

Culture & Money

in the Nineteenth Century

ABSTRACTING ECONOMICS



Edited by DANIEL BIVONA & MARLENE TROMP

CULTURE & MONEY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Acknowledgments

Culture and Money in the Nineteenth Century: Abstracting Economics grew out of the Thirty-Second Annual Nineteenth-Century Studies Association Conference in 2011. This conference, chaired by Marlene Tromp and Daniel Bivona and entitled “Money/Myths,” sought papers that explored how money was understood in the nineteenth century and in its global context. We asked how the ideation of money evolved around and through art, music, architecture, race, nation, and empire; how the stories told about money influenced people and practices; and what role mythologies played in comprehending money. The conference drew submissions from across the globe and representing a broad array of scholarship—historians, literary critics, architectural historians, art historians, economic historians, and music historians—and covered topics as varied as widowhood, charity, coins, speculation, debt, wages, industry, empire, fundraising, and even fiduciary sexuality. We were so intrigued by the body of papers and by the dialogues that emerged at the conference, particularly those that covered unmapped territory, that we sought the permission of the NCSA to put together a volume based on this event. We invited some of the best papers at the conference to include in this book, a sampling that reached across the range of fields that NCSA covers.

At that time, we had little sense of how much our ideas would evolve as we wrangled with the questions that we, ourselves, had proposed in the call for papers. What we had originally called “mythologies,” we came to see instead as active “abstractions.” “Mythologies” as a construct seemed too passive, too temporally and culturally transcendent, to capture what we saw as active, historically situated processes of interpenetration, naturalization, and universalization. Those structures that *seemed* most mythic, we came to believe, were, in fact, evidence of the process of abstraction at work. This understanding, then, guided the development of the volume and the chapters within it.

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We are grateful to the NCSA, its board of directors, and its president, Lucy Morrison, for their support of our concept for the conference and of the volume. We valued the willingness of the authors herein to share their work in this forum and to develop their contributions as we developed the volume's concept, acknowledging that while any strengths of this project are owed to many, any defects are ours alone. We owe a great deal to the body of scholars at the NCSA conference, who heard all our papers and helped us develop our insights. We especially want to thank the reviewers of this book, whose feedback was critical in helping us sharpen our thinking. We thank the staff at Ohio University Press for their support in bringing this project to the printed page. We also want to acknowledge and thank the staff at New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University, particularly Mary Bauer, Lucy Berchini, Tracy Encizo, and Stacey Kimbell, who supported us as we wrote, and to ASU itself for the research leave that supported Daniel Bivona and for the encouragement that all its faculty produce scholarship, even when engaged in administrative work. Our final word of thanks goes to our patient families, who have valued our active scholarly life and its work, even when it taxed our time and energy. It has been a pleasure, for both of us, to work together on this project and to engage in conversation about our field. We are grateful for the opportunity to do so with you now.

INTRODUCTION

Abstracting Economics

Daniel Bivona and Marlene Tromp

From the early 1980s onward, scholars in the humanities have taken an increasing interest in economics as an object of critical study in their own fields, and there are compelling reasons for this attention. Chief among these are the recognition that economics inflects and perhaps shapes nearly every other issue we study in the period and an understanding that the birth of the field during the nineteenth century gives that relationship between that moment of time and that body of knowledge special weight. Political economy, or the “dismal science,” emerged as a distinct, recognizable disciplinary strand closely entwined with Benthamite utilitarianism. Ultimately, the field enshrined its own intellectual heroes—Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo—in a pantheon constructed in John Ramsey McCulloch’s textbook *The Principles of Political Economy* (published in 1825). Even more influential with the literate public than McCulloch’s work during the next decade was Harriet Martineau’s *Illustrations of Political Economy*. Martineau’s narratives, published between 1832 and 1834, sought to help readers grasp the basic concepts of political economy by furnishing them with stories that illuminated important political economic concepts. Aimed at a broad audience that was, by and large, not well-informed about either the details of economic issues or the principles of political economic thought, Martineau’s *Illustrations* demonstrate how the literary (and humanistic) and the economic were closely tied together from the

early days of the foundation of the discipline, as well as being linked to the emerging, and powerfully felt, need to justify the ways of political economy to man.¹ What was also clear to many by the 1830s was that the doctrines of political economy were sufficiently obscure and counter-intuitive to ordinary readers to require the aid of didactic abstracts.

Such economic narratives can today offer us a means of analyzing a range of cultural processes and attitudes that can provide a keener understanding of the nineteenth century. The kind and quality of investment and the processes of speculation; the physical manufacture of money and its representational function, the shifting fiscal value of goods, services, and ideas; and how one understands investors become critical to understanding nineteenth-century social networks. Similarly, the language and concepts developed to articulate economic processes infiltrated other aspects of culture. How people understood the value of banknotes and how individuals, families, and groups were impacted by economic language, even in cases in which these matters seem only tangentially related to money matters, were objects of great concern throughout the century and form the basis of several of the chapters here. This volume sets out to explore how these processes work and to launch a new conversation in our field about what a better understanding of this interpenetration might reveal.

There has been some important research on the intersections of economics, economic theory, and the literary and cultural history of the nineteenth century, and our work is made possible by and grows from that grounding. The interdisciplinary field that is usually referred to as New Economic Criticism has been well tended since the 1980s by scholars such as Kurt Heinzelman, David Kauffman, Martha Woodmansee, Mark Osteen, Elaine Freedgood, and more recently, Regenia Gagnier, Mary Poovey, Patrick Brantlinger, and Catherine Gallagher, not to mention Francis O’Gorman (editor of *Victorian Literature and Finance* [2007]) and Nancy Henry and Cannon Schmitt (editors of *Victorian Investments* [2009]). Our contention is that, nonetheless, there is quite a bit more to say about this rich field. Rather than focusing, as much earlier work in this field has done, on a critique of the fundamental assumptions of economics as a discipline, the chapters in *Culture and Money in the Nineteenth Century: Abstracting Economics* all attempt to recenter arguments about the relationship between economic concepts and other cultural phenomena. All of our chapters address both economic concepts and issues in the nineteenth century: that is, both

what we would call disciplinary concepts and language and also “the economic,” a domain that exceeds the limits of political economy’s concepts. All chapters offer suggestive arguments for how economic concepts and ideas about money are abstracted into other discourses in the period, finding their way into the shaping of concepts in evolutionary science and literary narrative, debates about the social role of professional expertise, discussions of the missions of art galleries, the language of Victorian wills, the formulation of the social meaning of textiles, the positing of the character traits of successful businessmen, the performances of adventurers seeking to market their reputations, and the representation of Indian beggars. This volume’s focus on abstraction offers a shift in the conversation and opens an opportunity for the authors here to discuss how and why economic tropes played such an important role in defining the relationship between the local and the global, both in the political and geographic sense (nation versus globe) and in the disciplinary sense (the universalistic truth claims of post-Enlightenment science versus more local and contingent claims to truth).

Rather than training their attention on a critique of the practices of the disciplinary field of economics, as many New Economic theorists did in the 1980s and ’90s, the writers of the contributions in this volume focus more on what one might call the *generative uses* of the economic, on how the *abstraction* of economic ideas and tropes gave shape to a variety of discourses in the nineteenth century, both infusing these discourses with intellectual heft and securing the place of economic thought and economic metaphors to a proper understanding of the history of the nineteenth century.

CRITICAL CONTEXT

The introduction to Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen’s influential volume of essays, *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics* (1999), opens with the writers posing an important double question about the justification for the whole field of New Economic Criticism as it is seen from the perspective of the late 1990s: what can literary scholars learn from economists, and what can economists learn from literary scholars?² These seem to have been the compelling questions of the day in 1999, and indeed they still are, although humanities scholars and professional economists still occupy somewhat distinct niches in the academy and significant disciplinary

cross-fertilization remains—for institutional, historical, and sometimes cultural reasons—a somewhat distant goal. Woodmansee and Osteen argue that critical theory brings tools of great value to this interdisciplinary study because it challenges many of the basic assumptions grounding economic theory. For instance, some of the ciphers traditionally considered crucial to structuring the intellectual core of economics as a discipline—the “market,” “rational behavior,” and “self-interest” chief among them—can be, and have been, shown to be tropes sometimes unthinkingly reified, or at least not fully examined critically, in the writing of professional economists. The usefulness of the New Economic Criticism lies, among other things, in its opening up this critical discussion of what David Kauffman, in 1995, called the “fictive” foundation of economics as a field, a foundation it shares with literary studies but which has, by and large, been little discussed within the discipline of economics.³

Martha Woodmansee’s investigation of the origins of modern copyright provides a good example of how what one might call the dominant approach to economic concepts and language among New Economic critics—active historicizing—helps to free us from the temptation to conflate contemporary meanings and legal and economic concepts with earlier ones and to recognize the historically and disciplinarily contingent nature of economic concepts. She trains a historicist lens on dramatic changes in the conception of legal ownership of intellectual property in the eighteenth century. Along with Peter Jazsi, Woodmansee argues that the establishment of modern legal copyright requires the deliberate disavowal of the social aspect of literary ownership in favor of an emergent notion of individual ownership. It is, they contend, “a reconceptualization that downplays the social aspect of writing to foreground its individual aspects; figures it as essentially solitary and originary rather than collaborative; presents it as the product of inspired genius rather than the application of age-old technique to inherited materials.”⁴ What the authors refer to as a “Romantic construction” of the role of author as originator of the text helped create the competitive literary marketplace of eighteenth-century Britain by vesting legal ownership of the work entirely in an individual “author” who thereby gained market leverage in his or her negotiations with booksellers. This solitary authorship model remained the standard for legal authorship throughout the nineteenth century, and it remains so today. However, the beginning of the twentieth century saw the assertion, found in the U.S. Copyright Act of 1909, that literary works may also be owned by

an “employer” or a corporation, which itself occupied the legal status of “author,” a phenomenon analogous to the designation of corporations as legal persons in the mid-nineteenth century. Twentieth-century examples include the corporately owned Nancy Drew mysteries and the Harlequin romances.⁵ In short, historicizing can lead to a useful critical mapping of ever-changing economic concepts and their relationship to ideological formations.

