* 9.760-762). But her fears that death will rob her of the ‘profits’ of her ‘inward freedom’ are allayed when she remembers that ‘the serpent . . . hath eat’n and lives, / And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns, / Irrational till then’ (*PL* 9.764-766). The serpent has evidently gained considerably from eating the fruit, and Eve wishes to attain a similar profit. But she soon discovers that she has invested her free will unwisely, and is left, appropriately enough, with nothing but snake oil.

But it is not a total loss. With man mired in sin, he is in danger of defaulting on his debt to God, until Jesus steps in to offer him a spiritual bailout. According to Milton’s forensic theory of the atonement, Jesus repays man’s debt to God with his own blood. This does not, however, merely return man to where he was before the Fall. In the *Christian Doctrine*, Milton defines ‘MAN’S RESTORATION’ as ‘the act by which man, freed from sin and death by God the Father through Jesus Christ, is raised to a far more excellent state of grace and glory than that from which he fell’ (*CPW* 6:415).¹³ Jesus’ intercession leaves man better off than he was before the Fall, but we must be careful not to take this as evidence of Milton’s belief in the *felix culpa*.

The most commonly quoted evidence for Milton’s belief in the *felix culpa* is Adam’s speech after his vision of history:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!

That all this good of evil shall produce,

¹³ John Carey’s translation in the *CPW* is corroborated by the recent translation by John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington in the newly published *Complete Works*: ‘**Man’s restoration** is the act by which, set free from sin and death by God the father through Jesus Christ, [man] rose to a far more excellent state of grace and glory than that from which he had fallen’ (Milton 2012, 8:469).

And evil turn to good; more wonderful
 Then that which by creation first brought forth
 Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
 Whether I should repent me now of sin
 By mee done and occasiond, or rejoyce
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
 To God more glory, more good will to Men
 From God, and over wrauth grace shall abound. (*PL* 12.469-478)

Jason Mahn reminds us that ‘Milton, despite how often he is cited as an exponent of the fortunate fall, here merely considers its possibility’ (2011, 49), and Milton implies an answer in his allusion to Paul: ‘where sinne abounded, grace did much more abound’ (Rom. 5:20). Paul’s rhetorical question, ‘shall wee continue in sinne: that grace may abound?’ (Rom. 6:1), neatly encapsulates Adam’s quandary. Milton’s readers would have been familiar with the following verse, and thereby answered for themselves Adam’s questions about the *felix culpa*: ‘God forbid: how shall wee that are dead to sinne, live any longer therein?’ (Rom. 6:2). A desire to persist in sin is incompatible with salvation, and Adam’s uncertain reaction to the Fall is symptomatic of his spiritual immaturity. He now doubts whether he should repent at all, apparently forgetting that the Son only interceded and created ‘goodness infinite’ because Adam and Eve repented at the start of Book 11 (Ainsworth 2008, 136).¹⁴

For Arthur Lovejoy, ‘the two conclusions between which Adam is represented as hesitating were equally inevitable; yet they were mutually repugnant. The Fall could never be sufficiently condemned and lamented; and likewise, when all its consequences were considered, it could never be sufficiently rejoiced over’ (1937, 162). But Lovejoy in fact sets up a false dichotomy here, as contrition and adoration over the Fall are not ‘two mutually exclusive propositions, but rather ‘two counterpoised dispositions working in concert: contrition that arouses adoration and adoration that goads contrition’ (Mahn 2011,

¹⁴ For Ainsworth, Adam sounds here ‘a bit too much like Satan as the serpent, declaring to Eve that great good may come out of her eating the fruit’ (2008, 136). This is an appropriate parallel to draw, since the only explicit *felix culpa* in *Paradise Lost*, as Neil Forsyth notes (2003, 327), is expressed by Satan when he encourages his troops:

From this descent
 Celestial vertues rising, will appear
 More glorious and more dread then from no fall. (*PL* 2.14-16)

49). Mahn sees these counterpoised dispositions at work when Michael's foretelling the incarnation leaves 'Adam with such joy / Surcharg'd, as he like grief bin dewed in tears' (*PL* 12.372-74). This is no mere 'rhetorical flourish. It expresses the lack of any one point of view from which the Fall can be contemplated or univocal discourse in which its meaning can be stated' (Mahn 2011, 49–50).

Despite his misreadings, Lovejoy is nonetheless correct to observe that 'the final state of the redeemed' surpasses 'the pristine happiness and innocence of the first pair in Eden' (1937, 162). However, his conclusion that 'but for the Fall, man would presumably have [indefinitely] remained' (1937, 162) in such a state is 'simply invalid' (Danielson 1982, 211). Milton actually 'takes great pains to suggest what would have happened had man never fallen; and ... it involved a meaningful struggle to be perfectly obedient to the will of God, and it progressed toward a magnificent goal' (Mollenkott 1972, 1).¹⁵ Raphael tells Adam:

One Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return,
 If not depriv'd from good, ...
 Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit,
 Improv'd by tract of time, and wingd ascend
 Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice
 Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell;
 If ye be found obedient, and retain
 Unalterably firm his love entire
 Whose progenie you are. (*PL* 5.469-71; 497-503)

Milton evidently did not believe unfallen man to be static, and the rewards of obedience are profound. But the question remains whether they outweigh the benefits of redemption.¹⁶ A. D. Nuttall argues for a 'naturalist *felix culpa*,' whereby 'the Fall does not

¹⁵ In addition to the works cited here, further refutations of Milton's supposed belief in the *felix culpa* can be found in John C. Ulreich, "A Paradise Within: The Fortunate Fall in Paradise Lost," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32, no. 3 (1971): 351–366, and Diana Benet, "Satan, God's Glory and the Fortunate Fall," *Milton Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1985): 34–37.

¹⁶ While conceding that Milton did not subscribe to the *felix culpa*, Victor Haines's discussion of the doctrine enumerates these benefits thus: 'the joys of hopeful penance and patient suffering remembered in the history of personal sin from which the redeemed have been extricated, confession of personal guilt in the knowledge of good and evil, the bliss of a new communion with a loving, forgiving God, reconciliation, acceptance of forgiveness, thanksgiving for conquered sin, and resurrection from penal death are all benefits of the new

lead, through a long sequence, to ultimate good; rather, it is good immediately. Adam and Eve as they fall are instantly promoted, by authentic moral knowledge, to an arena of strenuous virtue' (1998, 120). For Nuttall, the postlapsarian state is superior to the prelapsarian due to the ethical opportunities it presents: 'the higher state half-promised by the angel would never be the dramatic, darkened field of moral heroism which this world affords' (1998, 120). This is an attractive reading – and Milton indeed subscribes to it in *Areopagitica* – but it is not tenable in *Paradise Lost*. *Areopagitica* claims that 'the knowledge of good is so involv'd and interwoven with the knowledge of evill' (*CPW* 2:514), but in *Paradise Lost* God is emphatic:

Let [man] boast
 His knowledge of Good lost, and Evil got,
 Happier, had suffic'd him to have known
 Good by it self, and Evil not at all. (*PL* 11.86-89)

Nor is the Fall a prerequisite for learning about evil. There are no shortage of opportunities to do so in Eden: Raphael warns Adam and Eve about evil through his account of the war in Heaven, Eve's dream gives them the opportunity to learn about evil and how to overcome it, and they both experience the possibilities of evil internally (Danielson 1982, 197).

It is clear, then, that Milton came to believe that the Fall was positive from one angle and negative from another. It ultimately left man with more than he had, but not more than he could have had. Intermediary loss was still turned to ultimate profit, and in this Milton reflects the nascent economic theories of his time, which asserted that capital could only be accumulated through investment.¹⁷ Milton maintained this economic mindset throughout his career, always viewing hoarding as a missed opportunity for investment and profit.

It was also common in this period for a borrower to specify another wealthier individual (usually a family member or friend) to stand surety, whereby the guarantor agreed to assume responsibility for the debt of the borrower if the repayments could not be

creation that could never have been benefits in the perfection of Eden. Whatever other gifts the innocent Adam could have been given, he could not have been given these' (2000, 87).

¹⁷ In contrast with bullionists, who maintained that true wealth was to be achieved by minimising imports and maximising the national stockpile of gold, Misselden and Mun emphasised that bullion sent to the East Indies was not really lost, but returned as commodities which were then re-exported or sold for considerable profit. I explore these economic ideas more fully in Chapter 1.

made.¹⁸ As a lifelong usurer Milton would of course have been familiar with such practices, but Edward Jones is right to note that ‘how this world [of usury] and its activities found expression in Milton’s writing has only just begun to be explored and assessed’ (2013, 7). For Kerry MacLennan, ‘Milton’s fluency in the commercial lexicon, with an accent on fastidious bookkeeping and the grammar of debt, informs and animates his creative work’ (2010, 222) and my thesis takes as its starting point the two-handed engine of investment for profit and payments of surety, tracing their influence on the development of Milton’s understanding of salvation.

The roots of this economic soteriology are found in the economic and theological treatises of the 1620s and early 1630s, which I examine in Chapter 1. Hoxby gives a rather cursory treatment of economic thought in the 1620s, and his analysis is less secure for it. The first section of Chapter 1 will therefore provide the historical context of early Stuart economic policy, before discussing the economic thought of Edward Misselden and Thomas Mun. The second section will expand Hoxby’s brief mention of English theologians by tracing the development of English covenant theology through the works of William Ames, John Preston, and Thomas Hooker, demonstrating these thinkers’ increasing tendency to understand salvation in economic terms.

While the economic and theological debates of the 1620s and early 1630s influenced Milton’s later soteriological thought, the issues they raised were also explored by other contemporary writers whom I discuss in Chapter 2. The connections between economic and theological contexts and the literary output of Milton’s predecessors have been overlooked by both Hoxby and Hawkes, and I will address this oversight. In the 1620s, stricter enforcement of trade monopolies and a reformulation of the usury laws were proposed to lift the trade depression, and Ben Jonson satirised these ideas in *The Staple of Newes* (1626). In *The Temple* (1633), we see the influence of the covenant theologians who were George Herbert’s Cambridge contemporaries, and his poetry gradually unfolds a conception of salvation as transaction which is a clear precedent for Milton’s economic soteriology.

Chapter 3 argues that Milton’s early works can be read as meditations on contemporary developments in economic thought, seen through the prism of hoarding and consumption. Economic ideas frame the debate regarding sexual hoarding which is the

¹⁸ For a recent account of debt relations in this period, see Amanda Bailey, *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

centrepiece of *Comus* (1634), and I argue that Milton's response to the tenability of hoarding is more complex than Hoxby suggests. *Mammon's Music* also makes no mention of the *History of Moscovia* (early 1640s), which is surprising since it is Milton's first explicit and extended interrogation of different attitudes to trade. The *Moscovia*, I argue, considers the consequences of a national adoption of the Lady's compulsion to hoard. *Of Reformation* (1641), again referenced only in passing by Hoxby and Hawkes, draws together the strands of hoarding and consumption in depicting a clergy who are, paradoxically, simultaneously consumers and misers. In rejecting the excesses of the clergy, Milton constructs a model of economic consumption which is neither ascetic nor libertine.

Winstanley attacks immoderate economic appetites in *Fire in the Bush* (1650), which criticises the greed of those who seek to amass private property and exclude their fellow men from enjoying a fair share of the earth. For Winstanley, the Garden of Eden was not a historical place but the soul of every man, and the Fall was an economic attitude. It was a submission to covetousness which manifested itself in both the jealous maintenance of private property and working for hire. Milton exhibits a similar distaste for hire in the *First Defence of the English People* (1651), which depicts Salmasius as a grasping mercenary. Milton treats hirelings at greater length in *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings* (1659), which develops a more nuanced response to the issue of hire than Winstanley's blanket prohibition. Milton proposes that the clergy support themselves by learning a trade, reflecting the easy congruence of economic and spiritual matters in his mind. Having addressed the covetousness of the clergy, in the *Readie and Easie Way* Milton turns his attention to the avarice of the English. With the Restoration looming, Milton frantically sketched a viable republican political settlement. Yet for all his protestations of the assured prosperity of his new commonwealth, he seems all too aware that his countrymen will find their appetites better sated under a monarchy.

While Hoxby and Hawkes argue that Milton's post-Restoration works only represent economic ideas in a negative sense, Chapter 5 will demonstrate that the *Christian Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost* are reliant on economic imagery to construct their soteriology. In the *Christian Doctrine* Milton draws on economics in a similar way to earlier covenant theologians, but it is in *Paradise Lost* that we find the most eloquent account of his economic soteriology. The negative economic associations of the poem – such as imperialism in the New World and Satan being characterised as a spice trader – have been

amply discussed by Hoxby and his predecessors, so I need not retread their ground. To create a more nuanced reading, I will instead consider how Milton represents economic ideas both positively and negatively in his great epic. The latter will be treated in my analysis of the devils' mining and metallurgy in Book 1, where Milton's debt to Biringuccio's *De la pirotechnia* (1540) has previously gone unnoticed by scholars. But for all the satanic associations of gold and trade in the poem, the language of economics is not exclusively negative in *Paradise Lost*. Milton repeatedly conceptualises sin and salvation in terms of debt, repayment, and profit, and economic ideas are fundamental to the poem's soteriological message. *Paradise Lost* represents both the Fall and the atonement as economic exchanges, with Eve being convinced by Satan to invest her capital, free will, in consumption of the Tree of Knowledge. The immense profit promised fails to materialise and her capital looks to have been squandered. But Jesus, acting like the guarantor so familiar from Milton's family trade, steps in and pays off man's debt to God, producing considerable profit for both parties.

This idea of salvation through external intervention is further developed in another text overlooked by both Hoxby and Hawkes, the *History of Britain* (1670). The ancient Britons are uncivilised and barbaric, and Chapter 6 demonstrates how the successive invasions by Romans, Saxons, and Danes, while initially devastating, are shown in time to be the means by which new ideas and practices are introduced to Britain. Echoing various contemporary economic tracts which argued that foreign immigration would improve the economic situation of the English, the *History* demonstrates the importance of foreign influence. Milton maintains that a free trade in ideas is the sole means by which the country can escape its barbaric primitive state and move from sin to salvation.

Chapter 1

‘The husbandman in the seed-time ... casteth away much good corn into the ground’: Early Seventeenth-Century Economic and Theological Thought

Mirabell: I wonder there is not an Act of Parliament to save the Credit of the Nation, and prohibit the Exportation of Fools.

Fainall: By no means, ’tis better as ’tis; ’tis better to Trade with a little Loss, than to be quite eaten up, with being overstock’d.

– Congreve, *The Way of the World* (1.1.201-206)

In placing economic and theological thinkers alongside each other, there is a ‘danger of arguing by analogy, as if homologies indicate shared causalities, or arbitrary specimens of a cultural field were synecdoches of the whole’ (Barbour 2000, 197), but Derrida reminds us that ‘the economic and the semio-linguistic sciences are no more juxtaposed than subordinated to each other. Their overlapping and cross-checking within a general theory of need and overabundance draws a more complex figure’ (1987, 102). This ‘complex figure’ has attracted increasing attention recently, with a number of essays emphasising the congruence between economics and theology in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁹ Valerie Forman’s reading of Elizabethan and early Jacobean tragicomedy ‘through the lens of economic theory’ has revealed how ‘merchants, economic theorists, and tragicomic playwrights all resolve the problem of present loss by reconceptualising it as a transformable source of legitimate, future profit,’ and that the common root of this new understanding was the *felix culpa* (2008, 1; 14; 7). But while Forman discusses Misselden and Mun alongside literary texts published up to the end of the 1620s, there is not a single mention of the covenant theology which was flourishing in England in this period.²⁰ This is a serious oversight, since nowhere is the overlap between economic and theological

¹⁹ Odd Langholm (2009) and John Singleton (2011) have attempted to restore Luther to his proper place in the history of economic thought, while Peter Harrison has demonstrated that in the early modern period the phrase ‘invisible hand’ most commonly referred to the Calvinist conception of providence, and so ‘when [Adam] Smith’s first readers encountered the phrase in his writings they would naturally have read it in a way that was in keeping with the predominant usage’ (2011, 45).

²⁰ Forman’s discussion ranges over Shakespeare, Fletcher, Webster, and Massinger, so we see Milton joining an established tradition of literary writers who drew on the interplay between economic and theological thought. These spheres would also overlap potently in Gerrard Winstanley’s writing, discussed below in Chapter 4.

concepts more apparent than in covenant theology, which patterned itself on the economic exigencies of everyday life, constructing God as a landlord, Jesus as a guarantor, and postlapsarian man as a debtor who must keep up payments on his spiritual rent. The blurring of the boundaries between economics and theology in the 1620s and 1630s is not only evident in their shared vocabulary of contract, investment, profit, and loss, but in the way the ‘mental universe’ of Edward Misselden and Thomas Mun was ‘dominated ... by the very same organicism that defined the world of Johannes Kepler, Richard Hooker, or William Perkins’ (Finkelstein 2000a, 25).²¹ In order to provide a firm basis for the later discussion of the influence of contemporary economic debates on Milton’s soteriology, this chapter will outline the main developments in economic and theological thought in the early seventeenth century. The first section will provide the historical context of early Stuart economic policy, before discussing the economic thought of Edward Misselden and Thomas Mun.²² The second section will trace the development of English covenant theology through the works of William Ames, John Preston, and Thomas Hooker, demonstrating these thinkers’ increasing tendency to understand salvation in economic terms.²³

In 1603, James I acceded to the throne of a nation £400,000 in debt (Russell 2011, 158). Despite this deficit, exports of England’s primary product, white broadcloth, grew constantly during the first decade of his reign and reached their ‘highest ever level in 1614’ (Suprinyak 2011a, 465). While exports of broadcloth provided a steady national income, ‘most of the profit on cloth was from the finishing and dyeing process,’ and ‘since most

²¹ While ‘organicism’ (at least in the field of literary criticism) carries Romantic connotations, it here refers to the fact that ‘the people of the early seventeenth century had no conception of a distinct “economic” dimension of life, and if we are to understand their thinking we must suspend our artificial and reified notion that the “economy” is an identifiable “sphere” or “thing”’ (Hawkes 2003, 79). The works of the covenant theologian William Perkins sat alongside Hakluyt’s *Voyages* in the standard reading matter supplied by the East India Company to its ships (Wright 1943, 71), and Joyce Appleby suggests that the proliferation of economic literature of the early 1620s ‘owes its existence, in all probability, to the outpouring of writings on religion and politics’ (1978, 4).

²² This section is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of early seventeenth-century economic thought; I will only discuss those writers whose works were well-known enough to be familiar to those, like Milton, who moved in learned circles. I therefore focus only on the most prominent economic thinkers of the period, Edward Misselden and Thomas Mun, and pass over minor figures such as Thomas Milles, Dudley Digges, and Rice Vaughan. Gerard de Malynes, although writing in the 1620s, sits uneasily alongside Misselden and Mun because he was ‘a man living well beyond his time, for he took his sixteenth-century ideas, pristine and uncompromised, into the controversial arena’ (Supple 1959, 211). I do not discuss Malynes at length because his atavistic economic ideology has little relevance to a thesis discussing Milton’s use of nascent contemporary economic thought.

²³ This thesis examines the influence of economics on Milton’s theology and not the influence of theology on Milton’s economics, and I place the same emphasis in this chapter. My argument is that English covenant theology is suffused with economic language and ideas, not that English economic writers were influenced by covenant theologians. I have found no evidence of Mun’s religious affiliations or sympathies, and Misselden was certainly no friend of radical covenant theologians like Thomas Hooker, as I discuss below.

English cloth was exported unfinished ... the Dutch finishing manufacturers took the cream of the profits' (Coward 2011, 15). In 1614, William Cockayne, an advisor to James I who had become 'enormously wealthy' by 'export[ing] cloth to the Baltic on a considerable scale' saw the opportunity to carry out 'what he considered to be the great project of his life: the dyeing and dressing of all cloths made in England before their exportation' (Aldous 2009). Cockayne proposed that

the export of unfinished cloth should be banned, that the monopoly of the Merchant Adventurers be rescinded, and that he and his syndicate should establish a new company to take over the profitable dyeing process and control the export of the cloth. The crown, through increased customs duties, would gain from the enhanced value of the trade, and Cockayne also offered James a substantial cash payment. (Coward 2011, 15)²⁴

While this was a risky proposition 'at a time when cloth constituted 80 percent of English exports' (Selwood 2010, 38), the king accepted Cockayne's plan, revoked the Merchant Adventurers' monopoly, and established the New Merchant Adventurers Company in its place. However,

the entire scheme began to collapse even as it was officially put into place. Most of the prominent members of the old Merchant Adventurers declined to be part of the new guild. Further, James did not predict that the Dutch, who made much of their profits in the dyeing and dressing of wool, would be so angered by this affront to their industry that they would immediately ban the import of all English cloth. (Hentschell 2008, 161)

Either of these problems in isolation could have been overcome, but with the Dutch market gone and the new company lacking 'the Merchant Adventurers' marketing contacts in Europe' (Coward 2011, 15), it was difficult to find replacement buyers. This situation was exacerbated by English craftsmen not possessing 'sufficient skill in the art of dyeing cloth'

²⁴ In addition to the works cited in this section, older but still useful accounts of the Cockayne Plan can be found in B. E. Supple, *Commercial Crisis and Change in England, 1600-1642: A Study in the Instability of a Mercantile Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), R. W. K. Hinton, *The Eastland Trade and the Common Weal in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), and Astrid Friis, *Alderman Cockayne's Project and the Cloth Trade: The Commercial Policy of England in its Main Aspects, 1603-1625* (London: Humphrey Milford/Oxford University Press, 1927).

(Coward 2011, 15), leaving most Europeans unimpressed by the inferior quality of English finished cloth. Consequently, there was ‘a dramatic falling off in the export of cloth’ (Benson 2002, 48) and the ‘substantial increase in profits, customs, and employment’ (Cramsie 2002, 132) promised by Cockayne failed to materialise.²⁵ In 1617 the New Merchant Adventurers Company was dissolved and the former company’s charter was regranted in exchange for ‘a lump-sum payment of £80,000’ and the usual ‘gifts and bribes to courtiers’ (Brenner 2003, 211). The failed project ‘fundamentally altered England’s cloth trade and its commercial relations with the continent. English exports of unfinished shortcloths would never again reach their pre-project levels’ (Benson 2002, 79–80), and even in 1640 ‘the value of exports was less than it had been before 1615’ (Muldrew 2012, 512).

By 1618 ‘the Crown’s debt had reached £900,000’ (Brenner 2003, 200), and England’s already shaky financial situation was exacerbated by economic preparations on the continent for the Thirty Years War. Events in the Holy Roman Empire are representative:

in order to raise the armies necessary for the war, governments needed to raise large sums of money to pay mercenaries ... [but] a unified tax code was impossible in the ‘crazy quilt’ of territories which formed the empire, each with its own partisan interests. The easiest solution for those in power was to strike more debased coins. The effect of debasing within one’s own borders could be further enhanced by going outside the territory, exchanging the debased coins for good coins, and then returning these for further debasement. (Paas 2012, 12)

The debased coins spread throughout Europe due to both the intentional circulation described above and the operation of Gresham’s Law.²⁶ Having coins of the same nominal but different intrinsic value circulating together was problematic enough, but this was exacerbated because the inevitable consequence of a currency debasement was an inflation of that currency (Munro 2008, 41). It therefore became increasingly difficult to accurately

²⁵ Between 25 December 1614 and 25 March 1615, the number of cloths exported from London ‘declined by 17,211 from the first quarter of the previous year. This decline was almost entirely in the trade of unfinished cloth and accounted for a loss of £6000 in customs duties for the Crown’ (Benson 2002, 48).

²⁶ Gresham’s Law is named for financier Thomas Gresham (1519-1579), although the idea was articulated in the mid-fourteenth century by the French philosopher, Nicole Oresme. The principle is that ‘bad money drives out good money’: following a currency debasement, ‘so long as coins circulated only by tale (face-value), no rational, informed person would spend higher-silver content coins of the same face value. Instead, most merchants would melt down and hoard the better coins as bullion, or sell them for export to foreign mints, especially those engaged in debasements’ (Munro 2012, 16).

determine international exchange rates, which further problematised trade between European countries.

The domestic and international economic challenges faced by England in the early 1620s prompted an outpouring of debate regarding both causes and solutions. But before delving into the economic tracts themselves, it will be useful to begin by considering the ideology they putatively propound: mercantilism.²⁷ The economic writers commonly considered mercantilists never described themselves as such, and indeed the term mercantilism itself was ‘coined by its opponents’ (de Deugd and Hoen 2010, 20). It is rooted in Victor Riqueti de Mirabeau’s use of the term *système mercantile* in his *Philosophie Rurale* (1763) to describe the ‘economic policy regime characterized by direct state intervention, intended to protect domestic merchants and manufacturers’ which prevailed in France in the later seventeenth century and was ‘designed primarily to finance state manufactories’ (Magnusson 2003, 46).

Mercantilism was more fully theorised in Adam Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), and this work came to define the characteristics of mercantilism for later commentators. The *Wealth of Nations* critiques at length the ‘commercial, or mercantile system’ (A. Smith 1976, 429), and identifies the fundamental error of this system as the belief that ‘wealth consists in money, or in gold and silver’ (1976, 429). Smith denies that wealth can be increased simply by stockpiling bullion: we would not attempt to

increase the good cheer of private families, by obliging them to keep an unnecessary number of kitchen utensils ... [because] it would be absurd to have more pots and pans than were necessary for cooking the victuals usually consumed ... [and] if the quantity of victuals were to increase, the number of pots and pans would readily increase along with it, a part of the increased quantity of victuals being employed in purchasing them, or in maintaining an additional number of workmen whose business it was to make them. (1976, 439–440)

²⁷ Mercantilism commonly attracts scant attention in histories of economic thought, often a mere paragraph in sections discussing Adam Smith. A recent exception to this is Warren J. Samuels, Jeff E. Biddle, and John B. Davis (eds.), *A Companion to the History of Economic Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003), which includes an excellent essay on the topic by Lars Magnusson (pp.46-60). Magnusson’s *Mercantilism: The Shaping of an Economic Language* (London: Routledge, 1994) is also an invaluable survey of the evolution of the concept. Andrea Finkelstein’s *Harmony and the Balance: An Intellectual History of Seventeenth-Century English Economic Thought* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000) offers an illuminating discussion of Misselden and Mun, although she questions the validity of the term ‘mercantilism’.

Smith is not part of ‘the croud ... set agape’ by ‘Grooms besmeared with Gold’ (*PL* 5.355-6), as he rejects the mercantile system’s fetishisation of precious metals, arguing that gold and silver are subject to the same laws of supply and demand as any other commodity.

They are mere

utensils ... as much as the furniture of the kitchen. Increase the use for them, increase the consumable commodities which are to be circulated, managed, and prepared by means of them, and you will infallibly increase the quantity; but if you attempt, by extraordinary means, to increase the quantity, you will infallibly diminish the use and even the quantity too, which in those metals can never be greater than what the use requires. Were they ever to be accumulated beyond this quantity, their transportation is so easy, and the loss which attends their lying idle and unemployed so great, that no law could prevent their being immediately sent out of the country. (1976, 440)²⁸

The mercantile system’s preoccupation with gold and silver ‘leads to an obsession with the balance of trade’ (Rothschild and Sen 2006, 340), and so ‘the encouragement of exportation, and the discouragement of importation are the two great engines by which the mercantile system proposes to enrich every country’ (A. Smith 1976, 642). In the mercantile system, an export surplus ‘earned gold and silver’ (Kennedy 2010, 129) because ‘when the country exported to a greater value than it imported, a balance became due to it from foreign nations, which was necessarily paid to it in gold and silver’ (A. Smith 1976, 432). But Smith believed there was nothing ‘more absurd than this whole doctrine of the balance of trade’ (1976, 488), both in theory and in practice.

In the sixteenth century ‘various nations entered into ... a commercial struggle, which was fought out in wars, protective duties and prohibitions ... trade had from now on a political significance’ (Marx and Engels 1998, 5:69), and this ‘conjunction between politics and the economy ... turned the globe into a theatre of perpetual commercial war’ (Hont 2010, 6). International trade was conceptualised as a zero-sum game in which each nation ‘look[ed] with an invidious eye upon the prosperity of all the nations with which it

²⁸ The young Marx made a similar observation in *Comments on James Mill’s Éléments d’économie politique* (1844): ‘the crude economic superstition of the people and governments clings to the *sensuous, tangible, conspicuous* money-bag, and therefore believes both in the absolute value of the precious metals and possession of them as the sole reality of wealth ... then the enlightened, worldly-wise economist comes forward and proves to them that money is a commodity like any other, the value of which, like that of any other commodity, depends therefore on the relation of the cost of production to demand, competition, and supply, to the quantity or competition of the other commodities’ (Marx and Engels 1998, 3:213).

trade[d], and ... consider[ed] their gain as its own loss' (A. Smith 1976, 493), and the theoretical premise of the balance of trade was that 'if the balance be even, neither of [the trading partners] either loses or gains; but if it leans in any degree to one side, that one of them loses, and the other gains in proportion to its declension from the exact equilibrium' (A. Smith 1976, 489). Smith used the example of two nations trading their native commodities to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the zero-sum model. If the commodities traded were of equal financial value, this would be an equally balanced trade in the zero-sum model, with no benefit or loss to either nation. But this was untrue, as

if the balance be even, and if the trade between the two places consist altogether in the exchange of their native commodities, they will, upon most occasions, not only both gain, but they will gain equally, or very near equally; each will in this case afford a market for a part of the surplus produce of the other: each will replace a capital which had been employed in raising and preparing for the market this part of the surplus produce of the other, and which had been distributed among, and given revenue and maintenance to a certain number of its inhabitants. Some part of the inhabitants of each, therefore, will indirectly derive their revenue and maintenance from the other. (A. Smith 1976, 489)

The theoretical issues underlying the balance of trade model were compounded by more pragmatic problems. The balance of trade was determined by tallying the records of imports and exports in the customhouse books, which presented its own difficulties: 'heavy duties being imposed upon almost all goods imported, our merchant importers smuggle as much, and make entry of as little as they can. Our merchant exporters, on the contrary, make entry of more than they export; sometimes out of vanity, and to pass for great dealers in goods which pay no duty; and sometimes to gain a bounty or a drawback' (A. Smith 1976, 883). The customhouse books therefore appear to show exports which greatly overbalance imports, 'to the unspeakable comfort of those politicians who measure the national prosperity by what they call the balance of trade' (A. Smith 1976, 883), despite the true figures being quite different.

Smith's definition of the mercantile system became the standard for the following two centuries, and even into the first half of the twentieth century, the concept of mercantilism, as it was now known, was 'indispensable and relatively unproblematic' (Ormrod 2003, 3). The most notable of this generation of economic historians was Eli

Heckscher, whose *Mercantilism* (1931) was an ‘all-encompassing attempt to come up with a definitive portrait of mercantilist doctrines and policies’ (Suprinyak 2011a, 462) and accordingly defined mercantilism as both ‘a uniform body of doctrine’ and ‘a phase in the history of economic policy’ (Heckscher 1955, 27; 19). For Heckscher, mercantilism itself was a ‘unified, coherent system,’ and economic policy should not be viewed as ‘the outcome and result of the actual economic situation’ (1955, 21; 20), two assertions which proved highly contentious.

In an article first published in 1939, A. V. Judges questioned the theoretical unity of mercantilism, reminding us that for ‘an “ism” to be worthy of serious consideration [it] must offer a coherent doctrine, or at least a handful of settled principles’ (1969, 35). No such coherent principles are found in seventeenth-century economic thought, and Judges concluded that ‘mercantilism never had a creed; nor was there a priesthood dedicated to its service’ (1969, 35) and so the ‘altar’ of mercantilism supposedly uncovered by Smith and Heckscher was nothing more than an ‘archaeological reconstruction ... first erected by men who fortified their attachments to their own faith by abusing the discredited and superstitious antics of their ancestors’ (1969, 36).²⁹ D. C. Coleman’s 1957 article ‘Eli Heckscher and the Idea of Mercantilism’ took issue with Heckscher’s separation of economic policy from its historical context, arguing that ‘because of his reluctance to concede that the ideas and policies of the time might owe something to contemporary awareness of economic reality, however crude or empirical, Heckscher did not bring out at all clearly certain fundamental distinctions both in ideas and in circumstances in the so-called “mercantilist” period’ (1969, 109). For Coleman, Heckscher’s use of the term ‘mercantilism’ was more than a mere reductive misnomer, but actually obstructed the historiographical process, as it ‘serve[d] to give a false unity to disparate events, to conceal the close-up reality of particular times and particular circumstances, to blot out the vital intermixture of ideas and preconceptions, of interests and influences, political and economic, and of the personalities of men, which it is the historian’s job to examine’ (1969, 117).

While Coleman conceded that ‘as a description of a trend of economic thought, the term [mercantilism] may well be useful, and worth retaining’ (1969, 117), recent economic historians tend to use the term only with qualifications and caveats: ‘I understand mercantilism not as a science of economic thought but as a contested label for various

²⁹ B. E. Supple concurred that it was unwise to use the term mercantilism when discussing seventeenth-century government policy, ‘for this would be tacitly to assume a full-blown system of doctrine and policy which we may feel did not exist, and would imply a continuity and momentum in official outlook which have been more conspicuous in history books than history’ (1959, 229).

forms of economic policy. That is, theory followed experience. In short, there was no one universal mercantilism but rather many, depending on time, place, and interests' (Koot 2007, 133 n.3).

It is now recognised that mercantilism did not exist in the seventeenth century as an overarching ideal which systematically shaped government policy, but 'originated with Adam Smith' (Sandmo 2011, 18) a century later. Seventeenth-century economic policy was determined by the capricious interests of those involved, not according to a concrete ideological framework. It is, as we shall see, similarly unclear how much economic thought of the period 'was honestly motivated by the desire to increase the power of the state and how much was merely thinly disguised efforts to promote the special interests of capitalism' (Hunt and Lautzenheiser 2011, 21).

But while Heckscher's idea of a unified system of mercantilist theory 'may easily give a misleading impression of general agreement among a large group of writers on economics who in many respects had relatively little in common' (Sandmo 2011, 18),³⁰ there are nonetheless some recurring ideas regarding the way 'the government should manage the economy for the purpose of increasing national wealth and state power' (Canterbery 2011, 33). This was to be achieved in a number of interrelated ways: stimulating the output of domestic goods by offering tax exemptions, subsidies, and regulation to industries producing for export; limiting domestic consumption of luxury items by putting heavy tariffs on non-raw material imports and raw material exports; and establishing import and export trade monopolies to prevent competing English merchants bidding up the price of imports and bidding down the price of exports, all of which would create a favourable balance of trade and an inflow of bullion (Hunt and Lautzenheiser 2011, 20–22; Sandmo 2011, 19–20; Canterbury 2011, 33–35).

It must be emphasised, however, that these ideas are not present in all early seventeenth-century economic tracts, and we find stark disagreements between writers commonly grouped together, or even between different texts by the same writer. Some representative examples may be found in the two writers commonly considered the first English mercantilists (Wachtel 2011, 182), Edward Misselden and Thomas Mun. Misselden's *Free Trade, or the Meanes to Make Trade Flourish* (1622) claimed that the English East India Company's exportation of bullion was a cause of England's economic problems (1622, 13–14), while his *Circle of Commerce, or the Ballance of Trade in*

³⁰ While Forman admits that Misselden and Mun 'would not have considered themselves of the same school of thought' and were in fact 'often in disagreement with each other' (2008, 206 n.8), she nonetheless blithely describes their 'pamphlet war' as 'the mercantilist debate' (2008, 4).

Defence of Free Trade, published the following year, argued that the Company's bullion export actually brought more money into the country (1623, 35).³¹ Mun's *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade*, published in 1664 but composed in the late 1620s (Gould 1955a, 161; Finkelstein 2000b, n.1), has been described as 'the manifesto of mercantilism' (Perrotta 2004, 138). But this tract in fact opposes the hoarding of bullion, arguing that money not employed in trade is wasted (Mun 1664, 44).

This is not to say, of course, that there are no traditional mercantilist concepts in these tracts; on the contrary, they are full of them. But that is precisely the issue: in these writings, mercantilist ideas sit alongside anti-mercantilist attacks on the East India Company, defence of the exportation of bullion, and opposition to stockpiling money in England. Philip Stern is right to note that "'mercantilist" arguments were hardly as black-and-white as often caricatured' (2011, 85), and these are indeed confused, contradictory writings. It therefore seems difficult to maintain Agnar Sandmo's belief that writers like Misselden and Mun can be considered part of 'a particular school of [mercantilist] thought' (2011, 18).

So if Misselden and Mun are not mercantilists, what term can be used? Andrea Finkelstein proposes that 'while the word *mercantilism* might best be avoided, the adjective *mercantile* should still be used to describe this body of thought because the specific problems addressed in these works ... are overwhelmingly those of the import-export merchant' (2000a, 251). Her premise is valid but her conclusion is problematic, because merchants are often mentioned in discussions of seventeenth-century economic thought, and so each use of 'mercantile' would require specification and clarification. While B. E. Supple was able to say in 1959 that 'it is surely possible, as a convenient shorthand, to refer loosely to this group of writers as mercantilist on the grounds that their immediate concern was with questions of a *mercantile* nature' (1959, 229), 'mercantilist' and 'mercantile' can now only be used with careful qualifications and limitations, leaving

³¹ The exact nature of the relationship between the East India Company and England remains contentious. It is agreed that the East India Company 'eventually became a territorial power' (Robins 2012, 15), partly because 'Company rule could be made acceptable on a long-term basis if the Company was perceived as lawful ruler rather than as a commercial enterprise' (Farooqui 2007, 47). But while Company sovereignty is commonly held to have developed as a result of 'the military and political events that unfolded in India after 1740' (Bowen 2003, 19), this transition has recently been placed nearer the start of the seventeenth century, with Rupali Raj Mishra arguing that 'from its formation the Company existed alongside of and as a part of the state, carrying out some state functions abroad, and relying on the power of the prerogative for its existence' (2010, 15). Philip Stern goes further, proposing that the Company was in fact 'a body politic on its own terms' because it 'did what early modern governments did: erect and administer law; collect taxes; provide protection; inflict punishment; perform stateliness; regulate economic, religious, and civic life; conduct diplomacy and wage war; make claims to jurisdiction over land and sea; cultivate authority over and obedience from those people subject to its command' (2011, 8; 5).

these terms neither convenient nor shorthand.³² Formulating a new, alternative umbrella term for writers like Misselden and Mun would merely perpetuate the elision of the differences between them, and I see no reason to do so.

Lionel Robbins told his students ‘I don’t think you need to worry much about Edward Misselden’ (1998, 51), but Misselden’s role in the development of seventeenth-century economic thought is in fact substantial.³³ Misselden and his polemical opponent Gerard de Malynes shared a ‘common scholasticism and Erasmian humanism that shaped their evidence, argumentative styles, and forms of rhetoric and logic’ (Ogborn 2007, 132), but their shared methodology came to quite different conclusions, with Misselden ‘support[ing] trade balance theory against Malynes’s view that currency speculation was the root of all evil’ (Finkelstein 2000b, 8). Misselden begins *Free Trade* by explaining that ‘it having pleased *God* to give mee my *birth* and being in this *good Land* ... I could not but thinke it my bounded duty, in all humble acknowledgement to *Almighty God* ... to endeavour to expresse the same, in some *publique service* for the *publique good*’ (1622, 1–2), just as Milton is ‘grateful to God ... that [he] was born at a time in the history of [his] country’ when he could undertake ‘the task of publicly defending ... the cause of the English people and thus of Liberty herself’ (CPW 4:548-9).

In 1616 Misselden had negotiated with the Dutch on behalf of the New Merchant Adventurers Company to encourage them to lift their prohibition on importing dyed English cloth, and by the time he wrote *Free Trade* he was an active member of the reinstated Merchant Adventurers Company (Grassby 2008). In light of this, he unsurprisingly devotes much of the tract to defending the Merchant Adventurers against the charge of monopoly, which he instead levels at the East India Company. While the Merchant Adventurers and the East India Company were both technically ‘forms of government-sponsored monopoly’ (Finkelstein 2000a, 62) with members from each gaining trading privileges in specific markets and commodities, they were two fundamentally different types of organisation. The East India Company was a joint-stock company in which anyone could buy shares, and although the active members were merchants, shareholders all received a proportionate amount of the profit earned by the

³² J. Caitlin Finlayson’s 2010 essay ‘Mercantilism and the Path to Spiritual Salvation in Thomas Heywood’s *Londini Emporia* or *Londons Mercatura* (1633)’ recently demonstrated the continuing ambiguity of ‘mercantilism,’ as it uses the term to denote the collective activities of merchants, not economic theory.

³³ The importance of the early seventeenth century in English economic history cannot be overstated. According to Jan Luiten van Zanden, ‘if real wages are a reliable guide to macro-economic performance, the transition towards modern economic growth in the English economy did not occur in the eighteenth century, but at some point between the 1590s and the 1620s, when it moved from what was basically a trajectory without technological progress to one with a higher level of investment and a roughly constant rate of productivity growth’ (2009, 253–254).

company as a whole. The Merchant Adventurers, conversely, were a regulated company to which qualified merchants could be admitted by their peers after paying an admission fee or serving an apprenticeship, with each member keeping his own profits or losses (Finkelstein 2000a, 62).

Critics of regulated companies argued their members were self-serving profiteers, and Malynes warned that such merchants traded according to what ‘yeeldeth them the most benefit and gaine: and herein is their particular profit or *Privatum Commodum*, more respected than the general good of the common-wealth’ (1622, 59). Misselden’s observation that ‘the name and nature of *Monopoly*, is more *talk’t of*, then well *understood* of many’ (1622, 54) is equally true today, and so it will be helpful to define the term as he understood it: ‘the parts then of a *Monopolie* are twaine. The restraint of the liberty of *Commerce* to some one or few: and the setting of the price at the pleasure of the *Monopolian* to his private benefit, and the prejudice of the publike’ (1622, 57).³⁴ It might well be argued that the Merchant Adventurers were just such a monopoly, but for Misselden, ‘the key distinction between a monopoly and a properly governed commerce was not the degree or absence of restraint but the extent to which the restraint benefited the public good’ (Finkelstein 2000a, 67). Misselden believed ‘the restraint of public liberty ... could be a thing beneficial to the state, under the right circumstances’ (Mishra 2010, 251), and so he defends the Merchant Adventurers’ ‘Speciall Licence ... to transport all sorts of white Clothes undrest’ because ‘the *Utilitie* that hereby arose to the *Common-wealth*, did farre exceede the restraint of the *Publike Libertie*’ (1622, 63). He reminds his readers that the Merchant Adventurers have ‘by their politique rule and order, eaten out the *Societie* of the *Hans-townes* of *Germanie* and the *Merchants* of the *Entercourse* of the *Low Countries*, in those trades, which a long time they enjoyed in this land,’ and it is also ‘worthy to be remembred to their *Honour*, that service which the *Merchants Adventurers* did to the *State* in *Anno. 88* when they supplied the *Navie Royall* with a whole ships lading of *Powder and Shot* from *Hamburgh*’ (1622, 74–75).

He denies that regulated companies are guilty of monopolism through price-setting, because ‘it is as impossible as unusuall, for any to have command of the price of their *Commodities*: because there is such a multitude of Traders of them; and every man is at liberty to buy and sell, without any rule by any general order, or meanes to hold one price,’ whereas ‘if there be any that tradeth in a *Joint Stocke*, and hath the *Sole* buying and selling of any *Commodity*, and buy one and sell the same *Jointly*, as by one person or common

³⁴ While the word ‘monopoly’ came into English in the mid-sixteenth century (R. Williams 1988, 209), it appears in extant texts only sporadically until the flurry of economic pamphlets in the 1620s.

factor, such is guilty of *Monopoly*' (1622, 70).³⁵ Misselden's partisan interests must be borne in mind here, however, as Sheilagh Ogilvie reminds us that regulated companies were no less guilty of 'price-fixing, supply controls, and other secretive machinations' (2011, 127) than their joint-stock counterparts.

Regulated companies tended to focus on intracontinental trade, while joint-stock companies primarily carried intercontinental trade, which created a disparity in their exports: 'the Muscovy, Eastland, and Levant companies could fund all or part of the trade with exports of English woollens or other domestic commodities ... the East India Company, on the other hand, had little or no market for English goods in the regions they traded, and necessarily relied on exports of silver bullion' (Mishra 2010, 242).³⁶ This led to the common charge that joint-stock companies worked against the national interest by exporting precious bullion, and Misselden too complains that the East India Company has tied up '*Stocke* ... of great value' so that 'the Common-wealth hath lost the use and employment of the *Stocke* it selfe, and all the encrease of *Trade* which the same might have produced, in the severall *Trades* of the *Subjects*, whereby abundance of *Treasure* might have beene brought into this land in all this time' (1622, 13–14).

Even if the Merchant Adventurers were not monopolists, the fact remains that other countries without chartered companies still outperformed England. But Misselden maintains it does not necessarily 'follow, that this their better thriving is because every man is at libertie to be a *Merchant* at his pleasure' (1622, 79), as this confuses correlation and causation. However, Misselden commits exactly this fallacy a few pages later when he asserts that 'for *France*, there are not (that I know) any *Companies* of *Merchants* for forreine parts. Which I take to bee the cause, why those *Merchants* shipping, is of so small burthen, and of as little sufficiency for service. Which is an effect of a stragling ungoverned Trade' (1622, 81).

But although Misselden opposed monopolies, he was (despite the pamphlet's title) no advocate of free trade. Instead, he supported 'a commercial system coming closest to that described today as oligopoly: a market dominated by a small number of sellers' (Finkelstein 2000a, 68). If trade was truly free it would become 'a receptacle and *Rendes-*

³⁵ Some joint-stock companies 'exercised market power quite crudely,' with the Muscovy Company 'raising the price of cordage by 50 percent by not importing for three years' (Jones and Ville 1996, 911, quoted in Ogilvie 2011, 130).

³⁶ As Nick Robins explains, this was not a new phenomenon: 'from Roman times, Europe had always been Asia's commercial supplicant, shipping out gold and silver in return for spices, textiles, and other luxury goods. European traders were attracted to the east for its wealth and sophistication at a time when the western economy was a fraction the size of Asia's, and for its first 150 years, the Company had to repeat this practice, as there was almost nothing that England could export that the East wanted to buy' (2008, 67).

vous for every Shopkeeper, Stragler and Unskilful person’ who would ‘not onely *Sinke* themselves and others with them; but also *Marre* the Merchandize of the land, both in estimation and in goodnesse’ (Misselden 1622, 87; 85). While opposing monopolies, *Free Trade* maintains that ‘the *Use of Government* is excellent for the restraint of unskilfull and disorderly trade,’ and we perhaps see the ‘inferiority complex of early seventeenth-century Englishmen regarding Dutch merchants’ (Coward 2011, 16) in Misselden’s assertion that the Dutch ‘very much complaine of the disorders of their Trades, for want of that kinde of *Government*, which many of them take notice of here in *England*’ (1622, 54; 83).

Regulated companies, with their strict standards of accreditation, prevent those who prefer ‘their owne liberty, to the utility of the publique’ (1622, 86) from damaging trade. The solution, Misselden concludes, is to address both ‘*too strict*’ and *too loose* forme[s] of Trade’ (1622, 133), the former by ‘rooting out the name and use of *Monopolies* from amongst this Nation,’ by which he meant joint-stock companies.³⁷ The opposite of monopolies, ungoverned trade, must also be addressed, and *Free Trade* concludes that ‘where *Trade* is *disordred*, and the *Traders ungoverned*, there they are like a house devided, which cannot long subsist’ (Misselden 1622, 134).³⁸

Free Trade effectively bolstered support against joint-stock companies, and so it became, in Anthony Milton’s words, ‘imperative for the [East India] Company to defeat its negative associations as a monopoly by mastering the same terminology as its opponents, claiming that the Company was acting in the public interest, and preserving the commonweal’ (2007, 170). Shortly after the publication of *Free Trade*, the East India Company appointed Misselden both a member and a commissioner in Holland, and so in *The Circle of Commerce* we find him, unsurprisingly, a vocal supporter of the Company. One of his central concerns in the tract is addressing the accusation that ‘the cause of our want of money is the ready monies sent to the *East Indies*’ (1623, 34). Those who criticised the bullion export of the East India Company took a reductive view of the trade, mistaking a cycle for a one-way process: ‘the Company traded primarily bullion ... for calico and indigo, some of which went back to Europe but much of which was in turn used to barter for spices that were then sent back to England and sold there or re-exported to Europe (or even the Levant) to acquire the necessary bullion – purchasing power – with

³⁷ Joint-stock companies might also be considered an example of loosely governed trade, as anyone who could afford shares could play a role in the East India Company, unlike the Merchant Adventurers, who only admitted merchants approved by fellow merchants.

³⁸ While Finkelstein suggests that this ‘adage ... cast a shadow as far forward in time as the American Civil War’ (2000a, 67), the obvious point of reference here is not Lincoln, but Jesus: ‘every citie or house divided against it selfe, shall not stand’ (Matt. 12:25), and ‘a house *divided* against a house, falleth’ (Luke 11:17).

which the cycle would begin again' (Forman 2004, 613). While Misselden was (through ignorance or omission) silent on this point in *Free Trade*, the *Circle of Commerce* proclaims that 'one hundred thousand pounds employed in that trade, and returned from the *East Indies*, in *Spices, Callicoes, & Indico*, besides the hopes of the *Persian* trade of *Rawe Silks*, will yield *Five hundred thousand pounds* to this Kingdome' (1623, 35).