Mary Poovey has recently joined the argument for this longer historical perspective and for shifting the focus of the field somewhat from economic concepts and tropes to money and representation and, in particular, to the historical affiliation between literature and money. In *Genres of the Credit Economy* (2008), Poovey takes us back to an earlier moment in Europe before the differentiation of money, economic writing, and literary writing was complete. In effect, she offers something of an origin myth for money, economics, and literature, seeking to locate the process by which contemporary conceptualizations begin to emerge—without recourse to those contemporary understandings to frame them.⁶ In Poovey’s telling of the story, attempts to distinguish between literary texts and banknotes often target the many generic hybrids that circulated in the eighteenth century, works such as Thomas Brydges’s *Adventures of a Bank-Note* (1771), although the very proliferation of these hybrids also testifies to the undifferentiated nature of the categories in this period.⁷ For instance, the widespread use of bills of exchange in the eighteenth century made close “reading” of these bills mandatory if one was to determine their authenticity, thus bringing together what we now see as separate economic and literary activities in the act of establishing value. The introduction of banknotes by the Bank of England in the eighteenth century revealed how fraught the issue of “authenticity” was at this time, for these notes were seldom accepted for exchange beyond a twenty-mile radius of the City for most of the eighteenth century. Not until the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars (1797) was the Bank of England relieved—through the Bank Restriction Act—of the requirement to redeem notes for gold. The result, however, was complicated by the popular wish to see money as embodying, rather than simply representing, value, and so the bank’s legally sanctioned refusal to convert its notes into gold during this period was anything but popular. In Poovey’s words, “[B]ecause [paper money] simply represents, instead of embodying, value paper always defers its ground and, thus, is always subject to deflation.”⁸

Poovey's origin myth for money invites comparison with the work of the influential scholar most closely associated with the theorization of economic exchange, not simply as the ground of literature but as the foundation of the relationship between language itself and money and thus central to all economic literary criticism: Jean-Joseph Goux. Goux rejects the relationship of "analogy" altogether in speaking of the relationship between literature and money, arguing instead that the relationship between the two is stronger and ultimately based in a homology. Relying heavily on Karl Marx's analysis of the function of money in *Capital*, Goux theorizes a generalized concept of exchange, asserting nothing less than that money, more than anything else, derives its power from the fact that it "makes unlike things commensurable."⁹ Of course, Goux implicitly demotes labor as the ground of value here (in Adam Smith's formulation, which Marx borrowed and updated) in favor of money. In Woodmansee and Osteen's critical view, Goux, however, ultimately succumbs to a tendency to assume the primacy of the economic, which Poovey does not.¹⁰ One might argue that this latter tendency runs against the grain of much New Economic Criticism of the 1980s and '90s, which, in general, eschewed the privileging of the economic register, attempting instead to offer itself as a critical meditation on economics as a field from outside of its disciplinary borders. The controversial, but nonetheless influential, figure most closely associated with a searching critique of professional economics from within its borders is, of course, Deirdre N. McCloskey.¹¹

The issue of consumption and consumer behavior has been explored by some notable figures in this field, especially those whose work focuses on the late nineteenth century. Attending to the importance of the marginalist revolution in late nineteenth-century economic thought, usually associated with the British economists W. Stanley Jevons and Alfred Marshall, consumerist theory owes much to the pioneering work of Rachel Bowlby (*Just Looking* [1985] and *Carried Away* [2002]) and to the insightful historicist work of Regenia Gagnier (*The Insatiability of Human Wants* [2000]). In her book, Gagnier argues that neoclassical economics' theorization of marginal utility needs to be understood as a response to the threat posed by the troubling late Victorian fear that basic economic needs might well, one day, be satiated by a productive capitalist order, thus bringing economic growth to a grinding halt as demand is curtailed. Jevons's introduction of the concept of marginal utility addresses this looming problem by offering a theoretical explanation

of, in Gagnier's terms, how "taste" supplants "need" as the central object of economic interest in advanced capitalist societies. The focus on "need" implies the recognition that there will come a moment when all basic needs might well be met for the bulk of the population, thus limiting the future growth of consumer spending. "Taste," by contrast, has a major advantage over "need": it is potentially unlimited because it drives a theoretically endless process of individuation and thus provides the fundamental impetus to our modern economic order, whose dynamism relies on the perpetual discovery and satisfaction of an infinity of new consumer tastes. In Gagnier's words,

Jevons, Menger, and the other early theorists of consumption claimed that as the basic needs of subsistence were satisfied, humankind's desire for variety in shelter, food, dress, and leisure grew limitlessly, and thus the idea of needs—which were finite and the focus of political economy—was displaced by the idea of tastes, which were theoretically infinite. *Modern* man would henceforth be known by the insatiability of his desires, and Others on the road to modernity needed only to be inspired by envy to desire his desires, to imitate his wants, to be on the road to his progress and his *civilization*. His nature, insatiability, was henceforth human nature itself. His mode, consumer society, was no longer one stage of human progress but its culmination and end.¹²

This formulation inevitably recenters the literary by recentring one of its most important concepts—desire. Indeed, Gagnier's formulation of Jevons's theory is partly indebted to the work of the literary critic René Girard, who analyzes the relationship of envy to desire, what he calls "mediated desire," in his classic analysis of desire in fiction, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* (1961).¹³ Gagnier's argument embeds us deeply in a late nineteenth-century economic argument over whether an inexhaustible pursuit of individuation can ensure economic growth in perpetuity and connects economic theorizing directly with other late Victorian cultural phenomena such as the cultural movement known as aestheticism. The flamboyant self-fashioning of writers such as Oscar Wilde and the economic pursuit of individual uniqueness as a goal in and of itself are, in Gagnier's view, intimately related cultural and economic phenomena.

To be sure, an interest in consumer society and in money in the broadest sense is closely linked in some of the important recent work of other New Economic critics, some of whom have been inspired by

the work of Bowlby and Gagnier. Since 2000, as Francis O’Gorman acknowledges in his introduction to *Victorian Literature and Finance* (2007), scholars with an interest in economics and the literary and cultural history of Britain and the British Empire in the nineteenth century have turned increasingly from telling the story of the Industrial Revolution and its social effects to telling a variety of other stories: about the growth of consumerism, the expansion and growth in the influence of the middle class, and the nineteenth-century preoccupation with finance and money. This turn from a scholarly focus on production to one of consumption has especially been evident in the field of Victorian studies, as the example of Gagnier shows, but O’Gorman discusses it in terms of a broader turn in disciplinary focus:

Marxist criticism has relinquished its conspicuous place in the Anglo-American academy. Its emphasis on literature and the economics of production, and particularly on the social-problem novel and literature between about 1830 and 1870, has been replaced, nevertheless, by the current, economically inspired interest among critics of different priorities. . . . If the factory was the totemic capitalist structure for the earlier generation of writers, the equivalent for the new group of scholars considering the relationship of economics and culture—historians, literature scholars, cultural critics—is the department store, the shopping mall, and later the cinema.¹⁴

This shift O’Gorman points to in the field, from a concern with production to an increasing preoccupation with consumption, value, and consumer desire, is visible not only in Bowlby’s and Gagnier’s work but also in all the contributions in O’Gorman’s collection. Gordon Bigelow’s “Inside Out: Value and Display in Thomas De Quincey and Isaac Butt,” for instance, argues convincingly that De Quincey and Butt inaugurated what he calls “a romantic turn” in political economy starting in the 1830s, a shift from the “rational analysis” of human productive activity to a “romantic” focus on inner and subjective desires and needs—a shift not unrelated to nineteenth-century fiction’s emphasis on interiority and one that looked forward to the theorization of infinitely expandable, mediated desire as the chief driver of economic life.¹⁵ Other contributions in that collection provide useful insights into the work of literary figures in the act of manipulating or attempting to manipulate the legal and reviewing system to their own individual economic advantage: from

Catherine Seville's chapter about Edward Bulwer-Lytton's campaign for universal copyright (which even, at one point, involved bribery), to Alison Chapman's chapter on Elizabeth Barrett Browning's bypassing of English periodical readership to protect the market for her English poetry volume and to insulate herself from the "sting of the British periodicals," to Jane Moody's discussion of Dion Bouicault's *The Poor of New York* (1857), which was reshaped into several "local" versions that earned it a place on the stages of such cities as London, Philadelphia, Boston, Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool.¹⁶ Several essays in *Victorian Literature and Finance* examine other exercises of economic self-interest by literary figures, including the important investing activities of women writers examined by Nancy Henry in "'Ladies Do It?' Victorian Women Investors in Fact and Fiction."

Some of the cultural, racial, and gender dimensions to Victorian investment raised by Nancy Henry's chapter in O'Gorman's book are also treated in the contributions in Nancy Henry and Cannon Schmitt's *Victorian Investments* (2009). Both Ian Baucom and Timothy Alborn discuss there the complex evolution of insurance as a means of lowering or spreading risk. Baucom's claim that "value survives its object"—that "[i]nsurance thus does not confer a monetary value upon lost things, it sets the money-form of value free from the life of things"—is trenchantly illustrated by his discussion of the shipwreck of the *Zong*, a slaver caught in foul weather in the eighteenth century.¹⁷ The ship was saved after its captain ordered some African slaves to be thrown overboard to reduce its weight; the cargo's owners later brought a successful suit against the insurers to recover the value of this lost "cargo." They succeeded in winning a favorable judgment for compensation, thus proving, as Baucom would have it, that the value of the slaves survived the death of the slaves—a crucial, if gruesome, moment in the establishment of a basic principle of insurance and thus an important legal moment in the taming of economic risk.

Donna Loftus's chapter in the same volume, "Limited Liability, Market Democracy, and the Social Organization of Production in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain," also addresses the issue of liability—this time, the Parliamentary Acts of 1855 and 1856, which, for the first time in British history, limited liability incurred by investors in failing ventures. As Mary Poovey reminds us in a chapter in the same volume, "Writing about Finance in Victorian England," individuals had been allowed—to their peril—to invest in joint stock companies in London

since as early as 1824.¹⁸ Loftus is particularly interested in an issue with large historical implications: how limited liability laws seem to “confirm the separate interests of capital and labor.”¹⁹ Despite that negative tendency, there were optimistic promoters of stock investing at the time who saw it as a means of securing a future for working-class people. These include Christian socialists who saw it as a potential panacea for the working class.²⁰ Other, more cautious, figures such as John Stuart Mill worried, however, that working-class people lacked the skills needed for successful investing in the stock market.²¹

If investment activities were spurred by a variety of social and legal changes evident in the nineteenth century, the insuring of bodies raises deeper questions about the relationship of the human body to—and its resistance to—economic formulation. Among those in the field of New Economic Criticism who have thought deeply about how the body and bodily sensation are implicated in economic phenomena, perhaps the most influential has been Catherine Gallagher. Her book *The Body Economic*, published in 2006, offers a novel discussion of the contrast between what she calls “bioeconomics” (which grounds the economic in relation to the issue of life and death and thus is often associated with the name of Thomas Malthus) and “somaeconomics” (which centralizes the role of the Benthamite “felicific calculus” of pleasure and pain). Gallagher focuses in this book on the connection between economic activity and bodily sensation or bodily drives, both of which are central to the theories of both Malthus and Jeremy Bentham. Her overall argument emphasizes what one might call the “tragic tradition” in political economy, whether it be Malthus’s contention that “sexual intercourse is both ineradicable and essential to human happiness” (but inevitably leads the poor to produce so many babies that they undermine their own economic welfare) or Ricardo’s labor theory of value, to which Gallagher refers as the “pain theory of value.”²² Identifying the major literary and artistic figures associated with the attack on political economy in the Victorian age (Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens, and John Ruskin, in particular), she offers a compelling reinterpretation of that Victorian critique that subsumes some of these critics into the discourse they are attacking. For example, Dickens’s *Hard Times*, widely read (for good reasons) as a satirical attack on Benthamite utilitarianism, seems to have its guns trained as much on Carlyle’s gospel of work as on Bentham’s ideas. Indeed, Bentham, she reminds us, was not a proponent of the Carlylean gospel of work, denying throughout his career that there

was any intrinsic value to work.²³ Moreover, Gallagher's reading of the novel *Hard Times* as an implicit defense of the hard work involved in the "amusement business," the "business to which [the novel] supposedly belongs," snares Dickens in his own trap as she exposes his inconsistency in promoting "hard work" in the novel while, at the same time, lampooning those who teach the work ethic to the young.²⁴

ABSTRACTION AND THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE ECONOMIC

This brief survey reveals the main contours of the field as it stands. We believe it also exposes a largely unexamined terrain in the careful mapping that has already been done. This space is a field on which the twin issues of abstraction and global impact, or claims to universality central to both economic theorizing and economic life, are engaged. In the time of Adam Smith, economics had presented itself as a science of exchange whose claims to truth had a universal reference because they were grounded in the facts of human nature and human behavior. While much of the work done thus far in this field draws heavily on domestic British examples and thinkers, many of those thinkers were asserting more than local and contingent truths but *universal* ones, as one would expect of an Enlightenment project. It is not surprising that the major lights of eighteenth-century political economy were British (or Scottish)—two of them (Smith and Malthus) teacher and pupil, in fact—although the contribution of the French physiocrats ought not to be overlooked. The emergence of political economic theorizing in Britain during the late eighteenth century is not surprising in light of the incontestable fact that Britain was the world's first industrialized society and ruler, after 1763, of the largest empire in the world. However, from its inception, political economy was grounded in Enlightenment notions of universal human acquisitiveness. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* sought to explain the basic principles responsible for the generation of wealth, not simply in the British Isles but across the world. The principles he lays out in that book were meant to guide our understanding of what any "nation" must do to prosper in a competitive world order. He was not interested in what we might call a "particularistic" or "nationalistic" analysis of Britain's so-called "right" to rule an expanding overseas empire, nor did he vaunt the superior qualities of the British "nation" that somehow accounted for Britain's success in accumulating a growing commercial empire, as many Victorian supporters of imperialism would

do later. A cosmopolitan thinker, he offered his labor theory of value as a broad foundation for understanding any form of human-constructed value. Moreover, he was suspicious of the “monopolistic” desires of royalty and the aristocratic class that supported an expanding empire, not to mention the fetishistic acquisitiveness that drove all wrong-headed mercantilist celebrations of national glory—his most specific political target throughout the *Wealth of Nations*.

Writing at the outbreak of war with the American colonies, Smith raised a devastating challenge to the Tory claim that ruling a vast and expanding empire was the chief means for a nation to prosper. What he wished his readers especially to grasp was the economic and political folly that underwrote the claim that formal empire (and a monopolized market that generates tax revenue) was the proper route to accumulating wealth:

A great empire has been established for the sole purpose of raising up a nation of customers who should be obliged to buy from the shops of our different producers all the goods with which these could supply them. For the sake of that little enhancement of price which this monopoly might afford our producers, the home-consumers have been burdened with the whole expence of maintaining and defending that empire. For this purpose, and for this purpose only . . . a new debt of more than a hundred and seventy millions has been contracted over and above all that had been expended for the same purpose in former wars. The interest of this debt alone is not only greater than the whole extraordinary profit which it ever could be pretended was made by the monopoly of the colony trade, but than the whole value of that trade.²⁵

Here, he put in starkly political economic terms his case against formal empire and the monopolistic trading practices that ultimately led to war between Britain and its North American colonies. In Smith’s view, formal empire simply did not pay. Moreover, imagining that it did pay tended to nurture a serious national political problem by reinforcing the social authority of exactly those elites—the Crown, the aristocratic class—whose dominant social and political positions had never been earned but only inherited and whose social privileges could be reinforced only if they were protected from the indignity of fair competition.

While many of the chapters in this volume address a critical assessment of the field of which he is usually treated as founder, they also embark on a study of the nineteenth century's engagement with economic concepts—and their radical implications—many of which owe much to Adam Smith's work. To be sure, the agent in Smith's engagement with universal human acquisitiveness was the seemingly particularistic figure of the "nation," but his title, notably, pluralized it to "nations," reinforcing the universality of his claims. Smith may have criticized Louis XIV's minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert for his wrong-headed mercantilist policies and deplored (as in the quotation above) the British government's attempt to prevent the American colonists from trading with other nations. This was not, however, because Smith believed either the French or the British nation to be incapable of embracing the wisdom of free trade by virtue of being French or British. Free trade, he argued, was beneficial to everyone who engaged in it. Two chapters in this volume, Kathryn Pratt Russell's "Walter Scott's Two Nations and the State of the Textile Industry in Britain" and Jennifer Hayward's "El Metálico Lord: Money and Mythmaking in Thomas Cochrane's 1859 *Narrative of Services in the Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil from Spanish and Portuguese Domination*," in fact, offer intriguing meditations on the tension between the particularistic concept of "Scottishness," self-constructed economic value, and the issues associated with Romantic anticolonialism in two Scotsmen, the writer Sir Walter Scott and the war hero and Latin American revolutionary Thomas Cochrane.