The *Circle of Commerce* is important not only because it recognises the cyclical nature of investment, but also because it is the first appearance in print of the term 'balance of trade' (Suprinyak 2011b, 15).³⁹ While the balance of trade was largely ignored in *Free Trade*, in the *Circle of Commerce* Misselden cannot overstate its importance:

If there bee any virtue in the Theorick part of Commerce, that might attract a Princes Eie to be cast upon it; surely it is in this kinde of *Exchange*, that one Country maketh with another in the *Ballance of Trade*. All the mysteries of other Exchanges are hidde in this mystery. All the knowledge of Commerce, is presented and represented to the life in this story, in this history. All the rivers of Trade spring out of this source, and empt[y] themselves againe into this *Ocean*. All the waight of Trade falles to this *Center*, & comes within the circuit of this *Circle*. (1623, 142)

But even while championing the primacy of the balance of trade, Misselden is keenly aware of its potential problems, as he recognises that as 'he that waigheth a draught, either with false waights, or such as are of different standards, can never tell whether he get or lose by his waight: even so in the *Ballance of Trade*, if either the Collections be imperfect, or the forme of the *Ballance* different; you shall never knowe whether the Kingdome gaineth or loseth, by the cast of the Scale in the *Ballance of Trade*' (1623, 126). While this anticipates Adam Smith's objection regarding the inaccuracy of customs books, it does not answer it. Misselden proposes that a commission of 'some of his Majesties principall *Fermers* of his Highnes Customes, and ... some of the most expert & judicious *Merchants* of the City of *London*' meet annually to decide on a 'constant *Forme*' by which the balance of trade could be calculated, and he goes on for three pages to carry out such calculations

³⁹ For a history of the term, see W. H. Price, 'The Origin of the Phrase "Balance of Trade,"' *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 20, 1 (1905), 157–167. Misselden was not the first to use the term, however, as in 1615 the surveyor-general of the customs, Lionel Cranfield, prepared a document for parliament tallying imports and exports entitled 'Sir Lionel Cranfield his balance of trade' (Price 1905, 165). Forman mistakenly credits Misselden and Mun with introducing the idea of the balance of trade (2008, 4), whereas in fact John Hales's *Discourse of the Commonweal of this Realm of England* (1549) had warned 'we must alwaies take hede that we bie no more of strangers then we sell them; for so wee sholde empoverishe owr selves and enriche them' (1971, 63).

(1623, 126–129). He concludes that ‘wee are fallen into a great *Under-ballance of Trade* with other Nations’ (1623, 130), empirically asserting ‘wee felt it before in sense; but now we know it in science: wee found it before in operation; but now wee see it in speculation’ (1623, 130). But as Adam Smith emphasised, the primary problem with calculating the balance of trade is not one of methodology, but of data: ‘it is in the interest of merchant importers, in a system of import duties and bounties on exports, to declare very little. It is in the interest of merchant exporters to declare a great deal, sometimes out of vanity and sometimes to gain bounties’ (Rothschild and Sen 2006, 339). Misselden is aware of the need for both methodological consistency (‘forme’), and accurate data (‘collections’), but only offers a solution for the methodological side. He overlooks the fact that the sophistication of a statistical model is irrelevant if inaccurate figures are fed into it. Nevertheless, Misselden maintains that

in the *Provinciall Exchange* betweene Country and County, the gaine or losse which one Kingdome maketh upon another, cannot bee knowne until the Returnes thereof bee made: that is, till the forraine Commodities bee brought in, for the Native Commodities issued and carried out; and both cast into the *Ballance of Trade*, to bee waighed and tried one against the other. (1623, 116)

Misselden thus formulates, I argue, an economic *felix culpa*: the East India Company exported bullion, and viewed in isolation this appeared to damage the national interest because silver and gold were the ‘sinews of war’. A round trip to the East Indies usually took about a year (Roy 2012, 45), so when considerable quantities of England’s most important asset were exported with no immediate return, it prompted vocal consternation at home. But eventually the Company ships returned laden with ‘forraine Commodities’ for consumption or re-export, and the initial investment was recouped with substantial profit.⁴⁰

While Misselden’s tracts are often bogged down by learned allusions and digressions, in Thomas Mun we find economic discourse edging away from art and towards science. Mun used ‘a plain and declarative mode of writing’ characterised by a ‘typographical avoidance of the trappings of scholastic erudition ... and appeal to the

⁴⁰ It might well be objected that there is a disparity between the economic cycle of investment-profit-reinvestment and the finality of the spiritual *felix culpa*. Trade is, of course, a circular process, but if one cycle of trade is taken as beginning with the exportation of gold and ending when the commodities bought with that gold are themselves sold for either a greater quantity of gold or exchanged for commodities of greater value, the *felix culpa*’s transformation of loss into profit remains a viable common model for both economic and spiritual endeavours.

authority of number' (Ogborn 2007, 134; 137), which provided an ideal 'intellectual framework for the [East India] Company's policies and practices for most of the seventeenth century' (Riddick 2006, 127). *England's Treasure by Forraigne Trade* begins with a classic declaration of balance of trade theory: 'the ordinary means therefore to encrease our wealth and treasure is by *Forraigne Trade*, wherein wee must ever observe this rule; to sell more to strangers yearly than wee consume of their in value' (Mun 1664, 11). Mun follows Misselden in asserting the primacy of the balance of trade:

so much Treasure only will be brought in or carried out of a Commonwealth, as the Forraigne Trade doth over or under ballance in value. And this must come to pass by a Necessity beyond all resistance. So that all other courses (which tend not to this end) howsoever they may seem to force mony into a Kingdom for a time, yet are they (in the end) not only fruitless but also hurtful: they are like to violent flouds which bear down their banks, and suddenly remain dry again for want of waters. (1664, 219)

But while *England's Treasure* contains the now standard balance of trade theory, it takes a more progressive approach to the zero-sum model of trade. Mun's former conservatism was evident in *A Discourse of Trade* (1621), which warned that if the East India Company were disbanded, the Dutch 'with more gladnesse would undertake the whole Trade to the *East Indies*,' and 'thus should the Dutch increase their honour, wealth and strength, while we abate, grow poore and weake at Sea for want of Trade' (1621, 48-49). Even if England were to withdraw from the East Indies, this would only 'keepe our Silver from hence' momentarily until it went to 'pay [the Dutch] a double price, or what they please, for all those wares which we shall want for our necessities' (1621, 48-49). But *England's Treasure* softens the zero-sum rhetoric, as Mun argues 'in our exportations we must not only regard our own superfluties, but also we must consider our neighbours necessities, that so upon the wares which they cannot want, nor yet be furnished thereof elsewhere, we may ... gain so much of the manufacture as we can, and also endeavour to sell them dear, so far forth as the high price cause not a less vent in the quantity' (1664, 17). Rather than bullheadedly exporting English manufactures as widely and for as high a price as possible, Mun proposes that an approach more sensitive to the needs of the market will be more profitable. This awareness of the value of the neighbours' market was also recognised by Adam Smith, who believed 'the wealth of a neighbouring nation, ... though dangerous in

war and politicks, is certainly advantageous in trade' (1976, 494) because 'the richer the neighbours with whom a country traded, the better off it would become, because rich neighbours are better customers for industrious people' (Kennedy 2010, 137). As Smith explains, the zero-sum model actually damages trade relations, because

as a rich man is likely to be a better customer to the industrious people in his neighbourhood, than a poor, so is likewise a rich nation. A rich man, indeed, who is himself a manufacturer, is a very dangerous neighbour to all those who deal in the same way. All the rest of the neighbourhood, however, by far the greatest number, profit by the good market which his expence affords them. They even profit by his underselling the poorer workmen who deal in the same way with him. (1976, 494)

Mun also anticipated Smith in recognising that currency manipulation could only bring short-term benefits, warning that the 'divers ways and means whereby to procure plenty of mony into a Kingdom' does not 'enrich but rather impoverish[es] the same by the several inconveniences which ever accompany such alterations' (1664, 51). He warned that melting plate into coin 'would cause Plenty of mony for a time, yet should we be nothing the richer, but rather this treasure being thus altered is made the more apt to be carried out of the Kingdom' and so 'our treasure will soon be exhausted' (1664, 51). The tract devotes an entire chapter to the problem of currency debasement, which Mun opposes due to its impact on both domestic and foreign finances.

While a debasement appears to increase the amount of money held by the crown, Mun emphasises that this increase is both short-lived and ultimately illusory. 'Lightning of all our mony' brings 'a present benefit' to the Mint, but it does this 'once only,' and actually ultimately reduces royal wealth (1664, 73). A debasement swells the royal coffers, but with money of less intrinsic value, and so the 'present benefit' is soon 'lost again in the future great In-comes of His Majesty, when by this means they must be paid yearly with mony of less intrinsique value then formerly' (1664, 73). For Mun, currency is 'the true measure ... of our forraign commerce with strangers and so [it] therefore ought to be kept just and constant' (1664, 71–72). Lessening the intrinsic and increasing the nominal value of English money is risky because it 'is not the denomination of our pounds shilling and pence, which is respected, but the intrinsique value of our Coins' (1664, 72), and since 'other Princes are vigilant in these cases to alter presently in proportion with us' (1664, 76) any advantage is soon negated. Foreign merchants are just as capable as their princes of upsetting English trading, as 'if the stranger-merchant bring in his wares, and find that our

moneys are raised, shall not he likewise keep his Commodities until he may sell them dearer?’ And shall not the price of the Merchants exchange with forraign Countries rise in proportion with our Moneys?’ (1664, 76–77) Mun concludes that all these observations ‘being undoubtedly true, why may not our Moneys be carried out of the Kingdom as well and to as much profit after the raising thereof, as before the alteration?’ (1664, 77).

Having shown how the various means proposed to ‘bring in store of money’ leave the country ‘nothing the richer’ because ‘such treasure so gotten [cannot] long remain with us’ (1664, 52–53), Mun goes on to suggest that, even if it were possible for the nation to accumulate a lasting store of money, it would not be beneficial to do so. For Mun, ‘too much wealth was as dangerous for society as too much poverty’ (Finkelstein 2000a, 88), and plenitude was damaging for both economic and moral reasons: not only does ‘plenty of mony in a Kingdom ... make the native commodities dearer’ (1664, 43–44), but ‘this great plenty which we enjoy, makes us a people not only *vicious* and *excessive*, wastful of the means we have, but also improvident & careless of much other wealth that shamefully we lose’ (1664, 178). But for Mun, the strongest argument against stockpiling money was simple: ‘when wee have gained some store of mony by trade, wee lose it again by not trading with our mony’ (1664, 44). He observes that men who are ‘worth five or ten thousand *l.*’ are rarely

possessed thereof all together or at once, for it were vanity and against their profit to keep continually in their hands above forty or fifty pounds in a family to defray necessary charges, the rest must ever run from man to man in traffique for their benefit, whereby we may conceive that a little mony ... doth rule and distribute great matters daily to all men in their just proportions. (1664, 74)

This prefigures Adam Smith’s definition of capital: when a man ‘possesses stock sufficient to maintain him for months or years, he naturally endeavours to derive a revenue from the greater part of it ... the part which ... is to afford him this revenue, is called his capital’ (1976, 279). Smith’s ‘critique of the mercantilists was that in putting one asset, the national gold stock, at the centre of policy, they supported policies that increased the stock of gold but reduced national net worth at market prices’ (Foley 2006, 171),⁴¹ and he insisted

⁴¹ Foley’s book *Adam’s Fallacy* is intriguingly subtitled *A Guide to Economic Theology*, but sadly it is nothing of the sort. Foley ‘call[ed] this book a “guide to economic theology” to underline what seems to [him] the fundamental point that at its most abstract and interesting level, economics is a speculative philosophical discourse, not a deductive or inductive science’ (2006, xiv–xv), and theology plays no further role in his thesis beyond this introductory invocation of the term.

instead ‘wealth does not consist in money, or in gold and silver; but in what money purchases, and is valuable only for purchasing. Money, no doubt, makes always a part of the national capital; but it has already been shown that it generally makes a small part, and always the most unprofitable part of it’ (1976, 438).

Carlos Suprinyak numbers Mun among the writers by whom ‘money (that is, precious metals) was regarded as a preferable form of wealth due to its durability – a form of wealth which could not be consumed’ (2011a, 468), but this is problematic. Mun emphasised that money in itself was *not* a preferable form of wealth, since money accumulated was inert and yielded no profit. Like Smith, Mun believed money was only useful when it was invested in trade and thus transformed into capital. Money’s true value was therefore rooted not in its durability, but in its protean potential, its ability to be consumed in exchange for commodities which would themselves later be exchanged for a profit, and thus we see that for Mun, ‘it is in the circulation, that is, in the very repetition, that value is produced’ (Forman 2008, 16). The importance of capital in *England’s Treasure* has recently been gestured towards by the suggestion that ‘there were mercantilist writers who emphasised that the wealth of a country also included natural resources and real capital’ (Sandmo 2011, 19–20), but Sandmo overlooks Mun’s careful distinction between the relative worth of natural resources and real capital:

our own natural wares doe not yield us so much profit as our industrie[.] For Iron oar in the Mines is of no great worth, when it is compared with the employment and advantage it yields being digged, tried, transported, bought, sold, cast into Ordnance, Muskets, and many other instruments of war for offence and defence, wrought into Anchors, bolts, spikes, nayles and the like, for the use of Ships, Houses, Carts, Coaches, Ploughs, and other instruments for Tillage. Compare our Fleece-wools with our Cloth, which requires shearing, washing, carding, spinning, Weaving, fulling, dying, dressing and other trimmings, and we shall find these Arts more profitable than the natural wealth. (1664, 32–33)

Here, Mun again urges the transformation of commodities into more capital, and so, whether discussing wool or gold bullion, his attitude is the same: a commodity stockpiled is a commodity squandered. Moreover, Mun reminds us that great profits could only be achieved with similarly sizeable investments, as ‘where the voyages are short & the wares rich ... the profit will be far less’ than in trading in ‘remote Countreys’ (1664, 39), and so

the immense profit margins of long-distance trade would ‘eclips[e] start-up expenses in gold and silver’ (Barbour 2003, 95).⁴²

Mun ‘stressed that the initial outlay had to be understood in terms of its final return’ (Finkelstein 2000a, 92), and he drew the parallel to sowing: ‘if we only behold the actions of the husbandman in the seed-time when we casteth away much good corn into the ground, we will rather accompt him a mad man than a husbandman: but when we consider his labours in the harvest which is the end of his endeavours, we find the worth and plentiful encrease of his actions’ (1664, 50). Mun urged his readers to take the longer view and recognise that while each investment was indeed a loss in isolation, it brought ultimate profit. The circular trade sketched in *England’s Treasure* redeems the initial expense, and so Mun rejoices with Adam ‘that all this good of evil shall produce / And evil turn to good’ (PL 12.470-471), just as Milton’s theodicy maintains that casting away the ‘good corn’ of Edenic innocence was a worthwhile investment when recouped in heaven.⁴³

Conceptions of investment are central to covenant theology, which was theology taken from the dusty bluster of scholastic disputations into the throng of the marketplace. Covenant theologians believed the merchant had as much need to learn his paternoster as the plowman, and so they made their sermons accessible by condensing theological ideas into mercantile metaphors. In the preface to his *Marrow of Sacred Divinity* (1642), originally published in Latin as *Medulla theologiae* (1629), William Ames anticipated objections to ‘this whole manner of writing, that the sum of Divinity should be brought into a short compend’ (1642, A4). While conceding that some ‘desire great Volumes, wherein they may loosely either dwell, or wander’ (1642, A4), he concluded that since ‘all have not so great leasure ... the condition of many doth rather require, that the nest it selfe, or the seat of the matter which they pursue, bee shewed without any more adoe’ (1642, A4).⁴⁴ In this regard, readers of the seventeenth and twenty-first centuries do not differ,

⁴² As in Misselden’s *Circle of Commerce*, Mun proposes that ‘100000*l.* being sent in our Shipping to the East Countreys’ will buy stock ‘which being after brought into *England* and housed, to export the same at the best time for vent thereof in *Spain* or *Italy*, it cannot yield less in those parts than two hundred thousand pounds’ (1664, 38).

⁴³ Forman has rightly identified a tension here with regards to Protestant salvation being *sola gratia*: ‘on the one hand, it is possible to equate loss/expenditure with sowing. But on the other, the logic of infinite return in exchange for nothing emphasises not a restricted economy, in which there is a need for return because of scarcity, but instead the potential for profit, growth, and expansion, that is not dependent on man’s own deserving labour, but on the grace of God’ (2008, 13). We must be careful here, however, to remember that Milton was an atypical Protestant; his salvation was indeed by grace alone, but man could choose to reject God’s offered grace, bringing bilateralism back into the covenant relationship.

⁴⁴ The *Christian Doctrine* serves a similar purpose, opening with Milton’s claim that ‘I do not teach anything new in this work. I aim only to assist the reader’s memory by collecting together, as it were, into a single book texts which are scattered here and there throughout the Bible, and by systematising them under definite headings, in order to make reference easy’ (CPW 6:127).

and so ‘the sum’ of early seventeenth-century English covenant theology shall now be ‘brought into a short compend.’

Since ‘the most common root of confusion in theology is misunderstanding terms’ (Olson 2006, 15), this section will begin with a discussion of the definition and development of the relevant theological terminology. ‘Federal theology’ and ‘covenant theology’ are often used interchangeably (Baker and McCoy 1991, 11–12; Carr 2009, 3 n.7), since ‘federal’ derives from the Latin *foedus*, meaning ‘covenant.’ According to J. Wayne Baker and Charles S. McCoy, modern ‘academic specialisation ... [has] separated federal and covenantal. Political thought has appropriated federalism as applicable to certain political patterns of the modern world. Biblical studies and theology have kept the word “covenant”’ (1991, 12). Theological and political discourses were not so discreet in the seventeenth century,⁴⁵ but because ‘covenant’ is the term most commonly used in the theological tracts discussed in this thesis, and ‘federal’ is an apt description of the political system of diffused autonomy that Milton came to favour, this thesis will maintain the distinction of ‘covenant’ as theological and ‘federal’ as political.

Covenant theology was a soteriological framework built around the prelapsarian covenant of works and the postlapsarian covenant of grace. The doctrine was initially popularised by puritans both north and south of the English border in the late sixteenth century, and flourished in early seventeenth-century English theological thought before being enshrined in the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647.⁴⁶ Scholarly disagreement

⁴⁵ *Leviathan*’s flitting between religious and political senses of ‘covenant’ is representative: ‘the *Pacts and Covenants*, by which the parts of this Body Politique were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that *Fiat*, or the *Let us make man*, pronounced by God in the Creation’ (Hobbes 2012, 2:16). For examples of other political orders founded on covenants, see Charles S. McCoy, ‘Federalism: The Lost Tradition?’, *Publius* 31, 2 (2001), 1-14, p.7. For further discussions of the interconnected nature of early modern uses of ‘covenant,’ see Brent James Brodie, ‘The Prevalence of the Magistrate in the Political Thought of Heinrich Bullinger,’ (MA Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 2012), Edward Vallance, ‘“An Holy and Sacramentall Paction”: Federal Theology and the Solemn League and Covenant in England,’ *The English Historical Review* 116, 465 (2001), 50-75, and Craig Smith, ‘“Great Reformation in the Manners of Mankind”: Utopian Thought in the Scottish Reformation and Enlightenment,’ *Utopian Studies* 16, 2 (2005), 221-245. For a twentieth-century example, see Barbara Allen, ‘Martin Luther King’s Civil Disobedience and the American Covenant Tradition’, *Publius* 30, 4 (2000), 71-113.

⁴⁶ It might be objected that since Milton’s puritan credentials, particularly in his youth, are now seriously questioned, any connections drawn between the poet and puritan theology are problematic. But covenant theology was not an exclusively puritan phenomenon; for a survey of the Anglican covenant tradition, see Michael McGiffert, ‘Henry Hammond and Covenant Theology,’ *Church History* 74, 2 (2005), 255-285. I follow N. H. Keeble’s recent definition of puritanism as ‘a dissatisfaction with the present realisation of Christian ideals and a consequent determination to reform practice and institutions. Its various strategies and platforms shared a desire to recover for individuals and congregations the purity of doctrine, the simplicity of worship, the commitment of ministry, and the integrity of faith that (it was believed) had characterised the early, or “primitive,” church before the growth of the ascendancy of Rome over western Christendom had led (so it was held) to the corruption of the Christian gospel and church’ (2012a, 307). While Milton has been considered one of ‘the great puritans’ (Spurr 1998, 47) and a ‘key puritan’ (Cambers 2011, 254), such characterisations have recently become more tenuous. Certainly, Milton eventually ‘embodie[d] the extreme

persists regarding the beginnings of covenant theology. Brian Lee has noted the ‘tendency to overemphasise the novelty of federal thought’ (2009, 17), and John Wood argues that since we find in the second-century Church Father Irenaeus ‘the notion ... that Adam related to God in ... a covenant relationship [,] ... Irenaeus could even be described (albeit anachronistically) as a federal theologian’ (2008, 133; 134).⁴⁷ But merely mentioning covenants between Adam and God does not make a theologian covenantal; after all, ‘the term “covenant” occurs at least 300 times’ in the Bible (Golding 2004, 13).⁴⁸ The covenant concept did not gain theological prominence until the second decade of the sixteenth century, when within a few short years many continental reformers – Oecolampadius at Basle, Bullinger and Pelican at Zurich, Musculus at Augsburg, and Bucer and Martyr at Strasbourg – laid increasing emphasis on the covenant in their writings (Golding 2004, 35). Donald McKim suggests that ‘because the covenant doctrine was not yet developed as an organising principle of theology in these theologians, “it is probably wisest to speak of a theology of covenant rather than covenant theology, so far as the sixteenth century is

development of puritan belief and practice’ (S. M. Fallon 2007, 21), but it is now apparent that ‘Milton came from a non-Puritan family, one keen on ritual and ceremony and stained glass and organ music in the church, and involved in non-Puritan entertainments such as plays,’ and would have been considered a high church Anglican until ‘his radicalisation in 1637’ (Campbell 2010, 14). However, even in his post-radicalisation writings, Milton differs from his puritan peers in a crucial regard: ‘where anxious self-examination and conviction of sin is a Protestant norm enforced by Lutheran and Calvinist theology, Milton writes instead of his blamelessness and heroic virtue’ (S. M. Fallon 2007, 21). Catherine Martin has developed Fallon’s emphasis on Milton’s cool self-assurance, concluding that in light of ‘how slender the [biographical and ideological] evidence for the puritanism of either Milton or his family actually is, ... Milton was not a puritan’ (C. G. Martin 2010, 8; xi). But ‘it cannot be said that Milton was never influenced by puritan thought’ (C. G. Martin 2010, 20), and therefore the parallels drawn in this thesis between covenant theology, a predominantly puritan ideology, and Milton’s own thought remain tenable, regardless of whether or not Milton can himself be considered a puritan.

⁴⁷ David Weir, making no mention of Irenaeus, claims that Augustine, ‘alone amongst the fathers of the church, spoke of a prelapsarian covenant with Adam’ (1990, 12), citing *City of God*: ‘the first covenant, made with the first man, is certainly this: “on the day you eat, you will surely die” (St. Augustine 1972, 688). Michael Horton concurs that ‘the basic elements of the covenant of creation can even be discerned in Augustine’s claim: “The first covenant was this, unto Adam: “whosoever thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death,” and this is why all his children “are breakers of God’s covenant made with Adam in paradise”’ (Horton 2006, 84; (St. Augustine 1972, 688–689)). Although he uses quotation marks, Horton is actually paraphrasing Augustine, not quoting. Despite using the same 1972 Penguin edition and giving the same page reference as Weir, Horton’s first quote from Augustine should read as given in Weir’s citation above, and in the second quotation Augustine describes children as ‘breakers of the Law that was given in Paradise’ (1972, 689), not as ‘breakers of God’s covenant made with Adam in paradise’ (Horton 2006, 84).

⁴⁸ Even in Genesis 1-3 ‘we recognise the features of a covenant ...: a historical prologue setting the stage (Genesis 1-2), stipulations (2:16-17), and sanctions (2:17b) over which Eve and the serpent argue (3:1-5) and which are finally carried out in the form of judgement (3:8-19). It is only after this fateful decision that an entirely new and unexpected basis is set forth for human destiny (3:21-24)’ (Horton 2006, 89–90). James Torrance enumerates a selection of other biblical covenants of various scales, both personal and national: ‘God makes among others a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15 and 17) and later renews that covenant at Sinai (Exodus 6). David makes a covenant with Jonathan (I Samuel 18:4) and, again, with the elders of the tribes of Israel when he becomes a king (II Samuel 5:3). Jeremiah speaks of a day when God will make a new covenant with the house of Israel (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and in the New Testament, Jesus is presented as mediator of the new covenant: “this cup is the new covenant in my blood” (I Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 12:24)’ (2000, 143).

concerned”” (McKim 1983, 89, citing Breward 1970, 90), but this statement entirely overlooks Heinrich Bullinger.

Bullinger has been described as ‘the founder of Reformed ... federal theology,’ and his *One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God* (1534) was ‘the first treatise to be published on covenant’ (Baker 2000, 26). Moving beyond his theological predecessors’ occasional references to covenant, Bullinger placed the idea at the centre of his theological system, and so ‘it is not so much that new elements of the covenant appear in his own work, but that the doctrine itself begins to demand its own autonomy in his theology’ (Strehle 1988, 134–5). By ‘organis[ing] the whole of theology under the banner of covenant’ (R. M. Allen 2010, 39) Bullinger evidently qualifies as a covenant theologian, and the *One and Eternal Testament* was no anomaly; his *Decades* were also ‘entirely structured by the covenant idea’ (Vos 1980, 236). Bullinger was a crucial influence on the emergence of English covenant theology, since ‘Zürich had attracted numerous Puritan expatriates under the persecutions of Bloody Queen Mary’ (Carr 2009, 5). The *Decades* became ‘a clergy textbook’ under Elizabeth, and even ‘as late as 1600, ... the official Church of England was marching to rhythms set in Zürich between the 1530s and 1550s’ (MacCulloch 2007, 932; 933).

In the *Decades*, ‘the covenante of God, whereby hee is joynd to us, and wee to him’ is shaped by divine condescension: ‘God in making of leagues, as he doth in all things else, applieth him selfe to our capacities, & imitateth the order which men use in making confederacies’ (Bullinger 1577, 234; 355). Man’s ‘leagues ... do precisely expresse what they be that make the confederacie, upon what conditions, and howe farre the covenant shall extend,’ and God’s ‘league or covenante with mankinde’ is similarly conditional (1577, 355). In this bilateral agreement, ‘there are two poyntes or especiall conditions ... the first whereof declareth what God doth promise ... the second comprehendeth the duetie of man’ (1577, 56). Bullinger outlines the duties of each party: ‘God for his parte sayeth, I will bee thy God ... and the God of thy seede after thee,’ while man must ‘take him for their God, to sticke to him alone, who is their onely all in all, to call uppon him alone, to worshippe him alone, and through his Messiah to looke for sanctification & life everlasting’ (1577, 356; 357).

While the English Reformation was ‘indebted to a number of continental influences, including ... Bullinger, ... by the later sixteenth century Calvin’s influence became predominant’ (Doerkson 2012, 200), and although Calvin ‘recognise[d] the

covenant as a biblical theme, ... he did not structure his theology in the way the federal theologians did' (van Asselt 2001, 326–327).⁴⁹ Some scholars demarcate 'two alternative, though related strands within the Reformed tradition – federalism and Calvinism' (Baker and McCoy 1991, 24), and indeed, both Calvinists and covenant theologians affirm the covenants of works and the covenant of grace. But Calvin's doctrine of double predestination meant that the covenant of grace (or its deprivation in damnation) could not be conditional like Bullinger's, since 'the covenant of life is not preached equally among all men, ... God once established by his eternal and unchangeable plan those who he long before determined once for all to receive into salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, he would devote to destruction' (Calvin 1960, 920; 931). Calvin's covenant was unilateral. It was a decree, not a deal.

By the seventeenth century, many English covenant theologians understood the covenant between man and God as contingent on man's fulfilment of God's condition: 'walke before me, and be thou perfect' (Gen. 17:1).⁵⁰ According to Victoria Kahn and others, this left predestination 'no longer simply a matter of divine fiat, but of the individual believer's response to a divine call. While covenant theologians insisted that the ability to respond was itself a gift of grace, the practical effect of covenant theology was to lessen the harshness of Calvinist predestination' (Kahn 1995, 86).⁵¹ But R. Michael Allen objects to readings which 'take the Reformed doctrine of predestination to be unilateral and to exclude human action from any sphere of meaning or ultimacy' as an interpretation which 'gets neither predestination nor covenant right' (2010, 45). Allen maintains that there is

⁴⁹ The exact relationship between Calvin and the later covenant theologians remains contentious; for van Asselt, 'a direct line running from Calvin to the later covenant theologians certainly cannot be proved' (2001, 327), while Jeong Koo Jeon maintains that 'there is a covenantal theological continuity' here (2004, 14).

⁵⁰ God appears less demanding in the Geneva Bible, which translates the verse as 'walke before me, and be thou upright' (Gen. 17:1). John Wesley, the prominent eighteenth-century Arminian and co-founder of Methodism, glossed this quote thus: 'that upright walking with God is the condition of our interest in his all-sufficiency. If we neglect him, or dissemble with him, we forfeit the benefit of our relation to him' (1765, 68).

⁵¹ Although unacknowledged, Kahn is here following earlier commentators such as Stephen Strehle, and McCoy and Baker. Strehle observed that Bullinger's covenant was 'in essence a bilateral commitment, and as such must incorporate and depend upon some human contribution towards its fulfilment,' and so despite 'affirm[ing] the Protestant watchword of justification by faith, [Bullinger's] impetus upon federal conditions ... does tend to lapse from Luther and his *sola fides* toward a covert doctrine of works' (Strehle 1988, 137; 136). For McCoy and Baker, William Perkins's *Golden Chaine* (1591) 'blunted the rigidity of the double predestination system of the high Calvinist rationalists and gave it a more humane face' (1991, 41).

a bilateral element in divinely decreed human activity. The elect are ‘predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son’ (Rom 8:29); thus conformity and ethical service are incumbent upon those chosen. While God’s grace is not conditional or based upon such action, such action does truly follow from this grace. Similarly, the covenants are unilaterally bestowed by God, who did not ask for Adam or Israel’s permission to sketch such a frame for fellowship. Yet such covenants involve bilateral conditions with real human obligations, so that their maintenance is dependent upon creaturely action. Contrary to some descriptions, then, covenant and predestination are parallel and compatible concepts. (2010, 45)⁵²

As Charles Butler observes, ‘Reformed covenant theology was not, of course, of one mind’ (2000, 102), and this is especially true of English covenant theology in the 1620s and 1630s. While Allen has recognised that unilateralism and bilateralism coexist in the covenant relationship, this is not to say that every covenant theologian offered an appropriately balanced representation of the covenant. Tracts of this period run the gamut from fiercely Calvinist assertions of the unilateralism and irresistibility of God’s will as expressed through the covenant, to emphases on the conditionality of the covenant relationship and Arminian assertions of man’s ability to reject God’s offered grace. The three theologians discussed here – William Ames, John Preston, and Thomas Hooker – can be approximately positioned on a spectrum between unilateralism (Ames) and bilateralism (Hooker), with Preston in the middle.

Movement towards the bilateral end of the continuum is accompanied by a marked increase in the use of economic vocabulary and metaphors. This is likely because ‘to formulate a theology that accommodated lay spiritual interests, Puritan clerics had to create one that was intellectually intelligible to ordinary laypersons ... [so they] borrowed a contractual idiom from secular life to translate major points of Calvinist doctrine into a relatively simple divinity’ (Zaret 1985, 129). Just as the God of Bullinger’s *Decades* ‘appeal[ed] to man’s capacities’ (Raath 2000, 93), so too covenant theologians found it

⁵² While readings like Allen’s are still in the minority, even those who still maintain that covenant theology ameliorated predestination now do so in a more nuanced way. See, for example, Catherine Martin’s argument that ‘moderate Puritans such as ... John Preston significantly softened high Calvinist teaching on predestination, although ... [he] retained the classical Calvinist emphasis on orthodoxy and rectitude’ (2010, 38).

easiest to reach an audience immersed in the marketplace by drawing analogies between the bilateral divine-human relationship and the business agreements of everyday life.⁵³

William Ames was not only ‘one of the most astute theologians of the second Reformation’ (van Asselt 2001, 27), but one of ‘the leading English federalists at the beginning of the seventeenth century’ (Golding 2004, 51). He ‘had grown up in a merchant home and for years lived among the mercantile Dutch, with the result that he became conditioned to the realities of a trading, acquisitive society’ (Sprunger 1972, 175), and his affinity with the mercantile mindset would have lent covenant theology a particular appeal. Ames constructed his theology along Ramist lines by presenting ‘principles subdivided and further subdivided into minute specific terms,’ and Milton followed suit in the *Christian Doctrine* by ‘proceeding from core concepts like God and the Trinity to the duties of the individual Christian’ (Limouze 2012, 311).⁵⁴ Keeble’s recent summary of Ames’s significance underlines the theologian’s influence on Milton: Ames ‘enjoyed a European reputation for *De conscientia, ejus jure et casibus* (1632, translated into English in 1639), the first Protestant treatise on casuistry, which Milton owned [, and] for his work of systematic theology, *Medulla sacrae theologia* (1627, translated into English in 1642 as *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*), which was among the works Milton studied for his own system of divinity and from which, in the heterodox *De doctrina christiana*, he came to dissent’ (2012b, 10).⁵⁵

Ames and Milton were not unique in using the same Ramist method for different theological ends, since ‘Arminius, who also made use of Ramist analysis ... came to rather different conclusions than [William] Perkins on key matters such as predestination and free will’ (Blacketer 2005, 41). Ames was on the front lines of the debates between Calvinists and Arminians in the Netherlands,⁵⁶ as between 1613 and 1618 he wrote four anti-

⁵³ Mark Valeri notes that ‘during the seventeenth century, the dominant teaching in Christian Europe about usury changed ...: at the beginning of the century, most Western Christians read Scripture to include strictures against the exchange of credit for profit, and at the end of the century, they read Scripture to allow for it’ (2011, 144).

⁵⁴ It would be more accurate to say that antitrinitarianism is one of the core concepts of the *Christian Doctrine*; the Trinity is only a core concept insofar as Milton spends a portion of the treatise rejecting it as unscriptural.

⁵⁵ As Michael Lieb notes, ‘Milton cites Ames directly and indirectly (but not always with approval) in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and in *Tetrachordon* as well [CPW 2:232, 275; 610]’ (Lieb 2006, 283 n.14).

⁵⁶ We must remember that in Milton’s time, ‘the term “Arminian” carried two different but equally pejorative meanings. Puritans, because they saw a link between Romanising sacramentalism and antagonism to a strict Calvinist understanding of predestination and election, applied the term to William Laud’s high-church party. The term was also used to condemn arguments that explicitly attacked absolute predestination. While Milton can be termed an Arminian in the latter sense, he shared puritan antipathy to the high-church “Arminian”

Arminian polemics, ‘three in his dispute with the Rotterdam preacher Nicholas Grevinchoven and one a detailed critique of the five major points of the Hague Remonstrance’ (Krop 2011, 63).⁵⁷ The latter must have particularly caught the attention of the Dutch Calvinists, because when the Synod of Dort convened in 1618 to settle the Calvinist-Arminian debates by offering an official response to the Hague Remonstrance, Ames was appointed to serve ‘as a theological adviser to Johannes Bogerman, the president of the Synod’ (Patterson 2000, 279) and ‘play[ed] an active role’ (A. Milton 2005, xxiv) in the proceedings. The outcome of the Synod was the condemnation of Arminianism as heresy and the promulgation of the Canons of Dort, which established the orthodox Calvinist position on the five points raised by the Hague Remonstrance. These became known as the five points of Calvinism: ‘total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints’ (Palmer 2010, 10).

The Synod effected ‘a consolidation of Reformed orthodoxy,’ and Ames proceeded to develop ‘the theological agenda for a “further Reformation”’ (Van Asselt 2001, 86). But Ames’s fervent Calvinism was far from incompatible with the covenant theology he went on to promulgate; indeed, the covenant of works ‘is everywhere presupposed in the Canons of Dort’ (Horton 2006, 84). The title page of *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* declared it ‘A Worke usefull for this Season,’ and, tellingly, it was ‘published by order from the Honorable the House of Commons.’ In the year of the outbreak of the English Civil War, a theological tract which would shore up support for Calvinist opposition to high church Anglicanism was timely indeed. Ames advocates a low church approach, writing in the hope ‘that it may come to passe, that two, or three or so ... may find something more fit to instruct, and stir them up to piety, then they have observed in the more learned writings of others; which conjecture if it doe not faile me, I shall think I have done a work worth the

party’ (S. M. Fallon 2012, 19). In this thesis, the term ‘Arminian’ will be used in its strictest sense to refer to sympathy for the views of Arminius, not of Laud.

⁵⁷ The Hague Remonstrance was written by followers of Jacobus Arminius and rejected Calvinist doctrine on five major issues. The Remonstrants’ views on these points are summarised thus by David Weir:

1. Man is not totally depraved; he has some ability to choose God and His grace.
2. God elected man on the basis of his foreknowledge; he saw ahead of time that certain men would, of their own free will, choose to repent and come to Christ for salvation.
3. The atonement of Christ was for all men, not just the elect. Christ’s blood was shed for all men, and it was the responsibility of each man to use his or her free will to repent.
4. God’s grace is not irresistible: man, of his own free will, could choose to reject the gospel.
5. Some Arminians taught that a saint’s salvation was mutable; one could be redeemed and then, somehow, fall from grace by an exceedingly wicked sin. This therefore gave Christians an impetus to obey the law of god and to live morally upright lives, lest they fall into reprobation and the flames of Hell. (1990, 20)

labour' (1642, A5–A6).⁵⁸ For Ames, 'divinity is practicall, and not a speculative discipline' (1642, 3), and his commitment to accessibility is evident in his inclusion of a glossary 'for the unlearned, whereby they may come to the understanding of this booke and others of the same nature' (1642, To the Reader). His aversion to speculation is common ground with Milton, and their shared belief that 'all things which are necessary to salvation are contained in the Scriptures' (Ames 1642, 169) is clear in Ames's observation that regarding 'the place of Hell, and manner of torture & nature of outward things which pertaine thereunto, because they are not necessary for us to know, the Scripture hath not pronounced any thing distinctly of them' (1642, 75), and Milton concurs 'let us ... follow exclusively what the Bible teaches' (CPW 6:213). But while the *Christian Doctrine* then concludes that 'it is absolutely clear from innumerable passages of scripture that there is in reality one true and independent supreme God' (CPW 6:213), *The Marrow* expounds 'traditional Trinitarianism' (Campbell et al. 2007a, 94) and embodies orthodox Calvinism in its affirmation of all five points.⁵⁹

For Ames, while the covenant of works was an 'agreement involving two parties' (D. N. J. Poole 1995, 205), the covenant of grace can only be unilateral, since postlapsarian man's total depravity leaves him unable to choose anything good. In the covenant of grace, 'God onely doth covenant. For man being now dead in sinne, had no ability to contract a spirituall covenant with God' (Ames 1642, 114). But while Ames's God appears to leave little room for free will, some elements of human volition still creep in. This manifests the essential duality of puritan theology:

as heir of the implicit ... voluntarism inherent in Protestantism's call for faith and obedience as the believer's response to God's proclaimed Word, [puritan theology] affirmed boldly the role of human responsibility and the element of contingency in the divine-human relationship. And on the other hand, as heir of early Protestantism's somewhat more fully explicit emphasis upon God's sovereignty in relation to human affairs, it saw ultimate human destiny as divinely and unconditionally determined by God's eternal decree. (von Rohr 1986, 1)

⁵⁸ We are reminded here of Herbert's deathbed request that *The Temple* be published if 'it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul' (Walton 1927, 314).

⁵⁹ Ames subscribes to total depravity (1642, 68), unconditional election (28), limited atonement (114), irresistible grace (127), and the perseverance of the saints (26).

Accordingly, the *Marrow's* God is omnipotent, but not omnivolent: 'by his *Will* he willeth not all things he can will, but all things which he judgeth to be willed, and therefore actually to be hereafter' (Ames 1642, 34). While 'predestination indeed was from eternity' (Ames 1642, 116),⁶⁰ God does not preordain every single event, but only wills the ends that are necessary to his plan, leaving the exact means undetermined. Ames emphasises that 'it is so far off, that the will of God ... doth urge all things with hard necessity,' citing the example of the soldiers at the Crucifixion: 'it could not be as to the certainty of the event, that the bones of Christ should be broken, because God would that they should not be broken: yet there was no necessity imposed upon the *Souldiers Speares*' (Ames 1642, 34). God allows this not from impotence, but kindness: He 'useth meanes, not for want of power, but through the abundance of his goodnesse: that namely he might communicate a certain dignity of working to his Creatures also, & in them might make his efficiency more perceivable' (Ames 1642, 46). This narrows the gulf between man and God, and this condescension serves two purposes. Firstly, it is necessitated by the disparity between divine and mortal understanding: 'many things are spoken of God according to the way of our conceiving, rather than from his Nature' (1642, 10).⁶¹ Arising from this is the second purpose: accessible theology engenders spirituality, since 'Man in this animall life doth understand by senses, and so is as it were led by the hand from sensible things to intelligible and spirituall,' and therefore 'the Scriptures doth not explaine the will of God by universall, and scientificall rules, but by narrations, examples, precepts, exhortations, admonitions, and promises: because that manner doth make most for the common use of all kinde of men, and almost most to affect the will, & stirre up godly motions, which is the chief scope of Divinity' (Ames 1642, 54; 170). The need to couch theological concepts in worldly terms underlies Ames's persistent references to the price of redemption. Despite prefacing his discussion of salvation by referencing 1 Peter 1:18-19,⁶² Ames nonetheless

⁶⁰ Ames here follows Ephesians 1:4: 'according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that wee should bee holy, and without blame before him in love.'

⁶¹ Raphael prefaces his account of the war in Heaven in a similar manner:

How shall I relate
To human sense th' invisible exploits
Of warring Spirits ...
What surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best. (*PL* 5.564-566; 571-574)

⁶² 'Yee were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and golde, from your vaine conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lambe without blemish and without spot.'

conceptualises salvation in profane terms: ‘this transaction between God and Christ was a certaine fore-going application of our redemption, and deliverance to our surety, and to us in him’ (Ames 1642, 112).

While Ames used mercantile imagery to simplify the ways of God to men, the distance between creator and creature was further narrowed by John Preston in the tenth sermon of *The New Covenant, or, The Saints Portion* (1629), ‘one of the most important writings on the covenant up to the time of the Westminster Assembly in 1643’ (Golding 2004, 51). The covenant was certainly important in Ames’s theology, but to Preston it was ‘one of the maine points in Divinity’ (1629, 71). In contrast to Ames, Preston’s covenant is bilateral, being ‘a mutuall engagement’ between God and man (1629, 70). Man’s duties are defined by Preston, as throughout covenant theology, in accordance with Genesis 17:1, ‘walke before mee, and be thou perfect’ (1629, 68). On the other side, God outlines the various ways in which he willingly limits Himself through the agreement: ‘I am willing to enter into Covenant with thee, that is, I will binde my selfe, I will ingage my selfe, I will enter into bond, as it were, I will not be at liberty any more’ (Preston 1629, 70). Each anaphora lashes God to man ever more tightly.

Just as the covenant is bilateral it is also twofold, divided into the covenant of works and the covenant of grace: ‘the *Covenant* of workes runs in these terms, *Doe this and thou shalt live*, and I will be thy GOD. This is the *Covenant* that was made with *Adam*, and the *Covenant* that is expressed by *Moses* in the Morall Law, *Doe this, and live*’ (1629, 71). The covenant of works ‘presupposes a righteous and holy human servant entirely capable of fulfilling [its] stipulations’ (Horton 2006, 83), which is inherently impossible for postlapsarian man. The bilateralism of the ideal covenant relationship is diminished, reducing dialogue to diktat: ‘this *Covenant*, brings only a servile feare, and an enmitie, for when a man looks upon the Author of this *Covenant*, & he heares no more but the Law, and what it requires; he looks upon *God* as a hard Master, as an enemy’ (Preston 1629, 72). Ames’s ‘obedientall subjection’ seems far behind as man now ‘lookes upon [the covenant of works] as a hard and cruell Law, as a heavy yoke, as an unsupportable bondage, and therefore he hates it, and wishes there were no such law; he runs from it, as a Bond-slave runnes from his master’ (Preston 1629, 72–73). But Preston is careful to emphasise that the fault lies in man, not God: ‘the reason why this Law, or *Covenant* of workes is a ministration of death, and of enmity, is not because there is any imperfection in the Law, ... but is from the weaknesse of the flesh, that is not able to keepe the Law’ (1629, 74).

Preston outlines the terms of the covenant of grace in distinction to that of works: ‘thou shalt beleeve, thou shalt take my Sonne for thy Lord, and thy Saviour, and thou shalt likewise receive the gift of righteousnesse, which was wrought by him, for an absolution of thy sinnes, for a reconciliation with me, then I will be thy *God*, and thou shalt be my people’ (1629, 71–72). It is opposed to the covenant of works in every respect, being ‘*a ministration of love*, not enmity; *of freedome*, not of bondage, ... *a ministration of life and justification*, and not a ministration of death and condemnation’ (1629, 74). Jesus’ intercession through the covenant of grace ‘shewes [man] a way of obtaining pardon and remission for the sinnes that he hath committed against this Law’ (Preston 1629, 75), and just as Ames’s covenant of grace was ‘a covenant of reconciliation between enemies’ (1642, 114), Preston’s covenant of grace transforms man’s relationship with God: ‘he lookes not upon *God* now as a hard and cruell Master, but he lookes upon him now as a *God* exceeding full of mercy and compassion’ (1629, 75). Jesus creates a bilateral covenant on two levels, between himself and God and himself and man: he ‘hath reconciled the disagreeing parties, he hath gone between them, as it were, and hath undertaken for both sides; he hath undertaken on *Gods* part, these and these things shall be done ... he hath undertaken on our part, to give satisfaction by his death, and likewise to make us obedient to his Father’ (Preston 1629, 84). Christ’s mediation heals the disjunction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, and in the latter Jesus ‘satisfied God’s justice and wrath, fulfilling the requirement of the broken covenant of works’ (Jeon 2004, 36). Ames argues the

saving Covenant of God hath beene onely one from the beginning, yet the manner of the application of Christ or of administring this new Covenant, hath not always been one and the same, but divers, according to the ages in which the Church hath been gathered ... this manner of administring is double: one of Christ to be exhibited, and the other of Christ exhibited. (1642, 193)

Similarly, Preston observes the ‘difference betweene the Testaments, [in that] the one was expressed but in types and shaddowes, the other hath the substance it selfe’ (1629, 81). This transition brings God into a tangible relationship with man; no more is he a tyrannical ‘hard Master,’ but Preston marvels that ‘I should enter into Covenant with the great GOD, that hee should come to a Campact and agreement with mee, that he should tye himself,

and bind himselfe’ to man (1629, 85–6).⁶³ But God’s bringing Himself closer to our level simultaneously raises us nearer to His, as His willingness ‘to enter into Covenant ... implies a kinde of equality betweene us ... then his strength is our strength, and his Armies are our Armies, we have interest in all; there is an offensive and a defensive League; and when we seeke to him, and put him in mind of it, he can not deny us’ (Preston 1629, 85–86). The parallel between this bilateral agreement and its counterpart in the commercial world is reinforced by the deluge of monetary imagery which follows: now that ‘this great Mystery’ of the bilateral covenant has been ‘revealed, now these great riches are opened, that before were hid’ (Preston 1629, 90). Preston reminds us that ‘it is better to be rich in grace, better to have the priviledges of *Jesus Christ*, then to be rich in this world’ (1629, 90), and disabuses readers who value worldly riches above their spiritual counterparts: ‘the Apostle exhorts rich men, that they change these other riches they enjoy, to spirituall riches’ (1629, 90).⁶⁴ But lest his readers mistake this for the usual puritan *contemptus mundi* rhetoric, Preston shows his business acumen by emphasising that ‘a man will never be exhorted to change, except it bee for the better’ (1629, 90). His readers can turn a shrewd profit by exchanging material riches for spiritual, and so he urges ‘let them so use their riches, so dispense them, so mannage them, that they may turne to other riches’ (Preston 1629, 90). While Preston’s final peroration is shot through with monetary imagery, the metaphors of commercial life played an even greater role in the theology of Thomas Hooker.

Like Ames, Hooker was a puritan in self-imposed exile in the Netherlands, and Sargent Bush Jr. suggests that Ames’s ‘early work had helped form Hooker’s theology and ecclesiology’ (Bush Jr. 2008). George Williams suggests that the two must have come into contact at Christ’s College (1975, 2), and there was evidently lasting mutual respect between the men: Ames declared ‘though he had been acquainted with many scholars of divers nations, yet he never met with Mr. Hooker’s equal, either for preaching or disputation’ (quoted in Williams 1975, 32), while Hooker wrote the preface to Ames’s *Fresh Suit Against Ceremonies* (1633). Hooker is also directly linked to Misselden, as from 1623 until 1633 the latter was ‘deputy governor of the Merchant Adventurers’

⁶³ In his *Treatise on the New Covenant* (1632), Richard Harris asked ‘who gaines by the service you doe to [God], he or you? All the commodity and benefit thereof is onely your[s]; having therefore the better end of the staffe, hold him fast to his bargaine’ (39).

⁶⁴ Preston goes on to note that ‘it is a true observation of one, when there were but wooden Chalices, then there were golden Preists; and in after time when there were golden Chalices they had woodden Priests; so it is, when the Church is in a lower condition, commonly it prospers best’ (1629, 92), and this image recurs in Milton’s *Of Reformation* (CPW 1: 557), discussed in Chapter 3 below.

Company at Delft' (Grassby 2008). Misselden was 'a supporter of Anglican religion and a known agent of Laud' (Sprunger 1982, 237), but his attempts 'to include the Church of England's liturgy and forms of prayer ... in services' (Ha 2011, 126) in the Merchant Adventurers' church met with considerable resistance. The Scottish minister in Delft, John Forbes, 'governed the church according to Presbyterian standards' (Sprunger 1982, 237) until the arrival of Hooker in the early 1630s. Hooker served as Forbes's assistant from 1631-33, and this period saw a gradual movement 'into freer, more congregational directions' (Sprunger 1982, 237) with Forbes and Hooker eventually 'thr[owing] out completely the Prayer Book and the authorised forms approved in England' (Sprunger 1973, 40). This shift towards nonconformism was exacerbated, in Misselden's eyes, by the Delft church's approval for the covenant theology which was sweeping English congregations in the Netherlands in the early 1630s, and he dismissed this new interest in the covenant as 'presbyterian canons' (quoted in Sprunger 1973, 41). Despite Misselden's conducting a 'furious campaign to discredit Forbes and force his removal' (Sprunger 1982, 241), the congregation and mercantile elders sided with Forbes and Hooker, voting Misselden out as deputy governor in July 1633.

It is no coincidence that Hooker's arrival in Delft coincided with a rapid increase of the congregation's interest in the covenant. Since the congregation was comprised largely of merchants and their families, sermons in Delft would be most effective if formulated in the language of commerce, and in this Hooker had considerable experience. *The Faithful Covenanter* was published in 1644, although it was based on a sermon Hooker preached in Dedham around 1629 (Parnham 2008, 922). Like the *Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, the *Faithful Covenanter's* title page declared the tract to be 'very usefull in these times of Covenanting with God,' and Hooker indeed seems remarkably prescient. The tract opens with an epigram from Deuteronomy 29:24-25,⁶⁵ and Hooker goes on to draw the trusty parallel between Israel and England: in response to the question, 'what was this goodly England, the onely Nation of all the Earth, and yet now all laid waste in this fearefull manner?' comes the response 'what would have had the Lord done more, he gave them a Law, and Mercies, and Judgements, but they would not serve the Lord, but brake the bands asunder, and cast the cords behind their backs' (1644, 3). Civil unrest is God's punishment for breaking the covenant, and the anticipation of the Civil War is acute: 'if one should hereafter passe by and see all the Townes burnt up here in this Land, ... and the Churches

⁶⁵ 'Even al nations shal say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them foorth out of the land of Egypt.'

burnt ... would it not make our hearts ake Brethren' (Hooker 1644, 4).⁶⁶ But Hooker is no Ozymandias, as he asks 'was any nation greater then Babylon, or more glorious then Jerusalem? But what is become of them brethren? Hath not the Lord brought desolation and destruction upon them?' (Hooker 1644, 10).⁶⁷

For Hooker, the punishment is not unwarranted: 'the Lord is just, for they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord their God' (1644, 4). This is no abstract covenant, but a bilateral agreement represented in worldly imagery.⁶⁸ Hooker anticipates his audience's anxious questions: 'how shall we know God will performe his part, and how shall the Lord know that we will performe our part to him, what Bond is there for it?' (Hooker 1644, 19). As Thomas Gataker observed in *Christian Constancy Crowned by Christ* (1624), the advantage of bilateralism was the mutual benefit of adhering to the covenant. It was unreasonable 'to expect that [Jesus] should keepe covenants with us, when we have no care to keepe the like with him,' and so the simplest way to ensure Christ kept his end of the bargain was for man to keep his own: 'if we looke that [Christ] should keepe *covenants* with us, let us be sure that we keepe *covenant* with him' (1624, 8). A preacher addressing a mercantile congregation would do well to vouch for God's credit, and so Hooker reminds us that 'it is a sweet thing that the Lord hath bound himself by Oath to us ... if you have an honest and able man bound to you for a debt, you goe away content' (1644, 22).

In an extended analogy, the covenant between man and God becomes a lease established between tenant and landlord, since there are manifold parallels between

a Covenant that is made between two parties, and the Law, which is the Covenant which is given us of the Lord: In a Covenant, first there must be conditions and Articles of agreement between the parties offered and consented unto: and secondly, a binding one another to the performance thereof by Bond, perhaps a

⁶⁶ For a vivid discussion of the destruction of property in this period, see Stephen Porter, *Destruction in the English Civil Wars* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1997).

⁶⁷ We are reminded here of Shelley's friend Horace Smith's treatment of the subject:

Some hunter may express
Wonder like ours, when thro' the wilderness
Where London *stood*, holding the wolf in chace,
He meets some fragment huge, and stops to guess
What powerful, but unrecorded, race,
Once dwelt in that annihilated place. (1821, 213, ll.9–14)

⁶⁸ In this, Hooker has an illustrious oratorical forebear: 'our Saviour borroweth his comparison from easie and familiar things, such as the Sower, the seed, the ground, the growth, the withering, the answering or failing of the Sowers expectations ... and by all these would teach us some spirituall instruction. For there is no earthly thing, which is not fitted to put us in mind of some heavenly' (T. Taylor 1621, 17).

paire of Indentures are drawne between them, wherein is declared, that they mutually agree; he to make good the land and to pay thus much rent: the other to let it him thus, and thus. (Hooker 1644, 18)⁶⁹

Just as a lease begins with the tenant promising to pay the agreed amount of rent to the landlord, so too in the covenant relationship ‘there must be answering of the means of Grace, with the measure of our uprightnesse and obedience’ (1644, 17). Hooker reminds his audience that they ‘know how Farmes and Leases goe, ... he that hath a Lease of an hundred pound a yeere, must not goe and pay but fiftie pound’ (1644, 17). God will not ‘lend his mercies for nothing,’ and if the congregation had been ‘those that creepe out once in a moneth to a Sermon, there is a fiftie pound rent,’ but ‘the Lord will not take this of a *Dedham* Christian ... [who] sit at an hundred pound rent’ (Hooker 1644, 17). Hooker again appeals to his congregation’s business sense: ‘if one owe you money, and take this day, and that day, and promise it, and not pay it; you would not thinke well of this dealing’ (1644, 24), but this is exactly what they do when they ‘doe not walke with God’ (1644, 20). God ‘cals for ... Good money: will he be payd with counters and shews? No, but currant money of England’ (Hooker 1644, 25), and when man falls behind with his spiritual rent payments, he is duly punished.⁷⁰ Sinners ‘run in rerages with the Lord for his rent’ (Hooker 1644, 30), and while they may think they escape, ‘God will have his rent one way or other’ (1644, 31). God keeps diligent accounts, and he will ‘call for the Bookes,

⁶⁹ The sacred and the profane overlapped in many contracts of the period. An ‘earnest,’ ‘a sum of money given and received to secure the legal binding force of [a] contract’ (Kato 2011, 7), was commonly referred to in early modern England as ‘God’s penny.’ It is unsurprising to see the ‘earnest’ invoked by other contemporary covenant theologians, particularly Richard Sibbes. Sibbes maintained that ‘grace is the earnest penny of glory: God hath made a covenant, and given earnest, he will not lose it, the earnest is never taken away, but filled up’ (1637, 217), and that ‘the earnest of the Spirit of God, the first fruites, of peace, and joy, of comfort and liberty, to the throne of grace, these are the beginnings of Heaven’ (1639, 571). In an interesting Miltonic parallel, in *Lydia’s Conversion* (1638), Sibbes observes that ‘there is such a distance betweene the nature, and corruption of man, and grace, that there must be a great deale of preparation, many degrees to rise by before a man come to that condition hee should be in’ (Sibbes 1638, 21), just as man shall not enter heaven ‘till by degrees of merit rais’d / They open to themselves at length the way / Up hither, under long obedience tri’d’ (*PL* 7:157-159). Earnests are a common occurrence in Shakespeare’s plays, as in *Cymbeline*, where the Queen gives Pisanio what she believes to be poison as ‘an earnest of a farther good / that I mean to thee’ (1.6.74-5). For a discussion of Shakespeare’s dramatic use of earnestes, see Patricia Parker, ‘Temporal Gestation, Legal Contracts, and the Promissory Economies of *The Winter’s Tale*’, in *Women, Property, and the Letters of the Law in Early Modern England*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Andrew R. Buck, and Nancy E. Wright (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 24-49.

⁷⁰ In *The Danger of Desertion* (1641), a sermon preached immediately before his departure for New England in 1633, Hooker lamented that ‘God is going, his glory is departing, England hath seene her best dayes, and now evill dayes are befalling us: God is packing up his Gospell, because no body will buy his wares, nor come to his price’ (1641, 15). While in *The Faithful Covenanter* he emphasised the high rent of Dedham Christians compared to ‘those that crepe out once in a moneth to a Sermon,’ *The Danger of Desertion* makes the local national, concluding that ‘the poore native Turks and Infidels shall have a cooler summer parlour in hell then [the English]; for we stand at a high rate, we were highly exalted, therefore shall our torments be the more to beare’ (Hooker 1641, 20).

and for Conscience, Gods Auditor, and the keeper of his accounts' (1644, 35), drawing up a spiritual 'bill, ... which if you cannot prove to be cancelled, woe be to you' (1644, 29) since God will 'have the utmost farthing' (1644, 37) on Judgement Day. Hooker concludes by shifting the economic focus back to the spiritual realm, urging his congregation to exercise the same caution in spiritual as business affairs:

amongst men, brethren, you would not have your credit cracked for anything; and you doe honestly. A good name is a Jewell ... O consider of this brethren; we have hard bargains at the hands of the world, and of the devil, and sinne; many knocks of soule, and girds of conscience with them: but the Lord hath beene ever gracious, mercifull, loving, and kinde to us: resolve therefore that the Lord shall never lose by you; let the world lose if it will; and let carnall friends, and sinne, and Satan lose if they will: let not the Lord lose. (1644, 42–3)⁷¹

Misselden's first published tract is little more than partisan bickering, and reading it we share Milton's exasperation when recounting of the battles of Saxon earls, which was no different to 'chronicl[ing] the Wars of Kites, or Crows, flocking and fighting in the Air' (*CPW* 5:249). It is only in the *Circle of Commerce* that theory begins to be drawn from practice, and Misselden declares the crucial importance of the balance of trade as if he had done so all along. It now becomes apparent that trade is cyclical, not linear, and concomitant with this is the awareness that investment must also be a circular process. Mun's *England's Treasure by Forraigne Trade* reformulates Misselden's rudimentary ideas with great sophistication, adding nuance to the zero-sum model and even anticipating Adam Smith's prioritisation of capital over money. Mun advocates a teleological view of trade, always careful to consider ultimate profit before lamenting immediate loss.

Covenant theologians also reconceptualised loss as investment. The commercial world so familiar to their congregations provided a ready source of rhetorical imagery, and this was exploited by theologians of all persuasions. For Ames, total depravity necessitates a unilateral covenant, but God's lack of omnivulence and His condescension means that *The Marrow* still gestures towards man's free will. This bilateralism was made explicit in Preston's *New Covenant*, with Jesus brokering a deal in which each party in the covenant agreement binds themselves to the other's conditions. While the economic parallels of the

⁷¹ Hooker perhaps has in mind here Matthew 6:19-21: 'lay not up for your selves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, & where theeves breake thorow, and steale. But lay up for your selves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, & where theeves doe not breake thorow, nor steale. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

covenant relationship were not lost on Preston, they are fundamental to Hooker's theology. Hooker's early career was spent – much to Misselden's chagrin – preaching to merchants, and his sermons are suffused with mercantile imagery. Playing on concepts of debt and credit, he transforms the covenant into a tenancy agreement complete with rent stipulations, penalties for late payments, and Jesus as guarantor. Hooker encouraged his congregation to think of their salvation as the greatest transaction of all, and just as Mun and Misselden reassured their readers that bullion exported to the East Indies would eventually return with profit, so too covenant theologians argued that Jesus' intercession would recoup the spiritual investment thought lost in the Fall.

Chapter 2

‘Is the ballance thine?’: Jonson, Herbert, and the Capitulation to Commodification

In the good old days of trade, in which our Forefathers plodded on, and got estates too, there were no bubbles.

– Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (1841, 18:156)

J. D. Gould has observed that the economic depression that afflicted England during the early 1620s was ‘one of the most widely discussed topics of the day’ and ‘gave rise to much official enquiry and unofficial documentary discussion’ (1955b, 121). The debate over the causes and remedies of the depression brought the wider ethical issues surrounding consumption and commodification to the forefront of cultural consciousness, and these concepts were investigated as much in literary works as in economic tracts. Ben Jonson’s *The Staple of Newes* (1626) explores the commodification of both money and information, concluding that to treat these concepts as commodities is not only unethical, but problematises representations of truth. In *The Temple* (1633), George Herbert gradually comes to understand salvation as a bargain struck with God, and so the commodification of the soul is crucial to his conceptualisation of redemption. While Jonson and Herbert have opposing attitudes regarding the consequences of commodification, they both prove to be crucial precedents for Milton’s exploration of the relationship between commodification, sin, and salvation.

During the spring of 1626, Milton briefly returned home from his studies in Cambridge for several weeks.⁷² The *First Elegy* recounts Milton’s activities during this period in London: like many seventeen-year-old boys, a portion of his time was devoted to

⁷² The exact reason for Milton’s absence from Cambridge is unclear. Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns recently followed John Carey in thinking that Milton was at home simply due to the ‘university vacation’ (2010, 32), but cite no supporting evidence. Campbell and Norman Postlethwaite earlier mentioned the Cambridge tutor, ‘William Chappell, who had recently rusticated Milton’ (2007, 78), and this position is supported by both Barbara Lewalski’s claim that Milton ‘had a serious altercation with his tutor Chappell which resulted in a brief rustication at home’ (2003, 21) and the *First Elegy*’s references to ‘the reproofs of a harsh tutor’ (l.16) and ‘this rustication of mine’ (l.19). Despite this, no conclusive evidence for Milton’s rustication in spring 1626 has been discovered. Gordon Campbell has kindly pointed out to me that in 1626 the Cambridge Lent term ended on 31 March while Lent ended on 6 April, so even if Milton had not been rusticated there was still a week after the end of the Lent term where he could have been in London to see the *Staple of Newes*.

watching girls (l.53), but he also spent time ‘beneath [his] father’s roof’ (l.11) absorbed in the

Books

That are my life and absorb me altogether.

When I weary of these and need a change, I have the theatre

To call me from my study and offer diversion. (ll.25–8)

Gordon Campbell doubts whether Milton actually visited the theatre during this period, explaining that, because ‘Greek and Roman plays were not performed in Caroline London,’ the classical dramatic types Milton refers to in the elegy ‘must be referring to plays that he had been reading’ (1999, 103). But the *First Elegy* explicitly describes the theatre as a ‘change,’ an *alternative* to books, which suggests that Milton had indeed seen plays performed. Milton most likely visited Blackfriars, as his father was a trustee and the theatre was ‘well within walking distance’ (Burbery 2007, 1) of the family home in Bread Street.⁷³ Moreover, Milton describes reading and the theatre as ‘indoor’ pleasures (l.49), and the Blackfriars was one of the few indoor theatres in London. Timothy J. Burbery also suggests that *sinuosi pompa theatre*, ‘the winding theatre’s parade,’ alludes to ‘the curve of the Blackfriars’ auditorium’ (2007, 9). This seems rather tenuous, however, as Milton’s familiarity with the Blackfriars interior does not necessarily mean that he saw a play there; it would surely be possible for the son of a trustee to visit the theatre between public performances.

But Burbery adduces further evidence to suggest that Milton did see a play at Blackfriars during his time in London: *The Staple of Newes*. Milton was home from Cambridge during the Lent term, which ran from 13 January to 31 March (Burbery 2007, 10), and *The Staple of Newes* repeatedly refers to ‘the time of year, in Lent’ (Int.2.63).⁷⁴ The play was performed at Court during Shrovetide (Jonson 1954, 251), and it is ‘likely that it was presented in the public theatre at Candlemas [between 28 January and 3 February]’ (Kifer 1972, 337) and ‘shown at least several times throughout Spring 1626, from late February until early April’ (Burbery 2007, 11). It seems more likely that Milton saw *The Staple of Newes* at Blackfriars when we consider the dramatic characters

⁷³ For an account of John Milton senior’s trusteeship of the Blackfriars theatre, see Herbert Berry, ‘The Miltons and the Blackfriars Playhouse,’ *Modern Philology* 89, 4 (1992), 510–514, and Gordon Campbell, ‘Shakespeare and the Youth of Milton,’ *Milton Quarterly* 33, 4 (1999), 95–105.

⁷⁴ There are further references to Shrovetide at Induction.11-12, 62-65; Intermean 2.63; 3.2.82-5; 5.5.35. For a reading of the play as a Shrovetide festive comedy, see Devra Rowland Kifer, ‘*The Staple of Newes*: Jonson’s Festive Comedy,’ *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 12, 2 (1972), 329–344.

described in the *First Elegy*. Milton arrays a collection of characters which, as Campbell notes, are stock characters from classical drama. But it is also plausible that Milton was describing characters from a contemporary play influenced by classical forms. Jonson's characteristic classicism is manifest in *The Staple of Newes*, and the first five characters described in the *First Elegy* have counterparts in Jonson's play (Burbery 2007, 12).

Burbery translates *catus senior* as 'crafty old man,' which aptly describes Peniboy Canter, an 'old man' (5.1.101) who fakes his own death then disguises himself as a beggar to observe his son squander the inheritance. However, David R. Slavitt's 2011 translation of the *First Elegy* translates *catus senior* as 'grasping old man' (l.29) which could equally describe Peniboy Senior, the uncle who is so miserly that he sells the food sent to him and 'preserves himselfe, / Like an old hoary Rat, with mouldy pye-crust' (2.1.17-18). The *prodigus hæres*, or prodigal heir, represents Peniboy Junior, who spends much of the play wasting his father's money until Canter reveals himself and denounces his son as 'thou, *Prodigall*' (4.4.127). *Procus*, or suitor, refers to many characters, as the play's action revolves around various attempts to woo Lady Pecunia, an allegorical embodiment of money to whom 'all the world are suiters' (1.6.65).⁷⁵ Burbery contests the usual literal translation of *positâ casside miles adest* as a soldier that has set aside his helmet, arguing instead for a figurative reading as 'one who has set aside, or foregone, warfare itself' (2007, 13). This describes *The Staple*'s Shunfield, a former 'Sea-Captaine' (2.4.7) who threatens to beat Peniboy Senior only for the latter to reply 'True, *Captaine*, if you durst beat any other, / I should believe you' (2.4.114-115). The 'lawyer ... who babbles in wretched Latin' (ll.31-2) represents Picklock, a lawyer who boasts of his ability to cant 'in all the languages in *Westminster-Hall*' (4.4.103). Finally, the 'innocent maiden, wide-eyed with wonder / At the first pang of a love that has taken her unawares' (ll.36-7) suggests the first meeting between Pecunia and Peniboy Junior, where Pecunia claims 'I felt my heart beat, as it would leape out, / In speach; and all my face it was a flame, / But how it came to passe I doe not know' (2.5.55-7).

There is one final parallel between the *First Elegy* and *The Staple of Newes*, which Burbery overlooks: Milton's description of 'ladies of fashion who gathered together / to see and be seen on Pompey's porch near the Roman theatres' (ll.66-67) mirrors the Gossips who interrupt Jonson's Induction claiming that they are 'women of *fashion*; [who]

⁷⁵ In the preface to his *Lady Pecunia* (1605), Richard Barnfield describes Pecunia as being 'lov'd of men' (3, cited in Stonex 1915, 825).

come to see, and to / be seene' (Ind.9-10). It seems likely, then, that Milton saw *The Staple of Newes* performed at Blackfriars.

In the past, criticism of the *Staple* has tended to disregard the main plot of Pecunia and the Peniboys as tiresomely allegorical, clumsy, and ill-defined (Thorndike 1929; Palmer 1967), and the livelier sub-plot satirising the new office has attracted more attention for what it reveals about the nascent English news trade (Muggli 1992; Levy 1999; Nevitt 2005; L. Davis, Smith, and Walker 2006). A decade ago, critics began to recognise the importance of currency and circulation in the play (Wayne 1999; Harp 2000), but it is only within the past five years that this approach has been broadened to read the play 'in relation to economic thought emerging in ... the 1620s' (Deng 2008, 246), interpreting the courtship of Pecunia as a 'meditation on the affect and ethics of capital' (Loewenstein 2008, 336). However, Joseph Loewenstein has somewhat oversimplified Jonson's attitude to monopolies, as I will show in my discussion of the Staple's project to issue news 'under the Seale of the *Office*, / As *Staple Newes*; no other news be currant' (1.2.35-6). Stephen Deng offers an insightful reading of *The Staple*'s didacticism in light of Thomas Mun's advocacy of the Aristotelian golden mean, but he neglects to discuss one of the primary pamphlet controversies of the early 1620s in which ethics overlapped economics, and which was most germane to the Milton family: the debate over usury.

Usury was central to the disputes regarding the causes of the depression, as the rate of interest on usury was limited to ten percent in England as opposed to eight or six percent in most other European countries. Many English merchants argued that this made England less competitive compared to her European rivals, and the rate of usury was lowered to eight percent in 1624. One tract which was influential in the decision to lower the rate of usury (Parr 1999, 2.1.4 n.4) was Thomas Culpeper's *A Tract Against Usurie* (1621). Despite the title, Culpeper does not argue against usury itself, but only against its high rate of interest. He recognises that usury was central to economic life, as its rate 'is the measure by which all men trade, purchase, build, plant, or any other waies bargaine' (Culpeper 1621, 4). Every interaction between the characters in *The Staple* falls under one of these categories, suggesting that the play may be read as a microcosm of English economic interactions. Culpeper believed the higher rate of English usury put the nation at a disadvantage with 'our industrious neighbours the *Dutch*' (1621, 3), whose rate was six per cent. Even though the Dutch had 'no other advantages of industry and frugality,' they would nonetheless out-trade the English, as 'if they make returne of tenne *per centum*, they

almost double the Use allowed, and so make a very gainfull trade' (Culpeper 1621, 2).
The high rate of usury actually led to a national regression, as

it makes the Land it selfe of small value, neerer the rate of new-found Lands, than
of any other Countrie where Lawes, government, and peace, have so long
flourished; For the high rate of Usury makes Land sell so cheape; and the cheape
sale of Land is the cause men seeke no more by industry and cost to improve them.
(Culpeper 1621, 5)

Culpeper held that with careful husbandry, the yields of English lands could be improved greatly and 'the riches and commodities of this Land would neere be doubled,' but low land values made it not worthwhile to have 'the barren Lands mended by Marle, Sleech, Lime, Chalke, Sea-sand, and other meanes' (1621, 6). This indifference to cultivation is expressed by characters in *The Staple*:

Fit[ton]: Who would hold any Land
To have the trouble to marle it? Shu[nfield]: Not a gentleman.
Bro[ker]: Let clownes and hyndes affect it, that love ploughes,
And carts, and harrowes, and are busie still,
In vexing the dull element. (2.4.152-156)

In the Netherlands, conversely, 'lands [are] deere, and money cheape; and consequently the improvement of their Lands at so great a charge with them, is gainfull to the owners,' and so the Dutch 'draine and maintaine their Lands against the sea which floweth higher above them, then it doth above the lowest parts of our drownd lands' (Culpeper 1621, 6).⁷⁶

But Culpeper does not propose that the limit on usury be abolished, as he anticipates the objection that there was no such limit during the reign of Henry VIII: 'to this, may bee answered, that in those times there was a stricter band in that point upon mens consciences; So far forth as Usurers were in the same case as excommunicate persons, they could make no wills, nor were allowed Christian burial' (1621, 9). The

⁷⁶ The sea also 'floweth high' above the Dutch in *The Staple*, as one of the stories from the news office claims that

One Cornelius-Son,
Hath made the Hollanders an invisible Eele,
To swimme the Haven at Dunkirke, and sinke all
The shipping there. (3.2.75-78)

absence of such religious strictures leads to moral dissipation, as Culpeper ‘fear[s] fornication is too frequent among us’ (1621, 9). The relationship between money and fornication recurs in the *Staple*, as when Pecunia leaves Peniboy Senior to cavort with Peniboy Junior in a tavern, the miser exclaims ‘*Pecunia* is a whore’ (4.3.82), as just as Peniboy Canter chastises his son for ‘prostitut[ing]’ Pecunia (4.4.130).

The ethical issues touched on by Culpeper evoke the patristic precedent for opposing usury. The acquisition of useful commodities was one of the goals of trade, but when money began to be treated not as a means to commodities, but a commodity in itself, many had an Augustinian anxiety regarding the confusion of means and ends:

There are some things which are to be enjoyed, some which are to be used ... those which are to be enjoyed make us happy; those which are to be used assist us and give us a boost, so to speak, as we press on towards our happiness, so that we may reach and hold fast to the things which make us happy. And we, placed as we are among things of both kinds, both enjoy and use them; but if we choose to enjoy things that are to be used, our advance is impeded and sometimes even diverted, and we are held back, or even put off, from attaining things which are to be enjoyed, because we are hamstrung by our love of lower things. (St. Augustine 1997, 9)

The anonymous tract *Usurie Araigned and Condemned* (1625) opposes usury on such religious grounds, as ‘the wrongs that Usurers doe to God and themselves passe all comprehension’ (24). Usury is a tool of Satan, and the author asks

can the grand enemie erect up any yoke-fellow to match with Idolatrie, but only Usurie[?] Doth not Idolatrie conspire against a Church that it may spoile that Common-wealth[?] And doth not Usurie on the other side conspire by many subtill practices, to impoverish Common-wealths, thereby at ease to spoile those Churches. (*Usurie Araigned* 1625, 14)

This connection between usury and idolatry is made in the *Staple*, when Peniboy Senior addresses ‘my Goddess, bright *Pecunia*’ (2.1.3), recalling Volpone’s ‘open the shrine, that I may see my Saint’ (1.1.2).

As usury distorts man’s relationship with God, so too it perverts familial inheritance:

so long as the Civill Law did censure Usurie, how lineably did Lands descend with little alteration through many generations, but since Usurie found favour under that shadow of a limitation, how hath it put men on to live beyond their limits in their diet and apparel, vaine buildings and superfluous attendance, whereby most houses have since expulsed their Owners. (*Usurie Araigned* 1625, 4)

In the *Staple*, however, the reverse is the case. The usurer, Peniboy Senior, despite being an ‘abstemious, childless killjoy’ (Kifer 1972, 340), lives very much within his limits, with a modest diet and two occasional servants, both of whom he chides for their extravagance. By contrast, Peniboy Junior, when his estate descends ‘lineably’ from his father, buys new boots, clothes, a girdle, ruff, hat, and spurs (1.3.36), lays on a ‘good dinner’ (4.1.2) in a tavern for eleven other characters, and proposes building a ‘*Canter Colledge*’ (4.4.82) which he will ‘endow with lands, and meanes’ (4.4.86), before Peniboy Canter throws off his disguise and expels his son from his house by pledging to ‘take home the *Lady* [Pecunia], to my charge, / And these her *servants*, and leave you my *Cloak*, / To travel in to Beggars Bush!’ (4.4.121-123). *Usurie Araigned* condemns those who borrow from usurers for their ‘extreme waste of forraine Commodities, that many of these wasters can eat, drink, & weare little but outlandish, to the empoverishing of their owne Countrie, and enriching forraine Nations’ (1625, 8), and Peniboy Junior indeed appears to spend his inheritance on domestic items:

P[eniboy] Ju[nior]: I pray thee tell me, *Fashioner*, what Authors

Thou read’st to helpe thy invention? *Italian* prints?

Or *Arras* hangings? They are Taylors *Libraries*.

Fas[hioner]: I scorne such helps. P[eniboy] Ju[nior]: O, though thou art a silk-worme,

And deal’st in sattins and velvets, and rich plushes,

Thou canst not spin all forms out of thy selfe...

Fas[hioner]: Believe it Sir. (1.2.101-106; 108)

Peniboy Junior’s relations with the fashioners of the *Staple* news office, however, are quite different. There, he has a hunger only for outlandish news, spending a great deal to hear ‘foreign fables’ (Rockwood 2008, 137). But nonetheless, *Usurie Araigned* finds spendthrift children serve a didactic purpose: ‘children with much outrage, and many mischiefs to

their Countrie, do commonly spend all, remaining to us as spectacles, through which we may discern the bad use, and bad end of goods gotten by these bad meanes' (*Usurie Araigned* 1625, 14), and this is indeed the purpose Peniboy Junior serves in the *Staple*.

But while critics usually consider Pennyboy Junior to be the central character of the play, the key protagonist is in fact Pecunia. She drives the dramatic action: Peniboy Junior inherits her in the protasis, Peniboy Senior's struggle to retain her forms the epitasis, and Peniboy Canter reclaims her in the catastrophe. Her tripartite characterisation as a goddess, a representation of money, and a real woman, mirrors the three interrelated approaches taken to the issue of usury: *Usurie Araigned's* fear of usurious idolatry, Culpeper's mercantile position regarding the economic benefits of a lower rate of usury, and Culpeper and *Usurie Araigned's* moral concern about the connections between usury, fornication, and the prostitution of money.

Pecunia's role as a goddess is clear from her first appearance, where Peniboy Senior's address 'is full of religious vehicles' (Partridge 1958, 181). His addressing her as 'Your *Grace*' (2.1.1; 4; 6; 11; 20) could be read as deference to a social superior, an interpretation supported by his desire that she 'teach this body, / To bend, and these my aged knees to buckle' (2.1.6-7). But it becomes clear that the abasement is not social but spiritual, as he declares 'I'm your *Martyr*' (2.1.10) and that

All this Nether-world
Is yours, you command it, and doe sway it,
The honour of it, and the honesty,
The reputation, I, and the religion...
Is Queene *Pecunia's* (2.1.38-41; 43)⁷⁷

Pecunia questions the 'self-punitive aspect of his sexual and financial obsession' (Sanders 1998a, 194), rejecting Peniboy Senior's pious prostration:

Pec[unia]: Why do you so, my Guardian? I not bid you,
Cannot my *Grace* be gotten, and held too,
Without your selfe-tormentings, and your watches,
Your macerating of your body thus

⁷⁷ Devra Kifer Rowland claims that *The Staple* is 'a morality account of the salvation of Pennyboy Junior' (1972, 329), but Peniboy Senior's character arc is more aptly described in such religious terms. He moves from outright idolatry of Pecunia at the beginning of the play, to happily surrendering Pecunia to his nephew at the close.

With cares, and scantings of your dyet, and rest? (2.1.21-25)

This foreshadows Comus' speech against temperance:

If all the world
Should in a pet of temperance feed on Pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but Frieze,
Th'all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd,
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,
And we should serve him as a grudging master
As a penurious niggard of his wealth. (ll.721-726)⁷⁸

Pecunia persistently derides Peniboy Senior as a 'penurious niggard of his wealth,' leading him to attempt to reclaim her: 'I am still awake, / To waite upon your *Grace*, please you to quit / This strange company, they are not for you' (4.3.14-16). When Pecunia responds 'No *Guardian*, I doe like them very well' (4.3.15-17), Peniboy Senior plunges from the sacred to the profane, disparaging Pecunia and her entourage as 'you whores, / My bawds, my instruments, what should I call you, / Man may thinke base inough for you?' (4.2.58-9).

Jonson plays on the mineralogical and social meanings of 'base' in his description of Pecunia's ancestry, which is a mixture of base and precious. Her lineage descends through 'the *mynes* o' *Hungary* [and] the *Welsh-myne*' (4.4.22-3), regions known for their production of base metals like lead, copper, and iron. But she also has roots in 'the *Spanish mynes* o' the *West-Indies*' (4.4.21), famed for their silver, and her grandfather was 'cousin to the *King of Ophyr*' (1.4.43).⁷⁹ The Spanish connection has contemporary relevance, as Jonson names Pecunia '*Aurelia Clara Pecunia*' (1.6.46) and titles her '*Infanta* of the *Mines*' (1.6.42), alluding to the Spanish Infanta, Isabella Clara Eugenia, whose potential marriage to Charles had foundered shortly before the play's performance. The English failure to gain legal entrance to the Spanish royal family is referenced in

⁷⁸ In *The History of Britain*, Milton compares the ancient Britons to the 'wild Irish' who 'run into Bogs ... up to the Neck, and there ... stay many daies holding a certain morsel in thir mouths no bigger then a bean, to suffice hunger,' although he regretfully notes 'that receipt, and the temperance it taught, is long since unknown among us' (CPW 5.1:59).

⁷⁹ Ophir's wealth was legendary and the region supplied Solomon with 'gold[,] foure hundred and twentie talents' (1 Kings 9:28).

Pecunia's 'contracted family' (1.4.48), which we first understand as 'close,' but then realise Jonson is also playing on the legal sense:⁸⁰

Pic[klock]: Her *Secretary* ---

P[eniboy] Ca[nter]: Who is her Gentleman-usher too. Pic[klock]: One *Broker*,
And then two Gentlewomen; *Mistresse Statute*,
And *Mistresse Band*, with *Waxe* the Chambermaide,
And Mother *Mortgage*, the old Nurse. (1.6.48-52)

This connection drawn between money and 'Mistresse *Statute*' is exploited by Peniboy Senior in his mentions of the new usury legislation, as when he reassures Pecunia that 'although your *Grace* be falne of, *two I'the hundred*, / In vulgar estimation; yet am I, / Your *Graces* servant still' (2.1.4-6). He takes the moral argument from *Usurie Araigned* and adapts it to criticise not usury itself, but its new lower rate: at the old rate 'th'age was thrifty, / And men good husbands, look'd unto their stockes, / Had their minds bounded' (3.4.35-7), just as *Usurie Araigned* asks if in the absence of usury, 'thriftie men... (their Talents increasing by Gods gifts and their honest endeavours) [would] make therewith all the more employment of their Children, Servants, and poore Neighbours in the same kinde of industrie, be it by Sea or Land, to the infinite increase of all kind of wealth?' (1625, 14). Instead, they 'give over and spend all in Idleness' (14), and so too Peniboy Senior claims that due to the lower rate of usury

Now the publike Riot
Prostitutes all, scatters away in coaches,
In foot-mens coates, and waiting womens gownes,
They must have velvet hanches. (3.4.37-40)

He then begins a tirade against those who 'covet things / Superfluous still' (3.4.50-51), asking

What need hath Nature
Of silver dishes? Or gold chamber-pots?
Of perfum'd napkins? Or a numerous family,
To see her eate? Poore, and wise she, requires

⁸⁰ For a recent examination of Jonson's use of legal processes in his plays, see Lisa Klotz, 'Ben Jonson's Legal Imagination in *Volpone*,' *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 51, 2 (2011), 385-408.

Meate only; Hunger is not ambitious. (3.4.52-56)⁸¹

This is a clear influence on the Lady's speech in favour of temperance in *Comus*:

Do not charge most innocent nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance, she good cateress
Means her provision onely to the good
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance. (ll.762-767)

However, there is one crucial difference between the speeches: the Lady believes that 'If every just man that now pines with want / Had but a moderate and beseeming share ... / Natures full blessings would be well dispenc't' (ll.768-9; 772), while Peniboy Senior extends the argument against superfluity to propose that 'it were much more honour / [To] want necessary' (3.4.51-2). Peniboy Senior's greed 'manifests itself largely as a refusal to eat' (Boehrer 1997, 139), and so he believes 'every just man ... pin[ing] with want' is not the problem, but the solution.

Peniboy Senior's fear of the 'publike Riot' underlies his jealous possession of Pecunia, keeping her 'smother'd ... in a chest, / and strangl'd ... in leather' (4.3.41-2). Even Mortgage, Bande, and Statute express anxiety about Pecunia's free circulation:

Mor[tgage]: Please your *Grace* to retire. Band[de] I feare your *Grace*
Hath ta'ne too much of the sharpe ayre. Pec[unia] O no!
I could endure to take a great deale more ...
What thinke you of it, *Statute*?
Sta[tute]: A little now and then does well, and keeps
Your *Grace* in your complexion. Ban[de]: And true temper.
Mor[tgate]: But too much *Madame*, may encrease cold rheumes,
Nourish catarrhes, greene sicknesses, and agues,
And put you in consumption. (2.1.45-54)

⁸¹ *Utopia*'s 'gold chamber-pots' resonated throughout the seventeenth century, reappearing again in Winstanley's *Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652), discussed in Chapter 4.

It is unsurprising that Peniboy Senior suggests ‘best to take / Advice of your grave women, Noble *Madame*, / They know the state o’ your body, and ha’ studied / Your *Graces* health’ (2.1.54-56).

While Pecunia represents both a goddess and money for Peniboy Senior, for his nephew she represents a tangible woman. Peniboy Junior praises her with Petrarchan references: ‘her smiles they are *Love*’s fetters! / Her breasts his apples! Her teats Strawberries!’ (4.2.53-55),⁸² which seems to support Joseph Loewenstein’s reference to the ‘courtship’ of Pecunia (2008, 348). But no such courtship takes place. Pecunia becomes Peniboy Junior’s inherited property, and he treats her as such. She is emphatically not his Petrarchan mistress, as she is both subservient and sexually available:

P[eniboy] Ju[nior]: Kisse him, sweet *Princesse*, and stile him a *Cousin*. [She kisseth]

Pec[unia]: I will, if you will have it. *Cousin Pyed-mantle*. (4.4.32-3)

Pecunia acts haughtily with Peniboy Senior because he has gained her by the unethical means of usury, rather than the ‘lineable’ descent of estate. The Petrarchan itemisation of Pecunia’s body enacted by Peniboy Junior, Fitton, and Almanac is an expression of communal sexual ownership.⁸³ Foreshadowing *Comus*, the female body is here ‘deconstructed and re-membered by the power of the male wit as a commodified and fetishized object’ (Sanders 1998a, 195), by which ‘the woman became arrayed as an object of consumption for other men, flaunted before an audience as something not only there to be looked upon, but eaten’ (Sawday 1995, 199, quoted in Sanders 1998a, 195).

Peniboy Senior’s desire to maintain his exclusive ownership of Pecunia is mirrored in the Staple news office, ‘an emporium of newsmongers bent on achieving a monopoly over the distribution of fresh intelligence’ (Sherman 2001, 24). That Jonson intends the news office to be read as an information monopoly is clear from its name, as ‘a staple was a place appointed by royal authority where a body of merchants had an exclusive right for purchasing certain export goods’ (Kitch 2009, 176). The decision to satirise a news monopoly is not arbitrary either, as ‘the crown intervened frequently in the operations of the print industry, tending to grant patents, for certain classes of publication, to the

⁸² Petrarchan imagery may be considered another instance of the meaningless jargon which so exasperates Peniboy Canter at 4.4.16-74.

⁸³ C. G. Thayer’s claim that Pecunia is ‘implicitly described as a whore’ (1966, 196) overlooks Peniboy Senior’s not so implicit description: ‘Pecunia is a whore’ (4.3.82).

monarch's favourites' (Sanders 1998b, 129). But Sanders's reading of the play as a satire on early modern print culture is erroneous, because the master of the Staple office, Cymbal, 'prides himself on the fact that his is a market for handwritten news' (Loewenstein 2008, 336), explaining that 'when *Newes* is printed, / It leaves Sir to be *Newes*' (1.5.48-49).⁸⁴

The Staple is evidently a modern undertaking, as it has a strictly regimented division of labour:

Cym[bal]: This is the outer roome, where my *Clerkes* sit,
 And keepe their sides, the *Register* I'the midst,
 The *Examiner*, he sits private there, within,
 And here I have my severall *Rowles*, and *Fyles*
 Of *Newes* by the *Alphabet*, and all put up
 Under their heads. (1.5.2-7)

The importance of division of labour did not become widely recognised in England until later in the seventeenth century, when William Petty's *Political Arithmetick* (1690), written in the 1670s, attributed the efficiency of Dutch shipyards to their strictly regimented division of labour. The nautical connection is reinforced by Pecunia's ability to attract ships:

P[eniboy] Ju[nior]: O, how my *Princesse* draws me, with her looks,
 And hales me in, as eddies draw in boats,
 Or strong *Charybdis* ships, that saile too neere
 The shelves of *Love*! (4.2.42-45)

The Staple is indeed drawn to Pecunia, but through her guardian, Peniboy Senior. Cymbal begins 'you have a *Lady*, / That sojournes with you ... whom I would draw / Oftner to a

⁸⁴ In Jonson's *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon* (1620), a Factor disputes with a Printer about whether news should be printed or handwritten, telling him 'it is the printing I am offended at, I would have no news printed; for when they are written, though they be false, they remain news still' (1.1.53-55). Paolo Sarpi, the Venetian canon lawyer, historian, and intelligencer, stressed that news was best published quickly, because 'while the events are recent, curiosity excites everyone to read about them, [but] a few days later no one bothers' (Sarpe 1969, 1178, quoted in De Vivo 2005, 48). Indeed, although 'Venice pioneered the regular exchange of manuscript news, no information press was established there before the late decades of the seventeenth century' (De Vivo 2005, 48). The speed with which handwritten news could get out into the streets and surreptitiously circulate also made it much more difficult to censor than its printed counterpart (Infelise 2002, 227).

poore *Office*' (3.4.20-1; 23-4),⁸⁵ but Peniboy Senior responds as if sceptical of investing in a trade voyage:

How come [the profits] in?
 Is it a certaine *businessse*, or a casual?
 For I am loth to seeke out doubtfull courses,
 Runne any hazardous paths, I love straight waies. (3.4.29-32)

When Cymbal is unable to offer any assurance, Peniboy Senior responds 'I'll ha' no venter in your *Ship*, the *Office*, / Your *Barke* of *Six*, if 'twere *sixteen*, good Sir' (3.4.79-80).

The news office does, however, take measures to ensure it is a 'certaine *businessse*.' In the Staple, 'communication is conceptualised as a commodity' (L. Davis, Smith, and Walker 2006, 8), and so news is collected from 'all the Shires o'the kingdome' (1.5.21) and throughout Europe, sorted, and stockpiled in the Staple office.⁸⁶ The Staple's purpose is 'to enter all the *Newes* ... o' the time... and vent it as occasion serves' (1.1.26-7), and the importance of 'occasion' is clear when a woman asks for 'a *groatsworth* of any *Newes*' (1.4.11). The Register tells her it will be forthcoming, only to be chided by the Clerk:

You'll blast the reputation of the *Office*,
 Now I'the Bud, if you dispatch these *Groats*,
 So soone: let them attend in the name of policie. (1.4.18-20)

Its stories are 'both infinitely desirable and infinitely fictional' (Penuel 2009, 141), sensationalist fabrications which exploit the fears and prejudices of the readers: the '*King of Spaine* is chosen *Pope*' (3.2.20), the Spanish general Ambrogio Spinola has 'a new *Project* : to bring an army over in corke-shooes, / And land them, here, at Harwich' (3.2.87-89), and the Rosicrucians have perfected 'the art of drawing farts out of dead bodies ... as there is no *Princesse*, / But may perfume her chamber with th'*extraction*' (3.2.98; 101-2). The Staple 'makes conversation itself a primarily commercial interchange' (Loxley 2002, 92) by peddling gossip, evoking Samuel Butler's description of a 'News-Monger' as a 'Retailer of Rumour, that takes up upon Trust, and sells as cheap as he buys. He deals in a perishable Commodity, that will not keep: for if it be not fresh it lies upon his

⁸⁵ Cymbal continues the earlier sexualisation of Pecunia: 'office' commonly punned on 'orifice,' as when Iago tells Rodorigo 'it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets / [Othello] has done my office' (2.1.376-377).

⁸⁶ Until 1641 there were restrictions on domestic reportage, which reduced domestic news to spurious tales of possessions, monstrous births, and the like.

Hands, and will yield nothing. True or false is all one to him; for Novelty being the Grace of bothe, a Truth grows stale as soon as a Lye' (Butler 2011, 126). This is evident when Shunfield exclaims 'you must get o' this *newes*, to store your *Office*, / *Who dines and sups i' the towne? Where, and with whom?*' (3.3.46-47), reminding us of Rochester's *A Ramble in St. James's Park*, which takes place when 'much Wine had past with grave discourse / Of who Fucks who, and who does worse' (1999, 76 ll.1-2). Jonson believes the appetite for gossip masquerading as news is absurd, and he 'rais[ed] this ridiculous *Office* of the *Staple*, wherein the age may see her owne folly, or hunger and thirst after publish't pamphlets of *Newes*, set out every Saturday, but made all at home, & no syllable of truth in them' (To the Readers 11-15).

After playing in a central role in Act Three, the Staple is left quietly behind, and the Gossips complain between the acts that the '*Poet* hath let [the Staple] fall, most abruptly!' (Int.4.75). The Staple is founded not on truth but on money, and it is explained that as 'soone as they heard th'*Infanta* was got from them' (5.1.42) the Staple went 'all to pieces, quite dissolv'd' (5.1.39). This peculiar demise has been read by Marcus Nevitt as 'a piece of Jonsonian wish-fulfilment with the arch-conservative poet fantasising a draconian crackdown on foreign news output or the wholesale destruction of this new media' (2005, 64). The latter of these two possibilities seems more tenable, but Nevitt does not explore the reasons for Jonson's opposition to the newssheet, or coranto, medium.

Jonson was evidently familiar with the coranto trade, but the Staple differs from its real-life counterparts in a number of respects. The first corantos began to emerge in the 1620s, although they were published at irregular intervals and successive editions of news from the same publisher often lacked continuous titles. Following complaints from readers corantos soon began to be numbered successively, creating a serialised narrative which proved ideal for treating rumour as a 'vendible commodity ... because it is a kind of truth which can always be corrected at a later date' (Nevitt 2005, 54). The coranto writers freely admitted the limits of their reporting:

I thinke it not unfit to resolve a question which was lately made unto mee viz. wherefore I would publish any tidings which were only rumoured without any certainty: I will answer that I doe it to shew both my love and diligence to the unpartiall Reader. And that I rather will write true tidings only to be rumoured, when I am not fully sure of them, then to write false tidings to bee true, which will

afterwards prove otherwise. (*Late Newes or True Relations*, 30 (2 July 1624), cited in Nevitt 2005, 58)

Customer loyalty was therefore ingeniously assured by the corantos leaving their readers ‘little choice but to acquire the next number in the series which would either confirm or deny the earlier stories they had already bought or heard’ (Nevitt 2005, 57).

Because they purveyed rumour and hearsay, corantos tend to be viewed as ephemeral documents. Critics of the *Staple* consider the news office to be a similarly fleeting enterprise, a reading supported by its ending ‘all to pieces, quite dissolv’d (5.1.39). But Jonson’s final assertion of the immateriality of the news office is threatened by the fact that while it operated, the *Staple*’s identity was reified, and its monopoly reasserted, by every news story it ran. The news office does not, like many coranto publishers, publish ‘*antiquated Pamphlets, with new dates*’ (1.5.61), but has a ready supply of novel, if spurious, news ‘from the *Mint* ... fresh and new stamp’d (1.5.62). The truth value of the stories is subjective (at one point, Fitton glibly admits that any one story is ‘as true as the rest’ (3.2.93)), and so patent nonsense becomes patented nonsense, as every story is ‘registred’ and ‘issue’d under the Seale of the *Office, / As Staple Newes; no other newes be currant*’ (1.2.34-36). The *Staple* seal, then, is not a guarantee of verifiable veracity, but of entertainment value,⁸⁷ and every story issued is a further step towards the monopolisation of the news market.

Loewenstein notes that the *Staple* seeks to monopolise information (2008, 343) and identifies Jonson among the ‘prior monopolists of information’ (2008, 342), but he does not explore the tension between the two. Jonson was not opposed to coranto publishers solely because they commodified rumour, but because their fluid conception of truth, whereby verisimilitude was redefined on an issue-by-issue basis, threatened Jonson’s claims to present truth in his plays. Jonson uses contemporary satire to reveal the foibles of human nature, holding up a mirror to his audience ‘wherin the age may see her owne folly.’ The coranto publisher’s relativisation of veracity denigrates the truth claims of Jonson’s drama, and Alan B. Farmer describes the *Staple* as ‘as an early salvo in what John Milton, during the English Civil War, would [in *Areopagitica*] call “the wars of Truth”’ (2006, 129). The *Staple*’s systematic stamping of specious yarns with their own seal also

⁸⁷ Jonson dolefully recognises ‘the advantage of manuscript circulation ... is that it enables [coranto publishers] to target their lies to the specifically credulous’ (J. Loewenstein 2008, 337). Jonson’s perpetual struggle against the misreadings and misunderstandings of his audience is sidestepped by this new medium he abhors.

undermines the connection between self-identification and merit asserted by Jonson's publication of his *Workes* in 1616. Jonson fears that the value of the authorial stamp will be degraded, justifying Vulcan's destruction of Jonson's library in a fire:

Thou'lt say
 There were some pieces of as base allay,
 And as false stampe there; parcels of a Play,
 Fitter to see the fire-light than the day. (*An Execration Against Vulcan* ll.41-44)

Some critics do indeed consider the *Staple* 'fitter to see the fire-light than the day,' and the disappointing ending might lead us to conclude with Dryden that Jonson's last plays 'were but his dotages' (1972, 17:57). The *Staple*'s predecessor, *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), was a morality play 'written at the height of [Jonson's] powers' (Happé 1996, 1). But the tedious reiteration of the play's moral in the final scenes of the *Staple* shows Jonson's powers faltering, as 'explicit moralising ... suggests that the dramatist has somehow lost control of his medium, or is uncomfortable in it and has to fall back on the didactic because the implicit and the oblique are not powerful enough for him' (Partridge 1958, 186). Sanders' suggestion that the *Staple* 'draws on a morality tradition that pitted prodigality against avarice, but employs that structure as an enabling rather than a constrictive framework' (1998a, 184) is questionable. The allegory of Pecunia and the opposition between prodigality and avarice anticipates, even demands, a conventional morality play ending. Accordingly, at the end of the play the Aristotelian golden mean is dutifully invoked by Pecunia as she advocates 'the middle ground between wasteful prodigality and covetous meanness, in order to prescribe a future course for her own treatment, as well as for her influence on others' (Deng 2008, 245). But we cannot help but feel dissatisfied. In the *Staple* 'the characters who are good are not likable' (Penuel 2009, 138), and Peniboy Canter's perpetual moralising is tiresome, leading us to agree with Anne Barton that the

parable of the prodigal son has always been potentially subversive. The dissolute young man who has fed the swine, slept with the whores and seen the strange cities can scarcely fail to seem more interesting and vital than his virtuous stay-at-home brother, who seems unable to rise to anything beyond outrage at the waste of a fatted calf. (1984, 242)

The Staple, then, is left a little flat by Jonson's ultimate rejection of the propensity to commodify, but George Herbert takes the play's flirtation with commodification and embraces it.

The Temple is a sinuous exposition of Herbert's spiritual struggles. He persistently represents salvation as a transaction, and as *The Temple* was published in 1633, a year before the first performance of *Comus*, Herbert should be considered as a crucial source for Milton's economic soteriology. By examining 'Avarice,' 'The Pearl,' 'Ungratefulnesse,' 'Dialogue,' and 'Redemption,' I will trace the gradual development of Herbert's economic soteriology from a puritanical *contemptus mundi* towards an explicit understanding of redemption as a bargain struck between man and God.