As this is the first volume to inquire into the practice of abstracting economics, we recognize that we risk overgeneralizing the processes we attempt to outline here. We might have made a tightly structured case in a more narrowly defined field if we, the editors, had elected to coauthor a monograph on the subject ourselves. Through our particular interests in science or investment, we might have traced the movement of abstraction more richly back and forth along a single channel. Our decision to bring together a collection of essays spanning space and disciplines emerged from our sense that the tidier case was less compelling than the one showing broader expression of the interrelatedness of economics and other cultural constructs. With this body of work, produced by scholars from across the globe and representing a variety of different fields of study, we contend that these processes of abstraction—both in economics and of economics—were widespread and intellectually salient across the nations engaged in economic and social exchanges. To

demonstrate that economic abstraction obtains in a range of contexts demonstrates its force as a subject of study. What we hope to do with this collection of essays is to press beyond the birth of these constructs and to follow their continual process of interpenetration: how are literature, culture, and economics intimately interrelated throughout the nineteenth century? Inspired by a newly invigorated cultural understanding of the economy's capacity to mark virtually all other aspects of life—an understanding, in part, born out of the global economic crash of 2008—we want to look back and understand how this interpenetration of meaning in economics and the cultural, as well as the abstraction of economics by scientists, lawyers, and writers into other fields, became so naturalized as to become largely invisible to us. We also actively trace how certain concepts and forms of language, emerging in the economic sphere during a particular cultural moment, came to be an intimate part of other aspects of culture: not just in terms of fiscal matters but conceptually. While we are inspired by our newfound contemporary sense of the interrelatedness of economics and other processes in culture, we do not wish simply to apply contemporary tools of economic analysis to the nineteenth century, which others before us have already ably done. Rather, we want to examine a variety of specific cases—case studies, if you will—in which we see this process of abstraction moving into economics or out of it, so that we might better understand the nineteenth century and, in doing so, perhaps better understand our own social and economic entanglements.

As our title suggests, we sought to assemble a collection of essays that would engage with the complex and interrelated issues of money, nineteenth-century political economy, and the cultural understandings of issues from fine art to family wills. Many of the chapters explore narratives dramatizing moral issues that were often, at bottom, driven by money concerns. All of the contributors deal, at some level, with how issues that are usually categorized these days as “economic” help to shape the way a variety of phenomena from scientific theory to characterology to poverty and empire are conceptualized in economic terms and through an understanding of the intimate relationship between economics in a global economy and everything else from art to heroism to death. While this turn to “the economic” is undoubtedly influenced by those claims made on us by the heated concerns of the present, this volume strives for a broader perspective and seeks to flesh out some of the terms of a nineteenth-century marriage of economics with other

cultural elements: what impact did the process of incorporating and utilizing economic language and of developing national economic practices have on the Victorians' sense of character, on how to understand the natural world around them, and on how to define their national identity and their relationship to other nations?

We employ the word *abstract* as both an intransitive and a transitive verb. The chapters that follow examine how economics emerged through a process of abstraction: a generalizing or summarizing from a series of quantifiable, material fiscal events that created certain discursive structures that then came to be associated with the field of "economics." We highlight the universalized, and, as a result, nearly mythic structures that have been crafted in order to create our understanding of money and the economic structures through which it moves and has meaning. These essays also examine the abstraction of these discursive structures to and from other fields, for example, how economic concepts helped form nineteenth-century understandings of evolution or racial and national relations. So foundational have these processes been that they have often escaped attention as processes. By exploring the abstraction of economics, we can better understand the nineteenth century and the ways in which money both figured and was figured by the social world. The development of economic abstractions must necessarily be international for nineteenth-century nations engaged in global trade. For this reason, our volume has an intentionally broad global reach, stretching from Britain and the United States to Chile, India, and China. We hoped through this approach to underscore the fact that since before the nineteenth century, no system of currency, of wealth and poverty, or of economic relationships has been able to operate without reference to the global landscape. In bringing together this interdisciplinary and international body of essays, we wish to suggest the enmeshment of these fields and the necessity of engaging them in dialogue in new ways to develop our understanding of this very complex matrix of ideas and practices.

While all the chapters here devote some attention to the issues of the global abstraction of economic concepts and metaphors, we have divided them into two parts reflecting the major foci of this book: part 1, "Broad Abstractions: Character, Professional Expertise, and Nature"; and part 2, "Particular Abstractions: Economics and Culture." The chapters in the first part outline a broad field of play for economic abstraction and its capacity to deeply penetrate other conceptual fields,

which positioned the qualities of both as universal: from heredity, eugenics, and other emerging scientific constructs to battles over currency, these three chapters engage with economic abstraction in the context of emerging, though still heavily contested, notions of professional authority in the nineteenth century. They explore the ways in which biological science, which made intentional claims to universalism, sought a ground in economics and in which those in the economic professions sought a kind of universalizing authority.

The second part consists of five chapters that address the abstraction of particular economic concepts into various fields, from art lotteries to textiles to the representation of Indian beggars by Victorian do-gooders to social anxieties about “bad wills” to heroic self-mythologization. These contributions dig into specific cases of this abstraction to refine the more expansive concepts, examining the social implications of the interpenetration of political economy and culture.

We are aware that other frameworks could have profitably structured our discussion and analysis and that any frame will have its limitations. We chose, however, to open this dialogue by moving from broad and universalizing constructs being established across fields of thought (the intransitive form of abstraction) to particular uses of those constructs (the transitive form)—notions that, of course, necessarily overlap. We hope in this way to begin to understand the ways in which money and economics were, in fact, broadly “abstracted”; examining the material effects of those abstractions not only can provide a useful construct for reading this period but also may help us develop intellectually meaningful tools for understanding contemporary economic questions.

In part 1, Aeron Hunt explores Victorian notions of business success through character formation in “Born to the Business: Heredity, Ability, and Commercial Character in Late Victorian Britain.” While the well-known self-help tradition has long supplied the main route to critically discussing Victorian characterology, Hunt argues that Victorian discourses on business character actually were as interested in explaining how to read shrewdly the character of others as they were in the question of how to develop the proper character to achieve business success. By the 1880s, she argues, the emerging sciences of eugenics and psychology had come to offer new opportunities for reading character as it is “physicalized,” that is, expressed physiognomically. Moreover, Hunt demonstrates that the “physicalization” or “biologization” of business character, which made use of Galtonian faculty psychology, procured

for those who practiced it a great deal of professional prestige, despite the claims of critics that Sir Francis Galton's own demonstration of the statistical reality of "regression to the mean" meant that it was hardly likely that the sons of "business geniuses" would inherit the abilities of their "genius" fathers. In her reading of Margaret Oliphant's novels, Hunt offers a Victorian novelist's counter to what she considered the indefensible notion of inherited business character, one that features the reading and interpretive skills that make successful novel readers into successful readers of character.

In chapter 2, "Shifting the Ground of Monetary Politics: The Case of the 1870s," Roy Kreitner shifts our attention from Britain to the United States and to the intensifying debates throughout the Gilded Age about the safety of the money supply. Kreitner is interested in a major political question about the popular mind and the role of money and economic value: how could the heated debates about the status of paper money in the aftermath of the Civil War, which began in the 1870s and culminated in 1896 with William Jennings Bryan's well-known "Cross of Gold" speech, have become muted by 1913 with the establishment of an institution of nonideological "experts" to regulate monetary policy, the governors of the Federal Reserve? Kreitner answers this question through an intriguing analysis of the politics of the Gilded Age that forces his readers to step outside the set of assumptions that Americans of the Federal Reserve era make about money, monetary policy, and economic expertise. Essentially, Kreitner argues, most nineteenth-century Americans considered Congress to be the proper place for debates and decisions about the currency, the shaping of which was considered a thoroughly "political" topic. In an era of American politics before the consolidation of professional expertise on matters of money, Congress seemed the right body to debate and legislate about matters that had real impacts on the lives of all Americans. The notion of detached, professional expertise being brought to bear on monetary policy in the Gilded Age was a seemingly "undemocratic" concept only beginning to form itself in the popular mind. With the growing dominance of influential bankers in the Progressive Era, public sentiment began shifting away from a vision of democratic debate about matters monetary and toward an embrace of a professionalized vision of a tight circle of major bankers managing on behalf of all. In short, the shift Kreitner maps out involves a movement from a notion of America's culture as a democratic culture with a rooted suspicion of expertise toward a view of

democratic culture as one that has learned to accommodate the role of “expertise” in its institutions even at the cost of a certain diminution of public, democratic influence.

Daniel Bivona’s “The Comparative Advantages of Survival: Darwin’s *Origin*, Competition, and the Economy of Nature” sees Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution through natural selection as intellectually framed by the powerful influence of the theoretical conceptions central to political economy: in particular, competition and wealth. Going well beyond Darwin’s confession of having been influenced by Malthus’s *Essay on Population*, Bivona argues that Smithian notions of competition and wealth are central to Darwin’s conceptualization of nature. For Bivona, Smith’s critique of intentionality and his ideas about division of labor and comparative advantage form the intellectual spine—a fundamentally economic argument—to *The Origin of Species*, even if, as Bivona argues, it seems likely that Darwin got his Smith mostly secondhand from Harriet Martineau rather than through reading and digesting the *Wealth of Nations*. Indeed, the Smithian definition of wealth in the context of national prosperity seems to have been central to Darwin’s ability to conceptualize the complex idea of what constitutes evolutionary success. In Bivona’s view, the function of the many abstracted concepts Darwin drew from political economy is simultaneously conceptual and rhetorical: conceptual, in that numerous political economic ideas framed his argument for natural selection; rhetorical, insofar as Darwin was able to make his argument compelling for his readers by drawing on a framework of concepts already well accepted and invested with some professional prestige.