In Herbert's poetry we find recurrent appeals to Puritan ideas: the devotion to Scripture, the belief in ministers as God's instruments, the spiritual confidence which informs audaciously personal approaches to God, and the use of the Puritan plain style to represent divine matters in everyday terms (Hunter 1988, 228). This is the legacy of Herbert's time at Cambridge, which coincided with 'the golden years of Puritan leadership, not only at the various colleges but at the great churches of the city as well' (Hunter 1988, 240).⁸⁸ Cambridge was home to many of the foremost English theologians of the period, including William Perkins, William Ames, Richard Sibbes, and John Preston (Strier 1983, 85), and he may have had these figures in mind when he told his father of 'those infinite Volumes of Divinity, which yet every day swell, and grow bigger' (Walton 1927, 329). Herbert was not, however, merely keeping his father abreast of the latest theological developments, but was facing the eternal predicament of students: 'I am scarce able with much ado to make one half years allowance, shake hands with the other: and yet if a Book of four or five Shillings, come in my way, I buy it, though I fast for it' (Walton 1927, 329).

Shortly after graduation in 1620, Herbert was appointed public orator of the university, and his royal addresses so impressed the king that he sought Herbert's company on future visits. The opportunity to further impress the king (Eliot 1962, 9) arose when

Andrew Melvin, a Minister of the Scotch Church, and Rector of St. *Andrews*; who, by a long and constant Converse, with a discontented part of that Clergy which oppos'd Episcopacy, became at last to be a chief leader of that Faction... being a man of learning, and inclin'd to *Satyrical Poetry*, had scatter'd many malicious

⁸⁸ At Herbert's college, Trinity, 'the chapel services were Puritan in character, and even Laud could not get the communion table moved to the east end until 1636' (Morison 1935, 88, cited in Hunter 1988, 240).

bitter Verses against our *Liturgy*, our *Ceremonies*, and our *Church-government*.
(Walton 1927, 271)

The most notable of Melville's 'bitter Verses' was *Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria*, 'a long polemical Latin poem in defence of Puritan liturgical usage' (Herbert 1965, 177). In response, Herbert wrote *Musae Responsoriae*, a poem which dutifully 'celebrate[d] the moderate orderliness of English worship and ridiculed the zeal and obstinacy of the Scots' (Doelman 2000, 72).⁸⁹

After the death of King James, Herbert's desire for a public career waned, and in 1627 he resigned as Public Orator. After a short spell as a canon in Lincoln Cathedral, he became the rector and later priest of a quiet country village, Bemerton. It is at this time that 'Herbert almost certainly began to write his English poems, which speak with a new intensity, with a new consciousness of strain, uncertainty, and loss' (Bell 1979, 69).⁹⁰ However, not everyone agreed with his change of career, and he was censured by 'sober men ... as a man that did not manage his brave parts to his best advantage and preferment, but lost himself in an humble way' (Oley 1652, xxii).

In Bemerton, Herbert consolidated the friendship with Nicholas Ferrar which had long been 'maintain'd without any interview, but only by loving and endearing Letters' (Walton 1927, 312). Like Herbert, Ferrar abandoned a promising public career for the religious seclusion of Bemerton. In 1622 Ferrar had succeeded his brother John as deputy of the Virginia Company, and in 1624 he sat in Parliament to defend the company's interests.⁹¹ Ferrar was tasked with making a complaint 'to the parliament of those several persons that had abused the king's ears, and so highly wronged the company ... all which he performed so well and pleasingly, that there was a great notice taken of him' (J. Ferrar and Jebb 1855, 19–20). But despite Ferrar's eloquent defence, the company soon ceased operations. It is not unreasonable to surmise that the conversations between Ferrar and

⁸⁹ Obstinacy and zeal were undoubtedly two qualities possessed by Melville, as when he was called before the King and prominent members of the English Church to account for his antiepiscopalian activities, he 'tooke occasioun to tell [the Archbishop of Canterbury] plainlie in his face, before the counsel, all that he thought. He charged him with all the corruptions, vanities, and superstitiouns of their charge, with profanatioun of the Sabboth, silencing, imprisoning, and bearing down of faithfull preachers, holding up of antichristian hierarchie, and Popish ceremonies. Taking him by the whyte sleeves of his rotchet, and shaiking them, [he] called them "Romish rags," and a "part of the Beast's marke"' (Calderwood 1845, 6:597).

⁹⁰ The tensions between inherited faith, worldly disillusionment, and the demands of a position in the Anglican Church are also found in the work of Herbert's friend, John Donne. Indeed, Douglas Bush has noted that 'Herbert's career was not unlike Donne's' (1945, 137).

⁹¹ Herbert also sat as Member of Parliament for Montgomery during 1624. Montgomery is situated on the edge of the Welsh Marches, only thirty miles from Ludlow Castle, where *Comus* was performed.

Herbert might have touched on the former's youthful experience in the mercurial field of Stuart economic policies.

Ferrar and Herbert's lives followed a shared trajectory from engagement with parliamentary economics to a retirement devoted to religion, and this is reflected in their tendency to describe spiritual matters in the language of commerce. Herbert deemed Ferrar's 'Concordance of the Four Evangelists ... a most inestimable jewel' (Peckard 1790, 203), and on his deathbed entrusted to Ferrar the manuscript later described by Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, as 'those so generally known and approved Poems Entitled the Temple' (1675, 54). Having 'many & many a time read [Herbert's poems] over, & embraced & kissed again & again... [Ferrar] sayd, he could not sufficiently admire it, as a rich Jewell' (N. Ferrar 1938, 59). Indeed, in the decades after his death, Herbert's work was commonly likened to precious metals. Joseph Beaumont's *Psyche*, dated between 1648 and 1650 (Patriides 1983, 69), concludes a discussion of Pindar and Flaccus by noting that

Yet neither of their empires was so vast
But they left *Herbert* too full room to reign,
Who Lyric's pure and precious Metal cast
In holier moulds. (Canto IV, Stanza 102)

It might reasonably be objected that eulogies which compare esteemed poets to gems and gold are commonplace, but in Herbert's case such readings are apposite because *The Temple* is suffused with images of trade, investments, and treasure. Such worldliness jars with the common depiction of Herbert as a meek and mild country pastor, when he was in fact 'somewhat haughty' (Eliot 1962, 13) and had as a young man been immersed in worldly affairs. We must, moreover, reject the assumption that the sensual tangibility of Herbert's poems betrays a tendency towards a High Church or even Catholic aesthetic. As C. S. Lewis reminds us, 'Protestants are not ascetics but sensualists' (1954, 34), and Herbert is demonstrably such a Protestant.

The reasons for Herbert's recurrent appeals to sensuality are threefold. Firstly, Herbert saw his poetry as didactic, and he urged Ferrar to publish *The Temple* if 'it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul' (Walton 1927, 314). Religious poetry is more likely to encourage 'meditation on spiritual virtues' (Strier 1983, 146) if it is composed in accessible terms, and so Herbert became 'the master of the simple everyday

word in the right place' (1962, 28).⁹² The potential objection that Herbert's preoccupation with gold, gems, and treasure betrays a sinful avarice is groundless, because these riches are used to lead the reader towards God, and 'the use of God's gifts is not wrongly directed when it is referred to that end to which the Author himself created and destined them for us, since he created them for our good, not for our ruin' (Calvin 1960 1:720). Herbert therefore wrote in the Horatian mode by 'mixing sweet, and fit, [to] teach life the right' (Jonson VIII 1947, 327, l.334), as delineated in Joshua Poole's *England's Parnassus* (1657):

Let the Poet use his lawfull bait,
To make men swallow what they else would hate,
Like wise Physicians that their pills infold
In sugar, paper, or the leaves of gold,
And by a vertuous fraud and honest stealth,
Cozen unwilling Patients into health. (p.7–8)

The second reason for Herbert's conceptualisation of religion in economic terms is his understanding of salvation, informed by the etymological roots of 'redemption' in the Latin *redimere*, 'to buy back' (Mulder 1969, 76). Bernard Knieger suggests that this etymology underpins Herbert's conception of the crucifixion as 'a purchase-sale in which Christ, going about God's business, purchased (for man) mankind's salvation at the cost of His own degradation and agony' (1966, 111). Of course, this was not Herbert's innovation, but is found throughout the Bible: St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they were 'bought with a price' (1 Cor. 6:20), while in Hebrews 9:15 Jesus is 'the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance' (Mollenkott 1979, 505).

This latter passage brings us to the third reason for the prevalence of economic imagery in *The Temple*, and supports Robert Montgomery's suggestion that Herbert 'shares with most writers of the age a fondness for similitudes, for precise and extensive correspondences' (1960, 457). The foremost seventeenth-century theological doctrine based on 'precise and extensive correspondences' was covenant theology, the major proponents of which were Herbert's Cambridge contemporaries, Richard Sibbes and John

⁹² As Herbert asked in 'Jordan (I),' 'must all be vail'd, while he that reades, divines, / Catching the sense at two removes?' (ll.9-10)

Preston. With such prominent covenant theologians preaching at Cambridge while Herbert was there, it is unsurprising that *The Temple* repeatedly represents salvation as a bargain struck between man and God. Herbert was far from anomalous in his understanding of the relationship between man and God in economic terms, and Jeffrey G. Sobosan's claim that 'one finds in George Herbert less of a stress on the legalistic aspects of redemption' (1977, 400) seems questionable.

While Herbert drew on the latest concepts in puritan theology, he also articulated more traditional responses to riches, as in 'Avarice,' which begins by addressing money as the 'Bane of blisse, & sourse of wo' (l.1). Puritans advocated godly engagement with the world, but money 'didst so little Contribute / To this great Kingdome, which thou now hast gott' (ll.5-6), that its status is undeserved: 'Whence Com'st thou, that thou art so fresh & fine? / I know thy Parentage is base and low: / Man found thee poore and durty in a mine' (ll.2-4).

Herbert's reminder of money's 'base and low parentage' in spite of its bright[ness]' (l.9) introduces the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity. This doctrine asserts that all man's actions, however apparently virtuous, are tainted by the 'base and low' sin of his Edenic parents. Just as money can only have the appearance of brightness, so too man can only have the appearance of virtue. Consequently, man can 'little Contribute / To this great Kingdome' because works are immaterial and salvation is by faith alone.

Fallen man thinks his mining is beneficial, as he digs gold 'out of [its] dark cave & grott: / Then forcing [it] by fire he ma[kes it] bright' (ll.8-9). But this is, for Herbert, an idolatrous parody of redemption, which is only achieved through Christ's willingness to 'feele all smart' ('Dialogue,' l.31) so that man might 'gaine at harvest an eternall Treasure' ('Our Life is Hid with Christ in God,' l.10). There is a particular affinity with 'To All Angels & Saints,' which represents the 'Mother of my God' (l.10) as 'the holy mine, whence came the gold, / The great restorative for all decay' (ll.11-12). The two poems are linked by a stratified chain of being: in 'To All Angels and Saints,' Jesus is the gold mined by God from Mary, while in 'Avarice,' man is the ore mined by Jesus, and gold is the ore mined by man.

The heredity of such connections is emphasised in 'Avarice' when money 'hast gott the face of man' (l.10) and man has 'with [his] stamp and seale transferr'd [his] right' (l.11), as in 'Perirrhanterium,' where 'Man is Gods Image; but a poore Man is / Christs Stampe' (ll.379-380). Herbert urges his readers 'Both Images Regard' (l.380), echoing Donne's 'The Canonization': 'the king's real, or his stamped face / Contemplate' (2010,

150, ll.7–8). Donne imagines that ‘countries, towns, courts – beg from above / A pattern of your love’ (ll.44-5), just as Herbert placed the love of God above the love of money:

If Soules be made of earthly mold,
Let them love gold.
If borne on high,
Let them unto their kindred fly. (‘Vanity (II),’ ll.11-14)

The man of ‘Avarice’ is evidently ‘of earthly mold,’ as his distinction from money is elided by the sonnet’s volta, ‘stamp and seal transferred our right.’ Man surrenders his superiority with his ‘stamp and seal,’ and the volta is literalised by the transposition of man and gold: ‘thou art the man, & man but drosse to thee’ (l.12). Man’s confusion regarding identity and true value has dire consequences: ‘Man calleth thee his wealth, who made thee rich, / And while he digs out thee, falls in the ditch’ (ll.13-14). A similar image is found in ‘Providence,’ which claims God

Hast hidd mettalls: man may take them thence.
But at his perill: when he digs the place,
He makes a grave; as if the thing had sense,
And threatned man, that he should fill the space. (ll.81-4)⁹³

Herbert makes a similar complaint regarding man’s corruption by greed in ‘The Church Militant,’ where he claims that ‘Gold and Grace did never yet agree: / Religion alwaies sides with povertie’ (ll.251-2). The natives of ‘*America* ... have their times of Gospel, ev’n as we’ (ll.247-8), but Herbert maintains that Europeans are mistaken when they think to profit from American gold. The Europeans in fact heap up sins quicker than bullion, and God ‘prepare[s] for [the natives] a way / By carrying first their Gold from them away’ (ll.249-50). In ‘Avarice’ man erroneously thought he grew richer from mining and in ‘The Church Militant’ he again mistakes his downfall for his success, and so ‘wee thinke we robb them, but we think amisse. / Wee are more poore, & they more rich by this’ (ll.253-4).

While the idea of Herbert being an unworldly country pastor is problematised in ‘Avarice,’ it is refuted in ‘The Pearl.’ The poem is subtitled ‘Math. 13.45,’ and so Herbert

⁹³ This also foreshadows *Paradise Lost*, where ‘impious hands / Riff’d the bowels of thir mother Earth / For Treasures better hid’ (*PL* 1.686-8).

establishes the biblical context: ‘the kingdome of heaven is like unto a marchant man, seeking goodly pearles: Who when hee had found one pearle of great price, he went and solde all that he had, and bought it.’ Herbert is the ‘marchant man,’ and this poem surveys various ‘goodly pearles,’ weighing their value against the ‘one pearle of great price.’

Herbert begins by declaring ‘I know the ways of Learning’ (l.1), and he ‘believes that the more exact his knowledge of the things he is renouncing, the more meaningful his renunciation’ (Strier 1983, 88). ‘Vanie (I)’ adopts a similar strategy by attacking ‘fleet Astronomer[s]’ (l.1), ‘nimble Diver[s]’ (l.8), and ‘subtil Chymick[s]’ (l.15) before asking ‘what hath not Man wrought out and found, / But his deare God?’ (ll.22-3). In ‘The Pearl,’ Herbert knows ‘What Reason hath from Nature borrowed, / Or of it self, like a good huswife spunne / In Laws and Policie’ (ll.3-5).

Economic imagery is introduced and combined with the trope of the Protestant work ethic, as duty inspires reason to become ‘like a good huswife.’ But Herbert is not lauding reason here, as each verse of ‘The Pearl’ describes an object consequently repudiated by the godly refrain ‘But I love thee’ which concludes each verse.⁹⁴ He is familiar with seventeenth-century economic matters, as he knows ‘both the old discoveries, & New found seas, / The stock & surplus, cause & history’ (ll.7-8).

But just as Herbert is poised to explore these concepts further, he retreats, claiming that although ‘All these stand open, or I have the keys. / Yet I love thee’ (ll.9-10). This encapsulates Herbert’s attitude towards economic ideas: they are used to facilitate the contemplation of God and taken no further, and so while he ‘does not repudiate contractual and economic language entirely ... he limits it carefully’ (Gordis 1996, 386). Herbert adopts the same strategy in ‘The Odour,’ which Walton remarks ‘seems to rejoyce in the thoughts of that word *Jesus*, and say that the adding these words *My Master* to it, and the often repetition of them, seem’d to perfume [Herbert’s] mind, and leave an oriental fragrancy in his very breath’ (1927, 290). Touch, hearing, and scent combine in a multisensory God reminiscent of ambergris, ‘a very curious substance, and so important as an article of commerce’ (Melville 1962, 406):

How sweetly doth My Master sound? My Master.

As Amber-greese leaves a rich sent

Unto the taster:

So doe these words a sweet content,

⁹⁴ This criticism of rationality recalls Luther’s belief that ‘reason is the greatest enemy that faith has: it never comes to the aid of spiritual things’ (1857, 154).

An Orientall fragrancie, My Master. (ll.1-5)

The next stanza of 'The Pearl' addresses 'The wayes of Honor. What maintaines / The quick returnes of curtesie and witt: / In vyes of favours, whether partie gains' (ll.11-13). The machinations of the court are represented in the language of commerce: flatteries become investments which can yield 'quick returns,' while rival courtiers become like trading companies competing to ensure that their 'partie gains' a lucrative monopoly of 'favours.' Herbert is not seduced by this, however, as he can 'now behold the Court with an impartial Eye, and see plainly, that it is made up of Fraud, and Tittles, and Flattery, and many other such empty, imaginary painted Pleasures that are so empty, as not to satisfy when they are enjoy'd' (Walton 1927, 289). Contrasted to this is 'God and His service,' wherein 'is a fulness of all *joy* and *pleasure*, and so satiety' (289), and so Herbert restates 'Yet I love thee' ('The Pearl,' l.20).⁹⁵

The third concept to be repudiated is the pleasures of the flesh. With C. S. Lewis's admonition in mind, we must remember Herbert is no dour puritan. He 'know[s] the wayes of Pleasure. The sweet strains, / The Lullings and the rellishes of itt; / The propositions of hott blood and braines' (ll.21-3). The music evoked by 'sweet strains' and 'lullings' is amplified by Herbert's knowledge of 'what Mirth and Musique mean' (l.24), and his 'chiefest recreation' being 'Musick, in which heavenly Art he was a most excellent Master' (Walton 1927, 303). Like Luther, he rejects the possibility of ascetic detachment, instead asserting 'my stuff is flesh, not brasse' (l.27). Herbert cannot escape worldly temptations, and so a perpetual battle rages between the compulsion towards sensual indulgence and the desire to follow Jesus:

My senses live,
 And grumble oft; that they have more in mee
 Then he, that curbs them, being but one to five.
 Yet I love thee. (ll.28-30)

⁹⁵ Herbert concurs here with St. Augustine's views on the distinction between things 'which are to be enjoyed' and things 'which are to be used ... if we choose to enjoy things that are to be used, our advance is impeded and sometimes even diverted, and we are held back, or even put off, from attaining things which are to be enjoyed, because we are hamstrung by our love of lower things' (St. Augustine 1997, 9). For Herbert, the love of court life and its worldly masters is a misdirection of the devotion that should be reserved for God.

Herbert's virtue, then, is neither fugitive nor cloistered, but willing to engage with worldly temptations. He is like the 'honest man' in 'Constancy,' who,

When great trials come,
Nor seeks, nor shunnes them, but doth calmly stay,
Till he the thing & the example Waigh:
All being brought into a Summe. (ll.6-9)

The catalogue of 'goodly pearls' concludes with Herbert claiming that 'I know all these, & have them in my hand. / Therefore not sealed, but with open eyes / I fly to thee' (ll.31-3). Having weighed 'the thing and example' of worldly pursuits in his hand, Herbert understands the extent of man's deviance from God. He is willing to 'fly to [God],' but total depravity means that he can only conceive of such an act in postlapsarian terms. Herbert's tainted will therefore imagines the act of salvation as a monetary transaction: 'I fully understand, / Both the main sale, and the commodities: / And at what rate & price I have thy love' (ll.33-5). But the 'rate and price' of salvation is not payable through the actions of the perverted postlapsarian will:

Yet through these labarinths, not my groveling witt,
But thy silk twist, let downe from heaven to mee,
Did both conduct, & teach mee, how by it
To climbe to Thee. (ll.37-40)

Man can gain nothing truly valuable from intellectual, courtly, or sensual activities; they are mere manifestations of a 'groveling witt' misusing God's gifts, as in 'Sighs and Grotes,' where Herbert laments 'I have abus'd thy stock, destroy'd thy woods, / Suck'd all thy Magazines: my head did ake, / Till it found out how to consume thy goods' (ll.9-11). Herbert's 'groveling witt' is manifest in his conceptualisation of the redemptive mercy of heaven as a 'silk twist' which he must climb up like a clandestine lover. In 'The Pearl,' man learns to 'consume thy goods' and 'climbe to thee,' not by any action of his own, but by ascending the 'silk twist let down from heaven.' He recognises his own corruption, and the refrain 'yet I love thee' expresses the faith that is the sole signifier of salvation.

In 'Ungratefulnesse,' Herbert develops the economic conceptualisation of salvation of 'The Pearl' into an extended treatment of covenant theology. He begins by asking 'Lord,

with what bounty and rare clemency / Hast thou redeem'd us from the grave?' (ll.1-2), and God's clemency is 'rare' due to the inscrutability of the 'voluntary condescension on God's part' in the Covenant of Grace (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 1913, 13). He continues:

If thou hadst let us runne,
Gladly had man ador'd the sunne,
And thought his God most brave:
Where now wee shall be better Gods, then hee. (ll.3-6)

Negating the potential idolatry of man's adoration of the sun, Herbert's homonymy suggests we should instead worship the Son. A similar concept informs 'Our Life is Hid with Christ in God': 'Life hath with the Sunne a double motion. / The first is strait, and our diurnal freind, / The other hid, & doth obliquely bend' (ll.2-4). But here the two poems deviate, as Herbert asserts that 'One life is wrapt in flesh, and tends to earth: / The other winds towards Him, whose happy birth / Taught mee to live here so' (ll.5-7).⁹⁶

'Our Life is Hid with Christ in God' urges rejection of 'life ... wrapt in flesh' in favour of the spiritual life, through which man 'gaine[s] at harvest an eternall Treasure' (l.10). In 'Ungratefulnesse', it is the Incarnation, the very thing 'wrapt in flesh,' that is to be clung to instead of abstract considerations of glory. This embodies Luther's distinction between fascination with the inscrutable aspects of the Godhead, the 'theology of glory,' and the 'theology of the cross': 'that person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God ... he deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross' (Luther 1955 31:40).⁹⁷ These concepts are represented by God's 'two rare cabinets full of treasure, / The Trinity, & Incarnation' (ll.7-8), which have both been 'unlockd' (l.9). That the two cabinets signify the Covenants of Works and Grace is suggested by the introduction of contractual imagery, as God 'Made them jewells to betroth / The work of thy creation / Unto thy selfe in everlasting pleasure' (ll.9-12). The Trinity and Incarnation become dowry jewels, and man's relationship to God is formulated in explicitly

⁹⁶ The spiritual life 'wind[ing]' upwards 'towards Him' continues the earlier imagery of the redemptive silk twist.

⁹⁷ To illustrate the distinction between the two theologies, Luther cites John 14:8-9: 'Philippe sayd unto [Jesus], Lord, shewe us thy Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus sayd unto him, I have bene so long time with you, and hast thou not knowen mee, Philippe? he that hath seene me, hath seene my Father.'

contractual terms, the terms of covenant theology.⁹⁸ These images of jewels, pleasure, and exclusive betrothal prefigure the contested ownership of the Lady's virginal 'unsun'd heaps / Of Misers treasure' (ll.398–9) in *Comus*.

Like the mysterious nature of the Lady's virginity, 'the statelier cabinet is the Trinity, / Whose sparkling light access denies' (ll.13-14), evoking Isaiah 45:15: 'Verily thou *art* a God that hidest thyself.' The true nature of the godhead will not be revealed until 'Death blow / The dust into our eyes: / For by that powder thou wilt make us see' (ll.16-18). Dust is also associated with mortality in *Paradise Lost*, as when the judgement of Adam concludes with 'dust thou art, and shalt to dust returne' (*PL* 10.208). But while the Fall will ultimately lead God to 'withdraw / His presence from among [men]' (*PL* 12.107-8), in 'Ungratefulnesse' dust leads not to being cut off from God, but gaining full knowledge.⁹⁹ But such knowledge is only postmortal, and this ignorance frightens Herbert, but 'as the first [cabinet] affrights, / [The second] may allure us with delights' (ll.21-2). Richard Strier suggests that Herbert 'simply moves on, happily, from "the majesty" to "the other"' (1983, 28), but 'affright' suggests that Herbert moves on not from happiness, but fear, and with some lingering curiosity about the theology of glory.

All God's 'sweets are pack'd up' (l.19) in the Incarnation, which serves to 'allure us with delights'. The Incarnation thus embodies God's accommodation; postlapsarian man cannot comprehend God in Himself, but He becomes relatable through the incarnated Jesus. This is further supported by the Incarnation appealing to postlapsarian man's corrupted proclivity for sensual 'sweets,' and 'this Bone wee know; / For wee have all of us just such another' (ll.23-4) explicitly states the parity between the Incarnation and man. In suggesting that 'the surrender to sensory imagery ... [makes] Herbert seem childlike at times' (1974, 635), Robert Higbie misunderstands Herbert's technique. Herbert's conception of accommodation follows Calvin, who believed that Scripture 'proceeds at the pace of a mother stooping to her child, so to speak, so as not to leave us behind in our weakness' (Calvin 1960, 2:925–6), and Moses' account of the creation of angels was spoken 'after the manner of the common people' (Calvin 1960, 1:162). Herbert uses sensual imagery because his readers are fallen, and the sinfulness of man is made clear in the penultimate stanza.

God and man entered into a covenant, the terms of which were defined in advance: 'those who will believe in the Redeemer have His righteousness ascribed to them' (P.

⁹⁸ This divine betrothal also evokes the biblical representation of the church as Christ's wife.

⁹⁹ The distinction between the two texts is further demonstrated by the fact that Adam's vision of 'the nebulous horizons of human history' (Sawday 2007, 262) is made possible not by dust, but by three drops from the 'well of life' (*PL* 11.416).

Miller 1939, 377). But man attempts to renege on the deal. In a parodic inversion of the ‘statelier cabinet,’ ‘unlockt’ but inaccessible due to ‘sparkling light,’ man is ‘close, reserv’d & dark to thee’ (l.25). The Covenant of Grace asks little from man, ‘but a heart’ (l.26), but man ‘cavils instantlie’ (l.27), like Hotspur, who, ‘in the way of bargain ... [will] cavil on the ninth part of a hair’ (*1 Henry IV*, 3.1.140). A similar dynamic occurs in ‘Faith,’ where the speaker ‘Owed thousands & much more: / I did believe, that I did nothing owe, / And liv’d accordingly’ (ll.13-15).

Man’s dishonest quibbling in ‘Ungratefulnesse’ disintegrates the fleeting accord between man and incarnated God. Herbert widens the gap by describing man’s ‘poore cabinet of bone’ (l.28), starkly contrasting Jesus’ representations as ‘flesh,’ the Incarnation’s ‘bounty,’ and a cabinet of ‘sweets.’ Jesus’ similarity to man was previously emphasised by ‘this box we know/ For we have all of us just such another,’ but now ‘Sinnes have their box apart’ in man, with no counterpart in Jesus. Herbert concludes by lamenting man’s ‘defrauding thee, who gavest two for one’ (l.30), and so despite the covenant being unevenly weighted in man’s favour, a bargain in both senses of the word, it is squandered.¹⁰⁰

Anxiety regarding man’s unworthiness of salvation is explored further in ‘Dialogue,’ a conversation between man and his ‘sweetest Saviour’ (l.1), respectively corresponding to the body and soul. The legacy of Herbert’s time at Cambridge is clear, as the soul-body dialogue was popular among those driven by puritan soteriological concerns. Herbert’s education in rhetoric is also apparent, as the first stanza is a tripartite syllogism which begins by establishing the conditional premise and consequence:

If my soul
 Were but worth the having,
 Quickly should I *then* controule
 Any thought of waving. (ll.1-4, emphasis added)

Herbert’s spiritual doubts have been expressed mutedly in the poems discussed so far, but in ‘Dialogue’ ‘the soul feels sin too strongly’ (Fish 1978, 121) and erupts into prostrated abasement worthy of Donne’s *Holy Sonnets*. In Marvell’s *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*, the body complains of ‘the cramp of Hope’ (l.34) and ‘the palsy shakes of Fear’ (l.35), and so too Herbert’s man miserably concludes his syllogism:

¹⁰⁰ Herbert reminds us in ‘Vanitie (II)’ that ‘to purchase heaven for repenting / Is no hard rate’ (ll.9-10).

But when all my care and paines
 Cannot give the Name of gaines
 To thy wretch so full of staines,
 What delight or hope remains? (ll.5-8)

Man's anguished uncertainty transforms him into a 'wretch so full of stains' who cannot understand what value he possesses for God, and there is a fear of squandered economic effort here, as the attempt to improve the value of his soul by expending 'cares and pains' is unsuccessful. Man has failed to refine his soiled raw spiritual material into a product worthy of God, just as the speaker of 'Grace' complains 'my stock lies dead, & no increase / Doth my dull husbandrie improve' (ll.1-2). In 'Dialogue,' God reminds man that the value of his soul is not determined by mortal criteria, but is weighed on the inscrutable divine scale:

What, Child, is the ballance thine,
 Thine the poise & measure?
 If I say thou shalt be mine;
 Finger not my treasure. (ll.9-12)

God reiterates Luther's dictum that reason 'never comes to the aid of spiritual things,' and so Herbert has erred by attempting to weigh the bargain of salvation on a worldly 'balance,' with its rational concerns of value, profit, and loss. Salvation is only conceptualised as a transaction because these are the terms in which fallen man thinks; it is an idea born of accommodative analogy, not perfect parity.

God continues: 'What the gaines in having thee / Doe amount to, onely he, / Who for Man was sold, can see' (ll.13-15). By his own standards, man is a worthless 'wretch so full of stains,' but God has a different 'poise and measure,' and so the 'gains in having thee' are knowable only to Jesus. The reader is also denied omniscience. Our fallen state is emphasised because we too are unaware what 'the gains in having thee' truly 'amount to'; we know nothing more than what God tells us. Herbert develops the allegory of transactional salvation by describing Jesus as the one who 'transferr'd th' accounts to [God]' (l.16), and so God becomes 'a gigantic accountant' (Knieger 1966, 133) with Jesus as his apprentice in the family business.

While ‘Dialogue’ began with man’s despair that his ‘cares and pains’ did not raise him from being a ‘wretch so full of stains,’ he now realises he misunderstood his role in salvation:

But as I can see no merrit,
 Leading to this favour:
 So the way to fitt me for it
 Is beyond my savour. (ll.17-20)

Luther held that works-religion, the notion that good works can earn salvation, was a falsehood, albeit a seductive one. As Strier reminds us, ‘nothing is more basic to Reformation theology than the denial that man can in any way merit salvation’ (1983, 1), and this is precisely what Herbert recognises here. He can never deserve the ‘favour’ of salvation, as total depravity leaves him inalterably ‘full of stains.’ Consequently, nothing he can do will ever ‘fit [him] for it,’ and so the mechanism of salvation, like the value of fallen man in God’s eyes, is unknowable: ‘as the reason then is thine: / So the way is none of mine’ (ll.21-2).

Herbert renounces agency in the act of salvation by ‘disclaim[ing] the whole designe’ (l.23), and as soon as he does so, ‘Sinne disclaimes’ (l.24) too. The impediment to salvation has been man’s mistaken belief that he could play any part in it; when he ‘resigne[s]’ (l.24), the process of salvation can progress. By ‘resign[ing],’ man relinquishes possession of his soul to Jesus, who in turn ‘transferr[s] the account’ to God.¹⁰¹ Just as a covenant is an agreement signed by both parties, man’s decision to re-sign restates his personal acceptance of the terms of the Covenant of Grace.

Herbert’s decision is confirmed by God, as ‘that is all’ (l.25) He needs:

If that I could
 Gett without repining;
 And my clay, my creature, would
 Follow my resigning. (ll.25-8)

¹⁰¹ We are reminded of Luis Vaz de Camões’s *The Lusíads* (1572), where Henry of Burgundy, ‘Pull’d by Death’s hand down from this mortal Stage, / His Spirit, unto Him, that gave it, gave’ (1940, 91, Cant. 3.28). The influence of *The Lusíads* on *Paradise Lost* has long been noted; see Hoxby 2002, 291 n.26.

The parallelism of the establishment and ratification of the Covenant of Grace is expressed by God's wish that 'my creature, would / Follow my resigning,' and so man's decision to 'resign' was correct. But it is not enough for man to 'follow my resigning'; he should do so 'without repining.' As man's speeches in 'Dialogue' are little more than 'repining,' he is not yet able to fulfil his role completely.

Recognising that man's self-pity is rooted in an awareness of his low status, Jesus offers his own example: 'I did freely part / With my glory & desert, / Left all joys to feel all smart' (ll.29-31). If man, too, can 'freely part' with his worldly preoccupation with value and status, he will be able to ascend to the 'joys' and 'glorie' that God believes are his 'desert.' But man struggles with this, and his painful awareness of his unworthiness of Jesus' example returns in the final line, as he interrupts with the cry 'No more. Thou breakst my heart' (l.32).

Herbert's most explicit treatment of economic soteriology is found in 'Redemption.' The sonnet begins with the speaker identifying himself as one who has 'bin tenant long to a rich Lord' (l.1) but is 'not thriving' (l.2). We might consequently be tempted to read 'Redemption' as an allegory for the transition of economic relations, from feudal vassalage to the autonomous capitalism that was gaining currency during Herbert's time. But to do so would place undue emphasis on one side of the economics-salvation metaphor, to the neglect of the other. Instead, we must find our hermeneutic framework in the dominant contemporary synthesis of economics and soteriology: covenant theology.¹⁰² The suggestion that 'Redemption' is informed by covenant theology was made as early as 1715 by George Ryle: 'the 1st Lease this great Landlord gave to Man, his Tenant; was the Covenant of works: by which man was bound to yeild all the profitts of the Land to his Landlord's use' (1982, 67).

Man decides 'to be bold, / And make a suit unto [his Lord] to afford / A new small-rented Lease, and cancell th'old' (ll.2-4). The contrast drawn between 'new' and 'old' supports a reading of the two leases representing the Old and New Testaments and their respective covenants. However, we must be careful not to interpret the transactional imagery which suffuses 'Redemption' as a simple indictment of fallen man's greed: 'humanity is not here presented as callously materialistic, but rather as being concerned enough with its inability to obey the law that it prays for some new and feasible means of settling its account with the landlord' (Mollenkott 1979, 504). Postlapsarian man is

¹⁰² Covenant theology's combination of economics and soteriology is reflected by the continuity of the covenants themselves. According to Zwingli, the Christian covenant 'was in substance continuous with the covenant of Abraham, since both pointed in different ways to the same Christ' (Holifield 1974, 6).

inherently unable to comply with the terms of the old covenant, so he seeks a ‘small-rented Lease’ more spiritually affordable to his tainted soul, as ‘just it is, that I should pay the rent, / Because the benefitt accrues to mee’ (‘Providence,’ ll.26-7). During the course of ‘The Pearl,’ ‘Ungratefulnesse,’ and ‘Dialogue,’ man has gradually come to realise the immensity of this ‘benefit.’

Herbert begins his search for the landlord ‘in Heaven at his mannour’ (l.5), only to be told ‘that he was lately gone / About some land, which he had dearly bought / Long since on Earth, to take possession’ (ll.6-8). In ‘Faith,’ man’s salvation was rather modestly valued at ‘thousands and much more,’ but here He ‘who for man was sold’ has simply been ‘dearly bought’; Jesus’ true price is unquantifiable to postlapsarian man. Man is undeterred, and, ‘knowing his [landlord’s] great birth ... sought him accordingly in great resorts, / In Citties, Theatres, Gardens, Parks, and Courts’ (ll.9-11). But as in *Comus*, where ‘courtesie... [in] Courts of Princes... first was nam’d / And yet is most pretended’ (ll.322; 325–6), here we find Herbert emphasising ‘the vanity rather than the foulness of sin’ (Tuve 1959, 316).¹⁰³ But Tuve’s reading is not wholly accurate because the ‘foulness of sin’ is not absent, nor is the landlord found in the places of vanity. Rather, He is ‘espyd’ (l.13) amidst the ‘ragged noise & mirth’ (l.12) of those more commonly associated with the ‘foulness of sin,’ ‘theeves & murderers’ (l.13). Having been found, the landlord ‘strait, your suit is granted, sayd, & died’ (l.14), and so ‘Redemption’ ends with the same abruptness as ‘Dialogue’. In the latter poem, Christ recounts His suffering for three lines before being interrupted, but in ‘Redemption’ there is the barest of allusions to the Passion; the ‘ragged noise and mirth’ suggest Christ’s shabby clothing and His mocking captors, while ‘thieves and murderers’ flank him on crucifixes.

The abruptness of Jesus’ death is also necessitated by prevenient grace. Jesus anticipated Herbert’s need for salvation, and consequently left Heaven ‘long’ (l.8) before the speaker began his search. Moreover, Jesus’ death is part of the terms of the Covenant of Grace and so becomes a necessary condition for man’s salvation, as ‘where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator’ (Heb. 9:16) and so ‘it is only the landlord’s death which activates his dying testament’ (Mollenkott 1979, 506). The callously casual report of Jesus’ death reinforces the sense that postlapsarian man can never merit salvation, as the speaker

103 This ironically recalls *The Faerie Queene*: ‘Of Court it seems, men Courtesie doe call, / For that it there most useth to abound; And well beseemeth that in Princes hall / That vertue should be plentifully found’ (VI.i.1.1-4).

shows no feeling of compassion, not even any evidence of surprise. There is no better way in which Herbert could have illustrated simultaneously the incomprehensibility of the measureless love that causes God to die for man, and man's unworthiness of that sacrifice because of the self-seeking meanness of his spirit. (Mulder 1969, 76)

'Self-seeking meanness' is rife in *The Staple of Newes*, which must be read within the wider context of the exploration of commodification by Jonson's peers. We see him drawing on various contemporary economic, theological, and moral approaches to the issue, and the play's treatment of usury both invokes and reconfigures the arguments advanced in works such as Culpeper's *Tract against Usurie* and *Usurie Araigned*. But the simplistic moralising of such tracts seeps into the *Staple*, and we are painfully aware of the disparity between the subtlety of Jonson's Jacobean plays, where he 'casts a whole world into being and lets it revolve there, hideous in its implications' (Partridge 1958, 186), and the blunt didacticism of the *Staple*. The play's obsession with strict dichotomy is further manifested in Jonson's inability to accommodate the fluidly intermingled concepts of truth and falsity propounded by the corantos, and the *Staple* is suffused with the sense that the playwright is continually asking himself 'is the ballance thine?'

The Temple does not reject, but embraces such tensions, and we find Herbert vacillating between depravity and sanctity, before finally recognising that the two are inextricably linked. These poems are a product of Herbert's familiarity with covenant theologians in Cambridge. His puritan sympathies are evident in his mistrust of money in 'Avarice,' while the proclamation of worldliness in 'The Pearl' begins the commodification of salvation. Herbert's exploration of covenant theology in 'Ungratefulnesse' informs the anxiety expressed in 'Dialogue' regarding man's true value, before Herbert resigns himself to the inscrutability of salvation. The unfeeling narrator of 'Redemption' succinctly demonstrates man's utter unworthiness of salvation, and so *The Temple* depicts not the contented retirement of a country pastor, but the agonised arena where the desire for godliness struggles with the postlapsarian compulsion to commodify, the perpetuity of which is demonstrated by its centrality in Milton's thought.

Chapter 3

‘Golden Chalice and wooden *Preists*’: The Service of God and Mammon

If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.

– J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (2000, 274)

While Blair Hoxby suggests that ‘the young Milton first betrayed his cautious interest in the new economic reasoning of the 1620s in *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*’ (2002, 17), such an interest is also evident in the *History of Moscovia* and *Of Reformation*. All three texts are meditations on the motivations and consequences of contemporary developments in economic thought, seen through the prism of hoarding and consumption. Economic ideas frame the debate regarding sexual hoarding which is the centrepiece of *Comus*, while the *History of Moscovia* considers the ramifications of a national adoption of the Lady’s compulsion to hoard. *Of Reformation* draws together the strands of hoarding and consumption in the depiction of clergy who are, paradoxically, simultaneously consumers and misers. In rejecting the excesses of the clergy, Milton constructs a model of economic consumption which is neither ascetic nor libertine.

Rosemary Mundhenk has observed that ‘the appointment of [the Earl of] Bridgewater as Lord President’ (1975, 143) is a crucial context for *Comus*, and the economic significance of this is clear considering Bridgewater’s new duties included the protection of trade monopolies in his jurisdiction (Skeel 1904, 147) and the hearing of ‘numerous private actions over debts and arrears in rent (which were due ... at Michaelmas, the date of the masque’s performance)’ (Hoxby 2002, 18). For Bridgewater, then, Michaelmas was a day dedicated to economic matters, and *Comus* would be a fitting culmination of such a day, as it explores the tenability of monopolies, both economic and sexual.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Welsh monopolies had been contested long before Bridgewater’s appointment. Under James I, ‘a succession of speculators had secured and re-sold among themselves the monopoly of transporting 3000 barrels of Welsh butter annually for twenty-one years, at fixed prices, from any port in South Wales’ (Dodd 1942, 50). In 1617 there was heard in Parliament a ‘statement of the case of certain petitioners for licence to export Welsh butter, when the price does not exceed 3*d.* per lb. in the summer, and 4*d.* in the winter. They paid 500*l.* fine, and engaged to pay 300*l.* a year for their licence, but it is prevented passing the Privy Seal and the Great Seal, by certain parties interested in opposing it. They urge its speedy completion’ (*CSPD*

The tendency to elevate chastity to divine status is undermined by its ineffectiveness in *Comus*, and Milton's treatment of temperance also deviates from his 'much neglected' (Singleton 1943, 949) neo-Latin source, Erycius Puteanus' *Comus* (1608). In the earlier *Comus*, 'sighting someone in the throng who looks like Epicurus, Puteanus comments upon the falseness of that teaching which assigns the law of conduct to pleasure instead of to virtue, and which seeks a sound authority for a bad thing by calling gluttony and lust happiness' (Singleton 1943, 951). This episode is absent in Milton's *Comus*, and one as classically erudite as Milton would surely have recognised that Puteanus had misrepresented the Epicurean philosophy:

it is not continued drinkings and revels, or the enjoyment of female society, or feasts of fish and other such things, as a costly table supplies, that make life pleasant, but sober contemplation, which examines into the reasons for all choice and avoidance, and which puts to flight the vain opinions from which the greater part of the confusion arises which troubles the soul. (Epicurus 1891, 471)

Milton redresses Puteanus' distortion by making the eponymous character of his masque more complex: while Comus enjoys drinking, revelry, and female society, his advocacy of free economic circulation is tacitly endorsed by Milton. Steadfast virtue, which is triumphant for Puteanus, is ineffective in the masque. Milton's having matured beyond Puteanus' simplistic idealism is emphasised by his departure from Puteanus' description of Comus. While Puteanus describes Comus as 'a tender and still immature lad' (Puteanus 1973, 25), Milton's Comus is 'ripe, and frolick of his full grown age' (l.59).

Comus' first speech begins by referring to the evening star, the poles, and the passage of the sun:

The Star that bids the Shepherd fold,
Now the top of Heav'n doth hold,
And the gilded Car of Day,
His glowing Axle doth allay
In the steep *Atlantick* stream,
And the slope Sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky Pole,

1653, 4:507). The Welsh butter monopoly remained in place until the 10 July 1621 'proclamation of the King's pleasure... licensing export of Welsh butter' (CSPD 1653, 4:274) which declared 'that Butter may be transported by all Men' (Tyrwhitt 1766, 102).

Pacing towards the other gole
Of his Chamber in the East. (ll.93-101)

In the Renaissance, latitude was calculated by pointing a mariner's astrolabe at the sun or a star of known declination, and then the resulting angle was read off the instrument and used to calculate position. 'Steep' and 'slope' evoke the angles used in these calculations, while 'the Star that bids the Shepherd fold', Venus, the 'gilded Car of Day', the Sun, and 'the dusky Pole,' the North Star, were common points of reference.

The tropes of celestial navigation recur throughout the masque, as when the Elder Brother implores

Unmuffle ye faint stars, and thou fair Moon
That wontst to love the travailers benizon,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit *Chaos*, that rains here. (ll.331-4)

This 'benizon' reminds us of *King Lear*, where it connotes guidance proffered to the blind Gloucester:

Edgar: Give me your hand:
I'll lead you to some bidding.
Gloucester: Hearty thanks:
The bounty and the benison of heaven (4.5.245-8)

Comus is persistently associated with darkness, as when he invokes 'dun shades' (l.127) and 'dark vaild *Cotyto*' (l.129), which may seem to challenge the continuity of navigational imagery. But this is not the case, as by the time *Comus* was written, shadows were in fact becoming crucial for accurate navigation. The mariner's astrolabe was superseded by the backstaff, whose use was 'altogether contrary' to that of previous instruments (J. Davis 1633, 56). The user was now required to stand with his back to the sun, and calculate his latitudinal position according to the shadow cast:

the center of this staffe where the brasse plate is fastned, must be turned to that parte of the Horizon which is from the Sunne, and with your backe toward the Sunne, by the lower edge of the halfe crosse, and through the slitte of the plate you must direct your sight onely to the Horizon, and then moving the transversary as

occasion requireth, until the shadowe of your upper edge of the transversary doe fall directly upon the saide slitte or long hole, and also at the same instant you see the Horizon through the slitte, and then the transversary sheweth the height desired. (J. Davis 1633, 56)

Tropes of navigation lead us to the imagery of spice, and Milton's descriptions of 'Hæmony' (l.638) has much in common with contemporary accounts of ginger and pepper, important exports from the East Indies. Milton's source here appears to be Pierre de La Primaudaye's *L'Academie Française* (1601), a 'prose compendium of scientific, moral, and philosophical knowledge' whose possible influence on Shakespeare has been noted (Gillespie 2004, 277). Hæmony is a 'small unsightly root' (l.629) and its leaf 'had prickles on it' (ll.631), just as ginger is a 'root ... which groweth not very high' (La Primaudaye 1601, 319) and pepper leaves 'are sharper at the end' (La Primaudaye 1601, 321). Both were used as protection against the plague; pepper was burnt in an attempt to ward off the contagion (Kohn 2008, 227), while Nathaniel Hodges lauded ginger's ability to 'defend the Spirits against the Pestilential Impression' (1721, 164). Hæmony is 'more med'cinal... then that *Moly* / That *Hermes* once to wise *Ulysses* gave' (ll.636-7), itself notable for its 'virtue' (Homer 2002, 10.406), while Hæmony is 'of sovran use / 'Gainst all inchantments, mildew blast, or damp / Or gastly furies apparition' (ll.639-41). Homer's description of how 'the root is hard to loose / From hold of earth by mortals, but god's pow'r / Can all things do' (Homer 2002, 10.408-410) mirrors the way in which the Lady is 'in stony fetters fixt, and motionless' (l.819). Moly cannot be dug up by mortals due to its godly virtue, while the Lady is captive due to her virtue and cannot be freed except by the intervention of Sabrina.

Milton invokes the conventional presentation of chastity as the greatest virtue in his claim that

So dear to Heav'n is Saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried Angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt. (ll.453-6)

But in *Comus* chastity alone is ineffective and sin and guilt are only driven off by a 'liveried Angel' at the very end of the masque, and so 'it is only after she has given a convincing demonstration of her own moral self-sufficiency that the Lady receives, even

indirectly, the help of heaven' (Adams 1953, 22). *Comus* therefore delineates a concept of chastity which would be more succinctly formulated in *Areopagitica*: 'I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat' (*CPW* 2:515). Milton goes on to cite a germane example from 'our sage and serious Poet *Spencer*,' who, 'describing true temperance under the person of *Guion*, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bowr of earthly blisse that he might see and know, and yet abstain' (*CPW* 2:516). This is precisely what the Lady undergoes in *Comus*.

The commodification of chastity is enacted by the Brothers as much as *Comus*, as the Second Brother expresses his fears for his sister's safety in monetary terms:

You may as well spread out the unshun'd heaps
 Of Misers' treasure by an out-law's den,
 And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
 Danger will wink on Opportunity,
 And let a single helpless maiden pass
 Uninjur'd in this wilde surrounding wast (ll.398-403)

By likening his sister to treasure the Second Brother identifies himself as the miser, 'the one who claims economic interest in maintaining the exchange value in his possession' (Kim 1997, 8). The Lady's 'exchange value' is her internal commodity, her chastity, and the Elder Brother reminds us that 'he that has light within his own cleer brest / May sit i'th centre, and enjoy bright day' (ll.381-2). The likening of chastity to an internal commodity and the reference to 'th centre' of the earth invites a comparison to the mining passage from *Paradise Lost*:

Men also, and by [Mammon's] suggestion taught,
 Ransack'd the Center, and with impious hands
 Riff'd the bowels of thir mother Earth
 For Treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
 Op'nd into the Hill a spacious wound
 And dig'd out ribs of Gold. (*PL* 1.685-90)¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Milton inverts the trope, common in contemporary tracts on mining, of personifying the earth as a pregnant mother who needed to be delivered by miner-midwives. Thomas Bushell had petitioned James I that

When transposed to *Comus* the metaphor becomes grossly sexual, as Comus' 'advice to invade the earth matches his intent to invade the Lady' (McColley 2007, 46). The Lady's 'Center' is to be 'ransack'd' and her bowels 'rifl'd' to dig out the 'Gold' under her ribs. It is an image of penetration, as 'a spacious wound' is to be opened into the Lady, yielding her sexual treasure to 'impious hands.'

Economic matters are most explicitly addressed in the central seduction scene, which takes place in 'a stately Palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft Musick, Tables spred with all dainties' (l.658), anticipating the banquet scene in the *History of Moscovia*, where the 'store of gold and silver Plate excessive' of the banquet hall is supplemented by 'a number ... of rare dishes piled up by half dozens ... of such strangeness, greatness and goodness as scarce would be credible to report' (CPW 8:530; 536).

Comus begins his address by developing the Second Brother's equation of chastity with treasure. He suggests that the Lady has become a miser like her brother, as to remain virginal is to renege on the deal struck between her and Nature:

Why should you be so cruel to your self,
And to those dainty limms which nature lent
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?
But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill borrower
With that which you receiv'd on other terms (ll.679-84)

Comus opposes such hoarding, instead asserting that to live in accord with nature is to consume without restraint, as he asks 'wherefore did Nature powre her bounties forth, / With such a full and unwithdrawing hand ... / But all to please, and sate the curious taste?' (ll.710-11;714) Following Sir Epicure Mammon's declaration in *The Alchemist* that 'to live recluse ... is a mere solecism' (4.1.101), Comus asserts that ascetics 'live like Nature's bastards, not her sons' (l.727). Moreover, they actually damage nature, as the earth is left 'surcharg'd with her own weight / And strangl'd with her waste fertility' (l.726-7).

'those Mountains are as so many pregnant Wombs, and now in labour call for your fortunate hands to deliver them.' If the king did not allow men to 'bring conceiled Treasures ... into use,' he risked leaving them 'to the worms of the earth, in whose womb those deserted Mineral riches must ever lie buried as lost abortments' (Bushell 1659, 4, quoted in McColley 2007, 48).

Comus' argument foreshadows Satan's apostrophe to the Tree of Knowledge during Eve's dream: 'O fair plant ... with fruit surcharged, / Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet ... / Is knowledge so despised?' (*PL* 5.58-60). Comus analogously defends the ethical tenability of mining, as he describes how the earth,

That no corner might
Be vacant of plenty in her own loins ...
Hutched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems
To store her children with. (ll.717-20)

This is similar to Georgius Agricola's defence of mining in *De re metallica* (1556), where he declares 'the earth does not conceal metals in her depths because she does not wish that men should dig them out, but because provident and sagacious nature hath appointed for each thing its place' (1912, 12). Comus goes on to imagine the damaging effects of a lack of mining, which would cause

Th'unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the Deep,
And so bestudd with Stars, that they below
Would grow inur'd to light, and com at last
To gaze upon the Sun with shameless brows. (ll.732-6)

Here, Comus articulates the 'general scientific position of seventeenth century mineralogists' (D. C. Allen 1949, 180) as represented in Anselmus Boëtius' seminal work *Gemmarum et lapidum historia* (1609), which claimed that an exhausted diamond mine would replenish itself if left fallow for two years (Boëtius 1636, 121). The concern with overburdening of untrafficked commodities, and unsought diamonds in particular, was also expressed in Lewes Roberts' *The Treasure of Traffike* (1641) as he discusses the problem which would afflict

those rich Kingdomes of *India*, some years past, by their great quantity of spices, drugs, and jemies, which, not by the Commodity of Traffike, carried thence away, exported and vented into other parts, and to remoter Countries: these excellencies which nature herein afforded them, would be prejudiciall to them, and their ground over-laid with sundry (though otherwise) excellent trees, and exquisite Minerals, whose fruit or worth would thus not be requested nor sought after. (1641, 8-9)

While Mammon luxuriates in the ‘magnificence’ (*PL* 2.272) of accumulated wealth, Comus subscribes to Bacon’s belief that ‘money is like muck: not good except it be spread’ (1985, 105). Recasting the *carpe diem* in economic form, Comus describes beauty as ‘nature’s coyn’ (l.739), and so the Lady’s commodification becomes literal. While such objectification may seem crass, it follows the *précis* of economic development offered by Misselden’s *Circle of Commerce*: ‘by degrees all things came to be valued with money, and mony the value of all things’ (1623, 94). Comus embodies the tendency towards universal commodification, as he ‘reduces everything to cash terms. Beauty and morality are degraded to commodities, to cash, and the language of capitalism is the language in which he presents them’ (Wilding 1987, 69).

Comus goes on to argue that

Beauty is nature’s coyn, must not be hoarded,
 But must be currant, and the good thereof
 Consists in mutual and partak’n bliss,
 Unsavoury in th’injoyment of it self.
 If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
 It withers on the stalk with languish’t head. (ll.739-44)¹⁰⁶

This emphasis on the necessity of circulation, while anticipating Locke’s belief that it is the ‘current of money which turns the wheels of trade’ (1991, 2:224), also owes much to the economic thinkers of the early 1620s (Hoxby 2002, 20). The economic *carpe diem* argument occurs in Mun’s *Discourse of Trade*:

would men have us to keepe our woods and goodly trees to looke upon? They might aswell forbid the working of our woolls, & sending forth our cloth to forren parts; for both are meanes alike to procure the necessarie wares, which this Kingdome wanteth. Doe they not know that trees doe live and grow; and being

¹⁰⁶ These lines are not present in the text used for the initial performance of *Comus*, known as the Bridgewater Manuscript. In the manuscript, Comus’ speech ends at ‘to gaze upon the Sun with shameless brows’ (Milton 1943 1:331). The three years between the performance and publication of *Comus* allowed Milton to add nuance the debate between the eponymous character and the Lady. The connections between *Comus* and contemporary discussions of national economic policy are supported by Cedric C. Brown’s argument that ‘the alterations made [to *Comus*] for publication are visibly in the spirit of the poet of *Lycidas*: they show a growing determination to take opportunities to speak out to the nation, in something approaching prophetic address’ (Brown 1985, 8).

great, they have a time to dye and rot, if opportunity make no better use of them?
(1621, 28)

Christopher Kendrick claims that Comus offers a ‘voluptuous, neo-aristocratic argument for temperance’ (1987, 65), but Comus clearly has no interest in temperance. He explicitly disparages the idea, claiming that

If all the world
Should in a pet of temperance feed on Pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but Frieze,
Th’all-giver would be unthank’t, would be unprais’d. (ll.720-3)

Rather, it is the Lady who urges temperance, describing Nature as a ‘good cateress’ who ‘means her provision onely to the good / That live according to her sober laws, / And holy dictate of spare Temperance’ (ll.764-7). Analogously, while defending the East India Company against the claim that domestic food prices were raised by the sailors’ excessive consumption of food and drink, Mun asserts that their supplies are ‘proportioned into a very sparing dyet to every man by allowance: so that here is no excesse nor ryot, or any other meanes to make our victuals scant and deare, as is by some erroneously supposed; but rather by this course of life, our plenty is much advanced’ (1621, 34).

The economic debate which Milton conducts in *Comus* serves two functions. Initially, the masque follows generic conventions by criticising the unchecked appetite of its eponymous character. But Milton deviates from convention when he attacks the propensity to hoard which is demonstrated by the Lady and her Brothers. These characters seek to enforce a fixity which is incompatible with the dynamism which was, as was becoming apparent, essential to effective economic interactions. The middle path Milton proposes, between the Lady’s chaste isolation and Comus’ belief that Nature covered the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks ... all to please, and sate the curious taste’ (ll.712; 714) is expressed by Mun’s asking ‘who is so ignorant ... [that] will not consent to the moderate use of wholesome Drugges and comfortable Spices ... not thereby to surfeit, or to please a lickorish taste ..., but rather as things most necessary to preserve their health, and to cure their diseases?’ (1621, 4) The sexuality-economics metaphor which underpins the masque was prevalent at the time – Misselden described how ‘the *Cloth-trade* is the *Dowry* of the

Kingdome' (1623, 63) – and Milton draws on this equation to advocate not isolated exclusivity, nor indiscriminate promiscuity, but a considered economic polygamy.

Hoxby remarks that

It is certainly remarkable to see how nearly Milton converges on Comus's arguments for economic and sexual circulation in his tracts of the 1640s: the Lady's concern with abstention and distribution gives way to the pamphleteer's investigation of the processes of circulation, commerce, and generation; an ethic of sexual hoarding gives way to an ideal of chaste sexuality governed by dissoluble (and potentially multiple) marriage contracts. (2002, 24)

While Hoxby astutely suggests the connection between *Comus* and Milton's views regarding polygamy, he neglects to explore the economic manifestation of polygamy in the masque. Polygamy was evidently on Milton's mind shortly after the performance of *Comus*, as two of the three citations on the subject in his commonplace book – Justin Martyr's observation that 'the polygamy of the ancient Jews was by no means forbidden' (*CPW* 1:397) and that 'Valentinian sanctioned bigamy by law' (*CPW* 1:400) – are dated between 1634 and 1638. Milton's familiarity with Justin Martyr is of particular interest here, as the latter understood patriarchal polygamy as follows:

The marriages of Jacob were types of that which Christ was about to accomplish. For it was not lawful for Jacob to marry two sisters at once. And he serves Laban for [one of] the daughters; and being deceived in [the obtaining of] the younger, he again served seven years. Now Leah is your people and synagogue; but Rachel is our church. (Justin Martyr 1867, 2:269)

In the same way, the Lady and Comus represent the extremes of the old and new economic models. The Lady embodies the obsessive loyalty and jealous guarding of exclusive monopolies, while Comus manifestats the indiscriminate consumption which was feared would be the consequence of removing monopolistic safeguards. Instead, Milton suggests a mode of economic interaction based on pragmatism and consumption for a purpose. The bigamy and polygamy of the biblical patriarchs was similarly motivated not by concupiscence, but the need for children; Abram and Jacob are polygynous because their first wives are barren (Gen. 16:1-2; Gen. 30:1-5). Augustine considered the case of Jacob, and concluded that since 'he used the women not for sensual gratification, but for the

procreation of children' (Augustine 1871, 5:438), he was blameless.¹⁰⁷ Grotius, whose arguments on free trade in *Mare liberum* (1609) influenced Milton's advocacy of the free circulation of ideas, argued that polygamy was in accordance with natural law (2005, 1:195).

While Milton's beliefs regarding polygamy were taking shape during the 1630s, seventeenth century literary representations of the practice tended to either satirical derision, or cautious advocacy. The former may be seen in the opening of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*:

In pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,
Before polygamy was made a sin,
When man on many multiplied his kind
Ere one to one was cursedly confined;
When nature prompted, and no law denied
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride. (1995, 1:454)

But more positive representations of circulation, whether sexual or economic, are found directly contemporary with *Comus* (Sensabaugh 1944, 240), such as William Cartwright's *The Royall Slave* (1636). In Cartwright's play, Atossa defends herself from her husband's accusation of infidelity by asserting

Love is as free as Fountaine, Aire, or Flower
For't stands not in a poynt; 'tis large, and may
Like streams give verdure to this Plant that Tree,
Nay that whole field of Flow'rs, and yet still runne
In a most faithfull course toward the bosome
Of the lov'd Ocean. (Cartwright 1639, 3.5.22-27)

So while Milton's beliefs regarding polygamy were not crystallised until the composition of the *Christian Doctrine*, which is 'likely to have been brought to its present condition at or around 1660' (Campbell et al. 2007a, 157), they are nevertheless taking shape in the

¹⁰⁷ As Leo Miller's *Milton among the Polygamophiles* (1974) reminds us, polygamy was far from universally condemned in Milton's time. In 1598 Alberico Gentili was uncertain about Solomon's polygamy, concluding that 'neither our most learned nor our most polished theologians satisfy me' (1933, 2:373, quoted in Miller 1974, 51). In a curious connection, Gentili's tract devoted to considering the legality of polygamy, *Disputationum de nuptiis libri VII* (1609) was dedicated to Thomas Egerton, father of John Egerton, the first Earl of Bridgewater for whom *Comus* was performed.

1630s. The *Christian Doctrine* defends polygamy on the grounds that ‘no trace of the censure of polygamy can be seen throughout the whole law’ (CPW 6:360), and *Comus* too argues against possessiveness which has no basis in law, natural or divine. When Milton wrote his masque he was becoming increasingly convinced that a return to a freer, primal mode of economic intercourse was necessary, because, as Misselden observed, ‘trade hath in it such a kinde of naturall liberty in the course and use thereof, as it will not indure to be fors’t by any’ (1623, 112).

Much ink has been spilt concerning the precise function of the *History of Moscovia*, which is rooted in contentions about its date of composition. Although not published until 1682, the *Moscovia* is generally considered one of Milton’s earliest texts, not least because Milton’s commonplace book entries for one of *Moscovia*’s main historiographical sources, Samuel Purchas’s *Purchas, his Pilgrimage* (1625), exhibits ‘orthographical practices ... which are not in evidence from his hand after the middle of 1644’ (Shawcross 1974, 365). Contrary to Milton’s claim that he collected what was ‘scatter’d in many Volumes’ (CPW 8:475), the *Moscovia* actually draws almost exclusively on only two texts, Purchas’s *Purchas, his Pilgrimage* and Richard Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* (1600). Consequently, John Gleason has observed that ‘so small is the volume of material drawn upon ... that the *Moscovia* could have been compiled in a week’ (1964, 642). Such a short period of compilation renders precise dating rather problematic, leading James Hanford to propose somewhat loosely that it was written ‘at some interval of leisure during the Commonwealth or Early Protectorate ... possibly even as early as the Horton period [1632-8]’ (1946, 129). Lloyd Berry dates the *Moscovia* to the Horton period in light of the ‘pervasive influence of Giles Fletcher’s *Russe Common Wealth* on Milton’s conception of Russia’ (Berry 1960, 150). In the mid-1630s Milton was evidently familiar with the writings of Phineas Fletcher, son of Giles, and clear parallels exist between Giles’s *De literis antiquae britanniae* and *Comus* (Bradner 1940, 39), while *Lycidas* shows evidence of influence from both Giles’s Latin elegies (Austin 1947, 55) and the *Russe Common Wealth* (Berry 1960, 155).

The dating of the *Moscovia* to the Horton period is supported by Milton’s comment in his preface: ‘and this perhaps induc’d Paulus Jovius to describe onely *Muscovy* and *Britain*. Some such thoughts, many years since, led me at a vacant time to attempt the like argument; and I began with *Muscovy*, as being the most northern Region of *Europe* reputed civil; and the more northern Parts thereof, first discovered by *English Voiages* (CPW 8:

474-5). Berry continues: ‘since Milton himself tells us that he began with Muscovy and since upon his return to England in 1639 he began his intensive reading for the *History of Britain*, we can safely conclude that the “vacant time” preceded the composition of the *History of Britain*; and the only “vacant time” preceding its composition was the Horton period’ (Berry 1960, 156)S.

Berry’s dating is not without its problems, however. Shawcross observes that ‘Milton was not reading the kind of material before 1639 that is compiled in [the *Moscovia*]’ (1974, 365), while the only three citations of Purchas in Milton’s Commonplace Book date between 1642 and 1644 (Mohl 1969, 13). It is clear, then, that while it is not possible to date the *Moscovia* with absolute accuracy, it seems most plausible to place it in the early 1640s.

The nature of future disagreements between England and Russia was hinted at during the very first mercantile encounter between the nations, when the Russians refused to trade ‘without first the consent had of their King’ (*CPW* 8:526). The first Romanovs ‘ascended the throne [in 1613] after a period of great troubles, experienced a want of ready money, and regarded customs paid by foreigners as a very important source for replenishing their treasury’ (Lubimenko 1928, 44). Trade relations between England and Russia grew more strained as the century progressed, and ‘the first news of the English revolution in 1642 had given a convenient pretext to begin the attack, which was continued during the next years’ (Lubimenko 1928, 44).

The Russians dispatched an urgent envoy to seek an audience with the king, which was repeatedly refused by Parliament on the messenger’s arrival in London (Lubimenko 1928, 43). Ideological opposition to the political situation in England coalesced with discontent about the trading privileges granted to English merchants, and the Russian government consequently revoked English trading privileges. This led a group of English merchants to complain that ‘the trade has been unquestioned one hundred years, in spite of revolutions of Emperors, till in 1646 Alexis Michaelowich took away our privileges, imposed large customs on us, and seized goods of grate value by fraud’ (*CSPD* 1653: 340).

The Russian merchants were still not appeased, and in early 1649, 164 deputies of Russian towns submitted a petition to the Tsar asking foreigners to be prevented from trading in the country. On 1 June 1649, the Tsar, ostensibly due solely to his anger at the regicide, issued a proclamation banning all English merchants from the interior of Russia. As in England, then, we see politics and protectionism intertwine, and Lubimenko is right

to observe that in such matters, 'economic reasons were ... at least as important as political ones' (1928, 49).

Berry has identified two dominant thematic strands running through the *History of Moscovia*: 'Milton's pride in the accomplishments of the English people and the system of government, so unlike that of Russia, which fostered these accomplishments... [and] contempt for the Russian people' (1960, 151). Milton was far from unique in this regard; he merely reflected the attitudes of his time. Robert Cawley has noted that we find in Milton the 'note of condescension toward Muscovia shared by so many of his countrymen' (1965, 40), but his comments are 'relatively restrained and judicious' (Bedford 1993, 77). A representative example of the European attitudes towards Muscovy may be found in Pierre D'Avity's *The Estates, Empires, & Principallities of the World*, translated into English in 1615. Avity describes how the Russians are 'so barbarous and trecherous, as there is not any plainnesse or sinceritie to be found among them; and their naturall disposition is so bad, as you shall never see any firme love or frindship among them, yea they keepe no faith with them to whom they have promised it, neither have they any respect of parentage or alliance' (1615, 691).

This incivility, Avity claims, is particularly evident in their mercantile conduct:

They are as subtile and deceitfull as can be, and in all their bargaines they have still some tricke and double understanding, with the which they seeke to abuse one another, and to find meanes to breake their contracts, and to interpret them after their owne fancies: and it is a thing so common among them, and so well knowne, as they finding themselves blemished with this vice, faine themselves to be no Muscovites, whenas they are to deale with any strangers, or would traffique with them. (1615, 691)

Economic concerns are similarly central to the *Moscovia*, and Berry's claim that Milton is uninterested in 'mercantile expansion' (1960, 81) in the text is inaccurate. Milton explicitly acknowledges that mercantile interests were the fundamental motivation of the initial expedition:

When our Merchants perceiv'd the Commodities of *England* to be in small request abroad, and foreign merchandize to grow higher in esteem and value than before, they began to think with themselves how this might be remedied. And seeing how

the *Spaniards* and *Portugals* had encreas'd their wealth by discovery of new Trades and Countries, they resolv'd upon some new and strange Navigation. (CPW 8:524)

While Milton was keen to depict his countrymen in a flattering light, he is forced to concede that the expedition 'might have seem'd an enterprise almost heroick; if any higher end than the excessive love of Gain and Traffick, had animated the design' (CPW 8:524). Similarly, Francis Bacon lamented that the 'princes and nobles of Europe' had

Made a great path in the seas unto the ends of the world; and set forth ships and forces of Spanish, English, and Dutch, enough to make China tremble; and all this for pearl, or stone, or spices: but for the pearl of the kingdom of heaven, or the stones of the heavenly Hierusalem, or the spices of a spouse's garden, not a mast hath been set up. (Bacon 1863, 13:193–4)

Such ignobly motivated explorers reappear in the *History of Britain*, although Milton's historiographical approach in the latter text is much more sophisticated than in the *Moscovia*. One immediately apparent difference between the two texts is that the *Moscovia* wholly 'ignore[s]' the wealth of 'literature on Russia in western languages, especially Latin and Italian (Gleason 1964, 642), in contrast to the relative historiographical diligence of the *History of Britain*. Cawley's proposition that the *Moscovia* 'carefully select[s]... material from eyewitnesses and thus correct[s] geographers who have written slavishly in the tradition' (Cawley 1965, 6) is flawed. Whereas the *History of Britain* 'carefully examines and criticises its sources before adopting or rejecting their testimony' (Gleason 1964, 641), the *Moscovia* slavishly replicates its sources without any interrogation of their credibility, as 'no one seems to have asked... whether the eyewitnesses were truthful, well-informed, conscientious. The *Moscovia* never raises such questions but uses every kind of assertion indiscriminately' (Gleason 1964, 641).

While Gleason offers a refreshing corrective to Cawley's adulation, his own reading is not without its problems. He criticises Milton because 'about five per cent of the entire book is devoted to a single incident, an altercation in which the English ambassador defied Ivan the Terrible... its occupying a twentieth of the whole *Moscovia* seems to place Milton himself squarely among those who have "miss'd their proportions"' (Gleason 1964, 641). However, the fundamental thesis of Gleason's essay is that the *Moscovia* is 'an

abandoned project never intended by Milton for publication' (1964, 641), and it therefore seems unreasonable to criticise the unevenness of an unfinished text.

In spite of its incomplete state, the *Moscovia* still possesses a degree of thematic continuity. The text opens with a description of the Bay of St Nicholas, the site of the first English landing in Russia. Milton's description of a nearby abbey 'wherein are 20 monks; unlearned ... and great drunkards: their church is fair, full of Images, and Tapers' (*CPW* 8:477) foreshadows the monastic depravity which permeates the rest of the text, as 'Russian religion is virtually paganism contrasted with English Protestantism' (Cawley 1970, 56). Spiritual debauchery is accompanied by agricultural infertility, as the land surrounding the monastery is 'so barren, that the inhabitants fetch their corn a 1000 miles' (*CPW* 8:477), evoking Hell's 'dreary Plain, forlorn and wilde' (*PL* 1.180).

The *Moscovia* persistently associates monks with barrenness and perversity, so Milton emphasises the sudden proliferation of natural wealth in their absence. The river Petzora 'abound[s] with Swans, Ducks, Geese, and Partridge' (*CPW* 8:479), while 'the Country is so fertile, so populous and full of villages, that in a forenoon 7 or 800 sleds are usually seen coming with Salt Fish, or laden back with Corn' (*CPW* 8:483). Bedford's claim that Milton does not 'seem to be interested in recording the natural products of Russia' (1993, 82) seems dubious considering that in just a few pages Milton mentions timber, iron, swans, ducks, geese, partridges, corn, salt fish, and sturgeon (*CPW* 8:478-5).¹⁰⁸ The proliferation of natural wealth is accompanied by simple economic conduct, as the people in these areas 'salt the Bodies [of the birds] for Winter Provision' (*CPW* 8:479) or exchange salt fish for corn. They exhibit temperance instead of greed, and do not stockpile excessive quantities of food or gold, which Milton believed was unnatural as 'nature's coin' was 'unsavoury in th' enjoyment of itself' (*Comus* 1.739; 742).

The sense of equilibrium is soon destabilised by the description of Astracan, a town in which 'the houses except that of the Governor's, and some few others, [are] poor and simple' (*CPW* 8:485). The relationship between injustice and infertility established by the description of the abbey at the Bay of St Nicholas is also manifested in Astracan, where the ground is 'utterly barren, and without wood' (*CPW* 8:485). Class inequality is reflected by physical corruption, as the sturgeon 'hanging up to dry in the Streets and Houses [bring]

¹⁰⁸ Considering how many commodities Milton enumerates here, it is strange that the *Moscovia* makes no mention of fur. In the seventeenth century, the Russian fur trade 'provid[ed] a lion's share of the state's disposable income, ... [and] played its role in financing military campaigns, diplomatic activities, and even religious treatises of the state' (Etkind 2011, 81).

whole swarms of flies, and infection to the Aire, and oft great Pestilence' (*CPW* 8:485), evoking the Satanic connotations of 'Beelzebub', etymologically rooted in the Hebrew *Ba'al Zəbūb*, meaning 'lord of the flies' (Balz 1996, 211). The connection to the corrupt monks is reiterated when we learn that one of their favourite foods are 'noysom Fish' (*CPW* 8:495).

'At least 200 monks' (*CPW* 8:486) live in a large monastery near Novgorod, which is 'the greatest Mart-town in all this dominion' (*CPW* 8:486). The monks are 'as great Merchants as any in the land' (*CPW* 8:493), yet there are 'for whordom, drunkenness, and Extortion none worse' (*CPW* 8:492). Milton describes them as 'great Talkers, Lyars, Flatterers and dissemblers' (*CPW* 8:495), and so it is unsurprising that the Novgorodians who are 'tenants to these monks' (*CPW* 8:486), are 'savages' (*CPW* 8:486).

Novgorod realises many of Milton's fears regarding the abuse of monarchical, jurisprudential, and ecclesiastical authority. In the city, 'justice by corruption of inferior officials is much perverted' (*CPW* 8:489) and the emperor 'exerciseth absolute power' (*CPW* 8:487). This incontestable authority removes any obstruction to the rapacious avarice of the emperor, and consequently

the revenues of the emperor are what he list... he omits not the coarsest means to raise them ... in any good town there is a drunken Tavern ... which the Emperor either lets out to farm or bestows on some Duke or Gentleman in reward of his Service; who for that time is lord of the whole Town, robbing and spoiling at his pleasure; till being well enricht, he is sent on his own charge to the Wars, and squeezed of his ill-got wealth. (*CPW* 8:489)

This description of a monarch exploiting his autocracy to raise revenues suggests a parallel to Charles I's struggles with Parliament, and Cawley has noted that 'possibly there is some reflection ... of needed reforms at home in what [Milton] writes of money-raising' (1965, 34). Such a connection is illuminated by the fact that the expeditions described in the *Moscovia* occurred in the latter half of the sixteenth century, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Many of Ivan's actions were motivated by fears of domestic opponents who might threaten his autocracy, and he implemented a centralised economic framework which rendered 'entire communities responsible to central apparatus' (J. Martin 2008, 386). Like Charles, Ivan pursued his imperialist interests by engaging in costly wars which

crippled the Russian economy, and sought to replenish the royal coffers through extortionate taxation. The amount collected in taxes from Russian peasants ‘rose dramatically during the sixteenth century’ (J. Martin 2008, 405), and this is particularly apparent during Ivan’s reign: in 1533, the peasants were taxed on average 9.5 rubles per *bol-shaia sokha* [area of land owned], while by 1561 it had risen to 22 rubles, far above the normal rate of inflation (Zlotnik 1979, 253).

The Russian passion for amassing vast quantities of gold is particularly evident in Novgorod. While Novgorod is ‘the greatest Mart-town in all this dominion’, Milton’s description of the town does not mention a single commodity. Attention is paid instead to the stockpiled gold which was so ardently desired by Misselden and Mun’s opponents. The profusion of gold is such that even soldiers’ uniforms are covered with ‘cloth of gold, for they desire to be gorgeous in arms, but the Duke himself above measure: his pavilion covered with cloth of gold, or silver, set with precious stones’ (CPW 8:490). This lack of continence is mirrored in the way that they ‘fight without order’ (CPW 8:490).

While the Duke arrays his soldiers in gold, the poor of Novgorod are not so well treated:

There are no people who live so miserably as the Poor of Russia; if they have Straw and Water they make shift to live; for Straw dry’d and stamp’t in Winter time is their Bread; in Summer Grass and Roots; at all times Bark of Trees is good meat with them; yet many of them die in the Street for hunger, none relieving or regarding them. (CPW 8:495)

This forms a stark contrast with the provisions of the monks, who ‘delight in gross Meats and noysom Fish, their drink is better, being sundry sorts of Meath’ (CPW 8:495).

It is in the court of Moscow, however, that the most potent manifestation of covetousness is found, as the entire last chapter of the *Moscovia* is devoted to a discussion of the lavish receptions and ceremonies witnessed by English ambassadors. The Muscovite obsession with gold is developed to the point of absurdity, as in the description of the emperor himself, who ‘was invested with an upper robe so thick with gold, orient pearls

and stones as weighed 200 pounds' (*CPW* 8:515).¹⁰⁹ This obscene profusion of riches is further emphasised in the description of a banquet at which there was

a very honourable company to the number of a hunder'd sitting all apparell'd in Cloth gold down to their Ancles ... there sate the Emperour ... on his Head a Diadem of gold, his Robe all of Goldsmiths work, in his Hand a Chrystal Sceptre garnish'd and beset with precious Stones ... beside him stood his chief Secretary, on his other side the great Commander of silence, both in Cloth of gold; then sate his council of 150 round about on high seats, clad all as richly. (*CPW* 8:527)

Even the servants are 'likewise arrayed in gold' (*CPW* 8:528), but a ten-page description of the banquet hall concludes with an almost cursory reference to 'a number ... of rare dishes piled up by half dozens ... of such strangeness, greatness and goodness as scarce would be credible to report' (*CPW* 8:536). Even the victuals of the Christmas Day feast are overlooked, as Milton instead focuses on the 'store of gold and silver Plate excessive' (*CPW* 8:530). This attitude is concisely represented by the fact that the centrepiece of the feasting hall was 'a Pillar heap'd round to a great height with massy Plate curiously wrought with Beasts, Fishes, and Fowl' (*CPW* 8:536); the Russians have no interest in perishable items such as food, and so the traditional banquet centrepiece of lavish cuisine is replaced by a more lasting golden representation. Milton too pays little attention to consumable items, focusing instead on the stockpiled gold which was invested with such permanent and potent status by bullionists. His account of the Muscovite court prioritises aurulent magnificence, and by emphasising the golden items in his written account, he reiterates the bullionist reification of the permanent value of gold.

Leaving Moscow, Milton describes the borders of northern Cathay, where 'the fair prospect of the country is replenished with many rare trees, plants and flowers, beasts and fowl' (*CPW* 8:505). In the country itself, however, the proximity of the temptations of avarice and sin is given its most literal articulation when Milton asserts 'the people are idolators; the country exceeding fruitful' (*CPW* 8:509).

The cities of Cathay are the most splendiferous of the *Moscovia*, as Shirskalya 'abounds with merchandise, velvets, damasks, cloth of gold and tissue, with many sorts of sugar. Like to this is the city Yora; their markets smell odiferously with spices' (*CPW*

¹⁰⁹ The crushing weight of the emperor's robe 'thick with gold [and] orient pearls' recalls the Anemolian ambassadors in *Utopia*, who wear 'caps which glistered full of pearles' and are 'adorned with massie chaines' which the Utopians recognise as 'the punishment of bondmen' (More 1639, 172-173).

8:509). In the imperial city ‘stands a Castle build of Magnet, where the King dwels, in a sumptuous Palace, the top whereof is overlaid with Gold’ (CPW 8:509).¹¹⁰ This magnetism reiterates the connections between *Moscovia* and the spice trade: the journey of acquisitiveness traced in the text is inexorably drawn towards the east, concluding with a palace built on spice and crowned with gold, the ultimate goal towards which the Europeans strived.

One of the most notable characteristics of the *Moscovia* is the omnipresence of gold. While commodities themselves are found in varying quantities, there is a constant golden thread running through the text which grows ever thicker. This reflects the ideal bullionist trajectory: commodities are obtained and possess value only insofar as they can be exchanged for gold, which is added to an ever larger stockpile. The *Moscovia* traces a nation’s gradual evolution into a hyper-bullionist state.

The criticisms of Russia which are found in the text – religious corruption and economic inequality – are causally rooted in both the tyranny of its spiritual and secular authorities and its bullionist obsession with gold. Cawley has noted that one of the primary differences between Milton and his sources is the emphasis on ‘the *human* interest’ (1965, 38), and the *Moscovia* thus becomes not a detached survey of a foreign nation, but an impassioned indictment of the human consequences of bullionism.

While Hong-Won Suh argues that *Of Reformation* (1641) is notable for its ‘glaring lack of admission that [Milton's] contributions to the struggle against prelacy are belated’ (2000, 24), the seeds of Milton’s antiprelatism can in fact be found in the anticatholicism of his early poetry. *On the Fifth of November* (1626) characterises the Pope as a ‘secretive adulterer’ who ‘does not / pass unproductive nights without a gentle whore’ (ll. 75-6), and *Lycidas* (1637) attacks avaricious priests,

Such as for their bellies sake,
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold.

¹¹⁰ Milton’s source for this passage, Purchas’s *Pilgrimes*, describes the imperial castle being ‘built of Magnet, or Load-stone’ (Purchas 1625, 3:801). Neither Purchas nor Milton provide any further information about the peculiarity of a castle being built of lodestone. Nevertheless, China’s connections to magnetism were known in Milton’s time, as William Gilbert’s *De Magnete* (1600), the first work to conclude that the Earth was magnetic, noted that ‘if those things be true which are told about the people of China, neither were they in primitive times ignorant of magnetic experiments, for even in their country are seen the most excellent magnets in the world’ (Gilbert 1958, 16-17). Gilbert goes on to claim that ‘knowledge of the mariner’s compass appears to have been brought into Italy by the Venetian Paolo [Marco Polo] who about the year 1260 learned the art of the compass in China’ (Gilbert 1958, 6-7). I have found no mention of an imperial castle built of lodestone in *De Magnete*, or in any other contemporary accounts of China.

Of other care they little reck'ning make,
 Ten how to scramble at the shearers feast,
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest. (ll. 114-118)

Milton's early poetic depictions of a debauched and devouring clergy inform his later antiprelatism. *Lycidas*, like *Of Reformation*, characterises the excesses of the clergy in terms of consumption. The priests are reduced to grotesquely gorging 'blind mouthes' (l. 119) and their greed starves the flock, as the 'hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed' (l. 125). The starved flock are also 'swoln with wind, and the rank mist' (l. 126); while the priests' care is ostensibly nourishing, the flock 'rot inwardly' (l. 127). For Milton, the prelates' holiness is a mere pretence, and this insubstantiality is evident in both *On the Fifth of November*, where the 'droning of chanters / continually fills the hollow domes and empty spaces' (ll. 62-3), and in *Lycidas*, where the flock are 'blown bagpipes for the fiend to pipe with' (Ruskin 1905, 18:74).¹¹¹ The diabolical connection drawn here by Ruskin is supported by the persistent Satanic connotations of mist throughout *Paradise Lost*, as when 'Satan involv'd in rising Mist, then sought / Where to lie hid' (*PL* 9.75-6).

Lycidas is not unremittingly bleak, however, as it concludes on a note of redemptive optimism. Milton hopes for the return of the eponymous shepherd to watch over his wayward flock, as he reminds us that

Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
 Sunk though he be beneath the watry floar,
 So sinks the day-star in the Ocean bed,
 And yet anon repairs his dropping head,
 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled Ore,
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky. (ll. 166-71)

Lycidas is identified with the sun, and most crucially, his 'new-spangled Ore'; a connection of mining and soteriology which is made explicit when *Lycidas* is reborn 'through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves' (l. 173). The reference to 'Ore' and the allusion to Jesus in the latter quotation reiterate the connections Milton draws between consumption and salvation. He perhaps had in mind here the other definitions of 'ore' in

¹¹¹ Interestingly, Ruskin was 'one of the great numismatists' (Shell 1993, 70).

use up to the fifteenth century, where the term meant ‘grace’ and ‘was common in Middle English in appeals to God.’¹¹²

Lycidas embodies the transfiguration of individual to national salvation which recurs throughout Milton’s canon, and so it shares more with *Of Reformation* than mere antiprelatical vitriol: ‘in the antiprelatical tracts Milton attempts to transfer the poetic vision of the apotheosis of the regenerate man to the reforming historical situation of England. The visionary consolation of *Lycidas* ... is transmuted to the compensation of regenerate reform in the present time’ (Via 1973, 123). *Of Reformation* exhibits further influence from *Lycidas* in its vivaciously poetic turn of phrase. It combines scurrilous smut with elevated apocalypticism, and Everett Emerson has noted that ‘Milton’s attacks on the bishops manifest the qualities that make his prose so great: an exploitation of the full resources of English from the poetic to the subliterate; striking images; concise, powerful, often highly sensuous phrases; packed, sprawling sentences’ (1967, 38).

It has been suggested that the antiprelatical tracts are characterised by ‘a pervading concept of harmony, radiant unity, [and] decorum’ (Kranidas 1965, 185), but this is patently not the case. I concede that some of the later antiprelatical tracts, and *The Reason of Church-Government* (1642) in particular, are tightly controlled, but *Of Reformation* could never be described as harmonious, unified, and decorous. Rather, it is a vividly diffuse text which possesses an ‘opulence of the graphic which might well be called unpruned’ (Ekfelt 1946, 66).

Thomas Corns argues that ‘the early fixations of [Milton’s] political prose are wholly with religious concerns’ (2009, 40), but the language of economics is in fact present from the outset in *Of Reformation*. Milton describes the ‘Doctrine of the *Gospel*’ being ‘planted by teachers Divinely inspir’d, and by them winnow’d, and sifted, from the chaffe of over-dated Ceremonies’ (CPW 1:519). The gospel begins as a raw material which is then worked by manufacture, and thus increased in value. The economic connotations of this image are developed in metallurgical terms, as the gospel is ‘refin’d to such a Spirituall height, and temper of purity, and knowledge of the Creator, that the body, with all the circumstances of time and place, were purifi’d by the affections of the regenerat

¹¹² "ore, n.1". OED Online. September 2011. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/132378?rkey=LFcppY&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed September 25, 2013). A representative example is Saint Editha’s *Chronicon Vilodunense* (1450), which implores ‘blessude virgyn, y crie 3ow mercy & hore / & beseche 3ow to for3eue me now þis mysdede’ (1883, 110).

Soule' (*CPW* 1:519). We see a connection drawn here between the 'regenerat Soule' and metallurgical 'refin[ement]'; Milton again imbricates economics and salvation.

He recalls to his readers the time when 'Faith need[ed] not the weak, and fallible office of the Senses, to be either the Ushers, or Interpreters, of heavenly Mysteries' (*CPW* 1:519), but now Milton has no choice but to conceptualise spiritual matters in physical terms. The worldliness of the church has long 'draw[n] downe all the Divine intercourse, betwixt *God*, and the Soule, yea, the very shape of *God* himselve, into an exterior, and bodily forme' (*CPW* 1:519), rendered absurd by *In Quintum Novembris*' description of 'gods made out of bread' (l. 55). The gospel consequently 'forgot her heavenly flight, and left the dull, and droyling carcas to plod on in the old rode, and drudging Trade of outward conformity' (*CPW* 1:522).

Consumption becomes comestible, as 'gods made out of bread' become ministers made out of stew, 'who no sooner advanc't to [episcopacy], but like a seething pot set to coole, sensibly exhale and reake out the greatest part of that zeale, and those Gifts which were formerly in them, settling in a skinny congealment of ease and sloth at the top' (*CPW* 1:536). This evokes the idiom described by William Tyndale in his *The Obedyence of a Christian Man* (1548), a work which is itself none too laudatory of episcopacy: 'when a thing speadeth not well, we borrowe speach and saye, the byshope hath blessed it, because that nothing speadeth well that they meddyl withal. If the porech be burned to or the meate over rosted, we saye, the byshope hath put his fote in the potte or the byshope hath played the cooke' (Tyndale 1548, 107).

The imagery of culinary clerics develops into criticism of the 'obscene, and surfeted Priest [who] scruples not to paw, and mammock the sacramentall bread, as familiarly as his Tavern Bisket' (*CPW* 1:547). Milton goes on to describe the 'canary-sucking, and swan-eating palat' of the 'many-benefice-gaping mouth of a Prelate' (*CPW* 1:548), just as William Prynne's *Lord Bishops None of the Lords Bishops* (1640) described prelates as 'carnall men, which savour the things of the flesh, worldly minded... [and] have a wisdom indeed, but such as is not from above, but is earthly, sensuall, and devilish' (Prynne 1640, 6). Contemporary prelates are contrasted with their ancient counterparts, who were 'undiocest, unrevenu'd, unlorded' and notable for their 'matchles temperance, frequent fastings, incessant prayer and preaching, continual watchings, and labours in his Ministry' (*CPW* 1:548). Milton constitutes pleasure in commercial terms, as to imagine such a minister would be 'a rich bootie' (*CPW* 1:548).

Of Reformation's discussion of Constantine illuminates Milton's understanding of the confluence and congruence between economic and spiritual matters. He begins by identifying what shaped Constantine's relationship with the clergy: 'hee appointed certain times for Fasts, and Feasts, built stately Churches, gave large Immunities to the Clergie, great Riches and Promotions to *Bishops*' (CPW 1:556). This explains the suspiciously invariably positive accounts of Constantine offered by the clergy: 'they extoll *Constantine* because he extol'd them; as our homebred Monks in their Histories blanch the Kings their Benefactors, and brand those that went about to be their Correctors. If he had curb'd the growing Pride, Avarice, and Luxury of the *Clergie*, then every Page of his Story should have swel'd with his Faults' (CPW 1:553). He urges his reader to recognise the bias of the prelates, reminding us that 'there is just cause therefore that when the *Prelates* cry out Let the Church be reform'd according to *Constantine*, it should sound to a judicious eare no otherwise, then if they should say Make us rich, make us lofty, make us lawlesse' (CPW 1:560). We see Milton here beginning to move from the historiographical naïveté of the *History of Moscovia* towards the interrogative rigour which shapes the *History of Britain*.

The consequence of Constantine's enriching of the church was that the prelates 'thought the plaine and homespun verity of *Christs* Gospell unfit any longer to hold their Lordships acquaintance, unlesse the poore thred-bare Matron were put into better clothes; her chast and modest vaile surrounded with celestially beames they overlaid with wanton *tresses*, and in a flaring tire bespeckled her with all the gaudy allurements of a Whore' (CPW 1:556). The same dynamic resurfaces in *The Reason of Church-Government*, where Milton anxiously sees the 'undeflower'd and unblemishable simplicity of the Gospell ... instead of calling her Disciples from the receipt of custome, is now turn'd Publican her self; and gives up her body to a mercenary whoredome under those fornicated arches which she calls Gods house, and in the sight of those her altars which she hath set up to be ador'd makes merchandize of the bodies and souls of men' (CPW 1:849).

Soon after Constantine's accession, 'the Church that before by insensible degrees welk't and impair'd, now with large steps went downe hill decaying; at this time *Antichrist* began first to put forth his horne, and that saying was common that former times had wooden Chalices and golden *Preists*; but they golden Chalices and wooden *Preists*' (CPW 1:557). This sharpens the voracious prelatical appetite for consumption, as they 'gape after possessions, they tend Lands and Livings, they coure over their gold, they buy and sell: and if there be any that neither possesse nor traffique, that which is worse, they sit still, and

expect guifts, and prostitute every inducement of grace, every holy thing to sale' (*CPW* 1:557). We see here the origins of prelatical avarice, but Milton still suggests that passivity is worse than activity. He favours an economic appetite which is not passively appeased but actively satiated, as to 'sit still, and expect guifts' is worse than to 'buy and sell.'

Arthur Barker notes that Milton's 'contrast between the degeneration of religion which has resulted from the forces animating the bishops and its purification as designed by the Puritans exactly parallels the Elder Brother's contrast between the imbruting of the spirit by lust and the spiritualising of the body by virtue' (1942, 16):

He that has light within his own cleer brest
 May sit i'th center, and enjoy bright day,
 But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts
 Benighted walks under the mid-day Sun;
 Himself is his own dungeon. (*Comus*, ll.381-5)

Milton identifies such '*Libertines*' as one of the primary 'hinderers of *Reformation*' (*CPW* 1:541) before cursorily dismissing them in a paragraph, claiming that 'it will not be requisite to Answer these men, but only to discover them, for reason they have none, but lust, and licentiousness, and therefore answer can have none. It is not any Discipline that they could live under, it is the corruption, and remisnes of Discipline that they seek' (*CPW* 1:570).

But despite Milton's contempt for libertines, sensuality remains fundamental to *Of Reformation*. While Milton may attack libertine sensory indulgence, he uses these same techniques to expound his rhetoric, as Ronald Cooley notes: 'the ironic ... undercurrent of this argument, evident here as elsewhere, lies in the sensuousness of the attack on "sensuall Idolatry," the reliance on extremely vivid, if less than appealing, imagery in attacking the Church's imagery' (1991, 25).

The physicality of Milton's imagery in *Of Reformation* is evident in his representation of the nation: 'if we could but see the shape of our deare Mother *England*, as Poets are wont to give a personal form to what they please, how would she appeare, think ye, but in a mourning weed, with ashes upon her head, and teares abundantly flowing from her eyes' (*CPW* 1:585). Marvell deploys a similar technique in *The Last Instructions to a Painter* (1667), where a vision of England appears to Charles II as

A sudden shape with virgin's face
 (Though ill agree her posture, hour, or place),
 Naked as born, and her round arms behind
 With her own tresses, interwove and twined;
 Her mouth locked up, a blind before her eyes,
 Yet from beneath the veil her blushes rise. (2006, 392, ll.891-6)

Charles 'with kind hand does the coy vision press' (l. 901), and his potentially predatory sexual appetite is hinted at by the reminder that her 'beauty greater seemed by her distress' (l. 902). The implication here is that 'kind' may not connote benevolence, but a desire to repeat the action in kind. A similar appetite is awakened in the bishops, who become like Charles as they 'began to cast a longing eye to get the body also, and bodily things into their command, upon which their carnal desires, the Spirit dayly quenching and dying in them, they knew no way to keep themselves up from falling to nothing, but by bolstering, and supporting their inward rottenness by a carnal, and outward strength' (*CPW* 1:576).

As a result of the abuses of the prelates, 'the Inhabitants [of England], to avoid insufferable grievances at home, are inforc'd by heaps to forsake their native Country' (*CPW* 1:585), just as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 'forced out of France a significant minority of the population, including a large number of its most talented manufacturers, craftsmen, and soldiers' (Glozier 2006, 90). Milton's anxiety regarding brain drain persisted throughout his career, resurfacing in *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings from the Church* (1659), which insists that 'they who are taught freely at the public cost, might have their education given them on this condition, that therewith content, they should not gadd for preferment out of their own countrey' (*CPW* 7:305). Laud's policies 'depopulat[ed] and weaken[ed] the nation' (Lewalski 2003, 142), and Milton recognised that the usual remedy 'against the depopulation, and thinnesse of a Land within, is the borrow'd strength of firme alliance from without' (*CPW* 1:585), and the most suitable nation in this regard is 'the prosperous, and prudent states of the united Provinces, whom we should love' (*CPW* 1:586). The 'commodity of traffick' was the reason for the founding of the 'old Burgundian league betwixt us' (*CPW* 1:586), and Milton appears magnanimous about Anglo-Dutch disputes in the Indies, as 'though [English and Dutch] Merchants bicker in the East Indies, neither is it safe, or warie, or indeed Christianly, that the *French* King, of a different Faith, should

afford our nerest Allyes as good protection as we' (*CPW* 1:586).¹¹³ Prelacy is a 'schisme it selfe from the most reformed and most flourishing of our neighbour Churches abroad' (*CPW* 1:791), and so although 'Religion should bind to us immortally, even such friends as [the United Provinces], out of some principles instill'd into us by the Prelates, have bin often dismist with distastfull answers, and sometimes unfriendly actions' (*CPW* 1:586).

The reference to the 'commodity of traffick' marks Milton's introduction of explicitly economic concerns into his arguments against the prelates, a common tactic in contemporary antiprelatical pamphlets. In *A short view of the praelaticall Church of England wherein is set forth the horrible abuses in discipline and government* (1641), Richard Bernard calculated their cost thus: 'the whole number appertaining to Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, with the many peculiars are judged to bee no fewer then ten thousand persons, which need yearely two hundred thousand pounds to maintaine them all, the greater and inferiour ones, reckoning but 20 l. a man, when many have 100 l, a yeare, some 200 l. others more' (1641, 9).

Lionel Robbins defines economics as 'the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses' (1984, 16),¹¹⁴ and this concept is evident in Milton's concern about prelatial embezzlement of scarce resources which could be put to better use: 'if they had one thought upon *Gods glory* and the advancement of Christian Faith, they would be a meanes that with these expences thus profusely throwne away in trash, rather *Churches* and *Schools* might be built, where they cry out for want, and more added where too few are' (*CPW* 1:590). This anticipates the same argument made some twenty years later in *Considerations*, where Milton again emphasises the financial benefits of clerical reform, arguing that the money saved could be used to 'to erect in greater number all over the land schooles and competent libraries' (*CPW* 7:305). Such expenses were also considered by John Taylor in his satirical *The Popes benediction, or, His generall pardon to be purchased onely with mony and without penance* (1641), a pricelist of 'free and easie remissions to all your friends that are well affected to our Holinesse' (1641, 1). Of particular interest is the declaration that

¹¹³ Milton would not always be able to remain so magnanimous. As Secretary for Foreign Tongues, in 1652 he translated the *Paper of Demands*, discussed in Chapter 4, which exhaustively catalogued English grievances against the Dutch.

¹¹⁴ This concept may be traced back through various prior theorisations of justice. See, for example, David Hume's *Treatise of Human Understanding* (1740), which offers 'a proposition, which ... may be regarded as certain, that 'tis only from the selfishness and confin'd generosity of man, along with the scanty provision nature has made for his wants, that justice derives its origin' (2000, 318).

if a man have vowed to build an Hospitall, to found a Chappell, or erect a Church parochiall, and hath afterwards seriously considered what inconveniences may thereby ensue, as a bad use might be made of his good intentions, and so in times to come, vice rather than religion may be nurtured in them, and the many sums of mony, it would cost him to no purpose; and therefore have a desire to have a dispensation from his vow, it shall cost him ten grosses. (1641, 4)

These abuses were also lamented in Bernard's *Short View*, which attacked the fact that the Pope could impose penance 'which the richer may commute for money, but the miserable poore (doing their penance) cannot bee freed from their Courts without money though they begge for it, but must stand Excommunicated, and so bee shut out of the Church and given over to the Devill, for non-payment of money' (1641, 14). He also attacked the monopoly of preaching imposed by the prelates; just as merchants commonly required licence from one of the larger trading companies in order to reach the most lucrative commodities and markets, so too the curates 'must pay for a Lycense to read prayers in some place; for a Lycense to preach, for a Lycense to keepe Schoole, undoing poore beginners before they get any thing' (1641, 13).

Concerns about the misuse of scarce resources also resurface in *The Reason of Church-Government*, where Milton argues that a man's success is measured by 'how and in what manner he shall dispose and employ those summes of knowledge and illumination, which God hath sent him into this world to trade with' (CPW 1:801). Moreover, God does not merely want man to hoard his gifts, but to improve them, as He 'even to a strictnesse requires the improvment of these his entrusted gifts' (CPW 1:801). This is an early instance of Milton's engagement with the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), but 'in no other work does [he] demonstrate such a thoroughly negative use of the parable, a use bereft of the softening effects of the parable of the labourers seen in *Sonnet 7* and the letter "To a Friend"' (Urban 2004).

In the parable of the talents, a master entrusted his three servants with a number of talents each, to be put to good use in his absence. On his return, two of the servants had traded with their talents and doubled their stock, to which the master says 'Well done, good and faithfull servant, thou hast beene faithfull over a few things, I wil make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord' (Matt. 25:23). But one of the servants buried his talent in the ground and so made no profit, to which 'His lord answered, and

said unto him, Thou wicked and slouthfull servant, thou knewest that I reape where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my comming I should have received mine owne with usurie. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents’ (Matt. 25:26-8). Poets had played on the monetary sense of ‘talent’ earlier in the seventeenth century, as in *The Lover’s Complaint* (1609): ‘Lo behold these tallents of their heir, / With twisted mettle amorously empleacht,’ (Shakespeare 1609, 38).¹¹⁵ Later in the century, Robert Boyle invoked the parable of the talents to warn against the hoarding of knowledge. In 1655, Boyle attacked ‘Physitians’ who refused to share their scientific discoveries because they have ‘laid out much of their mony, and more of their time, in the search of such and such a secret’ (Boyle 1655, 135). For Boyle, ‘the avarice of profitable secrets, is so much worse than that of money, by how much the buried Treasure is more excellent,’ and he urges his readers to ‘remember his fault that folded up his Talent in a Napkin; and fear to feel his doom’ (Boyle 1655, 135; 138–139, quoted in Picciotto 2010, 122).