Part 2 begins with Cordelia Smith’s intriguing reading of the significance of the art lotteries that emerged within a decade of the demise of the British State Lottery in 1826 in her chapter, “Art Unions and the Changing Face of Victorian Gambling.” While lottery gambling had been widely deplored as a vice that could bring moral and economic ruin upon the most vulnerable of Britain’s citizens earlier in the century, the new art lotteries, run by the Victorian art unions, awarded paintings (and prints) rather than money as prizes to avoid that criticism. Designed initially to stimulate the art market, they helped create what Smith calls “an entirely new kind of gambling culture,” one in which the positive moral effects of the arts were held to far outweigh the negative effects of gambling. Indeed, in Smith’s view, the new art unions’ lotteries not only helped make a new market for art in Victorian Britain

but also helped to create a middle-class gambling culture in which financial risk taking came to be widely seen as ethically viable. The clear implication, though one Smith does not directly argue here, is that the success of the art lotteries helped encourage the British public's acceptance of a new range of risk-taking activities that became central to developing capitalism in the nineteenth century.

Jennifer Hayward's "El Metálico Lord: Money and Mythmaking in Thomas Cochrane's 1859 *Narrative of Services in the Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil from Spanish and Portuguese Domination*" tells the story of a Royal Navy hero in the sea campaign against Napoleon who had fallen into debt by 1814, was stripped of the Order of Bath, and decided to flee Britain in disgrace to recoup his fortune and fame fighting for South American independence. The original of Frederick Marryat's *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, Cochrane used his fame and fighting abilities—his mythic persona—as a form of capital that he invested wisely. In turning from pursuing military fame in return for awards to pursuing military fame in order to make money, he made unusual use of his self-constructed global reputation as symbolic capital. Indeed, as Hayward argues, his need to make a very modern use of prestige to enhance his economic well-being was at least partly imposed on him by his national background—a Scot who would never, he felt, be fully recognized by England for what he was worth.

Suzanne Daly's "From Cooperation to Concentration: Socialism, Salvationism, and the 'Indian Beggar'" explores the development of the Victorian received idea of India as a land swarming with the poor. Rather than attempting to measure such a subjective—and thus elusive—thing, Daly instead examines a variety of tourist guides, missionary works, and travel narratives of the period to explore how the idea of Indian beggary was constructed by a variety of British interests to buttress ideological claims about the nature of Indian society, a society full of "exotic spectacles, economic indicators, or objects of pity." The result was often the construction of a self-serving and useful mission for the writer who found professional and economic opportunity in what was believed to be Indian misery.

In "Walter Scott's Two Nations and the State of the Textile Industry in Britain," Kathryn Pratt Russell examines Scott's construction of an imagined national past that still invigorates the nation in the present. Moreover, Pratt Russell focuses in particular on an underexplored theme in Scott's writings that is connected to this construction: his deliberately

anachronistic celebration of cloth (in particular, linen) as a truly patriotic commodity. Partly prompted by his suspicions of working-class radicalism during his novel-writing period (1814–32), Scott developed a novelistic celebration of truly “aristocratic” cloth—fine linen—and used it to represent the finest qualities he associated with the nation whose bard he had hoped he had become. Not surprisingly, the choice of linen as a commodity reflects as well an implicit denigration (and thus suspicion) of the mass-produced commodity par excellence, cotton, because of its association with the working-class radicalism he had come to suspect.

Finally, in “Antidomestic: The Afterlife of Wills and the Politics of Foreign Investment, 1850–85,” Marlene Tromp considers a notably underexplored way in which the willing of wealth could disrupt social life long after death. She focuses on numerous “bad wills” that previous scholars had not explored: that is, British wills that disrupted current social norms and expectations, particularly “bad wills” that generated xenophobic reactions when their authors willed fortunes to beneficiaries in other nations. In willing wealth to “others,” the authors of “bad wills” were more often than not accused of unethically undermining the financial health of the nation—an accusation that continues to be expressed today and is fundamentally tied to the nationalist anxieties originally provoked by, and allied with, mercantilism and insufficiently laid to rest by political economy’s critique.

We believe that these chapters as a body launch a dialogue about the new avenues of reading that open before us intellectually when we take the kind of complex material constructs that critics have traced in the nineteenth century and read the ways in which they were abstracted into a larger social world. Too often money has been treated as either simply a metaphor or simply a material fact. With this volume, we hope to begin to bridge these two poles and to build a more meaningful way of reading money and its abstractions in the nineteenth century.

NOTES

1. Elaine Freedgood claims that the *Illustrations* were, by contemporary standards, very popular with readers: “By 1834, the monthly sales . . . had reached 10,000, several times that of many Dickens’s novels, which at 2,000 or 3,000 per month were considered highly successful.” Freedgood, “Banishing Panic: Harriet Martineau and the Popularization of Political Economy,” in *The New*

Introduction

Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics, ed. Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen (New York: Routledge, 1999), 213.

2. Osteen and Woodmansee, introduction to Woodmansee and Osteen, *New Economic Criticism*, 2.

3. Kauffman cited in *ibid.*, 3.

4. Peter Jazsi and Martha Woodmansee, *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 6.

5. Osteen and Woodmansee, introduction to Woodmansee and Osteen, *New Economic Criticism*, 8.

6. Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

7. Thomas Brydges, *The Adventures of a Bank-Note* (London: T. Davies, 1771).

8. Poovey, *Genres*, 57.

9. Jean-Joseph Goux, quoted by Osteen and Woodmansee, introduction to Woodmansee and Osteen, *New Economic Criticism*, 13.

10. *Ibid.*, 14.

11. Deirdre N. McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) and *If You're So Smart: The Narrative of Economic Expertise* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

12. Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 94.

13. René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965).

14. Francis O'Gorman, introduction to *Victorian Literature and Finance*, ed. Francis O'Gorman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3.

15. Gordon Bigelow, "Inside Out: Value and Display in Thomas De Quincey and Isaac Butt," in O'Gorman, *Victorian Literature and Finance*, 47.

16. Catherine Seville, "Edward Bulwer Lytton Dreams of Copyright," in O'Gorman, *Victorian Literature and Finance*, 66–67; Alison Chapman, "'Vulgar Needs': Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Profit, and Literary Value," in *ibid.*, 80; Josephine M. Guy, "Cultural versus Financial Capital: Defining Literary Value at the *Fin de Siècle*," in *ibid.*, 108.

17. Ian Baucom, "'*Signum Rememorativum, Demonstrativum, Prognostikou*': Finance Capital, the Atlantic, and Slavery," in *Victorian Investments: New Perspectives on Finance and Culture*, ed. Nancy Henry and Cannon Schmitt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 30–31.

18. Mary Poovey, "Writing about Finance in Victorian England," in Henry and Schmitt, *Victorian Investments*, 40.

19. Donna Loftus, "Limited Liability, Market Democracy, and the Social Organization of Production in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain," in Henry and Schmitt, *Victorian Investments*, 80.

20. *Ibid.*, 83.

21. *Ibid.*, 87.

22. Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 22, 84.

23. *Ibid.*, 92.

24. *Ibid.*, 101.

25. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (London: Methuen, 1904), 4.8.53.

PART ONE

Broad Abstractions

Character, Professional Expertise, and Nature

CHAPTER ONE

Born to the Business

Heredity, Ability, and Commercial Character
in Late Victorian Britain

Aeron Hunt

What is the secret to business success? The question is routine— clichéd, even—appearing reliably on the covers of business magazines, in self-help volumes, and in the grandiose promises of one-day seminars with management gurus. There *must be* a secret: the success stories are combed for clues—decisions taken, habits adopted, opportunities spotted and seized. As one recent best seller posed the question, “When buffeted by tumultuous events, when hit by big, fast-moving forces that we can neither predict nor control, what distinguishes those who perform exceptionally well from those who underperform or worse?” The authors, management consultants and business-school faculty (current and former), confess to a “persistent angst” and a “gnawing sense of vulnerability in a world that feels increasingly disordered.” Their title—*Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck—Why Some Thrive Despite Them All*—offers a soothing promise: choice matters, agency exists. By reading about the “companies and leaders” who “navigate this type of world exceptionally well,” one can learn to master the uncertainty that conditions economic life.¹

Plus ça change: the “angst” of recent years finds plenty of parallels in the Victorian economic scene, which weathered crises and encountered

its own fast-moving and unpredictable forces, leaving businesspeople seeking just as tenaciously to manage the risks of commercial life. The postulation of abstract laws of political economy promised explanation but little comfort and limited agency. Many Victorian journalists, policy makers, and businesspeople turned their sights to the concept of character, which seemed to represent a path to an economy tamed and moralized by market rewards to reputation and commercial probity. But each new scandal or failure showed the promise of a self-correcting system failing in practice. Consequently, Victorian discourses of business character center not only on the familiar notion of self-help and character development but also on interpretation and accurate reading, to prevent costly errors.

Both character development and character interpretation suggested agency in a complex economy that too often seemed to exceed individual control. But even as character seemed to offer relief from the period's vexing economic abstractions—invoking real, particular agents as opposed to insubstantial financial instruments or anonymous corporate entities—its concreteness emerged more through contrast than as a feature of character itself. In fact, just what was being developed or interpreted under the sign of character varied greatly: “trust” and “talents,” for instance—one a moral quality and one an aspect of human capital—both inform Victorian concepts of business character. And not everything that entered into the range of associations that shaped ideas of character could be easily harnessed to the fantasy of agency.

In this chapter I focus on hereditary character, a physicalized concept that became increasingly prominent late in the century as the ideas of materialist psychologists and, especially, Francis Galton, filtered into business discourse.² Encompassing both moral qualities and aptitudes, skills, and talents, hereditary character was a construct that, on the one hand, set limits on self-help: one's inborn predispositions would condition the degree to which one could effectively exercise agency. On the other hand, it seemed to offer more effective agency on the interpretive side, as knowledge of character was invoked as a means to combat commercial ills. But just what kind of object of knowledge character was and how one would achieve an accurate understanding was not always clear. In many influential writings on commercial character, it is less a thing, possession, or specific quality than an impression grounded on a set of dispositions, actions, and habits: Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*, for instance, suggests that character is found in “the repetition of little acts” and the

“comparative trifles” that make up human life.³ But this model of character, temporal and in process, could never fully shed its element of risk. Because heredity imagined character as a complex of traits, rooted in the body, localizable, and measurable, it promised interpretive precision enhanced by the authority of science.

In focusing on heredity’s entry into accounts of economic institutions, relationships, and practices, we see evidence of the anxieties that economic abstractions provoked. But we also, I suggest, witness a new mode of abstraction, even mythmaking, in the encounters of hereditary science with commercial concerns. I therefore place the scientific accounts against another powerful genre through which nineteenth-century Britons came to understand their economic lives and characters: the novel. In particular, I explore how one novelist, Margaret Oliphant, took up the representational and interpretive challenges that the new scientific model posed. In two novels, *Phoebe Junior* (1876) and *Hester* (1883), Oliphant represents a critical perspective on hereditary business character, undoing its claims to concreteness and specificity and offering instead as a response to economic abstraction a defense of the interpretive skills and perspectives that novelistic character could provide.



Hester, in fact, may serve as an illustrative entry point into the late Victorian discourse of hereditary business character. Oliphant’s novel centers on the intergenerational tensions and commercial fortunes of Vernon’s bank, a family-owned bank in the provincial town of Redborough that, the novelist asserts, is “only second to the Bank of England in stability and strength.”⁴ The bank faces two crises over the course of the novel, the first a run in the opening chapter precipitated by John Vernon, the head of the family firm. The bank is saved by the business savvy of Catherine Vernon, John’s cousin—and by an infusion of cash, which Catherine has inherited from her mother. Toward the end of the novel, Catherine’s chosen successor, her nephew Edward Vernon, brings on the second crisis by speculating with the bank’s funds.

Family relations are thus at the center of the novel’s commercial plot. But the topic is broached even before the action begins in earnest, in opening pages that detail four generations of Vernon family history structured around the principle of heredity in which the course of the family and the bank is mapped through variations in the quantities and qualities of the Vernon family “genius for money.” The term

genius echoes Galton's *Hereditary Genius* (1869), a statistical inquiry into the biological basis for greatness that was followed through the 1870s and early 1880s by further investigations into the hereditary origins of particular interests and talents that gained widespread popular and scientific currency. (*Hester* was published the same year that Galton coined the term *eugenic* in *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development*.)⁵ Beginning with "the grandfather of the present head of the firm"—an earlier John Vernon—the narrator posits that he possessed a "special gift" for business, comparable to the "genius which produces a fine picture or a fine poem" (5). The later generation—Catherine and her cousin John, who preside over the crisis that initiates the novel's plot—distills the problem of interpreting business character through heredity. On the one hand, Catherine confidently claims her "head for business" as a paternal inheritance, a judgment echoed by the narrator: she "was, indeed, the heir of her great-grandfather's genius for business" (20, 22). On the other hand, John's leadership fails catastrophically: consanguinity alone proves no guarantee of talent.

Although this passage suggests some of the interpretive pitfalls to which a hereditary concept of business "genius" could lead, many of Oliphant's contemporaries found it hard to resist the notion that nature played a determinative role in business success. For instance, an 1882 *Blackwood's* article, "Romance in Business," celebrated "hereditary instincts" and "natural business aptitudes" as the source of success for the Rothschild family. Racializing these as features of the Rothschilds' "Jewish blood," it also renders them aspects of a *bloodline*, invoking a French proverb that analogizes dog breeding: "*Bon chien chasse de race*; and it is remarkable how the heirs of the family have taken after their founder."⁶ Other accounts of successful families saw similar signs of heredity at work. *Fortunes Made in Business*, a three-volume collection of business biographies, incorporates several multigenerational sagas that find good business in the blood; the history of the Low Moor Ironworks, for instance, deems it "somewhat remarkable that the business instincts and great natural abilities of the founders of these works should have been inherited so fully by their descendants."⁷

In rendering the secret of success a matter of the body, the corporeal focus of these texts was not altogether new; physiognomy and phrenology, for instance, featured in advice manuals for young men deciding on a career as well as handbooks aimed at employers who might look to hire them.⁸ Psychological and evolutionary science shared with

the phrenologist and physiognomist a conceptualization that fractured character into smaller component pieces with physical, localizable, and measurable origins. Galton's efforts, perhaps the most notorious instance of this tendency, treat the representation of character as a statistical project aiming at "the simplest and most precise measure" in which "carefully recorded acts, representative of the usual conduct" are listed, "separately verified, valued, and revalued, and the whole accurately summed."⁹ Though narrative representations often shared these preoccupations with typicality and detail as means to derive character, Galton's interest in measurement and heredity presses for precision, slicing character into particularized traits. Arguing that the "capacities" of man should be measured as a career service, to determine what work he is fit for, Galton suggests, for instance, measuring the capacity of energy, or "the length of time during which a person is wont to work at full stretch, day by day, without harm to himself, in obedience to an instinctive craving for work." In Galton's approach, the characterological term *industriousness* is translated into the physical term *energy*, which he imagines to be subject to "true tests"—"physiological and of considerable delicacy"—that would measure a concrete corporeal phenomenon, "the excess of waste over repair consequent upon any given effort."¹⁰

Like genius, ability, intelligence, and moral character, other qualities whose heritability Galton emphasizes, energy/industriousness fits within a model that construes business character as a general ethical-temperamental tendency. But Galton's investigations frequently delineate more narrowly conceived skills and talents. Thus, Galton's *Hereditary Genius* claims that judges inherit, not intelligence and fairness, but "judicial ability." Its taxonomy of types of genius includes the "statesman's type" and then breaks this specialized category down into particular components; these include features such as "tact in dealing with men" and "power of expression in debate," whose characterization as hereditary might be surprising. In one family, a "curious saving, mercantile spirit" is deemed hereditary.¹¹

As much as these examples muddy the distinctions between talents passed on and skills learned, they were not entirely out of line with contemporary scientific views of heredity, in which the question of whether characteristics developed through the lived experience of individuals could become heritable was still very much a matter of debate.¹² Galton himself was skeptical about the degree to which the transformation of action into biological, heritable matter occurred. In fact, he

invoked occupational examples to cast doubt on the possibility (“I am assured that the sons of fishermen, whose ancestors have pursued the same calling time out of mind, are just as sea-sick as the sons of landsmen when they first go out to sea”).¹³ But prominent scientists such as the evolutionary psychologist Henry Maudsley believed firmly that actions, habits, and conscious thought and choices could be imprinted on the nervous system or modify brain structures and could thus be transformed into heritable traits.¹⁴ In fact, despite Galton’s skepticism, the persistence of notions of the heritability of acquired characteristics helped to create an intellectual space within which the more finely tuned inherited traits and capacities in his theory made sense. Whatever the mechanism—whether an original, physical substance was expressed in a “mercantile spirit” or whether acting with a “mercantile spirit” made that spirit flesh—the discourse of heredity gave the material body a key role in business.

This broad willingness to countenance the heritability of all sorts of behaviors, talents, and dispositions conditioned the ground on which assertions of inherited business capacities might be offered and received. It was possible to imagine specific, focused business talents, separate from other qualities that might be associated with everyday commercial activities (Thomas Edison, for instance, was said to be a “true scientist,” with “no room in his brain for business talent”).¹⁵ And it was possible to imagine inheriting those particular traits. But even as accounts of business heredity implied specificity—*business* abilities, *business* instincts, *business* aptitudes, integrity, genius, talent—they remained suggestively vague. Hereditary business qualities could be moral (integrity) or intellectual (talent or aptitude); they could be subject to control and development (abilities) or beyond the reach of reason and will (instincts). In defining success as the product of inborn traits, the language of hereditary character formation promised more precision than it finally offered.

As a result, the scientific language of business character frequently shades away from the clinical or statistical domain of observation and measurability into a far more mysterious realm. Innate, unbidden, the hereditary business trait is deeply personalized but also strikingly elusive. When it registers as instinct, in particular, the intrinsic quality of mind that accounts for business success bypasses all the norms of conscious rational calculation and self-development that were elsewhere placed at the heart of capitalist endeavor, invoking instead a source of

motivation for action that was linked to more primitive stages of development.¹⁶ And instinct offered little comfort to those looking to increase agency by developing business character. A reader encountering a description of “the true inventor’s instincts” that lay at the base of S. C. Lister’s triumphs in the field of silk waste in that gentleman’s biography was not given a model from which to learn.¹⁷ Instead of enhancing the prospect of agency, instinct was a reminder of the less rational and calculable forces at play in market relations.

In fact, as in *Hester*, where the illustrious ancestor John Vernon was unable to explain how his “special gift” worked, commercial instincts and gifts often are represented as mysterious even to those who possess them. The quasi-magical aspect of John Vernon’s profit, mythologized into cellars filled with gold, is not a trope confined to fiction; rather, such tropes extend into nonfiction accounts of the business world, casting the language of heredity into the terms of legend. “Bankers and merchants from the City who turned everything they touched to gold, in virtue of an hereditary birthright” were to blame for the speculative frenzy of the mid-1860s, for instance, the *Saturday Review* claimed in 1871.¹⁸ The ambiguity in the description—was the bankers’ power attributable to biologically hereditary traits or a familial “birthright” of connections and commercial influence?—suggests the way that scientific language could itself be a mode of abstraction, generating mysteries as much as explaining them, forging an imaginative space that leaves behind the promise to determine the real forces driving business life and instead creates Midas-like bankers out of everyday City men.