Milton alludes to the parable of the talents by likening his rhetorical and prophetic abilities to the master’s gifts, thus defending himself against ‘an accusing voice with which he would have to contend if he did not use his ability and his learning for public service’ (Haskin 1994, 33). By using his talents in this way, he hopes to convince the English people to deliver themselves from the evils of prelacy, thus effecting national salvation. But this salvation is again couched in the language of trade, as the English under prelacy are in fact in a worse situation than the servant who buried his talents: they cannot even keep their gifts at an equal value, but must trade them far below their value. Despite the English people possessing ‘precious truths of such an orient lustre as no diamond can equall’ (*CPW* 1:801), the prelates deceive their flocks about the true value of such divine gifts, and so are compared to deceitful merchants: ‘fearing that this cours would soon discover, and disgrace the fals glitter of their deceitfull wares wherewith they abuse the people, like poor Indians with beads and glasses, practise by all means how they may suppress the venting of such rarities and such a cheapnes as would undoe them, and turn their trash upon their hands’ (*CPW* 1:801). This evokes Revelation 18: ‘the Merchants of the earth shall weepe and mourne over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linnen, and purple and

¹¹⁵ While this poem has generally been attributed to Shakespeare, some scholars have recently questioned this; see, for instance, Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, A Lover’s Complaint, and John Davies of Hereford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

scarlet, and decked with gold, and pretious stones, and pearles: For in one houre so great riches is come to nought' (Rev. 18:11, 16-17). The prelates are aware of their deception, and so 'though they cannot but testify of Truth and the excellence of that heavenly traffick which they bring against what opposition, or danger soever, yet needs must it sit heavily upon their spirits' (*CPW* 1:801).

The prelates thus become like monopolists who attempt to suppress the sale of a better quality commodity, as frequently occurred in the decade preceding the antiprelatical tracts. In 1630 Charles I granted a brass wire monopoly to James Lydsey in the hope of rejuvenating the flagging domestic brass industry, which struggled to compete with foreign importers. English wire workers petitioned Parliament in 1638 to disagree with the 'late proclamation of 19th August whereby it is first pretended that the latten wire made in England is much better than that imported,' complaining that 'the whole sale of this commodity is appropriated to the private lucre of one man' (*CSPD* 1638-9: 247). The wire workers and Milton share a common belief here: the former 'seek not to discourage this manufacture here, but desire that it may be for any man to make' (*CSPD* 1638-9:247), as the latter argues that 'the functions of Church-government ought to be free and open to any Christian man though never so laick, if his capacity, his faith, and prudent demeanour commend him' (*CPW* 1:844).

Milton believed the prelatical proliferation of liturgical ceremonies was intended to both cement the exclusion of the laity and bring more money into the church, and 'if any man will contend that Ceremonies bee lawfull under the Gospell, hee may bee answer'd otherwise. This doubtlesse that they ought to be many and over-costly, no true *Protestant* will affirme' (*CPW* 1:589). Milton has no issue with the appropriate use of resources, but he opposes the prelates' 'excessive wast of Treasury ... [on] the Idolatrous erection of Temples beautified exquisitely to out-vie the Papists, the costly and deare-bought Scandals, and snares of Images, Pictures, rich Coaps, gorgeous Altar-clothes' (*CPW* 1:589).

The implied illusoriness of such finery is developed by Milton's use of alchemical imagery. The 'soure levin of humane Traditions mixt in one putrifi'd Masse with the poisonous dregs of hypocrisie in the hearts of *Prelates*' (*CPW* 1:590) recalls the account of creation in *Paradise Lost*, where the

Spirit of God ...

Downward purg'd

The black tartareous cold Infernal dregs
 Adverse to life: then founded, then conglob'd
 Like things to like, the rest to several place
 Disparted. (*PL* 7.235; 237-41)

But while the 'Infernal dregs' are 'infus'd [with] vital vertue ... and vital warmth' (*PL* 7.236) by the 'Spirit of God,' the prelatical 'poisonous dregs' 'lye basking in the Sunny warmth of Wealth, and Promotion' (*CPW* 1:590). Creation in *Paradise Lost* involves repeated acts of purifying separation, yet the prelates' obsession with 'what is false and vain, / And meerly mortal dross' (*On Time*, ll.5-6) leaves their matter debased and commixed, a condition undesirable in a period where officers were employed to 'look to all sorts of bullions and coines, that they be not embasd and adulterated' (Howell 1651, 17). *The Reason of Church-Government* recognises the

certaine attraction and magnetick force betwixt the religion and the ministeriall forme thereof. If the religion be pure, spirituall, simple, and lowly, as the Gospel most truly is, such must the face of the ministry be. And in like manner if the forme of the Ministry be grounded in the worldly degrees of authority, honour, temporall jurisdiction, we see it with our eyes it will turne the inward power and purity of the Gospel into the outward carnality of the law; evaporating and exhaling the internall worship into empty conformities, and gay shewes. (*CPW* 1:766)

In erecting Pandaemonium, the devils 'with wondrous Art found the massie Ore, / Severing each kinde, and scum the Bullion dross' (*PL* 1.703-4), and a similar dynamic exists in *Of Reformation*. The prelates' 'trade' is 'by the same Alchymy that the *Pope* uses, to extract heaps of *gold*, and *silver* out of the drossie *Bullion* of the Peoples sinnes' (*CPW* 1:592), and in doing so they create 'the Serpents Egge that will hatch an *Antichrist*' (*CPW* 1:590).

The devilish characteristics of the prelates are further emphasised by Milton's likening of them to military miners, who 'min[e], and [sap] the out-works, and redoubts of *Monarchy*' (*CPW* 1:592), 'as when Bands / Of Pioners, with Spade and Pickaxe arm'd / Forerun the Royal Camp, to trench a Field' (*PL* 1.675-7). But however much the prelates mimic devils, they remain inferior, as Milton reminds us

Let those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wondring tell
 Of BABEL, and the works of MEMPHIAN Kings,
 Learn how thir greatest Monuments of Fame,
 And Strength and Art are easily outdone
 By Spirits reprobate. (*PL* 1.692-7)

In *Comus*, Milton uses the attempted seduction of the Lady to develop a nuanced sexuality-economics analogy. While masques conventionally uphold the power of chastity and virtue, Milton's response is more complex, as he questions the tenability of sexual hoarding. The economic imagery which permeates the debate between the Lady and Comus is reiterated in the final scenes, where the Lady being 'in stony fetters fix'd, and motionless' (1.819) mirrors the stagnancy of an economy which follows her hoarding example.

While *Comus* provided a crucial forum for Milton to consider the merits of the old and new modes of economic thinking, the *History of Moscovia* eschews 'dear Wit, and gay Rhetorick' (1.790) in favour of examining the practical consequences of these economic attitudes. The bullionist thirst for accumulated gold which pervades the *Moscovia* represents the extreme of the compulsion – demonstrated by both the Lady and her Brothers – to hoard. It results not in virtue, but stagnation. The other economic extreme, embodied by Comus' desire to 'consume without restraint,' is represented no more favourably, as manifested by the greed of the prelates and monks present throughout the text.

These provide an early outline of the consuming clergy who are the target of Milton's vitriol in *Of Reformation*. But these clergy are not only hoarders, nor libertines, but both. They demonstrate the tendency to both hoard *and* consume. The damaging effect they exert on the church, congregation, and nation, demonstrates the deleterious nature of the extremes of economic conduct. When taken together, the ultimate message of *Comus*, the *History of Moscovia*, and *Of Reformation*, is the necessity for an economic middle path, recognising the value of both consumption and temperance, following Aristotle's definition of a just person as one who would 'distribute things to himself in relation to another and between two others not in such a way as to give himself too much of what is desirable and his neighbour too little, and the reverse with what is harmful, but so as to

give what is proportionately equal to both' (2002, 167). If such a model was followed, 'if every just man that now pines with want / Had but a moderate and beseeming share ... the giver would be better thank't' (1.768-9; 775).

Chapter 4

‘Nothing now stands in the way of *Englishmen*, but inward covetousness’: Winstanley, Milton, and Self-Government in the 1650s

To expect, indeed, that the freedom of trade should ever be entirely restored in Great Britain, is as absurd as to expect that an Oceana or Utopia should ever be established in it. Not only the prejudices of the publick, but what is much more unconquerable, the private interests of many individuals, irresistibly oppose it.

– Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1976, 471)

By representing sin and salvation in economic terms throughout his life, Milton was no mere throwback to the pre-Civil War heyday of English covenant theology. Economic soteriology continued to be propounded well into the Commonwealth by fringe religious and political theorists such as Gerrard Winstanley. John Gurney has recently observed that Winstanley’s *Fire in the Bush* (1650) is ‘both deeply religious and avowedly communist,’ and that it was ‘designed partly to remind readers of the essential theological foundations of the Digger programme’ (2013, 70; 30), but he gives no further consideration to the overlap between theology, economics, and politics in the tract. This chapter will begin by examining Winstanley’s economic soteriology in *Fire in the Bush*, before considering how the political and religious tracts Milton wrote during the Commonwealth and Protectorate were animated by a concern, shared with Winstanley, that the English were unable to govern themselves.¹¹⁶

Winstanley asserted the central role played by economic desires in the Fall in one of his earliest published works, *Truth Lifting up His Head above Scandals* (1648). This tract describes fallen man as one who ‘feeds, lives and delights himselfe altogether in and upon the objects of the earth’ (*WCW* 1:424-5), and Gurney suggests this ‘determination to live upon the objects of creation rather than according to the light of the spirit had poisoned and corrupted the earth’ (2007, 93) is a recurrent idea in Winstanley’s thought. Gurney has

¹¹⁶ It should be noted at the outset that Winstanley and Milton were diametrically opposed on a crucial point: the former was a fervent communist, the latter an incorrigible elitist. Nonetheless, they share common ground in other political and theological areas, as this chapter will show.

noted the connections between Winstanley's four earliest pamphlets (1648)¹¹⁷ and *The New Law of Righteousnes* (1649), and Darren Webb (2004) has stressed the continuity between *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652) and Winstanley's other Digger tracts. Winstanley's *Fire in the Bush* (1650) has been largely overlooked by scholars, perhaps because it lacks the millenarian fervour of his earliest works, the communist urgency of his Digger tracts, and the political utopianism of the *New Law of Righteousnes*.

Fire in the Bush discusses 'Adam; the Serpent, the Garden, the tree of Knowledge of Good and evill; and the Tree of Life; and the promise of redemption' (WCW 2:188); in short, all the essential aspects of soteriology. Thomas Corns is right to observe that 'the self is at the core of Winstanley's notion of sin' (2006, 194), since *Fire in the Bush* maintains that all of these concepts and events are located 'within the heart of man,' and the idea that they are 'without us' is a fallacy perpetuated by 'Judas Ministry' (WCW 2:188) to maintain control over the populace.

For Winstanley, the Garden of Eden 'which is the spirit of man' is filled with both 'weeds and hearbs' (WCW 2:172). The herbs are 'Joy, Peace, Love, humilitie, selfe-denyall, patience, sincerity, truth, or equitie,' but these are 'over-spread' by the 'stinking weeds ... Selfe-Love, Pride, Envie, Covetousnesse after riches, honours, pleasures, Imagination, thinking he cannot live in peace, unlesse he enjoy this or that outward object' (WCW 2:173; 172). For Winstanley, imagination, which he defines as an undue reliance on external things, is the fundamental error from which all other sins proceed:

Imagination is he that fills you with feares, doubts, troubles, evill surmisings and grudges, he it is that stirs up warres and divisions; he makes you lust after every thing you see, or heare of, and promises delight to you, in the enjoyment; as in riches, places of Government, pleasures, societie of strange women: and when you have all these, which you thinke or imagine to have content in, presently troubles follow the heeles thereof; and you see your selfe naked and are ashamed. (WCW 2:177-178)

This aptly describes Adam's attitude during the vision from Speculation, where he sees both a 'Beavie of fair Women, richly gay' and men smelting ore into 'Tooles' and 'what

¹¹⁷ *The Myserie of God, The Breaking of the Day of God, The Saints Paradise, and Truth Lifting Up Its Head Above Scandals*, all published in 1648.

might else be wrought / Fusil or grav'n in mettle' (*PL* 11.582; 572-3). He tells Michael 'much better seems this Vision, and more hope / Of peaceful dayes portends,' but is admonished 'judg not what is best / By pleasure' (*PL* 11.599-600; 603-4).

Winstanley complains that 'every one lookes upon a God and a ruler without him, as the Beast of the field does, few sees their Ruler within' (*WCW* 2:183). The majority of people 'live out of themselves upon the Earth ... upon riches, honors, pleasures, Ministers, Lawyers, Armies, wife, children, Ordinances, customes, and all outward forms of worship,' (*WCW* 2:183) and this is done out of fear, since 'they dare not live in the life of free community, or universall Love; least others jeare, hate, and trouble them' (*WCW* 2:184). But the greater anxiety is a 'slavish feare' that without this externalised living men will 'come to want food and raiment' (*WCW* 2:184), and even that 'if this power of universall love be advanced; this will destroy all propriety, and all trading' (*WCW* 2:214). As we shall see, in the *Readie and Easie Way* Milton denounces his countrymen for a similar 'slavish feare,' their economically motivated desire to return to monarchy.

For Winstanley, the Fall was not a historical event, nor was prelapsarian innocence a state irretrievably lost by Adam and Eve: 'this Innocencie, or plaine heartednesse in man, was not an estate 6000. Yeare agoe onely; But every branch of mankinde passes through it' (*WCW* 2:207). Everyone is born innocent, everyone is a prelapsarian Adam, until they are tempted and fall into covetousness. Neatly anticipating the argument Hobbes would make a year later in *Leviathan*, Winstanley notes how the 'power in man, that causes division and war is called by some men the state of nature, which every man brings into the world with him' (*WCW* 2:220). But Winstanley maintains that 'this law of darknesse in the members is not the state of Nature,' and asks his reader to

looke upon a childe that is new borne, or till he growes up to some few yeares, he is innocent, harmelesse, humble, patient, gentle, easie to be entreated, not envious; And this is *Adam*, or mankinde in his innocency; and this continues till outward objects intice him to pleasure, or seeke content without him; And when he consents, or suffers the imaginary Covetousnesse within to close with the objects. Then he falls, and is taken captive, and falls lower and lower. (*WCW* 2:220).

After 'innocency,' Winstanley identifies two further 'estate[s] of mankinde': 'the time of the curse' and 'the day of Christ' (*WCW* 2:208; 210). 'Innocencie' is 'changeable, subject

to be overcome by temptation,’ and ‘many men live longer in their innocencie then others, some are tempted sooner then others, but all must be tempted’ (*WCW 2:208; 207*). Everyone who is tempted by covetousness will eventually fall into ‘the time of the curse,’ which makes him ‘to covet after content in objects without him, and to looke for a God without, and so fills him with anger, envie, hypocrisie, vexation, griefe; and brings him into bondage within himselfe’ (*WCW 2:208*).

But for Winstanley the Fall is not only inevitable, but necessary. He believes that ‘all must be tempted, and tried by the evill one; that so way may be made for Christ to shew his power’ (*WCW 2:207*). It might be objected here that inevitable temptation does not mean an inevitable Fall, but Winstanley goes on to argue that the Fall is indeed necessary:

temptations and falling from innocency must be, that so man may be drawne up into the life and strength of the righteous God, or ruler, from whom he shall never fall again ... this is the mysterie and wisdom of God, to let that innocent nature of man fall, and be defiled by his owne invention; that so, he may declare his power, in redeeming him from that defilement. (*WCW 2:207-8*)

We see here that Winstanley, unlike Milton, unambiguously subscribes to the doctrine of the *felix culpa*.

Since the Fall is caused by reliance on external objects, it would be incongruous if redemption also came from without. Winstanley asserts that ‘publick Ministers [bewitch] you, by telling you of a Saviour at a distance,’ and that instead Christ ‘is to be seen within ... [He] must be a power within you, to deliver you from that bondage within’ (*WCW 2:222; 223*). The internal recognition of fallenness is the beginning of redemption:

When Mankinde begins to look within himself, and sees his pride, Envie, Covetousnesse, Lust of the Flesh, anger, hypocrisie, and nothing but darknesse and discontent; and begins to say with himselfe; oh what have I done, how am I falne? ... now the Seed begins to worke, to bruise the Serpents head, and man begins to looke upward, towards the life of the Spirit within, which he sees now is a life above the life of Earthly objects. (*WCW 2:184-5*)

We see here how ‘Christ was not expected to appear in some sudden or dramatic way “in the clouds”, or even as an individual person to all, but to “rise up” in men and woman, reawaken them to the rule of Reason within them, and lead them to embrace the principle of community lost since the Fall’ (Bradstock 2011, 62).

Having outlined the internal processes of sin and salvation, Winstanley anticipates his readers asking ‘how came mans fall in the first?’ (*WCW* 2:215), and he obliges with a more concrete narrative, unique in ‘understanding ... the Fall as the introduction of private property, and not as a separate state which gave rise to it’ (Bradstock 2011, 61). In the beginning, ‘whole mankind walked in singleness and simplicity to each other,’ and even though some were stronger and some weaker, ‘the stronger [brother] did work for the weaker, and the whole Earth was common to all without exception’ (*WCW* 2:215). But soon the stronger brother came to believe that his greater workload entitled him to a larger share of the Earth, and he began to ‘inclose parcells of the Earth into severall divisions, and call those inclosures proper or peculiar to himselfe, and that the younger, or weaker brother should lay no claime to it’ (*WCW* 2:216).

The stronger brother goes on to buy and sell these enclosures of land, and ‘by reason of this bargaining, the younger, or weaker brother is more forcibly shut out of the Earth, and so here is a foundation laid to steale the earth by craft, and to murder one another by the sword’ (*WCW* 2:216). Winstanley traces all this back to the one original sin of covetousness: ‘this enmity that brought in this division; first of inclosing; then of buying and selling, then of killing one another for the Earth, is the curse within of imaginary covetousnesse, and it was bred by the presentment of outward objects, tempting the five Senses, or the living Soule’ (*WCW* 2:219).

Covetousness is also the root of the contemporary evils Winstanley sought to address in his politico-economic programme, as he believed ‘there is a foure-fold power, much Idolized, and doted upon by covetous flesh, which must be shaken to pieces’ (*WCW* 2:189). These were outlined as follows:

The first is the Imaginary, teaching power, called hear-say, booke-studying, University, Divinity, which indeed, is *Judas* Ministry ... secondly, the Imaginary Kingly power, who by the power of the sword, and successive conquests doe set up one part of Mankinde, to rule over another ... thirdly, the imaginary Judicature, called the Law of Justice; which indeed is but the declarative will of Conquerors,

how they will have their Subjects be ruled ... fourthly, buying and selling of the Earth, with the fruits of the Earth' (WCW 2:189-90)

Together, these are 'the cause and effect of human misery and bondage' (Webb 2004, 205). While Winstanley 'perceives multiple forms of oppression in the Commonwealth' (D. Loewenstein 1999, 110–111), such forms are inseparable, as although 'all these Beasts ... differ in shape, they all agree in one oppressing power, supporting one another; one cannot live without another ... and if one truly die, all dies' (WCW 2:191). For Winstanley, 'the most dreadfull and terrible Beast, is the Clergy Power; for though the other three raised them up by action; yet this Imaginary learned Beast raised them up by policie; for self ends' (WCW 2:194). Winstanley fulminates against the avarice of the clergy, who 'make themselves ministers, as a man teaches birds to speak; But they doe not stay till Christ make them, for that will be too long for them to wait, the rich Benefices will be all taken up' (WCW 2:200).

Milton spent over ten years, from March 1649 to the eve of the Restoration, employed as the Secretary for Foreign Languages. But some Miltonists, driven by 'a misguided desire to magnify Milton's status' (L. Miller 1992, 7) in the Interregnum governments, have tended to overemphasise the importance of his official post. Milton was undoubtedly 'close to his country's centres of political power,' but his job was to communicate official policy, not to formulate it (R. T. Fallon 1993, 5).¹¹⁸ But while he 'was primarily a translator, and not the formulator, of the state papers, he did have some leeway in phraseology' and Leo Miller has described Milton as 'a most extraordinary literary Secretary for Foreign Languages' (Miller 1992, 19, 3). Milton's source texts were composed by 'a regime of lawyers, merchants, and shipowners', but he did the best he could with this rather dry source material, supplying 'the most appropriate level of literary phrasing, conforming to the best classical models' (L. Miller 1992, 17). This ability to transform the economic to the literary is one of Milton's great gifts, and one he put to good use in the *Defence of the English People* (1651).

As Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns have noted, the *Defence* was an extension of, not a digression from, Milton's diplomatic activity: 'Salmasius's objective had been to

¹¹⁸ Leo Miller has found evidence for Milton's attendance at only one meeting of the Council of State, the session where Salmasius's *Royal Defence* was discussed and Milton was ordered to write a rebuttal. From 'early 1651 onward, there are strong indications that [Milton] was *not* present at Council policy sessions' (L. Miller 1992, 5).

render the republican regime odious across Europe; Milton writes to ease the resumption of normal diplomatic relations with other nations in general and with the United Provinces in particular' (2010, 235). England and the United Provinces were bitter trading rivals, and many of their diplomatic interactions were concerned – explicitly or implicitly – with economic matters. We find a similar emphasis in the *Defence*, where much of Milton's invective against Salmasius and Charles centres on accusations of covetousness and greed.

Milton opens by upbraiding Salmasius for taking payment for his work, claiming that the Frenchman's 'discourse was hired, ... and at a high price' which left 'the whole treasury ... nearly drained (*CPW* 4:308; 309). Milton believes the *Royal Defence* was written for entirely mercenary reasons, and that Salmasius was 'unwilling to defend Charles the father, best of kings in your judgement, before Charles the son, poorest of kings, without some royal recompense' (*CPW* 4:308). This recalls *Fire in the Bush*'s depiction of Judas as a hireling who 'was defiled and false by temptation, that is, he was one that followed Christ for selfe ends; not simply; like most preachers, and covetous, bitter hearted Professors, that will covenant before hand, what they must have before they will follow Christ' (*WCW* 2:205).

Milton develops the imagery of the monetary corrupting the divine with his comparison of Salmasius to Balaam, the mercenary seer who was asked by Balak, king of Moab, to place a curse on the Israelites: 'you go on to recount the very extensive annual income of our kings ... by such inducements did those betrayers of their country win you over like that Balaam whose wickedness is known to all, encouraging you to revile God's people and rant against his judgements' (*CPW* 4:503). But this is a peculiar biblical parallel for Milton to draw if he is intending to emphasise Salmasius's covetousness and willingness to work for hire, as Balaam in fact refused Balak's money twice because God would not give him leave to go with Balak's men: 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot goe beyond the word of the Lord my God, to doe less or more' (Num. 22:18). Balaam only went to Balak on the third occasion because 'God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and goe with them' (Num. 22:20).¹¹⁹ These hardly seem the actions of a man 'whose wickedness is known to all' (*CPW* 4:503); Balaam's curse on the Israelites comes to pass later with the mention of 'women ... [who] caused the children of Israel, through the counsell of Balaam,

¹¹⁹ It is all the stranger, then, that God reminds Balaam 'the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou doe,' but then His 'anger [was] kindled, because he went,' despite His having just given Balaam permission to do so (Num. 22:20; 22).

to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the Congregation of the Lord' (Num. 31:16).¹²⁰

Balak had a 'house full of silver and gold' and Milton demands to know 'did such boundless wealth profit an unjust and raging ruler in the end?' (*CPW* 4:503). Milton's question evokes Marks 8:36, where Jesus asks 'what shall it profit a man, if he shall gaine the whole world, and lose his owne soule?' But even though the royal coffers were 'nearly drained' by Salmasius, he is far from gaining the whole world, and his paltry reward does little to satisfy his covetousness: 'I understand that of all the money which your insatiable greed has fixed on, you actually got but that one poor little purse with its glass beads and the hundred pieces inside. Well, Balaam, you can take those wages of sin you wanted so much and make the most of them!' (*CPW* 4:503).

Salmasius may have made a meagre profit from the *Royal Defence*, but this may be because arithmetic was apparently not one of his strengths, a fact which Milton gleefully points out. Salmasius declares that the king has greater power than 'more than half of the people,' finally asking 'if the other half be added as well, is he not still more powerful?' Milton sardonically replies 'Carry on; why run off with your counting board, O great accountant, unless you are ignorant of arithmetical progression?' (*CPW* 4:470). Milton then finds his opponent 'turning to a new system of accounting' when Salmasius asks 'whether the king together with the nobles does not have more power?' (*CPW* 4:470). This Milton denies, 'if by nobles you mean lords; for it may be that none of them deserve the name of noble. More often far more of the commoners surpass the lords in character and intellect' (*CPW* 4:470). If these noble commoners 'are joined by the larger or more able part of the people,' Milton 'need[s] not hesitate to state that they are equivalent to the whole people' (*CPW* 4:470), and he finishes with a final savage swipe at Salmasius's economic incompetence: 'add up your accounts, then, and you will find that by your incompetent computations you have lost your capital!' (*CPW* 4:470).

For all his denunciation of Salmasius' working for hire, we must remember that Milton was awarded £100 on 18 June 1651 by the Council of State for writing the *Defence* (Campbell 1997, 119). The original order has been obliterated from the Council record book, but another order added shortly afterwards thanks Milton for his services but does not mention any money, 'so it seems possible that [Milton] declined the reward, and a

¹²⁰ John of Patmos also mentions 'Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idoles, and to commit fornication' (Rev. 2:14).

revised order was therefore drafted' (Campbell 1997, 119). In the *Second Defence*, Milton declared

I am content to have sought for their sake alone, and to accomplish without recompense, those deeds which honour bade me do. Let others look to that, and do you rest assured that I have not touched these "abundances" and "riches" of which you accuse me, nor have I become a penny richer by reason of that renown with which especially you charge me. (*CPW* 4:596)

Barbara Lewalski sees no reason to disagree with Milton here (Lewalski 2003, 255), whereas Campbell and Corns remind us of the fact, no less true today, that 'MPs and their servants were not noticeably reluctant to accept whatever came their way' (Campbell and Corns 2010, 239). Considering that Milton was an uncompromising usurer with a shrewd head for business, their caution may be astute.

While Milton's official duties in 1651-2 were primarily focused on diplomatic correspondence with Portugal, Hamburg, and Oldenburg, he also became increasingly involved in negotiations with the Dutch before the outbreak of the First Anglo-Dutch War in 1652. There is no evidence that Milton was involved in the unsuccessful English envoy to the United Provinces in early 1651 (R. T. Fallon 1993, 25), which was stalled by the Dutch due to both 'fears that their trading interests would be adversely affected' (J. R. Jones 1996, 84) and it seeming 'shrewd policy in Amsterdam to wait for the outcome of Charles II's Scottish ploy' (L. Miller 1992, 9). Following Cromwell's emphatic victory at Worcester on 3 September 1651, 'legitimacy was no longer at issue, and Parliament, now securely in power, resolved to flex its economic muscle' (R. T. Fallon 1993, 27). Amid millenarian clamour to secure English sovereignty of the seas 'to prepare for the coming of Christ' (Wilson 1957, 40), Oliver St. John, the leader of the failed English embassy to the Low Countries, proposed 'out of spite' (Farnell 1964, 422) the legislation which became the Navigation Act of 1651.

The Navigation Act stipulated that 'no goods or commodities whatsoever ... shall be imported or brought into this Commonwealth of England ... in any other ship or ships, vessel or vessels whatsoever, but only in such as do truly and without fraud belong only to the people of this Commonwealth,' or 'to the people of that country or place, of which the said goods are the growth, production or manufacture' (quoted in Gardiner 1906, 468-9).

The Act also demanded the cessation of all foreign fishing in English territorial waters (Gardiner 1906, 469–70). The Act was ‘primarily aimed at the Dutch’ (L. Miller 1992, 9), who fished heavily in English waters and made the majority of their trading profits from re-exporting foreign goods from their Amsterdam entrepôt, since their domestic products were low-value goods such as butter, cheese, and herring. Despite being difficult to implement, the Navigation Act nonetheless found support in the most unlikely quarters.

Winstanley’s *Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652) outlined a vision of a commonwealth where ‘if any do buy and sell the Earth or fruits thereof, unless it be to, or with strangers of another nation, according to the Law of Navigation, they shall be both put to death as traitors to the peace of the *Common-wealth*; because it brings in Kingly bondage again: and is the occasion of all quarrels and oppressions’ (WCW 2:373). Winstanley allowed international trading ‘for the peace of our Commonwealth ... because other Nations as yet own Monarchy, and will buy and sell,’ (WCW 2:374). But this was only permitted on the condition that ‘our ships do transport our English goods, and exchange for theirs, ... [and] what goods our ships carry out, they shall be the Commonwealths goods’ (WCW 2:374), echoing the Navigation Act’s attempts to minimise foreign involvement in the importation and exportation of goods.

Winstanley was cautiously willing to allow precious metals in his commonwealth, but primarily ‘to make dishes and other necessaries for the ornament of houses, as now there is use made of Brass, Pewter, and Iron, or any other Metal in their use’ (WCW 2:374), as in More’s *Utopia* where gold and silver are used to ‘make chamber-pots, and other vesells that serve for most vile use’ (More 1639, 169). Nonetheless, some ready money is to be kept ‘in case other Nations, whose commodities we want, will not exchange with us, unless we give them money’ (WCW 2:374). In this situation ‘pieces of Silver and Gold may be stamped with the Commonwealths Arms upon it,’ but Winstanley remains opposed to money being ‘coyned with a Conquerors stamp upon it, to set up buying and selling under his name’ (WCW 2:374) and Milton agrees that ‘money does not carry the ruler’s portrait to show that it belongs to him, but to show that it is pure, and to prevent anyone from daring to counterfeit it when it is stamped with his likeness’ (CPW 4:377).

The Navigation Act and Cromwell’s consolidation of the republic gave renewed urgency to the Anglo-Dutch negotiations, and Miller proposes that by the end of January 1652 ‘it is quite likely that Milton was already involved’ (1992, 12) in the negotiations which ended in the declaration of the First Anglo-Dutch War on 10 July 1652. A number

of English diplomatic salvos were translated by Milton, such as the *Paper of Demands*, an itemised list of reparations sought by the English from the Dutch for various incidents which came to '16 pages of Latin text, with many names of individual persons, places and ships, and many figures in English currency and continental currency, several times revised and refigured' (L. Miller 1992, 25). Milton translated various other documents as war loomed ever closer, and Robert Fallon proposes that 'if Milton was indeed responsible for many of the papers that led up to the declaration [of war], it would be reasonable to conclude that he would employed in translating the document that represents the culmination of the negotiations' (1993, 82–83).

While the 'publication of the declaration [of war] in July 1652 may well have marked the end of Milton's close involvement in correspondence between the two nations' (R. T. Fallon 1993, 83), economic concerns continued to shape the diplomatic correspondence he translated throughout the 1650s. In April 1657 Milton composed a letter of credentials for Richard Bradshaw to present to Tsar Alexis of Russia, which opens with the sentence 'that the English nation has had for some time now an ancient friendship with the people of your empire, as well as great profits and very abundant trade, everyone knows' (*CPW* 5.2:788). J. Max Patrick argues that it is likely Milton also wrote the companion piece of instructions for Bradshaw, since he had already done some reading on the country, its people, and practices when writing the *History of Moscovia* (*CPW* 5.2:786).¹²¹ In the tracts he wrote in the twilight of the Protectorate, Milton found his countrymen guilty of the same avarice which had so disgusted him in the Russians some fifteen years earlier.

Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church (1659) is primarily concerned with 'the oppressions of a Simonious decimating clergie' (*CPW* 7:275). For Winstanley, the two 'greatest sinnes in the world' were 'for a man to lock up the treasuries of the Earth in Chests and houses; and suffer it to rust or moulder, while others starve for want to whom it belongs ... [and] for any man, or men, first to take the Earth by power of the murdering sword from others' (*WCW* 2:223), and in *A Treatise of Civil Power* (1659) Milton concurred that the two factors 'working much mischief to the church of God, and the advancement of truth' were 'force on the one side restraining, and hire on the other side corrupting the teachers thereof' (*CPW* 7:241).

¹²¹ Considering the *Moscovia* drew on only two historiographical sources, we might wonder if there wasn't somebody better suited to the task considering Milton's relatively scant knowledge of Russian matters.

But while Milton and Winstanley shared concerns about the ‘National Ministry appear[ing] to the people to be but hirelings’ (WCW 2:298), they disagreed about the legitimacy of hire itself. Winstanley believed there should be ‘no buying and selling in a Free Common-wealth, neither shall any one hire his brother to work for him’ (WCW 2:359), while Milton took a more pragmatic approach, arguing in *Considerations* that ‘hire of itself is neither a thing unlawful, nor a word of any evil note, signifying no more than a due recompense or reward... that which makes it so dangerous in the church, and properly makes the hireling, a word always of evil signification, is either the excess thereof, or the undue manner of giving and taking it’ (CPW 7:278).

While hire possesses an inherent potential for corruption, Milton recognises it as an economic necessity and therefore proposes ‘we must use our utmost diligence, how it may be least dangerous’ (CPW 7:280). To this end, just as Winstanley suggested that ‘every man shall be brought up in Trades and labours’ (WCW 2:302), Milton suggests that clergymen learn a trade, as ‘they would not then so many of them, for want of another trade, make a trade of their preaching’ (CPW 7:306). He laments that many ‘count it the reproach of this age, that tradesmen preach the gospel’ (CPW 7:306), contrasting the ‘modestie, the contentedness of those forein pastors with the maintenance given them’ to ‘the avarice of ours’ (CPW 7:289). Milton’s admiration for foreign practices would not find its fullest expression until the *History of Britain*, but we see it developing here.

English pastors are also inferior to their European counterparts in rhetorical skill, reflecting Milton’s belief that erudition was linked to virtue. The English clergy, ‘through the love of their old Papistical tithes, consider not the weak arguments, or rather conjectures and surmises, which they bring to defend them’ (CPW 7:289). Crucially, Milton’s opposition centres on the lack of evidence; mere ‘conjectures and surmises’ are only idealism, and therefore insufficient justification. The proof sought by Milton is scriptural, as he observes that ‘if Christ or his apostles had approved of tithes, they would have either by writing or tradition recommended them to the church’ (CPW 7:290), and he derisively notes that arguments in favour of tithes were largely based on the church fathers (CPW 7:293), for whom Milton had little respect. He scorns the patristical ‘false supposition,’ which is the basis for the ‘infirm and absurd’ notion that ‘he should reap from me, who sows not to me’ (CPW 7 301).

In addition to suggesting alternative employment for the clergy, Milton proposes that ministers be allocated to a parish for a year or two at most, rather than having lifetime

tenure (*CPW* 7:305). In *Oceana* (1656), James Harrington analogously recommends that, following the death of a minister, a new one should be appointed for a one-year probationary period, after which their suitability for the post will be voted on by the elders of the community (1992, 12). Milton emphasises the economic consequences of such a policy, arguing that the money saved by a rotational clergy could be used ‘to erect in greater number all over the land schooles and competent libraries’ (*CPW* 7:305). Milton believes that education is currently unavailable to many due to prohibitive transportation costs, but if more schools and libraries were built, it would overcome the need for ‘unprofitable, and inconvenient removing to another place’ (*CPW* 7:305), evoking the Traveller of Gabriel Plattes’s *Macaria* (1641) for whom knowledge was a commodity and who ‘travelled through many Kingdomes, and paid neither freight nor Custome for [his] wares, though [he] valued them above all the riches in the Kingdome’ (1641, 14).

Milton opposes a centralised source of education in favour of a wider distribution of knowledge, just as he proposed political federalism to ‘mitigate the danger of arbitrariness ... [by] diffusing authority to the regions’ (Lewalski 2003, 371). He drew a causal relationship between education and virtue, hoping that universal education would soon convey ‘the natural heat of government and culture more distributively to all extreme parts, which now lie num and neglected, [and] would soon make the whole nation more industrious, more ingenious at home, more potent, more honourable abroad’ (*CPW* 7:460)

For Milton, an educated populace is a virtuous populace, and as Harrington reminds us, ‘education is the scale without which no man or nation can truly know his or her own weight or value’ (1992, 206). Milton hopes that ‘through participation in local government and educational institutions, citizens could be exercised and fitted for the responsibilities of republican government’ (Lewalski 2003, 359), and the nature of such participation is made clear when he observes that ‘in commonwealths of most fame for government, civil laws were not established till they had been first for certain days publisht to the view of all men, that who so pleasd might speak freely his opinion thereof, and give in his exceptions, ere the law could pass to a full establishment’ (*CPW* 7:278). This is remarkably similar to Harrington’s proposal for the legislative process in *Oceana*: ‘the senate having passed a decree which they would propose unto the people, cause it to be printed and published, or promulgated, for the space of six weeks ... that which is proposed by the authority of the senate and commanded by the people is the law of Oceana, or an act of parliament’ (1992, 237).

But by the time he wrote the second edition of the *Readie and Easie Way* (1660), it was clear that Milton's proposals had fallen on deaf ears. The English would 'undoubtedly' restore the monarchy, with the result that 'we may be forced perhaps to fight over again all that we have fought, and spend over again all that we have spent' (*CPW* 7:423). Milton's fears are repeatedly couched in economic terms, as he worries that his countrymen will squander 'all the treasure we have spent, not that corruptible treasure only, but that far more precious of all, our late miraculous deliverances' (*CPW* 7:423), just as Winstanley heard 'most people cry, We have payd Taxes, given Freequarter, wasted our Estates, and lost our Friends in the Wars, and the Taskmasters multiply over us more then formerly' (*WCW* 2:279). Milton is concerned about the 'lost labour' of the 'free government which we have so dearly purchased' (*CPW* 7:423). We can see, then, that in moments of crisis, he returns to the language of economics.

Monetary imagery is also central to his criticisms of the restored court. While the attacks on monarchy in *Eikonoklastes* and *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* were centred upon more abstract ideological arguments, here Milton is more concerned with the practical consequences of the Restoration. He emphasises the luxury and debauchery of the 'dissolute and haughty court about [the king], of vast expense and luxurie' (*CPW* 7:425), recalling Harrington's belief that 'the liberty of man consists[s] in the empire of his reason, the absence whereof would betray him unto the bondage of passions' (1992, 19)

This concern with virtuous conduct is manifest in both Milton's fear that those 'who fought so gloriously for liberty ... can change their noble words and actions ... into the base necessity of court flatteries and prostrations' (*CPW* 7:428), and in his contrasting conceptions of class in a commonwealth and a monarchy. In the former, 'they who are greatest, are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at their own cost and charges, neglect their own affaires; yet are not elevated above thir brethren,' while in the latter the king is 'ador'd like a demigod' by 'the perpetual bowings and cringings of an abject people' (*CPW* 7:425; 426).

Milton proposes a meritocratic system which accords with Harrington's belief that 'where men excel in virtue, the commonwealth is stupid and unjust if accordingly they do not excel in authority' (1992, 35). Milton's fear, which would be realised in the *History of Britain*, is that those who have demonstrated their virtue will become base, that 'our prime gentry' will be perverted by the 'loos imploiments of court service, which will be then

thought honourable,' as in the French court, where 'enticements and preferments daily draw away and pervert the Protestant nobilitie' (*CPW* 7:425; 426).

Milton opposes autocracy in the *Readie and Easie Way*, exclaiming 'what madness is it, for them who might manage nobly their own affaires themselves, sluggishly and weakly to devolve all on a single person' (*CPW* 7:427).¹²² Nevertheless, he maintains that the 'Grand or General Council' must be 'perpetual' in order to respond to events immediately and effectively, as 'the opportunity of affairs [may be] gain'd or lost in a moment' (*CPW* 7:433). Winstanley argued that 'to remove Officers of State every year will make them truly faithful, knowing that others are coming after who will look into their ways; and if they do not do things justly, they must be ashamed when the next Officers succeed' (*WCW* 2:318), and Milton grudgingly concedes the possibility of replacing the oldest third of the senators each year. But this concession is undermined by his sour admonition that 'it appears not how this can be done, without danger and mischance of putting out a great number of the best and ablest: in whose stead new elections may bring in as many raw, inexperienced and otherwise affected, to the weakening and much altering for the worse of public transactions' (*CPW* 7:435).

Both Winstanley and Milton saw themselves as proposing an interim government, with the former responding to the accusation that he would 'have no government' by declaring 'True Government is that I long for to see, I waite till the power, Authority, and government of the King of righteousness rule over all, for as yet the power and dominion of the Prince of darknesse rules every where, and that is the government, which must be throwne down' (*WCW* 2:198). The fixed senate delineated in the *Readie and Easie Way* is likewise 'much better doubtless ... in this wavering condition of our affairs, ... till the commonwealth be thoroughly settled in peace and safetie' (*CPW* 7:441). The benefits of such fixity are represented in economic terms, as Milton is confident that if senators are only replaced due to death or default, 'there can be no cause alleged why peace, justice, plentiful trade and all prosperitie should not thereupon ensue throughout the whole land' (*CPW* 7:444).

The use of economic language becomes even more emphatic in the peroration of the *Ready and Easy Way*. While one might expect Milton to conclude the tract with a

¹²² This starkly contrasts his declaration five years earlier in the *Second Defence*: 'Cromwell, we are deserted! You alone remain. On you has fallen the whole burden of our affairs. On you alone they depend. In unison we acknowledge your unexcelled virtue' (*CPW* 4:671).

rhetorical flourish extolling the virtues of the Good Old Cause, he recognises that he would do so in vain:

What I have spoken, is the language of that which is not call'd amiss the *good Old Cause*: if it seem strange to any, it will not seem more strange, I hope, then convincing to backsliders. Thus much I should perhaps have said though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones; and had none to cry to, but with the Prophet, *O earth, earth, earth!* to tell the very soil it self, what her perverse inhabitants are deaf to. (*CPW* 7:462)

However much Milton still believed in the Good Old Cause, at this stage he recognises the futility of an appeal to idealism. He argues that popular support for the Restoration is rooted in the belief that 'nothing but kingship can restore trade,' to which he answers that 'trade flourishes nowhere more then in the free commonwealths of Italie, Germanie, and the Low Countries' (*CPW* 7:461). He attacks the immoderate economic appetite of the English by claiming that the 'luxurious expenses of a nation upon trifles or superfluities' serve only to satisfy 'the profuse living of tradesmen' (*CPW* 7:461). The nation's profligacy is attributed to the fear that, if the people 'should betake themselves to frugalitie, it might prove a dangerous matter, least tradesmen should mutinie for want of trading,' and that therefore 'we must forgo and set to sale religion, libertie, honour, safetie, all concernments, to keep up trading,' but monarchy is a 'new guilded yoke' which 'neither shall we obtain or buy at an easie rate' (*CPW* 7:461; 450).

Milton thus applies the tenets of free trade to the market itself: if so much must be sacrificed to maintain trade at the reckless levels desired by the English people, then rather than artificially maintaining this volume of trade by eschewing virtuous actions and government, a laissez-faire approach must be inaugurated. By addressing the root causes of corruption by treating education (the means of production of civic virtue) as something owned and participated in by all, Milton hopes the nation can overcome its predilection for debauchery and monarchy. This will eventually establish a natural equilibrium, restoring the commonwealth which he was adamant offered 'the only possibility of long-term stability' (Davis 1981a, 692) and was even 'planely commended, or rather enjoind, by our saviour himself' (*CPW* 7:424).

In 1650, Winstanley saw his countrymen living in a way which was far from that 'enjoind by our saviour himself.' For Winstanley, the Fall was not in the distant past, but something that happened every day when people submitted to pleasure and sought fulfilment in external objects. He represented this submission to externality in concretely economic terms, and in *Fire in the Bush* private property, hire, and avarice are causes, not symptoms, of this economic Fall.

Milton's writings in the 1650s exhibit a similar concern with the consequences of covetousness in the religious and political spheres. In the *First Defence* he attacks Salmasius' working for hire, before turning his attention to hirelings themselves in *Considerations*. The *Readie and Easie Way* sketches an ideal commonwealth, but even as he was writing Milton knew it would never materialise. The avaricious atavism of the English would lead back to monarchy, and both Milton and Winstanley agree that while 'nothing now stands in the way of *Englishmen*, but inward covetousness' (WCW 2:174), this was an urge that could not be overcome.

Chapter 5

‘Account mee man’: The Price of Redemption in the *Christian Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost*

If no other way to *Neroes* raigne
 The fates could finde, if gods their Crownes obtaine,
 At such deare rates, and Heaven could not obey
 Her *Jove*, but after the sterne Giants fray;
 Now we complaine not, gods, mischiefe and warre
 Pleasing to us; since so rewarded, are.

– Lucan, *Pharsalia* (Trans. Thomas May 1631, sig. A2^r)

Blair Hoxby describes *Paradise Lost* as a text in which ‘Satan is associated with grandiose mercantile ventures and imperial projects and Adam’s vision from the Top of Speculation includes a disturbing panorama of global exploitation’ (2002, 12), and I concur that much of the poem’s economic imagery is deployed negatively. But if Hoxby is right, and Milton had indeed by this point come to view the mechanics of long-distance trade – that is, the transformation of immediate loss into eventual profit – as symptomatic of corruption, it would be peculiar if he were to represent the atonement as the repayment of a debt by proxy and to structure the vision from Speculation around Adam’s gradual realisation that what he lost in the Fall would be recouped with profit. But this is precisely what Milton does in *Paradise Lost*. Milton’s epic poem is no anomaly in this regard, as we find the same conceptualisation of the atonement in the *Christian Doctrine*.

This chapter will begin by examining Milton’s use of economic imagery to outline key concepts in the *Christian Doctrine*. While the structural influence of William Ames on Milton’s theological treatise has been noted (Lares 2001, 91), I will show that the economic soteriology outlined in the *Christian Doctrine* in fact has more in common with radical covenant theologians such as Thomas Hooker than with Ames’s staid Calvinism. Having established the importance of economic concepts to Milton’s theology in this period, I will then go on to discuss the economic ideas which run through *Paradise Lost*. The negative side of such associations – such as imperialism in the New World and Satan being characterised as a spice trader – have been amply discussed by Hoxby and his

predecessors, so I need not retread their ground. To create a more nuanced reading, I will instead consider how Milton represents economic ideas both positively and negatively in his great epic. The latter will be treated in my analysis of the devils' mining and metallurgy in Book 1, where Milton's debt to Biringuccio's *De la pirotechnia* (1540) has previously gone unnoticed by scholars. But for all the satanic associations of gold and trade, the language of economics is not exclusively negative in *Paradise Lost*. Milton repeatedly conceptualises sin and salvation in terms of debt, repayment, and profit, and economic ideas are in fact fundamental to the soteriological message of the poem.

Before I continue, it is worth emphasising that I do not intend to extend Maurice Kelley's project in *This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's De Doctrina Christiana as a Gloss upon Paradise Lost* (1941). Michael Lieb is rightly suspicious of Kelley's reading 'because of its determination to make correspondences between poem and treatise a one-to-one operation. This approach assumes that what the poem fails to yield about complex doctrinal matters will be set straight by the theological treatise' (Lieb 2007, 416). The relationship between the treatise and the poem are of little concern to my thesis; rather, these two texts are of interest because they both contain a wealth of examples of Milton's economic understanding of sin and salvation in the late 1650s and early 1660s.¹²³

As we saw in Chapter 2, Herbert used economic imagery to render divine mysteries intelligible to postlapsarian man, and so too the *Christian Doctrine's* reliance on metaphors of debt and repayment manifests Milton's belief that 'God is always described or outlined not as he really is but in such a way that will make him conceivable to us' (CPW 6:133). But before examining the economic soteriology of the tract, it is worthwhile outlining Milton's views on free will which were so crucial to his ideas of sin and salvation.

The influence of William Ames on the *Christian Doctrine* has already been noted in Chapter 1, and just as Ames maintained that 'it is so far off, that the will of God ... doth urge all things with hard necessity' (1642, 34), Milton likewise claims that 'God made no absolute decrees about anything which he left in the power of men, for men have freedom of action' (CPW 6:155). This is more than mere ontological musing; asserting man's free will exculpates God, who has 'not decreed that everything must happen inevitably. Otherwise we should make Him responsible for all the sins ever committed, and should make demons and wicked men blameless' (CPW 6:164-5).

¹²³ The *Christian Doctrine* was brought to its present (albeit unfinished) state by 1660 (Campbell et al. 2007b, 68), and according to Edward Phillips, *Paradise Lost* was written between 1658 and 1663 (Darbishire 1931, 13).

But while free will was central to the Fall, it is even more crucial to redemption, and it is here that we begin to see economic imagery creeping in. In the *Christian Doctrine*, as in *Paradise Lost*, it is clear that

in the love and worship of God, and thus in their own salvation, men should always use their free will. If we do not, whatever worship or love we men offer to God is worthless and of no account. The will which is threatened or overshadowed by any external decree cannot be free, and once force is imposed all esteem for services rendered grows faint and vanishes altogether. (*CPW* 6:189)

For Milton, worship is a ‘service rendered,’ and his belief that mandatory praise is ‘worthless and of no account’ reminds us of Hooker’s God, who ‘cals for ... Good money: will he be payd with counters and shews? No, but currant money of England’ (1644, 25). Freely willed belief is the condition ‘without which the sprinkling of Christ’s blood would have been of no profit’ to ‘believers’ (*CPW* 6:183).

Christ’s redemptive blood can bring profit to believers, and the Fall itself can also be seen in terms of profit and loss. The *Christian Doctrine* maintains that Adam and Eve ‘did not expect for a moment that they would lose anything good by eating the fruit, or that they would be worse off in any way at all’ (*CPW* 6:390), and we will see in *Paradise Lost* that they in fact expected to gain a great deal. But eating the fruit actually came at a heinous cost to themselves and their descendants: ‘both of them committed theft, robbery with violence, murder against their children (i.e., the whole human race); each was sacrilegious and deceitful, cunningly aspiring to divinity although thoroughly unworthy of it, proud and arrogant’ (*CPW* 6:384-5).