This unexpected horizon of enchantment diminished the authority to which the scientific language of heredity otherwise laid claim. Take, for instance, the question of succession within a firm, a moment of instability requiring assessments of character and aptitude to which models of heredity might seem especially relevant. In one post-Victorian history of the commercial system, Ellis T. Powell’s *The Evolution of the Money Market, 1385–1915*, “physiological” terms derived explicitly from Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer describe a “deathless corporate organism” “capable of accumulating and transmitting experience” over time “by means of a corporate identity.”¹⁹ This gothic metaphor suggests an anxiety about exorbitant corporate power, as Gail Houston has argued.²⁰ However, Powell’s example—the Bank of England—was not necessarily representative, and in the more typical contexts of Victorian commerce, still largely dominated by family firms, the hereditary

transmission of business was not a gothic fantasy but a real problem highlighting the relationship between the corporate form and the living, dying, and reproducing bodies that brought it to life.²¹ And in such contexts, supernatural explanation signals explanatory weakness more than fantasized power. When the crisis hits Vernon's bank, the memory of John Vernon's inexplicable "special gift" demonstrates that weakness: it offers no tangible model of knowledge and practice for the firm's current leaders to follow, and the reappearance of the gift via biological transmission through the family's bodies is uncertain.

Succession is a tangible point of vulnerability, upending whatever character knowledge has been gathered and marking a moment of suspension as the qualities of particular firm members are absorbed, shed, or transformed. While the late Victorian science of heredity claimed, on the one hand, that sons belonging to a firm might be more likely to succeed than the clerks it employed, on the other the genealogical projects and statistical assumptions of hereditary science highlighted uncertainty as well. Galton's studies of twins trumpet the priority of nature over nurture in forming human character; however, his examples—including twins who seemed "perfectly dissimilar in character, habits, and likeness" from birth, and who maintained their dissimilarity despite receiving identical upbringings and influences—emphasized that families did not *always* reproduce identical, or even similar, "natural" characters.²² Galton's histories argue that ability is likely to cluster within a family, but the statistical methodology requires recognizing the family members who do not achieve the lofty heights of "genius." As a *Times* notice about a lecture by Galton recognized, the principle of reversion to the mean suggests that extraordinary ability is by no means necessarily followed by equally extraordinary progeny.²³ In cases of succession, heredity's probabilistic claims cut both ways, making prediction difficult and leaving character assessment doubtful.

Finally, heredity's association with evolutionary models raised its own conundrum. The late Victorian economy, facing agricultural depression, continued commercial shocks, and increased international competition, seemed to have a less certain hold on the top rung of the evolutionary ladder. As the principle of hereditary *property*—and the desire to preserve family businesses for new generations—clashed with the unpredictability of the heredity of *talent*, commercial adaptation was jeopardized and the degeneration of British business was feared.²⁴ An 1881 letter to the editor of *Bankers' Magazine*, for instance, fretted that

too many banks were “aristocratic and exclusive,” concerned to work “in a groove, and with what we may call their exclusive traditions,” rather than “adapting themselves to the changing times.”²⁵ One leading economist invoked the trope of blood in his diagnosis of the 1879 failure of the City of Glasgow Bank as the result of its hidebound leadership, prescribing “the constant infusion of fresh blood” into boards of directors to prevent stagnation and work toward openness.²⁶ Carrying property and talent through the firm and through generations, but not always in tandem and not always predictably, “blood” became an ambivalent marker that could be hindering progress as much as helping.

When Baron Lionel de Rothschild, head of the Rothschild enterprise in Britain and the son of the firm’s founder, Nathan Meyer Rothschild, died in 1879, *Bankers’ Magazine* reflected on the complex interpretive tangle posed by family and personal qualities in commerce. “The business abilities of a man of great wealth are sometimes mixed up with the influence of that wealth itself by those who judge him merely by reputation or from casual intercourse,” the writer suggests. “They think that because a man is wealthy and born to a great hereditary business position he cannot fail of success.” Lionel’s example, he argues, demonstrates the distinction that must be maintained between mere hereditary position and active business talent. It was Lionel’s “powerful judgment and keen insight into affairs” and his “accurate knowledge of his business” that kept him “at the head in business qualities of that great branch of commerce which he so long controlled.”²⁷ “Business qualities”—elements of character and talent—and hereditary position matched up in Lionel’s case. But, the writer insists, they are separate to begin with. Another man’s inherited property and position might mask personal incapacities. Furthermore, the interpretive confusion might press the other way, with the presence of family wealth and position creating a persistent uncertainty about personal talents that might otherwise be unquestioned. Family not only does not necessarily signal talent, in other words, but might in fact cloud its evaluation—undermining the fantasy that heredity could provide the clear index to character that would minimize commercial risk.



If the model of hereditary character failed to deliver as much as it promised, the nature of that promise was significant: to bypass interpretation in evaluating business character, locating precise indices that

could place commercial relationships on firmer footing. What would be transformed, if hereditary business character could be confirmed and pinned down, was the nature of commercial character reading: a scientific, empirical approach to the more intangible aspect of economic life that character represented could replace efforts to locate those incidental details and trifles of behavior and to determine their significance in narrative contexts that might be partial or incomplete. In light of this aspiration, Margaret Oliphant's treatment of heredity and character represents a defense of the role of narrative and interpretation in economic life. By introducing and then interrogating the concept of hereditary business "genius," Oliphant reminds readers that the techniques of reading and the multiple narrative situations and perspectives to which novels might draw attention could develop a model of character—holistic, contextual—that would ultimately be more significant than a complex of inherited traits.

Oliphant draws out this critical analysis of character and heredity through a focus on separate moments of crisis and succession in the Vernon banking enterprise, which resembles one of Powell's "deathless corporate organisms" but, as a family firm, with a biological mechanism for transmitting its essence. Oliphant's interest in the questions about intergenerational and familial relationships and capitalism that such moments engender was longstanding. Her 1876 novel *Phoebe Junior* takes up similar issues as it examines the relationship between the business magnate Mr. Copperhead and his puzzling son Clarence, an object lesson in the way heredity cannot be counted on to provide predictable and commercially desirable results for a family firm. His brothers are in business and are "less vigorous, but still moderately successful copies of their father."²⁸ Clarence, in contrast, represents a "freak of nature" through which his mother's "disposition"—her "mouse's heart," her "penny-whistle" voice, her "mild brown" eyes—are "repeated" in his own nature, incongruously animating a "huge frame, somewhat hulking and heavy-shouldered," derived from Mr. Copperhead and his lower-class ancestry, the "original navy who was at the root of the race" (46–48). But Clarence has inherited none of the "faculty" of practical "genius" (44) that would make him a fitting successor: "He was not clever; he had none of the energy of his race, and promised to be as useless in an office as he would have been in a cutting or in a yard full of men" (46–47). Marriage to Phoebe Beecham, a clever and resourceful young woman whose grandparents were provincial shopkeepers, Mr. Copperhead

finally decides, will provide Clarence with the behind-the-scenes talent to enable him to have a career in public service.

Phoebe Junior thus raises the question of the unpredictability of hereditary character. But by moving Clarence—and Phoebe, who self-consciously asserts that she will have a career in promoting Clarence—into public service rather than into his father’s business, the novel sidesteps some of the questions it might have asked about the commercial implications of family, heredity, and marriage. Phoebe may not be a “golden girl”—Mr. Copperhead’s term for an heiress—who provides money and social position to move a nouveau family into the higher social reaches, enacting Galton’s nightmare of talent wasted through irrational, social-climbing breeding. Nonetheless, her importation of talent (“brains,” as Mr. Copperhead puts it) into the family is figured more as a solution to the family problem of one inadequate son than as a contribution to the continuity of the Copperhead business line (413).

Hester, in contrast, takes these questions to heart, first by making the Vernon “genius” the initial centerpiece of the business plot and second by making that genius appear in an unmarried, childless woman whose place within a hereditary structure is ambiguous. Catherine’s representation literalizes the ambiguity when she enters the Vernon family tree as a virtual blank in the opening crisis that forms the immediate prehistory to her leadership of the bank. As Mr. Rule, the bank’s clerk, ponders what to do about the threatened failure precipitated by Catherine’s cousin John, he runs through the Vernon generations down to the present calamity, coming up short when he remembers Catherine and her pedigree:

Vernon’s! To think that Ruin should be possible, that so dark a shadow could hover over the sacred place. What would old Mr. Vernon have said, he who received it from his father and handed it down flourishing, always prosperous, to—not to his son. If his son had lived, he who was the father of—It was at this point that Mr. Rule came to a dead stop. . . .