Adam and Eve used their free will not to praise God, but to disobey him. To save fallen man from death and God’s wrath, Christ uses his own free will correctly by ‘submitt[ing] himself voluntarily, both in life and in death, to the divine justice, in order to suffer all the things which were necessary for our redemption’ (*CPW* 6:438). As in Preston’s *New Covenant*, where Jesus ‘hath undertaken on our part, to give satisfaction by his death, and likewise to make us obedient to his Father’ (Preston 1629, 84), Milton’s Christ is a ‘mediator’ who ‘offered himself to God the father as a sacrifice for sinners, and has always made, and still continues to make intercessions for us’ (*CPW* 6:418; 433).

The description of Christ’s mediation between God and man then moves from the legalistic to the monetary, with Milton defining the ‘satisfaction’ as when Jesus ‘fully

satisfied divine justice by fulfilling the law and paying the just price on behalf of all men' (CPW 6:443). As so often in Milton's thought, this transaction is not just a payment, but specifically the repayment of a debt at risk of defaulting. Milton glosses 'the just price on behalf of' with reference to a range of biblical texts which describe Christ paying for man with His blood. The citation of 1 Timothy 2:5-6 ('Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all') includes a quotation from the Greek, whereon Milton observes 'the Greek words plainly signify the substitution of one person for another' (CPW 6:444). This aptly describes the system of standing surety on a loan, as in the *Merchant of Venice*, where Antonio first offers his body and then his soul for Bassanio:

I once did lend my body for thy wealth,
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring
Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly. (5.1.263; Bailey 2013, 73)

Such oaths and binding remind us of Hooker's declaration that 'it is a sweet thing that the Lord hath bound himself by Oath to us' (1644, 22), and the usurious allusions are compounded by Milton's citation of Hebrews 7:22, which describes Jesus as 'a surety of a better Testament.' Milton's interest in texts which represent salvation as payment of a debt is not merely due to the fact that usury was Milton's 'own lifelong means of making a living, a source of income more lasting than the salaries he drew as a teacher and then state servant' (von Maltzahn 2008, 72). Relationships of payment were in fact fundamental to Milton's biblical hermeneutics, as he says in the *Christian Doctrine* 'the restoration of man is a matter of desert. It is in this sense that those texts are to be understood which indicate a system of recompense and remuneration' (CPW 6:451).

But this recompense cannot come from man's spiritual coffers, depleted as they are by sin. Although 'our justification is freely given so far as we are concerned, ... it is not free from Christ's point of view' (CPW 6:486). Christ 'paid the price, and imputed our sins to himself' (CPW 6:486), and Milton emphasises that fallen man could not hope for a better deal since 'we receive [Christ's] righteousness, imputed to us, as a gift. We pay nothing for it, we merely have to believe. Thus the Father is appeased, and pronounces all

believers righteous. There could not be a simpler or more equitable method of satisfaction’ (*CPW* 6:486).

While Milton’s economic understanding of soteriology is roughly delineated in the *Christian Doctrine*, the costs and profits of the Incarnation are more fully fleshed out in *Paradise Lost*. Milton gilded his great epic with a wealth of economic imagery, and his debt to Guillaume Du Bartas’s *Divine Weeks* (1584) has long been recognised by critics.¹²⁴ Du Bartas opens the poem with the invocation of his divine muse: ‘Lift up my soul, my drossy spirits refine / With learned art enrich this work of mine.’¹²⁵

The reference to ‘drossy spirits’ prefigures Du Bartas’ and Milton’s emphasis on the correspondence between metallurgical and spiritual processes of refinement, highlighting the homonymic significance of ‘work of mine.’ *Paradise Lost* indeed appears to be a ‘work of mine’ in the frequent characterisation of God as a blacksmith. Belial likens God’s breath to bellows, advising against war on Heaven by asking ‘What if the breath that kindl’d those grim fires / Awak’d should blow them into sevenfold rage / And plunge us in the flames?’ (*PL* 2.170-172). If the devils instead submit to the ‘Omnipotent Decree’ (*PL* 2.198) and remain in Hell, Belial maintains it is possible that

Our Supream Foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps ...
 These raging fires
Will slack’n, if his breath stir not thir flames. (*PL* 2.210-11; 213-14)

It is not only the devils who describe God’s activity in metallurgical terms. For the narrator, the ‘Empyrean Aire’ is God’s ‘tempring’ (*PL* 7.14; 15), while in Raphael’s account of creation, God ‘Then founded, then conglob’d / Like things to like, the rest to several place / Disparted’ (*PL* 7.239-241). ‘Founded’ invokes the image of God working in a foundry, a reading supported by the earth being a ‘conglobed’ drop of metal. Milton’s God becomes, like Du Bartas’s, simultaneously ‘smith, founder, purifier’ (*DW* 2D1W, 968).

¹²⁴ See Charles Dunster, *Considerations on Milton’s Early Reading and the Prima Stamina of his Paradise Lost* (London: John Nicols, 1800) and George Coffin Taylor, *Milton’s Use of Du Bartas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934).

¹²⁵ Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, *The Divine Weeks and Works*, trans. Josuah Sylvester and ed. Susan Snyder (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 1D1W, 5-6, hereafter cited parenthetically as *DW* by day, week, and line number.

But while God is the master smith of creation, Milton lavishes most technical detail on the mining of the devils in Book 1. Close parallels to two sixteenth-century treatises on mining and metallurgy, Vannoccio Biringuccio's *De la pirotechnia* (1540) and Georgius Agricola's *De Re Metallica* (1556), suggest that these texts furnished Milton with technical knowledge of the process of mining and smelting. The connections between the descriptions of the devils' mining and Agricola's treatise have been acknowledged by Alastair Fowler (J. Milton 2007, 103 n.704), and Diane McColley has observed that 'Milton shows some knowledge of mining handbooks' like Gabriel Plattes's *A Discovery of Subterranean Treasure* (1639) (McColley 2007, 48). Milton's use of Biringuccio has so far been overlooked.¹²⁶

By using mining treatises as part of his larger theodical project, Milton follows Francis Bacon's recognition of the overlap between metallurgical and intellectual endeavours: 'we should divide [natural philosophy] into the mine and the furnace: and ... make two professions or occupations of natural philosophers, some to be pioneers and some smiths, some to dig, and some to refine and hammer' (Bacon 1965, 90). While Juliet Cummins reads the early sections of *Paradise Lost* as 'Milton's condemnation of mining' (2007, 169), Milton is in fact the smith to Agricola and Biringuccio's pioneers, refining and hammering their ideas into new, more positive forms.

Paradise Lost's status as a 'work of mine' is hinted at by the opening reference to the abundance of sulphur in Hell (*PL* 1.68-9), which is an element described in *De la pirotechnia* as 'the prime agent of nature in the composition of metals' (Biringuccio 1990, 86). This ubiquity of sulphur leads Milton to advise his reader not to 'admire / that riches grow in Hell; that soyle may best / Deserve the precious bane' (*PL* 1.690-2), and John Gillies finds the descriptions of the mining and construction in Hell 'plausible' because 'the geology of [H]ell is effectively identical with that of [H]eaven and earth' (Gillies 2007, 48). The inhospitality of the 'Plain, forlorn and wilde' (*PL* 1.180) is the reason that it is conducive to mining, as the terrain most likely to yield gold is 'the most rugged mountains that are completely barren of soil, trees, and grasses' (Biringuccio 1990, 29).

The devils soon encounter a

¹²⁶ Vannoccio Biringuccio (1480–c. 1539) was an Italian metallurgist and armament maker whose *Pirotechnia* (1540) 'is the earliest printed work to cover the whole field of metallurgy' (Gnudi 1990, x). In *De re metallica*, Agricola spoke highly of the *Pirotechnia* and described its author as 'a wise man experienced in many matters' (Agricola 1912, xxvi, quoted in Gnudi 1990, xvii). Biringuccio's influence persisted through Milton's time, as in 1675 Robert Hooke consulted the *Pirotechnia* 'for practical information' (Gnudi 1990, xvii).

Hill not far, whose griesly top
 Belch'd fire and rowling smoke; the rest entire
 Shon with a glossie scurff, undoubted sign
 That in his womb was hid metallic Ore. (*PL* 1.670-3)

Analogously, Biringuccio describes mineable mountains being covered 'in place of leaves and blossoms ... [by] fumosities, marcasites with small veins of heavy mineral ... from these things, when they are found, it is possible to make certain inference that such a mountain contains ores, and as the signs are more or less, so are the minerals plentiful and rich or poor' (1990, 13).

The fact that the 'entire' mountain shines with the 'glossie scurff' of marcasite indicates the immense quantity of ore within. The devils' mining party is led by Mammon, the *Faerie Queene's* 'uncouth, salvage, and uncivile wight' (II.vii.3). Spenser's description of Mammon's 'ill favour'd sight' (II.vii.3) is expanded in *Paradise Lost* to create 'one of those several figures in Milton who look and cannot see' (Forsyth 2008, 187). Mammon's fall is no surprise, since this 'mining engineer' has already 'worked in heaven' (Gillies 2007, 48):

Ev'n in heav'n his looks and thoughts
 Were always downward bent, admiring more
 The riches of Heav'ns pavement, trod'n Gold,
 Then aught divine. (*PL* 1.680-3)

Mammon's avarice is backed up by technical knowledge, as the devils follow *De re metallica's* advice to 'hire as many men as one needs, and send them to various works' (Agricola 1912, 25). In a grim foreshadowing of the division of labour which leads to the fall (*PL* 9.214), the 'numerous Brigad' (*PL* 1.675) of devils divide into three groups to carry out the mining and smelting process more efficiently. The first group divert 'veins of liquid fire / Sluc'd from the Lake' to facilitate the 'second multitude[']s' founding of the 'massie Ore' (*PL* 1.701-3). Biringuccio's recommended method of smelting ore is to skim off the slag 'layer by layer ... until the clear metal is reached ... then open the hole of the forehearth and let it run into the ditch that is customarily made near by' (1990, 154). Accordingly, the second group of devils 'scum'd the Bullion dross' (*PL* 1.704) while the

third group of devils ‘had form’d within the ground / A various mould, and from the boyling cells / By strange conveyance fill’d each hollow nook’ (*PL* 1.705-7).

Mammon reminds his audience that Hell ‘wants not her hidden lustre, Gemms and Gold’ (*PL* 2.271), and the diabolical associations of gold set up here indeed appear to support Hoxby’s assertion that economic matters serve a primarily negative function in *Paradise Lost*. But this reading seems less assured when we consider that Milton persistently represents not only sin, but also salvation, in terms of debt, repayment, and profit. Unlike Flaminius in *Timon of Athens*, who hopes that ‘molten coin’ will be Lucullus’ ‘damnation’ (3.1.48), Milton recognises that while gold should not be sought as an end in itself, it can still serve a worthy purpose in his theodicy, as it ‘gilds the virtuous, and lends them wings / to raise their thoughts unto rarest things’ (*DW* 3D1W, 911-12).

In this, Milton follows both Agricola and Biringuccio, whose treatises addressed the ethical issues surrounding mining. In considering the idea that gold and silver are ‘scourges’ because they bring jealousy and ruin for those who own them, Agricola wonders ‘might not anything that we possess be called a scourge?’ (1912, 16). Hamlet maintained that ‘there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so’ (2.2.244-5), and the Tree of Knowledge’s ethical neutrality is the very reason it was used by God, since ‘it was necessary that one thing at least should be either forbidden or commanded, and above all something which was in itself neither good nor evil, so that man’s obedience might in this way be made evident’ (*CPW* 6:351-2). Biringuccio suggests that ‘of all the things created by the most high God ... not one ... has been produced without some particular gift,’ and he urged his reader ‘never to lack the desire to understand everything that may be useful ... you must always give eye and ear to it and must despise nothing nor have fear of any of those things which may harm’ (1990, 33). Milton adopts this attitude when he decides to use metaphors of commerce throughout the poem. While the devils’ metallurgy gives mining and gold its customary negative associations, we also find some of the most important and beneficial events of the poem – such as the creation and atonement – to be reliant on the imagery of monetary transactions.

Man’s relation to God is frequently expressed in economic terms, and this is evident from his very creation, when, Raphael tells Adam, ‘God on thee / Abundantly his gifts hath also pour’d / Inward and outward both’ (*PL* 8.219-221). The hierarchy of allegiance between animal, man, and God is constituted in terms of payment: the animals ‘pay [Adam] fealtie / With low subjection’ (*PL* 8.344-45), just as God asks, without free

will ‘what praise could [man] receive? What pleasure I from such obedience paid’ (*PL* 3.106-7). It might be objected that this is mere homonymy, and Milton means nothing financial by these payments of fealty. But we must remember that during the medieval period, fealty was often literally paid, as ‘in post-Conquest England, ... money payments were permitted in lieu of military service’ (Goodman 1995, 170). Before writing *Paradise Lost* Milton had familiarised himself with English history in preparation for writing the *History of Britain*, so he was aware of the financial dimensions of fealty and used it with this sense in mind in his epic poem. Moreover, the idea of payment in lieu of service aptly describes the trajectory of Adam’s relationship to God, as he is ultimately unable to serve him obediently and therefore must find another way to pay.

While God disapproves of forced obedience, Adam and Eve delight in tendering due praise, as they start each day ‘lowly ... bow’d adoring, and began / Thir Orisons, each Morning duly paid’ (*PL* 5.144-5). For them, the terms of their contract with God are equitable: in exchange for God’s pouring his abundant gifts on them, He requires

From [them] no other service then to keep
This one, this easie charge ...
Not to taste that onely Tree
Of knowledge. (*PL* 4.420-21; 423-4)

For the fallen devils, such praise is far from an ‘easie charge.’ While ‘in Heav’n’ it would have been their ‘delight’ to shower their ‘envied Sovran’ with ‘servile offerings,’ now ‘Eternity so spent in worship paid / To whom [they] hate’ would be ‘wearisom’ (*PL* 2.244-249). Rather than repaying God, they prefer independence, and this independence is articulated in economic terms as they wish to live ‘free, and to none accountable’ (*PL* 2.255). For Mammon, this is feasible due to Hell’s mineral wealth. Hell is quite capable of mimicking Heaven’s light, since

this Desart soile
Wants not her hidden lustre, Gemms and Gold;
Nor want we skill or Art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heav’n shew more? (*PL* 2.270-3)

In Heaven, Satan saw rebellion as a way to raise himself to magnificence, a means for this ‘desperate debtor’ (Greteman 2013, 151) to escape what he owed God:

I sdeind subjection, and thought one step higher
 Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
 The debt immense of endless gratitude,
 So burthensome, still paying, still to ow; (*PL* 4.50-53)

If true, this is certainly ‘an awesome obligation so impossible to fulfil that failure is inevitable’ (Schwartz 1993, 68). But Satan swiftly admits that he has misrepresented the debt,

Forgetful what from [God] I still receivd,
 And understood not that a grateful mind
 By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
 Indebted and dischargd; what burden then? (*PL* 4.54-57)

Commenting on this passage, Hawkes has rightly observed that Satan ‘imagined his relationship to the deity in quantitative terms ... and this led him to imagine gratitude as a compound interest, a never-ending, always increasing burden exacted on a regular temporal basis’ (2011, 517). This much is true, but Hawkes is wrong to say that ‘Satan refuses to pay his debt because he fails to understand it. He thinks usury is unfair because he misconceives it’ (2011, 517). Satan had *previously* misconceived divine usury, but Hawkes’s use of the present tense suggests that Satan *still* misunderstands the arrangement. Lines 54-57 above demonstrate that Satan in fact has a new understanding, and this is corroborated by earlier lines which Hawkes omits from his quotation:

Me, whom he created what I was
 In that bright eminence, and with his good
 Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
 What could be less then to afford him praise,
 The easiest recompence, and pay him thanks,
 How due! (*PL* 4.43-48)

Instead of paying God his ‘due,’ Satan ‘Warr[ed] in Heav’n against Heav’ns matchless King,’ and he ruefully exclaims ‘Ah wherefore! He deservd no such return / From me’ (*PL* 4.41-43). These are not the words of one who persists in ‘think[ing] usury unfair’ (Hawkes 2011, 517), for if Satan still thought the arrangement unfair he would hardly call praise ‘the easiest recompence’ and consider thanks ‘due.’

Satan is acutely aware of how he reneged on his due payment of thanks to God, and so the only means of repentance is ‘submission; and that word / *Disdain* forbids [him], and [his] dread of shame / Among the spirits beneath’ (*PL* 4.81-83). Nevertheless, he persists in understanding both sin and redemption in monetary terms, as he fears that if he ‘repented and then ‘soon unsa[id] / What feign’d submission swore,’ the resulting ‘worse relapse / And heavier fall’ would ‘purchase deare / Short intermission bought with double smart’ (*PL* 4.95-6; 100-102). Instead, since Satan believes man to have been made to ‘spite’ the fallen angels, he concludes ‘spite then with spite is best repaid’ (*PL* 9.177-178).

The misunderstanding of divine usury which leads to Satan’s fall is replicated in his seduction of Eve, where he insists that God is nothing more than a swindler:

The Gods are first, and that advantage use
 On our belief, that all from them proceeds;
 I question it, for this fair Earth I see,
 Warm’d by the Sun, producing every kind,
 Them nothing. (*PL* 9.718-22)

By this stage, Satan is well aware of the actual nature of the usurious relationship between man and God, but he wilfully misrepresents it to Eve by depicting God as an unscrupulous usurer who exacts the payment of praise on false grounds.

Having implied that Eve is getting ‘nothing’ in return for her payments of praise to a barren God, Satan then proceeds to offer an alternative arrangement. He begins by telling Eve that he has lost nothing by eating the fruit:

Doe not believe
 Those rigid threats of Death; ye shall not Die:
 How should ye? by the Fruit? It gives you Life
 To Knowledge. By the Threatner? Look on mee,
 Mee who have touch’d and tasted, yet ... live. (*PL* 9.684-688)

But merely insisting that Eve ‘shall not Die,’ will hardly be enough to tempt her; Satan must also convince her that there is much to be gained from eating the fruit. Accordingly, he enumerates the profits ripe for the taking: ‘your Eyes ... shall perfectly be then / Op’nd and cleerd, and ye shall be as Gods’ (*PL* 9.706-708). The serpent’s promises of profit seem more credible since they are of a specific and proportionate amount, with consumption of the fruit offering a determinate movement up the great chain of being: ‘that ye should be as Gods, since I as Man, / Internal Man, is but proportion meet, / I of brute human, yee of human Gods’ (*PL* 9.710-712).

This emphasis on ‘proportion meet’ normalises the consumption of the fruit for Eve, as Eden is a place where she and Adam ‘took only what they needed and knew no greed or want’ (Stoll 2008, 243). She had earlier described to the serpent how the ‘abundance’ of fruit-bearing trees in Eden

leaves a greater store of Fruit untoucht,
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to thir provision, and more hands
Help to disburden Nature of her Bearth. (*PL* 9.621-624)

As well as recalling Comus’ warning that ‘a pet of temperance’ would leave the earth ‘surcharg’d of her own weight, / and strangl’d with her waste fertility’ (ll.728-729), this also anticipates Adam Smith’s objection to the stockpiling of bullion since it would be like attempting to

increase the good cheer of private families, by obliging them to keep an unnecessary number of kitchen utensils ... [because] it would be absurd to have more pots and pans than were necessary for cooking the victuals usually consumed ... [and] if the quantity of victuals were to increase, the number of pots and pans would readily increase along with it, a part of the increased quantity of victuals being employed in purchasing them, or in maintaining an additional number of workmen whose business it was to make them. (1976, 439–440)

After Eve’s fall, Adam’s musings on the fruit turn first to proportion, as the serpent ‘gains to live as Man / Higher degree of Life,’ which is an ‘inducement strong / To us, as likely

tasting to attain / Proportional ascent, which cannot be / But to be Gods, or Angels Demi-gods' (PL 9.933-937). The symmetry between Satan's seduction of Eve and her seduction of Adam is reinforced when she speaks like the serpent:

I

Have also tasted, and have also found
 Th' effects to correspond, opener mine Eyes,
 Dimm erst, dilated Spirits, ampler Heart,
 And growing up to Godhead ...
 On my experience, *Adam*, freely taste. (PL 9.873-877; 988)

At the moment of Adam's fall, Milton suggests that Adam and Eve will receive an unexpected return on their investment with a dry aside that 'in recompence (for such compliance bad / Such recompence best merits) from the bough / She gave him of that fair enticing Fruit' (PL 9.994-996). Satan perverts Eve's fealty from God to nature and thus leads her to 'worship a vegetable' (Lewis 1960, 126), and Adam's loyalty deviates in turn to Eve, to whom he declares 'I the praise / Yeild thee, so well this day thou hast purvey'd' (PL 9.1020-1021). Both have been cheated by the serpent, but Adam is particularly angered by the return of his investment in Eve:

O *Eve*, in evil hour thou didst give eare
 To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
 To counterfeit Mans voice, true in our Fall,
 False in our promis'd Rising; since our Eyes
 Op'nd we find indeed, and find we know
 Both Good and Evil, Good lost, and Evil got ...
 Is this the Love, is this the recompence,
 Of mine to thee, ingrateful *Eve*[?] (PL 9.1067-1072; 1163-4)

Promised profit turns to loss, and, were it not for Jesus' intercession, would remain that way. The Son asks God

should Man finally be lost, should Man
 Thy creature late so lov'd, thy youngest Son
 Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joynd

With his own folly? That be from thee farr. (*PL* 3.150-153)

But while Satan ‘question[ed]’ the justice of divine usury, God is adamant that sin demands a ‘rigid satisfaction’ for man:

He with his whole posteritie must dye,
 Dye hee or justice must; unless for him
 Som other able, and as willing, pay
 The rigid satisfaction, death for death. (*PL* 3.209-212)

Jonathan Sheehan argues that God here ‘clearly wants to exit from the dilemma his own justice caused: he wants some way to relax the strictures of the law’ (2011, 73), but this idea of a God who decrees himself into an impotent corner is problematic. Elliott Visconsi’s reading is more convincing, as he sees God as ‘not overly rigorous.’ Rather, ‘absolute ... justice cannot exist if crimes go unpunished. Since justice flows from the fact of a voluntarist universe, the death sentence is cast as the necessary or inevitable consequence of creaturely liberty rather than as excessive divine rigour’ (2008, 102).

In his fallen state, man on his own can only repay sin with his death: ‘once dead in sins and lost; / Atonement for himself or offering meet, / Indebted and undon, hath none to bring’ (*PL* 3.233-235). Yet as Paul reminds Timothy, there is ‘one Mediatour betweene God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave himself a ransome for all’ (1 Tim. 2:5), and so the Son declares ‘Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life / I offer, on mee let thine anger fall; / Account mee man’ (*PL* 3.236-238).

Leah Whittington describes the Son here as ‘emerg[ing] out of the silence to take on the burden of raising the collective fortune’ (2010, 588), which is an apt choice of words; in asking to be ‘account[ed] man’ the Son stands surety for man’s debt in order to avoid the latter’s spiritual bankruptcy. This idea of legal intercession is developed later when, on hearing Adam and Eve’s repentant prayers in Book 11, the Son declares he will become their

Advocate
 And propitiation, all [their] works on mee
 Good or not good ingraft, my Merit those

Shall perfet, and for these my Death shall pay. (*PL* 11.33-36)¹²⁷

Postlapsarian man does rather well from the soteriological deal, but the Son's side of the bargain is ultimately decidedly equitable too. Man must be 'ransomed with [Christ's] own dear life,' thereby 'to redeeme, / So dearly to redeem what Hellish hate / So easily destroy'd' (*PL* 3.297; 299-301). The repetition of 'redeeme' reminds us of its resonant etymology. The Son's task is unenviable, not least because it involves leaving his position 'Thron'd in highest bliss / Equal to God, and equally enjoying / God-like fruition' (*PL* 3.305-307).

But thirty-three years are nothing compared to eternity, and the rewards for the Son's agreeing to incarnation and death are considerable. After his death, Christ will be 'anointed universal King' and will 'assume [His] Merits' by receiving 'all Power' from God (*PL* 3.317; 318-19; 317). Soon 'all knees to [Him] shall bow; of them that bide / In Heaven, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell' (*PL* 3.321-22), and His ego will also be amply compensated:

I heard the voyce of many Angels, round about the Throne, and the beasts and the Elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a lowd voice, Worthy is the Lambe that was slaine, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. (Rev. 5:11)

Milton makes it clear that while the Son paid man's debt at a cost to Himself, His incarnation involves only a relatively momentary deprivation of God's glory. The Son also recognises the transient nature of his task:

though now to Death I yield, and am his due
 All that of me can die, yet that debt paid,
 Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
 His prey, nor suffer my unspotted Soule
 For ever with corruption there to dwell;
 But I shall rise Victorious, and subdue

¹²⁷ For an illuminating discussion of Milton's legal and usurious dealings, see John T. Shawcross, *The Development of Milton's Thought: Law, Government, and Religion* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008), pp.25-48.

My vanquisher, spoild of his vaunted spoil. (*PL* 3.245-251)

The Son must pay man's 'due,' but He knows that ultimately He will have first Death's 'spoil,' and then His own numerous rewards on His return to Heaven. Apparent loss is thus transformed into immense gain, and Milton here follows Mun, who maintains that 'if we only behold the actions of the husbandman in the seed-time when we casteth away much good corn into the ground, we will rather accompt him a mad man than a husbandman: but when we consider his labours in the harvest which is the end of his endeavours, we find the worth and plentiful encrease of his actions' (1664, 50).

The long view is both literal and metaphorical in Adam's vision from the 'top / Of Speculation' (*PL* 12.588-9). Hoxby has noted that when Milton wrote, 'the word *speculation* was just taking on its economic meanings as prospective investment: the *OED*'s first recorded use in that sense is by John Evelyn in 1666' (2002, 169), but Milton often used it in a theological sense, as when he warns in the *Christian Doctrine* against moving 'outside the written authority of scripture, into vague subtleties of speculation' (*CPW* 6:134). The natural philosopher Henry Power's *Experimental Philosophy* (1664) described 'Speculators' as short-sighted, since they 'onely gaz'd at the visible effects and last Resultances of things, [and] understood no more of Nature, than a rude Countrey-fellow does of the Internal Fabrick of a Watch, that onely sees the Index and Horary Circle, and perchance hears the Clock and Alarum strike in it' (1664, 193).

Adam and Michael's responses to each of the vignettes seen from Speculation are initially disparate, with Adam being a speculator in Power's mould, his reactions characterised by immediacy and superficiality. Conversely, Michael follows Mun as he takes – and gradually brings Adam round to – the long view.

After seeing Cain murder Abel, Adam exclaims 'O Teacher, some great mischief hath befall'n / To that meek man, who well had sacrific'd; / Is Pietie thus and pure Devotion paid?' (*PL* 11.450-453). Adam's concerns are articulated in financial terms, as he worries that Abel's expenditures of 'Pietie' and 'Devotion' have not been appropriately recompensed. Michael responds in kind that there will indeed be a return on Abel's spiritual investment, as 'the bloodie Fact / Will be aveng'd, and [Abel's] Faith approv'd / Loose no reward, though here thou see him die' (*PL* 11.457-459). But while David Ainsworth argues that Abel's death and the subsequent description of the Lazar-house 'gives the reader every reason to forget that ... Christ's death will provide hope and salvation to humanity' (Ainsworth 2008, 106), Abel in fact becomes a forerunner of Christ

when Michael emphasises that a death ‘rowing in dust and gore’ (*PL* 11.460) is no impediment to – indeed, is a necessary condition for –the recouping of a spiritual investment.

Despite Michael’s reassurances, Adam continues to lament over ‘miserable Mankind’ (*PL* 11.500). As Jason Kerr has noted (2013, 15), Adam reconsiders his earlier arguments against suicide and in favour of childbearing (*PL* 10.1016-1025; 1050-1053), now becoming like Satan in his declaration that the terms of man’s agreement with God are unjust:

Why is life giv’n
To be thus wrested from us? rather why
Obtruded on us thus? who if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offer’d, or soon beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismiss in peace. (*PL* 11.502-507)

But Michael explains that the arrangement is not as unjust as it seems at first. Life need not be ‘wrested,’ since ‘if thou well observe / The rule of not too much, by temperance taught, ... So maist thou live, till like ripe Fruit thou drop / Into thy Mothers lap’ (*PL* 11.530-1; 535-6), and in response Adam begins to adopt a more teleological view, as he declares ‘henceforth I flie not Death, nor would prolong / Life much’ (*PL* 11.547-8).

In Book 4 the command not to eat the fruit and thereby stay alive was an ‘easie charge’ (*PL* 4.420) but now Adam sees life as quite the opposite, as he is ‘bent rather how [he] may be quit / Fairest and easiest of this combrous charge’ (*PL* 11.548-9). So far, so Satanic, as we cannot but be reminded here of Satan’s desire to ‘quit / the debt immense of endless gratitude, / So burthensome’ (*PL* 4.51-53). Patience was not one of Satan’s virtues, but Adam is content with a long-term arrangement and happy to render unto God far in the future the life that was given to him. The charge may be ‘combrous,’ but he will nevertheless keep it until his ‘appointed day / Of rendring up, and patiently attend / My dissolution’ (*PL* 11.550-551).

But while Adam is making progress towards angelic understanding, it is clear that he still has a tendency to be like Power’s speculator, easily swayed by appearances. The vision of the discovery of metals, where ‘liquid Ore’ is ‘dreind / Into fit moulds prepar’d’ (*PL* 11.570-571) appears impressive, but this is undercut by its evocation of the devils’ mining earlier in the poem. Similarly, after seeing ‘a Beavie of fair Women, richly gay / In

Gems and wanton dress' singing 'soft amorous Ditties,' Adam tells Michael with delight 'much better seems this Vision, and more hope / Of peaceful dayes portends, then those two past' (*PL* 11.582-3; 584; 599-600).

But again, Michael must remind him to 'judg not what is best / By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet.' While they seem 'Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,' Milton warns us, with characteristic misogyny, 'yet [they are] empty of all good wherein consists / Womans domestic honour and chief praise' (*PL* 11.603-4; 615-617). Stanley Fish interprets Michael's injunction as being to 'look deeper for the significance of anything said or done, look to the relationship between actions, words and even thoughts, and the imperative, always in force, first to discern, and then to do God's will' (2012, 7), and this aptly describes the function of economic imagery in *Paradise Lost*: although gold is often associated with Satan, we should not blithely assume that its connections are invariably negative. We see that it also serves a positive purpose, with Milton continually calling on it to help him reveal 'God's will.'

At the end of Book 11, the vision of Noah allows Adam to understand that loss should not be mourned if it allows a greater good to emerge. God transformed loss into profit when he created man to remedy the loss of the fallen angels:

Least [Satan's] heart exalt him in the harme
 Already done, to have dispeopl'd Heav'n
 My damage fondly deemed, I can repaire
 That detriment, if such it be to lose
 Self-lost, and in a moment will create
 Another World, out of one man a Race
 Of men innumerable. (*PL* 7.150-156)¹²⁸

Long-distance trade operates according to a cyclical dynamic of expense and profit, and so too does creation in *Paradise Lost*. The angels were created, then some were lost, leading God to create man. Man was created and fell, leading ultimately to the Son's incarnation, and the corruption of antediluvian man led God to 'set open ... all the Cataracts / Of Heav'n,' but to follow with 'a Covenant never to destroy / The Earth again by flood' (*PL*

¹²⁸ Satan himself wonders in Book 2 if God created man 'to supply / Perhaps our vacant room' (*PL* 2.834-5) and does so again in Book 9:

To repaire his numbers thus impair'd, ...
 Or to spite us more,
 [God] determin'd to advance into our room
 A Creature form'd of Earth. (*PL* 9.144; 147-149)

11.825; 824; 892-3). In an apt parallel, the created speaks like the creator in Adam's assessment of the Flood:

Farr less I now lament for one whole World
 Of wicked Sons destroyd, then I rejoyce
 For one Man found so perfet and so just,
 That God voutsafes to raise another World
 From him, and all his anger to forget. (*PL* 11.874-878)

The economic ideas evoked here are made more explicit in Book 12, where Christ's atonement, as in the *Christian Doctrine*, is represented as the repayment of a debt. As we saw in Chapter 1, John Preston believed that man was unable to keep the Mosaic Law 'not because there is any imperfection in the Law,' but rather due to 'the weaknesse of the flesh' (1629, 74). Milton goes further, fully 'separat[ing] the Gospel with its promise from the Law, whose stipulations are for Israelites alone, and whose discipline he dismisses as slavish and childish' (D. N. C. Wood 2001, xviii). Michael explains that the 'Law was given [to men] to evince / Thir natural pravitie, by stirring up / Sin against Law to fight' (*PL* 12.287-289), but God did this not from malice, but so man could understand that his own payments to God were not substantial enough to satisfy the agreement.

Man's spiritual coffers are too meagre to meet the repayments required for sin and the 'bloud of Bulls and Goats' (*PL* 12.292) will not satisfy. What is needed instead is the blood of the Lamb:

Some bloud more precious must be paid for Man,
 Just for unjust, that in such righteousness
 To them by Faith imputed, they may finde
 Justification towards God, and peace
 Of Conscience. (*PL* 12.293-297)

Adam now shows signs of moving towards an economic understanding of redemption, as he delights to think 'needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise / Expect with mortal paine' (*PL* 12.383). The primary meaning of 'capital' here is rooted in its Latin etymology, but Milton's learned readers would also have been familiar with its economic meaning. The first instance of the word being used in the latter sense is in Randle Cotgrave's

Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues (1611), where it is defined as ‘wealth, worth; a stocke, a man’s principall, or chiefe substance’ (1611, 78).¹²⁹

Michael reinforces this economic reading by explaining the mechanism of the atonement. It is not, as Adam supposes (*PL* 12.384-5), a literal fight, but instead Christ’s agreeing to ‘pay a debt’ (Nuttall 1998, 165) that man cannot afford alone. Milton’s commitment to an economic soteriology is nowhere more evident than in his decision to represent the atonement, the linchpin of his entire theodicy, as the repayment of a debt:

Thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying *Satan*, but his works
In thee and thy Seed: nor can this be,
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the Law of God, impos’d
On penaltie of death, and suffering death,
The penaltie to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
So onely can high Justice rest appaid. (*PL* 12.393-401)

Stella Revard has noted the circularity of the way ‘the second Adam pays the penalty for the sins of Adam and Eve’ (2005, 100), and this is echoed by Eve’s recognition that ‘though all by mee is lost, / Such favour I unworthy am voutsaft, / By mee the Promis’d Seed shall all restore’ (*PL* 12.621-623). This understanding of the long view, the recognition that loss can be transformed into gain, is, for Milton’s economic soteriology, ‘the summe / Of wisdom’ (*PL* 12.575-576).

This economic soteriology underpins both the *Christian Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost*. When reading the *Christian Doctrine* we are reminded of the earlier English covenant theologians discussed in Chapter 1, who wrote with one hand on the Bible and the other on their ledgers. Milton certainly saw man’s relationship with God through mercantile eyes, with man’s love of God becoming a ‘service rendered’ which is worthless if not freely given. The *Christian Doctrine* outlines the price of redemption; to escape his debt to God, fallen man must be contrite and repentant, and if these conditions are met, Jesus can intercede on his behalf and pay the debt.

¹²⁹ We can assume its use in this sense predates the *Dictionarie*, for it must have already been in use to be worthy of inclusion. The idea of capital itself – then referred to as ‘stock’ – had arrived in England from Europe in the sixteenth century (Boldizzoni 2008, 12).

These ideas are developed more fully in *Paradise Lost*, where Milton's attitudes to economic ideas are more complex than have been hitherto supposed by critics. There are certainly negative aspects to the economic imagery of the poem, but these have been rather overemphasised by Hoxby. A more attentive reading of *Paradise Lost* reveals that Milton relies on the language of debt, investment, and profit to expound his soteriology. Milton adopts the rhetoric of economic thinkers such as Mun and Misselden to bring the reader, with Adam, to prioritise final results over intermediate losses. Moreover, by presenting man as in thrall to his own appetites and reliant on external intervention for salvation, Milton sets the stage for his next published work, the *History of Britain*.

Chapter 6

‘As Wine and Oyl are Imported to us from abroad: so must ripe Understanding, and many civil Vertues’: The Fallen State in the *History of Britain*

It is no longer a matter of preserving nations, but of producing the strongest possible mixed European race.

Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* (2004, 229)

Jonathan Israel has identified 1647-1672, which almost exactly matches the period of composition of the *History of Britain*, as a time when the English ‘were concerned as a matter of great urgency with the problem of Dutch economic superiority, and which sought England’s economic salvation in a wide-ranging protectionist system’ (1997, 308). But the Navigation Act of 1651 proved difficult to enforce, a problem exacerbated by the lax quality controls in the domestic production of English goods. In 1652, Benjamin Worsley lamented the ‘carelessness of this nation, in keeping our manufactures to their due contents, weight and goodness,’ and he claimed the contrast between Dutch diligence and English negligence was ‘the cause of the so great thriving of our neighbour’s cloathing, and of the so great ruine and decaie (on the contrarie) of our own’ (1652, 9). A number of English political and economic tracts written during the 1650s and 1660s adopt a similar position to Worsley, with xenophobic mistrust of the Dutch gradually giving way to a grudging admiration and a desire to emulate.¹³⁰ We see this attitude at points in the *Readie and Easie Way*¹³¹ and it is crucial to the narrative trajectory of the *History of Britain*. This chapter will begin by examining a number of economic tracts of the 1650s and 1660s, showing how there was a clamour for the nation to be more accommodating to foreigners in light of the improvement of domestic institutions they could facilitate. I will then demonstrate how the *History* sees Milton coming to the same conclusions; he reconfigures soteriology in national terms to depict a nation, mired in corruption, covetousness, and cowardice, who must look beyond their borders for salvation.

¹³⁰ A representative example is Thomas Violet’s *The Advancement of Merchandize or, Certain Propositions for the Improvment of the Trade of this Common-wealth* (1651), which called for England to be more accommodating of ‘merchant strangers’ because Amsterdam and Genoa had achieved economic success by treating foreigners with ‘equal privileges with their own natives’ (1651, 2–3).

¹³¹ Milton urges the English to ‘look to our neighbours the United Provinces, to us inferior in all outward advantages; who not withstanding, in the midst of greater difficulties, courageously, wisely, constantly went through the same work, and are settled in all the happie enjoyments of a potent and flourishing republic to this day’ (CPW 7:423).

The tension between mistrust and admiration of the Dutch is embodied by George Downing, one of the most important economic figures of the Restoration. He inhabited the liminal space between patriotism and pragmatism, as ‘though he hated the Dutch, he recognised quite frankly their merits and was not to be deluded or, apparently, even bribed into supporting economic patriotism where the facts did not warrant it’ (Wilson 1957, 101).

This attitude is apparent in the time Downing spent in the United Provinces as an envoy in the 1650s, where he established a network of spies and studied Dutch economic and financial practices. He attributed Dutch trading success to their high excise and low customs, which was the inverse of the English system at the time. His time in the United Provinces proved crucial, as it was ‘his situation outside the country [which] exposed him to the European perspective upon English fiscal and military weakness’ (Scott 2003, 337). Accordingly, in a letter to John Thurloe in 1659 he advised ‘not to spend your time about vaine questions and janglings which profit not’, but that ‘the playne truth is, if you will be able to pay taxes, you must lower your customs very greatly, and raise it by way of excise’ (Clark 1992, 3:177-8).

Shortly before the Restoration, Downing wrote to Charles II to excuse his service of the Protectorate, claiming he had ‘sucked in principles that since his reason had made him see were erroneous’ (Carte 1759, 1:319). He was knighted upon the Restoration, and was reassigned to The Hague to fulfil a similar service as before. While Downing’s service of both the Protectorate and the Restored monarchy was not unusual among his peers, his disdain for loyalty was demonstrated by his engineering of the arrest in Holland of three regicides, Miles Corbet, John Barkstead, and John Okey, the latter of whom was Downing’s former commander and sponsor. In the entry covering this event, Pepys concisely summarises the general sentiment in his description of how ‘all the world takes notice of [Downing] for a most ungrateful villain for his pains’ (Pepys 1971, 3: 17 March 1662). Indeed, Downing’s infamy spread much further afield, as in New England ‘it became a proverbial expression, to say of a false man who betrayed his trust, that he was an arrant George Downing’ (Hutchinson 1936, 97). While Downing may have taken the disregard of ideological loyalty to a rather unpalatable extreme, nevertheless his ‘lasting contribution to England's economic destiny was that he brought to bear his observation of Dutch economic practice on English economic theory and policy’ (Wilson 1957, 95)

Downing's views swiftly gained currency in England, and it became clear that a crucial factor in the economic success of the Dutch, a mystery which had eluded English economic thinkers for so long, was the greater freedoms granted by the States. Soon even Josiah Child, one of the founders of the East Africa Company and the largest stockholder in the East India Company, attributed Dutch trading superiority to 'their toleration of different opinions in matters of religion: by reason whereof many industrious people of other countreys, that dissent from the established churches of their own government, resort to them with their families and estates, and after a few years cohabitation with them, become of the same common interest' (Child 1668, 5).

These dynamics of trade are crucial to Milton's historiographical approach. The essential function of trade is to allow a nation to address its deficiencies by ridding itself of superfluities. Milton adopts a similar methodology regarding his sources in the *History*, taking what is required and discarding whatever is unnecessary. Wherever possible, he avoids embellished historical accounts, and when he has no alternative but to include them, he does so with the caveat of scepticism. Nevertheless, he feels that even dubious sources have their value, as they may in time be shown to possess some truth, or at least provide inspiration for future writers (*CPW* 5.1:3). This willingness to engage with sources usually viewed in a negative light reflects the willingness of English economic thinkers of the Restoration to draw on Dutch ideas.

Such contrast is also present in the disparate nature of the sources used in the *History*, where accounts of the purported mythological origins of the Britons sit alongside vicious excoriations of a failed nation. While this may seem inconsistent, it is apt that a national history which oscillates between invasion and assimilation should juxtapose historiographical styles in the creation of an overarching narrative.

The different facets of Milton's historiography can be elucidated by exploring his historiographical precedents, the most important of which is Gildas' *De excidio et conquestu britanniae*. Gildas is the historian with whom Milton feels most affinity, and *De excidio* was utilised by figures from all points of the political, religious, and historiographical spectrum.

In *Britannia* (1586), William Camden adopts a historiographical approach which is concerned above all with accurate sources and material evidence. One might, therefore, expect Camden to have little use for Gildas' *De excidio*, a text which is 'in no way a history, nor written with any object a historian may have ... it is a message or a sermon ...

containing historical portions ... [which] are coloured by their author's main purport as a Christian moralist' (Williams 1875, v-vi). The overtly rhetorical function of *De excidio* jars with Camden's distaste for editorialised histories. Yet, in his pursuit of sources as contemporary as possible to the events they report, he has no choice but to cite Gildas 'who then lived and was an eie witnesse' (Camden 1634, 113), just as Milton's desire to treat prehistoric Britain in the *History* forced him to 'bestow the telling over ev'n of these reputed Tales' (*CPW* 5.1:3).

Despite Gildas' evident bias, Camden maintains that *De excidio* still possesses value. He recognised that historiography which is contemporary to the events it reports will inevitably be coloured by those events, and he consequently urges his reader 'let us not be offended and displeased with good Gildas, for his bitter invectives against either the vices of his owne countrey-men the Britans, or the inhumane outrages of the barbarous enemies, or the insatiable crueltie of our fore-fathers the Saxons' (Camden 1634, 110). This anticipates Milton's similar plea in the *History* that 'oft-times relations, heretofore accounted fabulous, have been afterwards found to contain in them many footsteps and reliques of something true' (*CPW* 5.1:3).

Gildas' influence on Camden extends to their shared use of *paralepsis*, a rhetorical technique which Joannes Susenbrotus defines as 'when we pass over something, not to know it or not to wish to say it when it is something we wish above all to say' (Sonnino 1968, 135). In his discussion of the paganism of the early Britons, Gildas claimed 'I shall not name the mountains and hills, and rivers, once so pernicious ... on which ... a blind people heaped divine honours' (Gildas 2002, 18), just as Camden maintained 'neither will I speake of [the Britons'] ancient religion, which is not verily to be counted religion, but a most lamentable and confused chaos of superstitions ... when Satan had drowned the true doctrine in thicke mists of darkenesse' (Camden 1634, 31). He goes on to comment that 'the ugly spectres of Britaine (saith that Gildas) were meere diabolicall, exceeding well neere in number those of Egypt' (Camden 1634, 31).

Gildas was also utilised in the religious debates of the period. John Bramhall may broadly be characterised as an Anglican apologist, and he drew on Gildas and Bede to defend the national faith against its opponents, emphasising that 'if Gildas or Bede have spoken any thing to the prejudice of the Britons, it was not intended against the whole nation but against particular persons' (Bramhall 1658, 317). Bramhall's polemical defences of Anglicanism are heavily reliant on appeals to the past and he was firmly opposed to the

notion that anything substantially new had been introduced into the Church of England. Rather, he stressed the continuity of the character of the Church, which he argued was subject to a continual process of improvement through the removal of negative superfluity: ‘the Church of England before the Reformation and the Church of England after the Reformation are as much the same church as a garden before it is weeded and after it is weeded is the same garden’ (Bramhall 1842, 1:113). This has something in common with Milton’s view of national identity in the *History*, where the invasions that are perceived as catastrophic ruptures – as the Reformation was by Catholics – in fact gradually refine the national character, stripping away the aboriginal accretions of vice.

Bramhall’s discussion of the negative assessments of the Britons groups together ‘venerable Bede, and Gildas, and Fox in his *Acts and Monuments*, [who] brand the Britons for wicked men, making them as good as atheists’ (Bramhall 1658, 317). This association of Bede and Gildas with Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* invokes martyrdom, and indeed, Gildas suggests that God responded to the persecution of Christians by ‘sav[ing] Britain being plunged deep into the thick darkness of black night; for he lit for us the brilliant lamps of holy martyrs’ (Gildas 2002, 19). While one would expect a monk to be outraged by Christian executions, Gildas takes the teleological view that the martyrs’ deaths had ‘the greatest effect in instilling the blaze of divine charity in the minds of beholders’ (Gildas 2002, 19). Similarly, Foxe’s aim in *Acts and Monuments* was to detail the sufferings of Protestant martyrs in order to demonstrate that the Reformation was an act of theological purification, not innovation.

Gildas was even pressed into the service of mythologizing histories, to which he was emphatically opposed. In 1676, *Britannia antiqua illustrata, or, The antiquities of ancient Britain derived from the Phoenicians* was putatively written and published by Aylett Sammes. His authorship was questioned by contemporaries, who were suspicious of this ‘impertinent, girning and pedantical coxcomb’ that could not ‘give any account of authors that are quoted in the said *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata*’ (Wood 1813, 2:363). While Sammes follows in the mythologising historiographical tradition of ascribing to the Britons venerable classical origins, he does so in an unusual fashion. Rather than the traditional identification with Brutus, the *Britannia antiqua illustrata* proposes that Britain was originally settled by Phoenicians.

Sammes’s historiographical approach is quite at odds with Camden’s focus on contemporary evidence or Milton’s concern for the accuracy of his sources. He recognises

the esteem in which Camden was held, and that ‘by some it is thought a piece of weakness only to dissent from him; however it be, I have chose rather to follow that which seems to the best of my judgment to be truth’ (Sammes 1676, iv). Yet, Sammes is aware that his conception of truth may not accord with that of his audience, and he excuses himself thus: ‘in this intricate and obscure study of antiquity, it is thought praise-worthy somewhat to erre; and remember we should withal, that such things as at the first sight being slightly thought upon are deemed false, after a better review, and further consideration, oftentimes seem true’ (Sammes 1676, iv).

While taking a different approach from Camden, Sammes does not wish that ‘the credit of so fair an hypothesis should depend upon so weak an authority [i.e. his own]’ (Sammes 1676, 4). Instead, he draws on *Geographia Sacra* (1646), a text written by ‘Bochartus, a learned Frenchman in this last age’ which claimed to detail the journeys of the Phoenicians (Sammes 1676, 5). Although his thesis begins on rather shaky ground, Sammes intriguingly emphasises the centrality of economic factors to his argument. Beginning from John Leland’s suggestion that the ‘main body of ... the British and Welch language ... consisteth of Hebrew and Greek words’, Sammes wonders

How it should come to pass that the ancient Britains could have any commerce with the Jews, who where never known to send out colonies, and of all people in the world were most fond of their own country; certainly I concluded, this could proceed from no other root but the commerce of the Phoenicians with this nation, who using the same language with the children of Israel in Canaan, even in those primitive times were great traders and skilful mariners, and sent out their colonies through the world. (Sammes 1676, iv)

Sammes goes on to suggest that the Phoenicians implemented a primitive form of monopolistic legislation, as they ‘studiously concealed this treasure [Britain] from the world, being exceeding jealous, lest the source and head of their trade being discovered, the busie Graecians might put in for sharers ... by a publick edict of those states, care was taken to prevent it’ (1676, 2). Sadly, this intriguing starting point comes to nothing as he goes on to base his argument on a number of spurious etymological derivations rather than supplying any concrete evidence for his claims. Sammes’s discussion of the gods of the ancient Britons is rife with false etymologies, and he attempts to legitimise his argument by emphasising ‘that these sorts of ridiculous spectres were worshipped in Britain, I have

shewn out of Gildas' (Sammes 1676, 138). He goes on to discuss the 'names, originals, and offices [and] from what country [these gods] were derived ... by which circumstances it will more evidently appear the great confinity and alliance once made between these nations' (Sammes 1676, 125).

When discussing the corruption of the Saxon clergy later in the text, Sammes mentions that his source is 'Gildas himself,' crucially, 'as it is most elegantly translated by Mr. Milton' (Sammes 476). Thus, we see that Sammes was familiar with Milton's use of Gildas in the *History*. One of the central themes of the *History* is the native assimilation of practices and ideologies imported by economically motivated invaders. While the specifics of Sammes's argument are spurious, it is interesting to note that the fundamental structure of his thesis – that Britain is a product of the economically motivated colonisation in the past – bears a remarkable similarity to that traced in the *History* six years earlier.

It is clear, then, that Gildas was a crucial source for diverse types of intellectual endeavour in this period, and was used to imbue any argument with legitimacy. His importance in historical texts is rooted in his relative contemporaneity to the events he reports, although his patently unhistorical approach frustrated Camden's newer school of historiographers. Figures such as Sammes, who were not so concerned with historiographical accuracy and disdained respected historians like Camden, still used Gildas to buttress their arguments. Even though Sammes lacked historiographical rigour, his mention of the economic motivation of invasions gives his text value, albeit more by accident than design.

The contemporary utilisation of Gildas provides a valuable illustration of the historiographical milieu in which Milton was writing, an environment which produced an incredibly diverse range of texts. The *History* was composed during a period of great national flux, when economic concerns were intimately related to conceptions of national security and identity. The gradual subordination of stubborn ideological loyalty to teleologically-minded pragmatism occurred in tandem with both the proliferation of toleration and the realisation of the benefits of free trade.

The United Provinces provided the model for many of these ideological innovations, and the concept of the *entrepôt* is crucial to the *History*. Rather than focusing on the export of a sole domestic product, the Amsterdam *entrepôt* served as a storehouse of difficult to obtain, high value commodities such as spice and precious metals. By stockpiling such commodities, the Dutch could smooth over the vicissitudes of supply and

demand by providing a ready source of rare commodities to those who required them, allowing each nation to address its economic deficiencies with greater ease.

One of Milton's contemporaries, Thomas Fuller, suspected that because 'some readers will be out of breath in going along with the long-winded style of Gildas, (the excusable fault of the age he lived in) I crave leave to divide his long and entire sentence, for the better understanding thereof, into severall parcells, without the least addition thereto, or alteration thereof' (Fuller 1659, 51). In the *History*, analogously, Milton draws a diverse range of sources together in order to spare his reader the tedium of 'rakeing in the Foundations of old Abbies and Cathedrals' (CPW 5.1:230). He seeks to create a historiographical entrepôt, which, by virtue of its increased ease of access, will facilitate with greater ease the process of national instruction and refinement, with the ultimate aim of preventing 'the Revolution of like Calamities' (CPW 5.1:403).

The opening of the *History* demonstrates the overlap of historiography and nationhood, as the lack of reliable historical records rendered Britain's very existence questionable to classical commentators. There was doubt in the classical world regarding Britain, 'the reported extent of which had made its existence a matter of controversy among historians, many of whom questioned whether it were not a mere name and fiction, not a real place' (Plutarch 1939, 2:548). Milton too is reduced to mere conjecture as he wonders whether Britain had 'her dwellers, her affairs, and perhaps her stories, ev'n in that old World ... before the Flood,' and he has no choice but to 'bestow the telling over ev'n of these reputed Tales' (CPW 5.1:4; 3).

One such 'reputed tale' concerns Dunwallo, who 'came into prominence because of his courage' (Geoffrey of Monmouth 1966, 88) and was 'the first in Britain that wore a Crown of Gold; and therefore by som reputed the first King' (CPW 5.1:27). In light of Milton's dislike of royal 'garnish' (CPW 3:339) in *Eikonoklastes*, one might expect him to criticise Dunwallo's use of gold, but he instead records Dunwallo's purported creation of the Molmutine Laws, 'famous among the English to this day' (CPW 5.1:27). Here, gold represents the power which made possible Dunwallo's 'subjugat[ion of] the entire island' (Geoffrey of Monmouth 1966, 89), making 'such riddance of Theeves and Robbers, that all passages were safe' (CPW 5.1:28). Gold's symbolism of both avarice and power is thus not necessarily negative, and this hermeneutical instability recalls *Paradise Lost*, reminding us that 'for over fifteen years ... [Milton] bore [*Paradise Lost* and the *History*] in his mind

side by side. Seed-thoughts and suggestions for the one must have had their share in shaping and colouring the other' (Glicksman 1922, 475).

Milton is glad to escape the 'obscure pre-Roman period so full of unsupported legends and superstitions' (French 1935, 472), and his relief at the end of Book 1 is palpable: 'like one who had set out on his way by night, and travail'd through a Region of smooth or idle Dreams, our History now arrives on the Confines, where day-light and truth meet us with a cleer dawn, representing to our view, though at a farr distance, true colours and shapes' (*CPW* 5.1:37).

But while historiographical light was approaching, Britain was still mired in civic darkness when the Romans arrived. While Milton came to support federalised government, the ancient Britons were autonomous but isolated, 'under many princes and states, not confederate or consulting in common, but mistrustfull, and oft-times warring one with the other, which gave them up one by one an easie conquest to the Romans' (*CPW* 5.1:60). This causal connection between civic vice and weakness is reiterated by Nicholas von Maltzahn: 'courageous and warlike, the early Britons nonetheless suffer from a lack of civic ... discipline, and therefore must submit to the Roman invasion' (1991, 112).

The Romans' reasons for invading were partially economic, but they were not the first to do so, as Julius Caesar described how 'the coastal areas belong to people who once crossed from Belgium in search of booty' (Caesar 1998, 95). In the twelfth century, Henry of Huntingdon noted in his *Historia anglorum* that 'because of Britain's pre-eminent wealth, it excites the spite and jealousy of all its neighbours. Therefore it has been frequently conquered, and even more frequently attacked' (Henry of Huntingdon 1996, 29), and 'except Merchants and Traders, it is not oft, saith [Caesar], that any use to Travel thether' (*CPW* 5.1:42). However, British commodities were not always taken by force in this period; rather, they were more often 'fetch't away by Foren Merchants: thir dealing, saith Diodorus, plaine and simple without fraude' (*CPW* 5.1:60).¹³²

Milton muses on Caesar's possible motivations for invading: 'a desire of adding still more glory to his name, and the whole *Roman* Empire to his ambition, som say, with a farr meaner and ignobler [motive], the desire of *Brittish Pearls*, whose bigness he delighted to ballance in his hand' (*CPW* 5.1:41-2). This recognition of the conquest's economic dimension is supported by the fact that 'the *Britans* in most of his *Gallian Warrs*

¹³² As we saw in Chapter 3, the ancient Britons are quite unlike seventeenth-century Russians in this regard.

had sent supplies against him' (*CPW* 5.1:42; Caesar 1998, 79), and in his *Gallic War*, Caesar pointedly details British resources: '[The Britons] have large herds of cattle. They use either bronze or gold coinage or, instead of currency, iron rods of a fixed weight. Tin is found in the midland regions, iron along the coast but only in small quantities. Their bronze is imported. Timber of all kinds is found as in Gaul, except for beech and silver fir' (Caesar 1998, 95). However, despite the frequent visitations of traders to Britain, the country was 'eev'n to the *Gauls* thir Neighbours almost unknown' (*CPW* 5.1:42). Caesar was consequently 'unable to ascertain either the size of the island, the nature and numbers of the peoples living there, their skill in warfare, their established customs, or which harbours were suitable for a fleet of fairly large ships' (Caesar 1998, 80). He entrusted Caius Volusenus with the task of 'mak[ing] discovery [of Britain] ... with command to return as soon as this could be effected' (*CPW* 5.1:43). Analogously, Satan is a 'scout' who traverses the void to reconnoitre the rumoured new world, 'Obtain[ing] the brow of some high-climbing hill, / Which to his eye discovers unaware / The goodly prospect of some forein land' (*PL* 3.543; 546-8).

E. L. Marilla expands this colonialist parallel between *Paradise Lost* and the *History* by suggesting Eden is the symbolic site of a power struggle between native and foreign forces: '[In *Paradise Lost*] Milton was thinking not primarily of an isolated region inhabited by two persons but, rather, of the domain of men who seek to preserve a free society' (Marilla 1968, 15). Such a reading invites a consideration of the nature of a 'free society', and, in particular, how freedom is utilised in the absence of external rule. This is particularly pertinent to the conduct of the Romans while in Britain. Caesar was not wholly dismissive of the uncouth Britons, but rather follows Nennius' assertion that 'truth ... does not despise the jewel which she has rescued from the mud, but she adds it to her former treasures' (Nennius 2004, 2). Caesar recognised the unsuitability of Roman triremes to the tempestuous waters of the English Channel, and later used British coracle designs in his civil war against Pompey (Williams 1875, 290). This Roman willingness to adapt to effective British practices is found from their first landing, when the Britons assaulted the Romans 'eev'n under thir Ships; with such a bold, and free hardihood, that *Caesar* himself ... denies not but that the terrour of such new and resolute opposition made [the Romans] forget thir wonted valour' (*CPW* 5.1:44-5). It soon became clear the Roman mode of disciplined, organised warfare was 'not so well fitted against this kind of Enemy; for that the Foot in heavy Armour could not follow thir cunning flight, and durst not by ancient Discipline stirr from thir Ensigne' (*CPW* 5.1:53).

Even in this first battle we see the bi-directional process of cultural osmosis taking place, as ‘*Scæva a Roman Souldier*’ broke ranks and ‘press’d too farr among the *Britans*, and besett round, after incredible valour shewn, single against a multitude, swom back safe to his General’ (CPW 5.1:45-6). Given the early stage of exposure to British practices, however, Scæva remained cognisant of his Roman sense of duty, and immediately ‘besought pardon for his rash adventure against Discipline ... [yet] such a deed wherin valour, and ingenuity so out-weigh’d transgression, easily made amends and preferr’d him to be a Centurion’ (CPW 5.1:46). Similarly, Satan assures Eve that she will not be punished for eating the fruit:

Will God incense His ire
For such a petty Trespass, and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of Death denounc’[?] (PL 9.692-5)

While Scæva eschews the Roman continence Milton admired in favour of the British indiscipline which he abhorred, the historian must reluctantly concede that this was a positive action in light of its pragmatic success.

The first sustained British attempt to exercise autonomy is the Boudican rebellion, and Milton’s treatment of the insurrection questions the British capacity for self-governance, juast as he had in the 1650s. The notion of a woman leading the Britons was most irksome to Milton, and he ‘could not forgive the ancient Britons their unmanly ways, a recurrent symptom of which was “the uncomeliness of thir Subjection to the Monarchie of a Woeman”’ (Le Comte 1947, 978). Milton correlates this uncomely subjection with the sloppy military conduct of the British, as

in this Battel, and whole business, the *Britans* never more plainly manifested themselves to be right *Barbarians*; no rule, no foresight, no forecast, experience or estimation, either of themselves or of thir Enemies; such confusion, such impotence, as seem’d likest not to a Warr, but to the wild hurrey of a distracted Woeman, with as mad a Crew at her heeles. (CPW 5.1:80)

The Boudican rebels’ destruction of normative gender identifiers is gruesomely manifested in their mutilation of ‘*Roman Wives and Virgins*’, who were ‘hang’d up all naked, [and] had thir Breasts cut off, and sow’d to thir mouthes’ (CPW 5.1:78).

This ignobility is further evident in the base motivations for the uprising. While the rebellion was precipitated by unjust treatment at the hands of the Romans, the anti-tyrannical sentiment which Milton believed to be an admirable cause for rebellion is, crucially, absent. Rather, the decision to revolt is rooted in the deprivations of status, power, and money that occurred after the death of Prasutagus: ‘his Kingdome became a prey to Centurions, his House to rav’ning officers ... the wealthiest of his Subjects ... thrown out of thir Estates’ (*CPW* 5.1:76). These degradations of rank led the Britons to ‘[band] themselves to a general revolt,’ and as Milton astutely asked in *Of Reformation*, ‘what stirs the Englishman ... sooner to rebellion, then violent and heavy hands upon their goods and purses?’ (*CPW* 5.1:76; 1.591). It is clear that the economic motivations which impel the foreign invasions of the *History* are similarly present in civil uprisings.

Julius Agricola recognised the connection between economic factors and the outbreak of war, and so he set about ‘cutting off the causes from whence Warr arises’ (*CPW* 5.1:84). To this end, he ‘began reformation from his own house; permitted not his attendants and followers to sway, or have to doe at all in public affairs’ (*CPW* 5.1:84-5). In light of Charles II’s delegation of power to favourites who exploited their positions to the national detriment, Milton would certainly find Agricola’s firm separation of personal and national affairs laudable.

Agricola also redressed the abuses of merchants who manipulated the markets by withholding commodities such as corn, ‘causing a Dearth, where none was’ (*CPW* 5.1:84) to drive up prices. It was also clear that extortionate, arbitrary taxation on corn was damaging trade, and consequently Agricola ‘lai[d] on with equallitie the proportions of corn and tribute that were impos’d, [took] off exactions, and the Fees of encroaching Officers, heavier then the tribute itself’ (*CPW* 5.1:85). The various innovations implemented by Agricola ultimately ‘brought peace into some credit; which before, since the *Romans* coming, had as ill a name as war’ (*CPW* 5.1:85).

However, 150 years into the occupation, the Romans were making their own ill name. The fragility of Scævan decorum became evident after the departure of Ulpius Marcellus, a Governor of Britain whom Milton describes as ‘a man endu’d with all nobleness of mind, frugal, temperate, mild, and magnanimous’ (*CPW* 5.1:99). After Marcellus left for Rome in 200 AD, ‘the *Roman* Legions fell to sedition among themselves; 15 hundred of them went to *Rome* in name of the rest, and were so terrible to *Commodus* ... [that] they endeavour’d heer to set up another Emperor against him’ (*CPW*

5.1:99).¹³³ Order and formality had been a fundamental tenet of Roman society for centuries, and the Romans stationed in Britain were unsure how to act once such strictures had been removed. The remorseful sense of duty which stung Scæva was wholly absent as they indulged their baser appetites, becoming ‘Roman in name, but not by law and custom’ (Gildas 2002, 20).

Roman rule played a crucial role in the initiation of national progression in various fields, and Milton recognised that ‘[The Romans] beate us into some civilitie; likely else to have continu’d longer in a barbarous and savage manner of life’ (*CPW* 5.1:61). Yet, the conduct of the Romans early in the occupation, and their facilitation of civic and economic advances, forms a profound contrast with the degeneracy of the last Romans stationed in Britain. The process of cultural osmosis continued to such a point that, while the Britons had slowly adopted Miltonically laudable practices, the Romans began to be corrupted by the more dissolute tendencies of the Britons, which led to a gradual regression into petty squabbles and struggles for power. Thus it is apparent that the possibility of degeneration inheres in all cultures, even those that are held up as the pinnacle of sophistication. While innovative thinkers of the seventeenth century highlighted the potential value of demonised figures, so too the converse formulation becomes apparent here: the *History* suggests that unquestioning veneration of the practices of a revered nation can be dangerous, emphasising that actions must always be assessed on a pragmatic, rather than an ideological, basis.

The text repeatedly demonstrates the risks of the complete removal of authority, instead stressing the necessity of a gradual process of transition. This concept is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the period following the Roman withdrawal. While the withdrawal removed the foreign yoke under which the nation had been held for centuries, such freedom is not as unambiguously beneficial as it may first appear.

Over the course of the occupation, the Romans provided the Britons with examples to be both emulated and abhorred, and the fundamental issue at this stage is whether the Britons had developed the Miltonic acuity to distinguish between the two. Had they

¹³³ Commodus was renowned in classical histories for his tyranny. He believed himself to be the reincarnation of Hercules and often set up sadistic contests for himself in the arena. A representative example is when he gathered ‘all the men in the city who had lost their feet as the result of disease or some accident, and then, after fastening about their knees some likenesses of serpents’ bodies, and giving them sponges to throw instead of stones, ... killed them with blows of a club, pretending that they were giants’ (Cassius Dio 1927, 9:114). Milton was evidently familiar with Cassius Dio since he cites him elsewhere in the *History* as an authority on Roman history, so it is strange that he passes over Cassius Dio’s account and instead depicts Commodus as a victim.

assimilated enough civic and economic knowledge to progress into well-regulated self-government, or would they regress into their old barbaric, bickering, profligate ways? The actions of the Britons at this crucial juncture shape the rest of the *History*, and their decision is succinctly articulated in *Paradise Lost*: ‘To stand or fall / Free in thine own Arbitrement it lies’ (*PL* 8.640-1).

The departure of the Romans left the Britons, for the first time in generations, with the monumental task of civil autonomy. The Britons struggled to wield their new independence, and

Seem’d a while to bestir them with a shew of diligence in thir new affairs, some secretly aspiring to rule, others adoring the name of liberty, yet so soon as they felt by proof the weight of what it was to govern well themselves, and what was wanting within them, not stomach or the love of licence, but the wisdom, the virtue, the labour, to use and maintain true libertie, they soon remitted thir heat, and shrunk more wretchedly under the burden of thir own libertie, than before under a foren yoke. (*CPW* 5:131)

This resonates with *Samson Agonistes*, where the eponymous character bemoans ‘nations grown corrupt’ that prefer ‘bondage with ease than strenuous liberty’ (*SA* 268; 271), and Harry Glicksman has rightly observed that ‘to become a sluggard in an hour of ease, or a voluptuary in an hour of affluence, or a tyrant in an hour of authority – these, [Milton] is convinced, are perils that never fail to beset the race of man’ (Glicksman 1922, 474).

One of the most immediate consequences of the Roman withdrawal was the complete removal of the military forces which had repelled Britain’s enemies for four centuries. The Britons were quickly beset by ‘those ravenous multitudes who minded only spoil’ (*CPW* 5.1:132), and, like ‘frightened chicks huddling under the wings of their faithful parents’ (Gildas 2002, 22), entreated the Romans to return.¹³⁴ The Romans took pity on the beleaguered Britons and came back to ‘instruct them in the art of Warr, leaving Patterns of thir Arms and Weapons behind them; and with animating words, and many lessons of valour to a faint-hearted audience, bid them finally farewell, without purpose to return’ (*CPW* 5.1:133).

¹³⁴ We are reminded here of Matthew 23:37: ‘O Hierusalem, Hierusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and yee would not?’

Following the Roman withdrawal, the centralised organisation of the nation rapidly broke down, and each kingdom became isolated and engaged in petty squabbles with its neighbours. This civic regression was also economically manifested, as a famine at this time led to ‘discord and civil commotion among the *Britans*: each man living by what he rob’d or took violently from his Neighbour. When all stores were consum’d and spent where men inhabited, they betook them to the Woods, and liv’d by hunting, which was thir only sustainment’ (*CPW* 5.1:135).

The Roman occupation had largely restrained the British predilection for bellicosity, albeit with occasional eruptions at points such as the Boudican rebellion. In the absence of Roman rule, belligerence flared up between the increasingly insular kingdoms, demonstrating that ‘the national character may have proved ultimately indomitable, but this was destructive when the civilising foreign influence weakened or was removed’ (von Maltzahn 1991, 112).

This is not to say that Roman civic practices were wholly abandoned; the Sub-Roman Britons retained the meritocratic election of leaders. However, they appear to have drawn their model in this respect from the last Roman legions stationed in Britain. Those soldiers feared invasion from the Vandals, and ‘in tumultuous manner set up *Marcus* ... but him not found agreeable to thir heady courses, they as hastily kill ... the like they do by *Gratian* a *British Roman*, in four Months advanc’t, ador’d, and destroy’d’ (*CPW* 5.1:124). This is similar to the Sub-Roman Britons, according to whose wishes ‘kings were anointed ... not of Gods anointing, but such as were cruellest, and soon after ... put to death by thir anointers, to set up others more fierce and proud’ (*CPW* 5.1:140). Thus the potential flaw in any meritocratic system of election becomes apparent: it hinges upon what is considered meritorious by the electorate. As Don M. Wolfe points out, ‘to Milton it was axiomatic that wicked men, slaves to their passions, would elect to office men of their own unbridled desires’ (*CPW* 4:264). While for Milton democracy could minimise tyranny, the intentional perversion of this original function by the Sub-Roman Britons has evident lapsarian connotations. This link to the Fall is reinforced by the Britons’ descent into vice, creating a situation in which ‘evil was embrac’d for good, wickedness honour’d and esteem’d as virtue’ which echoes Satan’s ‘evil be thou my good’ (*CPW* 5.1:139; *PL* 4.110).

Such a lack of wisdom and virtue in civic affairs is evident in the reign of Vortigern. Vortigern is a figure whose character certainly accords with Wolfe’s assessment

of the Miltonic axiom of meritocracy, as he is ‘decipher’d by truer stories a proud unfortunate Tyrant, and yet of the people much belov’d, because his vices sorted so well with theirs’ (CPW 5.1:142). Just as the prospect of a Vandal invasion caused the last Romans to look to their tyrannical leaders, so too the Britons ‘r[a]n to the Palace of thir King *Vortigern* with complaints and cries of what they suddenly fear’d, from the *Pictish* invasion’ (CPW 5.1:141). In response, Vortigern called a ‘general Council’ (CPW 5.1:142) to decide a course of action. However, as with the meritocratic electoral process, theoretically superior civic models can only be beneficial when they are tempered by the wisdom to utilise them correctly. While Milton admires a system of government in which the ruler makes decisions after taking counsel from advisors, the potential flaw is the wisdom (or lack thereof) of the advisors and the temperament of the ruler. The virtue of Vortigern and his advisors are evident in Milton’s observation that during his reign, ‘all things were done contrary to public welfare and safety’ (CPW 5.1:140).

Just as the Philistines ‘call in hast for thir destroyer’ (SA 1678), Vortigern’s council decide to invite the Saxons, a ‘barbarous and heathen Nation, famous for nothing else but robberies and cruelties done to all thir Neighbours’ (CPW 5.1:142). This also evokes the *Readie and Easie Way*, where Milton laments the ‘ignominy’ of a newly emancipated nation that ‘should be so heartless and unwise in their counsels as not to know how to use [freedom] ... butt basely and besottedly to run their necks again into the yoke which they have broken’ (CPW 7:428). The ramifications of the council’s decision were not lost on Gildas, who explodes with indignation: ‘How utter the blindness of their minds! How desperate and crass the stupidity!’ (Gildas 2002, 26). This suggestion of Vortigern’s instrumental role in the national downfall is further supported by his exchange of the kingdom of Kent for the daughter of Hengist, king of the Saxons. The Saxons promised to defend the Britons, yet soon claimed ‘that thir pay is too small for the danger they undergo, threat’ning op’n Warr unless it be augmented’ (CPW 5.1:148). Such economic short-sightedness proves to be a recurrent theme in the *History*, reaching its nadir when Ethelred pays the Danes ever-increasing sums under the threat of conquest in the eleventh century.

Vortigern’s son, Guortimer, sought to rectify his father’s mistake by attempting to expel the Saxons, and we see here a calamitous situation facilitating the emergence of virtue, which happens throughout the *History*. While the Britons would successfully drive out invaders under Alfred, at this stage they lack sufficient experience in defending themselves and consequently, the Saxons ‘wasted without resistance almost the whole

Land eev'n to the Western Sea, with such a horrid devastation, that Towns and Colonies ... lay altogether heap'd in one mixt ruin' (*CPW* 5.1:148). Nevertheless, the nascent virtue symbolised by Guortimer is also evinced by his people. This is surprising, as one might expect a nation 'whose vices sorted so well' with those of Vortigern to applaud his incestuous relations with his daughter, but the king was actually 'censur'd and condemn'd in a great Synod of *Clercs* and *Laics*' and deposed (*CPW* 5.1:150).

According to the native Sub-Roman historians that are 'in expression barbarous,' (*HoB*, 81), Guortimer replaced his father on the throne and valiantly 'thrice [drove] and beseig'd the *Saxons* ... fought with them fowr other Battells ... [and] beat them into thir Ships that bore them home, glad to have so scap'd and not venturing to land again for 5 years after' (*CPW* 5.1:151). The Saxon account of Vortigern and Guortimer, however, is 'far differently related' (*CPW* 5.1:153). The Saxon chronicles claim that Vortigern was deposed from the throne of Kent after losing a battle to Hengist, who went on to kill much of the British nobility in the four battles with Guortimer. How Guortimer died is unclear, but Hengist, 'thus rid of his grand opposer, hearing gladly the restorement of his old favourer, return[ed] again with great Forces' (*CPW* 5.1:153). Vortigern entered into a new treaty with Hengist but was betrayed at a feast, where the Saxons 'dispatch'd with those Poniards every one his next man, to the number of 300. the cheif of those that could do ought against [Hengist] either in Counsel or in Field' (*CPW* 5.1:154).

The eradication of Vortigern's peers is a crucial event in the struggle towards national grace, as the Britons display virtue more frequently from this point. The ill-judged decisions made by Vortigern's council support a comparison to the justification of civil insurrection in *Paradise Lost*: 'the war in Heaven is an indication that this civic sphere was not wholly perfect, and the purgation of its decadent elements is the first step in its renovation' (Riebling 1996, 587). Such renovation can be seen in the reign of the early Saxon king Ethelbert. Ethelbert is the first explicit advocate of ideological, and particularly religious, toleration in the *History*. He is particularly receptive of foreign ideas, as demonstrated by his speech to Augustine of Canterbury and his missionaries:

[Christianity] being new and uncertain, I cannot hastily assent to, quitting the Religion which from my Ancestors, with all the *English* Nation, so many years I have retained. Nevertheless because ye are strangers, and have endur'd so long a journey, to impart us the knowledge of things, which I perswade me you believe to be the truest and the best, ye may be sure we shall not recompence you with any

molestation, but shall provide rather how we may friendliest entertain ye; nor do we forbid whom ye can by preaching gain to your belief. (*CPW* 5.1:188)

Despite his initial hesitation, Ethelbert is soon ‘convinc’t by [the missionaries’] good life & miracles, [and] became Christian’ (*CPW* 5.1:189).

Ethelbert’s conversion demonstrates the crucial shift in the British epistemological attitude which takes place in the Early Saxon period. During the Roman occupation, the assimilation of Roman practices into British society can be largely attributed to the immense duration of Roman ubiquity in all aspects of British life. Yet, the Britons rapidly discarded many Roman customs after the withdrawal, demonstrating they had only superficially penetrated into British culture.

In the early Saxon period, conversely, Christianity was promulgated by a comparatively minute group of missionaries who initially lacked any real power, preaching in direct opposition to an ancient religion that was thoroughly ingrained in the native culture. In spite of this, the early Saxons eschewed the passive assimilative approach of the Roman Britons in favour of an active methodology through which virtue is persistently sought out and judged on its pragmatic merit, and as Hugh Jenkins has pointed out, ‘the Saxons are not so much converted as they are willing converts’ (1995, 319). Moreover, Ethelbert understood ‘that Christian Religion ought to be voluntary, not compell’d (*CPW* 5.1:189), and Milton would concur.

The *History* also suggests a connection between the transition from the perceived barbarism of paganism to Christianity and the progression between established and innovative modes of government. In Ethelbert’s reign there is a shift from the traditional autocratic rule of kings towards a proto-commonwealth style of government. He was ‘the first Christian King of the *Saxons*, and no less a favourer of all civility in that rude age. He gave Laws and Statutes after the example of *Roman* Emperors, written with the advice of his sagest Counsellors, but in the *English* tongue, and observ’d long after’ (*CPW* 5.1:195-6). The effectiveness of Roman modes of government leads Ethelbert to use them as a template upon which he collates the views of his advisers in an attempt to discern the best course of action. Yet, these laws were written not in the language of Rome, but in English, which illustrates his awareness that wise conduct is rooted in adaptation of foreign practices, not mere adulatory mimicry. Moreover, the proto-humanist emphasis on vernacular language signifies that the perpetual refinement of national conduct is

facilitated by the proliferation, rather than the deprivation, of knowledge.¹³⁵ The lasting efficacy of Ethelbert's synthetic and flexible approach is made clear by his laws being 'observed long after', recalling the Molmutine Laws of Dunwallo which were 'famous among the English to this day'. Indeed, Jenkins has suggested that 'Ethelbert becomes the emblem for the virtues of the Saxons' (1995, 319).

Ethelbert's legislative innovations were also reflected in his treatment of the clergy, which starkly contrasts with Vortigern's conduct. Milton laments the corruption and hypocrisy of the Vortigernian Britons, who 'punish rigorously them that rob by the high way; but those grand Robbers that sit with them at Table, they honour and reward. They give alms largely, but in the face of thir Alms-deeds, pile up wickedness to a far higher heap' (*CPW* 5.1:174). Milton's description of the clergy under Vortigern would not have been out of place in *Considerations*, as he attacks the Sub-Roman clergy as 'Pastors in Name, but indeed Wolves; intend upon all occasions, not to feed the Flock, but to pamper and well line themselves: not call'd but seising on the Ministry as a Trade, not a Spiritual Charge' (*CPW* 5.1:175). Conversely, the frugality of the Christian missionaries who arrived during Ethelbert's reign 'won many; on whose bounty and the Kings, receiving only what was necessary, they subsisted' (*CPW* 5.1:189). Similarly, unlike Vortigern's exploitation of both the church and the laity, Ethelbert's 'special care was to punish those who had stoln ought from Church or Churchman' (*CPW* 5.1:196).

While Ethelbert was the first British king to embrace a foreign religion, Offa, a 'strenuous and suttle King' of Mercia (*CPW* 5.1:244), was the first to adapt British economic practices to international factors. Offa 'had much intercourse with *Charles* the Great, at first enmity, to the interdicting of commerce on either side, at length much amity and firm League' (*CPW* 5.1:245). Charlemagne's conquests were instrumental in the creation of 'the first European unity' (Riché 1993, xvii), and his coinage reforms replaced the gold standard *sous* coined by merchants with royally sanctioned silver coins (Campbell et al. 1991, 118). When Charlemagne prohibited the use of foreign coins in the Frankish empire, Offa, recognising the importance of international trade to British prosperity, changed the weight and composition of English coins 'to make [them] more acceptable abroad' (Sutherland 1973, 12).

¹³⁵ We are reminded here of Milton's hope in *Considerations* that building more provincial schools and libraries will spread 'the natural heat of government and culture more distributively to all extreme parts, which now lie num and neglected, [and] would soon make the whole nation more industrious, more ingenious at home, more potent, more honourable abroad' (*CPW* 7:460).

Yet, as throughout the *History*, progression is inevitably and swiftly followed by disaster, and in 789, ‘a new and fatal revolution of calamity’ (*CPW* 5.1:242) began: the Danish invasions. In keeping with the economic motivations of invaders throughout the *History*, Milton describes the Danes as ‘wanderers at Sea, who ... through love of spoil, or hatred of Christianity, seeking booties on any land of Christians, came by chance, or weather, on this shore’ (*CPW* 5.1:242). The persistent ascription of economic motivations to invaders is further apparent in the Britons’ initial misidentification of the Danes as ‘Foren Merchants’ (*CPW* 5.1:242).

As elsewhere in the *History*, Milton views this invasion as divine punishment for degeneracy, claiming that the Saxons of this period evince ‘all the same vices which *Gildas* alleg’d of old to have ruin’d the *Britains*’ (*CPW* 5.1:256). He emphasises the cyclical process of invasion, assimilation, progression, and atavism which pervades the *History*: ‘the *Saxons* were now full as wicked as the *Britans* were at their arrival, brok’n with luxurie and sloth, either secular or superstitious; for laying aside the exercise of Arms, and the study of all vertuous knowledge, some betook them to over-worldly or vitious practice, others to religious Idleness and Solitude’ (*CPW* 5.1:259).

The bi-directional nature of cultural osmosis discussed earlier is also present here; invaders become like those they subjugate, just as the Britons adopt the characteristics of their conquerors. These two concepts of cultural osmosis and cyclical progression amalgamate in Milton’s description of how ‘in this invasion, *Danes* drove out *Danes*, thir own posterity. And *Normans* afterwards, none but antienter *Normans*’ (*CPW* 5.1:258). This creates a fundamental shift in the mechanics of invasion, by which the usual definition of one nation conquering another is no longer applicable; rather, nations begin to conquer themselves. The perpetual invasions of the *History* and the consequent fusion of cultural identities gradually erode the distinctions between the people of Britain and those of Denmark or Normandy.¹³⁶

Milton’s recognition of the gradual dissolution of ethnic difference is also contemporaneous with the Britons’ first explicitly civil conquests. The kingdoms of the heptarchy were akin to distinct countries, yet the elimination of these long-established boundaries – both literal and figurative – by the first kings of the Late Saxon period forged a more unified people of Britain. The identity of the nation produced by the amalgamation

¹³⁶ Racial commixture was causing anxiety when Milton wrote, as the first law prohibiting miscegenation was passed in Maryland in 1664 (Browne 1873, 1:534).

of the heptarchy is aptly described by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's assessment of the 12th century postcolonial anxieties of Gerald of Wales: '[Gerald explores] how both Wales and England were changed when two bodies formed a third that carries with it something of both parents without fully being either' (Cohen 2000, 93).

In 800, King Ecbert united England's 'seaven Kingdoms into one' (CPW 5.1:248), but this event is calamitous for a federalist like Milton. He opposes the unification of the heptarchy, claiming that the Danish invasion,

Perhaps, had the Heptarchie stood divided as it was, had either not bin attempted, or not uneasily resisted; while each Prince and people, excited by thir nearest concernments, had more industriously defended thir own bounds, then depending on the neglect of a deputed Governour, sent of-times from the remote residence of a secure Monarch. (CPW 5.1:258)

While in Book 2 Milton cited civil divisions as one of the reasons for British capitulation to the Roman invasion, here he states the contrary. This suggests that by this stage of economic development, Milton believes centralised control becomes an ineffective and unnecessary hindrance.

The ferocity of the Danish invasion renders this period the darkest of the entire *History*, and yet we also see here Milton's recurrent emphasis on the connection between crisis and the emergence of virtue. It is into this apparently hopeless situation that Alfred the Great makes his entrance, and the notion of a leader who appears at a time of national need being a redemptive gift from God recalls the *Second Defence*: 'there is nothing in human society more pleasing to God, or more agreeable to reason, nothing in the state more just, nothing more expedient, than the rule of the man most fit to rule. (CPW 4:671). Here, the country may be compared to Samson, 'that self-begott'n bird ... / That revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most / When most unactive deem'd' (SA 1699; 1704-5).

The opening of the *History* highlighted the weak sense of nationhood which accompanies vague or wholly absent historical records, but 'the story of Alfred was well authenticated and relatively free of legend' (Sasek 1956, 6), mirroring the national potency which emerges during his reign. Alfred's power was such that he 'gave Battel to the whole *Danish* power, and put them to flight' (CPW 5.1:280), and we see his appeal to Milton, insofar as Alfred exhibits the 'strong executive presence [which] is a legitimate part of the

ideal state as envisioned by civic humanists' (Riebling 1996, 584). Alfred's recognition of the teleological value of war reflects Milton's belief that 'he whose just and true valour use the necessity of Warr and Dominion, not to destroy but to prevent destruction, to bring in liberty against Tyrants, Law and Civility among barbarous Nations, ... fails not to continue through all Posterity, over *Envy*, *Death*, and *Time*, also victorious.' Milton subscribes to the notion of just, necessary conquest in the *History* just as he had in the *Observations upon the Articles of Peace* (1649).

Alfred recognised that 'the want of Shipping and neglect of Navigation, had expos'd the Land to these Piracies,' so he built a fleet to repel the Danes (*CPW* 5.1:277). This consolidation of the navy is similar to that of the 1650s, and in particular the problems of Dutch privateering in both the Indies and the English Channel. Yet, we must remember that while Charles Johnson's *General History of the Pyrates* (1726) described them as men 'who were abandoned to all vice, and lived by rapine' (Johnson 1999, 527), they were remarkably innovative in terms of using democratic election to limit abuses. An eighteenth-century pirate testified that 'most of them having suffered formerly from the ill-treatment of officers, provided thus carefully against any such evil now they had the choice in themselves ... for the due execution thereof they constituted other officers besides the captain; so very industrious were they to avoid putting too much power into the hands of one man' (Hayward 1874 [1735], 1:42).

This 'institutional separation of powers aboard pirate ships predated its adoption by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century governments' (Leeson 2007, 1066), and thus we see that pirates demonstrate the ability to learn from past abuses of power, an ability which remained frustratingly elusive for the Britons. This is not to say, however, that the Saxons were wholly impotent in this regard. In the tenth century, Ælfric of Eynsham wrote that 'the people has the choice to choose as king whom they please' (Whitelock 1956, 642), and the witenagemot, although being 'composed of the aristocratic elite created by monarchy' (Liebermann 1925, 19), nevertheless possessed the power to depose tyrannical kings, as happened in 757 and 774 (Chadwick 1905, 362-3).

Like Gildas and Milton, Alfred also acknowledged the congruence between civil virtue and knowledge, as in order to ensure the efficacy of the witenagemot he 'permitted none unlearn'd to bear office' (*CPW* 5.1:290). Nevertheless, Alfred recognised the importance of foreign influences, as he put aside a third of his revenue 'in readiness to relieve or honour Strangers according to thir worth, who came from all parts to see him

and to live under him' (*CPW* 5.1:291). He was not, however, solely concerned with the education of the ruling classes. As far as was possible in an age of extremely limited literacy, he 'thirsted after all liberal knowledge ... [and] leisure he found sometimes, not only to learn much himself, but to communicate thereof what he could to his people, by translating Books out of Latin into English' (*CPW* 5.1:290). One of the texts translated by Alfred is 'Beda's history' (*CPW* 5.1:290), an act which literally expresses the synthesis of Miltonically admirable historiography and its dispersal to the people. Indeed, as 'he alone is to be called great who either performs or teaches or worthily records great things' (*CPW* 6:601), Alfred's appellation is apt in that he both performs great things and teaches the 'worthily record[ed]' texts of Bede.

The need to balance the diverse concerns of skilful kingship required Alfred's 'wiser husbanding of time' (Hoxby 1998, 149), which is reflected in Milton's claim that there was 'no man then hee more frugal of two pretious things in mans life, his time and his revenue; no man wiser in the disposal of both' (*CPW* 5.1:291). This contrasts with the profligacy of Vortigern, who was 'covetous, lustful, luxurious, and prone to all vice; wasting the public Treasure in gluttony and riot' (*CPW* 5.1:142). Alfred was also the first to engage England in long-distance international trade, sending a bishop to India who returned laden with 'many rich Gems and Spices' (*CPW* 5.1:292), and this 'first intercourse that took place between England and Hindostan' (Pauli 1857, 146) is an early instance of the spice trade which was so central to Milton's time.

The praise of Alfred's polymathic virtues also has remarkable similarities to the panegyric treatment of Oliver Cromwell in the *Second Defence*. Milton begins by asserting that Cromwell was 'sprung from renowned and illustrious stock' (*CPW* 4:666), just as Alfred is 'of noble descent' (*CPW* 5.1:289). Interestingly, it is only around the late Saxon period, when the concept of pure Englishness was becoming assimilated into the conglomerate, pan-European national identity, that Milton begins to mention the nobility of provenance.

Following Alfred's death, the progress achieved during his reign appeared to have some lasting efficacy. The Britons demonstrated a new resistance to Danish raids, as the 'Countrypeople inur'd now to such kind of incursions, joining stoutly together, fell upon the spoilers, recover'd thir own goods, with some booty from thir Enemies' (*CPW* 5.1:297). This progress was mirrored by King Edgar, who 'had no War all his Reign; yet allways well prepar'd for War, govern'd the Kingdom in great Peace, Honour, and

Prosperity' (*CPW* 5.1:321). Edgar was able to use this prosperity wisely, giving King Kened of the Scots 'many rich presents' (*CPW* 5.1:324) to consolidate their rapprochement.

While Edgar is notable for using his gold wisely, Ethelred the Unready did quite the opposite, and his 'sluggish and ignoble vices' would prove to be 'a fatal mischeif of the people, and the ruin of his Country' (*CPW* 5.1:331).¹³⁷ Following an intensification of Danish incursions which could not be resisted by the dilapidated English armies and navy, Ethelred 'thought best for the present to buy that with Silver which [the English] could not gain with thir iron; and Ten Thousand pound was paid to the *Danes* for peace' (*CPW* 5.1:335). However, the short-sightedness of Ethelred's plan was clear, as it simply taught the Danes 'the ready way how easiest to come by more' (*CPW* 5.1:335).

Now knowing 'how to milk such easie kine' (*CPW* 5.1:342), the Danes soon demanded more money and Ethelred paid £16,000 before being subjected to further Danish rampages. Ethelred raised an army in response, but, in a parallel to the mismanagement of resources in the Anglo-Dutch wars, 'the unskillfull Leaders not knowing what to do with it when they had it, did but drive out time, burd'ning and impoverishing the people, consuming the publick treasure, and more imboldning the Enemy, then if they had sat quiet at home' (*CPW* 5.1:338). With his ineffective army swiftly crushed, Ethelred paid £24,000, and soon £36,000 'out of the people over all England, already half beggared, was extorted and paid' (*CPW* 5.1:339; 342).

Ethelred's inability to resist foreign invaders is reflected by a shift in the effect of foreign influence on the Britons. From this point, the Britons move into a state of apathetic weakness, no longer judiciously adopting what is beneficial from foreign practices, but instead wholly abandoning their own traditions in favour of those of another culture: 'then began the English to lay aside thir own antient Customes, and in many things to imitate French manners ... asham'd of thir own' (*CPW* 5.1:377). The immediate consequence of the appropriation of French customs is a profound degeneracy of the national character, and shortly before the Norman Conquest, 'the clergy ... had lost all good literature and Religion, scarce able to read and understand thir Latin Service ... the great men giv'n to gluttony and dissolute life, made a prey of the common people' (*CPW* 5.1:402). This

¹³⁷ Ethelred's epithet is a mistranslation of *unræd*, meaning 'lacking good counsel' (Toller 1921, 737), a word used to refer to the Fall in a 9th century Anglo-Saxon poem known as *Genesis A* (Krapp 1931, p.3, l.30). Parallels between *Genesis A* and *Paradise Lost* have been suggested (Evans 1968, 144-8), and the manuscript to which *Genesis A* belongs was published by Milton's friend, Franciscus Junius, in 1655.

evokes *Paradise Regained*, where Jesus questions the possibility of freedom for such depraved people: ‘What wise and valiant man would seek to free / These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav’d, / Or could of inward slaves make outward free?’ (*PR* 4.143-5). The connection between internal and external subjugation is reiterated by Milton’s suggestion that the British adoption of French customs was ‘a presage of thir subjection shortly to that people’ (*CPW* 5.1:377).

In spite of this, we still find virtue in figures such as Edward the Confessor, son of Ethelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that ‘the whole nation chose Edward to be king’ (Garmonsway 1955, 163), and Milton notes that ‘his Laws held good and just, and long after desir’d by the English of thir Norman Kings, are yet extant’ (*CPW* 5.1:392). He was ‘at Table not excessive,’ and his moderate appetite was reflected in his ‘Alms-deeds,’ the importance of which he emphasised as he ‘exhorted the Monks to like Charitie’ (*CPW* 5.1:392).

His successor, Harold Godwinson, son of Godwin Earl of Wessex and the Swede Gytha Thorkelsdóttir, shared many of the virtues of Edward the Confessor, as he ‘endeavour’d to make good Laws, repeal’d bad, became a great Patron to Church and Churchmen, courteous and affable to all reputed good, a hater of evill doers, charg’d all his officers to punish Theeves, Robbers, and all disturbers of the peace, while he himself by Sea and Land labourd in the defence of his Country’ (*CPW* 5.1:394). However, Milton’s praise is undermined by the suggestion that Harold was motivated by ‘ambition,’ and ‘began to frame himself by all manner of compliances to gain affection’ (*CPW* 5.1:394).

Milton reports that William the Conqueror ‘restrein’d his Army from wast and spoil, saying that they ough to spare what was thir own,’ although he questions the truth of this claim (*CPW* 5.1:398). Beyond the description of William as an ‘out-landish Conquerer’ (*CPW* 5.1:402), Milton is strangely silent about his character or conduct. Instead, he devotes the concluding pages of the *History* to lamenting the avarice of the monks and the degeneracy of the populace, leaving his final assessment of the ultimate expression of foreign influence – foreign rule – tantalisingly unresolved. It is crucial, however, not to allow the final national regression which closes the *History* to undermine the immense achievements that precede it, as Milton does not intend to ‘blur or taint the praises of thir former actions and liberty well defended’ (*CPW* 5.1:328).

The *History* is, in many respects, similar to *Paradise Lost*, as they are both texts in which lament and joy are profoundly imbricated. Yet, ‘nothing here is for tears’ (*SA* 1721),

as the *History* is not merely a jeremiad of failed attempts to cast off malignant foreign yokes, nor is it a straightforward celebration of a thousand years of national turmoil. There is ‘no “ready and easy way” to establish a perfect and stable society; there is only a difficult and tragic way’ (Radzinowicz 1978, 108), but when the events of the *History* are teleologically considered, it becomes apparent that the text emphasises the crucial role played by foreign influence in a millennium-long progression towards national virtue, suggesting that ‘perfection may gradually emerge out of the turbulence of history’ (Loewenstein 1990, 15).

While the *History* repeatedly constitutes the flaws of the Britons in terms of excess, it is this same desire to consume which motivates every group of invaders. The level of sophistication achieved by the Britons at each stage in the text is also intimately related to the development of their economic practices. The Boudican rebels are hostile to foreigners and are also economically primitive, neglecting agriculture and living from hunting, with disastrous consequences. The Sub-Roman Britons, recognising the value of foreign assistance, invite the Romans and then the Saxons, although they still lack economic continence. The early Saxon toleration of Christian missionaries evinces a willingness to engage with foreign ideas, while Offa’s reformation of the mint demonstrates his recognition of England’s place within the wider European market. In the late Saxon period, the increasingly international nature of English economic conduct is reflected in the hybridisation of national identity. Many kings of this period, whom Milton finds to be the most laudable of the entire *History*, are the products of international marriages. This gradual intermingling of European cultural identities fashions a nation which is, somewhat paradoxically, unique in its ethnic hybridity.

It is, however, this very dissolution of national boundaries that leads to the complete appropriation of foreign customs after Alfred’s death. Whereas the nation had hitherto adopted foreign practices only after being invaded, the loss of Alfred’s judgement was keenly felt as the Britons’ mimicry of the French presaged the Norman Conquest. The postmortal acquisition of grace promised *Paradise Lost* is a state from which there is no possibility of return. Civic grace lacks this eschatological finality and immutability, and consequently, its attainment and retention is highly precarious. The struggle entailed in reaching and remaining in the fragile state of greater national perfection accounts for the wax and wane dynamic of the *History*, although this dynamic operates within an overarching structure of gradual progression.

Milton's contemporaries achieved considerable progress regarding the adaptation and assimilation of foreign ideas, which is manifest in seventeenth-century developments in economic theory and practice. However, such progression was stilted, and Milton's survey of the national state in both history and contemporaneity demonstrates that the sole apparently immutable constant of the British national character is the desire to regress into the old ways. As he became only too aware in his lifetime, this trait causes every moment of national achievement to teeter on the brink of atavism, and he was troubled by the same questions which led Melville to muse some two centuries later, 'there is no steady unretreating progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause ... but once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, mens, and Ifs eternally. Where lies the final harbour, whence we unmoor no more?' (Melville 1962, 486).

Conclusion

The economic and theological tracts written during the 1620s and 1630s exerted a lasting influence on Milton's thought. Misselden's *Circle of Commerce* depicted both trade and investment as circular processes, and in *England's Treasure by Forraigne Trade* Mun eloquently and empirically emphasised that gold stockpiled was squandered and that it should always be put to use. Covenant theologians preached in terms accessible to their commercially aware congregations, refiguring man and God as tenant and landlord, with Jesus standing, as he would in *Paradise Lost*, as guarantor.

Milton was, of course, not the first to respond to contemporary economic and theological thought in his literary work. Jonson's *Staple of Newes*, which Milton likely saw performed six years before his own first published work, would have had particular appeal to the usurer's son since the play interrogates contemporary attitudes towards usury and monopolies, both topics of enduring interest to Milton. In *The Temple*, Herbert wrestles with covenant theology, and his attempts to reconcile materiality and spirituality ends in the recognition that the sacred and profane cannot be separated.

Comus takes up the *Staple of Newes*'s satire of monopolies, subverting the masque tradition by showing the Lady's sexual hoarding to be not only ineffective but harmful. The *History of Moscovia* transposes the Lady's attitude on to the Russian nation, demonstrating – in keeping with Misselden and Mun – that the accumulation of gold leads not to profit but to degeneracy. Degenerate prophets populate *Of Reformation*, where Milton attacks a clergy that seek to both hoard and consume, at great cost to their flocks.

This submission to covetousness was Winstanley's primary concern in *Fire in the Bush*, in which the Fall is a daily danger, occurring when people seek fulfilment outside themselves in private property, hire and possessions. The *First Defence* develops Winstanley's concern regarding hire, with Milton attacking Salmasius for being a covetous mercenary. *Considerations* addresses the avarice of the clergy, while the *Readie and Easie Way* blames the greed of the English for their failure to govern themselves.

In the *Christian Doctrine* we see the influence of English covenant theologians in Milton's representation of salvation as Jesus' payment of man's debt to God. *Paradise Lost* is the clearest exposition of Milton's economic soteriology, with the mechanics of salvation repeatedly couched in economic terms. There is a clear parallel between the

gradual unfolding of Adam's teleological understanding and Misselden and Mun's urging their readers to understand that apparent loss could eventually return as future profit.

Just as fallen man must rely on Jesus' intercession, so too the ancient Britons are 'self-deprav'd' (*PL* 3.130). While they are 'progenitors not to be glori'd in' (*CPW* 5.1:61), the *History* shows the Britons being gradually refined by successive invasions, which both introduce new practices and ideas from abroad and provide opportunities for native virtue to emerge. Milton long held an admiration for the Dutch, and many of the tracts published by his countrymen before the publication of the *History* voiced a similar desire for open borders and open minds. The *History* should take its place among them.

But Milton's belief that there was much to be learned from foreign minds also presented one of the major obstacles encountered writing this thesis: a mere monoglot like myself cannot hope to do full justice to a man who could read 'Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Italian, French, Spanish, [and] Dutch' (Hale 1997, 8). While it is unlikely that many important economic treatises were written in Aramaic, my lack of Latin has been keenly felt at points, since 'all the most vigorous disciplines of early modern intellectual culture were international and hence still conducted through Latin' (Hale 1998, 4). Being limited to using only texts available in English translation, it is likely that I have overlooked other writers and works that would either support or undermine my argument. Nonetheless, I hope to have opened up the economics of Milton's soteriology for future study, and I concur with Winstanley by concluding hopefully that 'though this Platform be like a peece of Timber rough hewd, yet the discreet workmen may take it, and frame a handsome building out of it' (*WCW* 2:288).

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