The father of—Yes, indeed, indeed, and that was true! (16)

The dash that signals the first disruption in the proper sequence of inheritance, as the elder son’s death prevents his accession, morphs into a new disruption, standing in for Catherine’s name. The function of these latter dashes is peculiar. Both substitute for missing periods, stopping thoughts and transitioning to the uppercase of a new sentence. But even

as they move forward, the nominal substitution that the dashes represent (especially as the final one doubles to mimic the conventional placeholder for a name) makes them more than merely connective: they represent a person whose function in the familial/business sequence is ill defined. In this dual role they resemble the unspecified nodes in the family trees generated by investigators of heredity, whose names are either unknown or unrecorded. Unnamed, they do not apparently signify talent, but the bodies they represent—as sources of hereditary content and as connective conduits—might contribute to that story’s meaning and its interpretation.

Catherine’s initial entry as a blank is partly attributable to her gender: she is a surprise, an afterthought to the main, masculine story, especially as it has centered on the varying quantum of hereditary business talent. Paradoxically, however, this gender anomaly helps to confirm that the talent for accumulating property is a feature—though not always a consistent one—of Vernon blood, rather than Vernon experience. Catherine’s skill is not easily ascribed to nurture, because she did not receive—even informally—the business education that a boy would have. Her early dealings with the bank lie in performing the girlish offices of monitoring her grandfather’s consumption of biscuits and wine and inspiring chivalric worship in the clerks; upon her cousin’s accession she retreats altogether. When called upon, Catherine’s business talent blossoms from a latent state and can only be attributed to innate inheritance.²⁹

However, even as Catherine’s anomalous status seems to confirm the relevance of heredity, it reopens the problem of interpretation. As a single, childless woman, Catherine embodies familial talent without enacting a biological reproductive role: she represents hereditary content but is not a conduit. Contemplating her retirement after her successful career, Catherine therefore faces the question of succession. With “so many Vernons” to choose from, the problem seems “not difficult” (25). But because the succession is a matter of choice, not a relatively automatic filial sequence, the problems of reading character within a familial commercial context are foregrounded. As the novel follows the consequences of Catherine’s decision, it expands the material of interpretation, weighing different models of character that emphasize the assemblage of inherited traits, the imperatives of self-making, and the psychological and affective demands of family.

As the main action of the novel opens, Catherine’s position blends masculine and feminine: with streets, buildings, philanthropic

institutions, and even churches in the town of Redborough named after her, she has attained the local eminence that represents the crowning achievement of many masculine business careers.³⁰ She is an “old maid” but not a pitiable one; though she is a “dry tree,” in her unfruitfulness she has crafted a role likened to “Queen Elizabeth,” with “plenty of money,” a “handsome, cheerful house,” and an alternative structure of adoptive, affiliative family (24). In fact, Catherine—an unmarried only child—enjoys the names of mother, grandmother, and aunt in these flexible, self-chosen relationships.

In choosing her successor, however, Catherine gives priority to bloodline, favoring three—Edward, her favorite, and the sibling team of Harry and Ellen—who were “descendants of the brothers and sisters of the great John Vernon” and were “the nearest to her in blood” (25, 26). Though cousins, they call her Aunt Catherine, claiming an intergenerational, proximate, and, as Eileen Cleere has suggested, economically resonant bond and resenting those “many” who call Catherine “Aunt” in what they deem a “fictitious relationship” (26).³¹ The ironic treatment of their resentment introduces a skeptical note into the novel’s representation of the foundational status claimed for blood relationships, which here are no more and no less fictitious than other modes of affiliation.

In fact, *Hester* frequently matches assertions of flexible and affiliative kinship possibilities with competing claims grounded in blood. With the same unconcern for precision as Edward, Harry, and Ellen (the nephews and nieces who are really cousins), Captain Morgan, a maternal relative of Catherine, jettisons even the principle of consanguinity when he describes Hester—the eponymous daughter of Catherine’s irresponsible cousin John—as his “great-grandchild in the spirit,” slotting neatly into the generational spaces left by the death of a beloved daughter. His actual grandchild, Emma Ashton, who comes to visit to find a husband, shrewdly overlooks the fact that she is not blood kin to the cousins of Catherine, adopting the name of cousin and brazenly presuming on the fictional relationship to gain entrance to Redborough society. As one character after another makes kinship a matter of choice, metaphorical likeness, or calculation, sliding between kinship terms and even from one family tree to another, the hereditary model of character set up in the opening account of the Vernon family history begins to unravel.

Insofar as characters maintain their investment in blood as a determinant of kinship and character, the novel suggests that this investment

is driven by property, rather than emerging from an inherent meaningfulness. Property concerns *make* blood significant; by extension, blood cannot be considered an a priori indicator of a particular familial talent for making good use of property, because the relationship between the two is intertwined. *Hester* makes this point most directly through its representation of the sneering, seething relatives whom Catherine maintains in the apartments of the Vernonry, a charity project for her dependent kin. Unpleasantly insistent on determining degrees of Vernonness as they forthrightly conflate blood and property rights, these relatives resent the unequal distribution of Vernon property to those nearer and farther from the main patrilineal line, even as they accept the principle of blood-linked distribution in rejecting the use of Vernon money for the support of non-Vernons, especially Catherine's maternal relations, Captain and Mrs. Morgan. In this, of course, they overlook that Catherine's maternal inheritance saved the bank; "Vernon" money is, like "Vernon" blood, a mixture. The Miss Vernon-Ridgways join their coinhabitants of the Vernonry in this resentment of the Morgans, even as, "convinced that the blood of the Ridgways had much enriched the liquid that meandered through the veins of the Vernons," they stew in anger that their own familial contribution has been overlooked (52). As the parasitical inhabitants of the Vernonry translate money into blood and back again, heedless of contradictions that Oliphant's ironic narrative tone makes apparent, the precise distinction of bloodlines appears as an effect of property rather than a source of talent accounting for it.

Though Catherine is amused by the peevishness of the Vernonry, she just as carefully draws lines around degrees of "Vernonness." In fact, despite the initial assertion of Catherine's openness to affiliative relationships, she is susceptible to the same tendency to fetishize blood, to see it as an interpretive key providing confident mastery as she makes her business decisions. For instance, Catherine imaginatively transforms the apparently affectionate Edward, who resides with her, from cousin to nephew; she then translates nephew into more directly filial terms, coming to see Edward as both "son and daughter" (123). His commercial skill becomes, in her view, a concrete manifestation of the rightness and the reality of that designation. Whereas Harry will "never set the Thames on fire" (126), the notion that Edward shares Catherine's familial talent seems to signal the alignment of the imaginative, the affiliative, and the actual with blood—expressed through talent—confirming that she has found her true son and heir.

But as Catherine takes blood as a defining, dispositive sign, a confirmation that she has located the character qualities that will help Vernon's bank continue its successful management of the ups and downs of the capitalist economy, she locates mastery in the wrong place. In the bitter unraveling of the certainty that Catherine believes she has found in Edward, Oliphant's novel turns on its head the relevance of family to business implied by the notion of inherited genius. Edward's particular familial trait—his hereditary talent—is, in the end, far less important than his overall character, conceived not as a collection of biologically based traits but rather in moral and psychological terms as a product of the tension between the demands of family inheritance (hereditary and financial) and the desire for independent self-development. By making her story of a family firm center on a business head who is both female and an adoptive mother, Oliphant emphasizes the danger to business that family can pose. Rather than acting principally as a fount of transmitted, innate talent—and thus a confidence-inspiring signal of personal fitness for business—or as an institution in which the moral character necessary to safeguard the economy is nurtured, family in *Hester* represents a potential to disrupt character development and to stymie character interpretation.

For the same familial determinism that makes hereditary talent such an appealing premise when looking for interpretive clues to business character represents a challenge for characters living and working in the context of family business. If one of capitalism's most enduring and appealing fantasies is the notion of individual autonomy and agency—the power to make something of oneself—this fantasy is circumscribed by inherited talents, just as the actual range of choices available to individuals may be limited by familial pressures. Edward's surreptitious speculations with bank property represent a rebellion against familial trusts and responsibilities as he seeks to establish his independence and to liberate himself from a family role that he experiences as stultifying. Feminized and delibidinized by his role as Catherine's favorite—at once her chosen “son and daughter” and a kind of substitute, asexual husband—Edward stays in with Catherine or walks with her in the garden rather than joining in the mating rituals of the Redborough youth. Edward's initial step toward criminal misuse of the bank's funds and deposits is cast as an expression of resistance to these psychological constraints when he responds to the news that his more plodding cousin and partner, Harry, is pursuing a romantic inclination toward Hester with his first mentions to Catherine

of the “prospectuses and investments” that are his individuating and energizing secret (128). The physiological metaphor through which Edward imagines speculation—“It would be like pouring in new blood to stagnant veins; it would be new life coming in” (249)—is as much a fantasy of male parthenogenesis as of transfusion. Placing his own mark into the blood of the firm through speculation, and framing it as an individualist rebellion against an “old woman’s insane objection to anything daring” (247), Edward asserts a self-generated masculine potency that lifts him above the role of mere hereditary vehicle, a cog in a familial machine.

As he shares his secret in pulse-racing exchanges during his own surreptitious flirtation with Hester, the sexual and psychological charge of Edward’s dangerous speculations, enacted to resist an adoptive maternal/uxorial force, undercuts the sense that the moral flaw in his character might be simply innate, taking hold when financial opportunities present temptation. Instead, whatever Edward’s inborn tendencies, the overlapping emotional and financial demands of family and firm, and the nurture that they represent, take narrative priority. Figured through a maternal substitute who helps shape his character with affection and support, pressure and demands, but not a direct hereditary transmission, Edward’s criminal actions are finally represented as motivated by a psychology formed in familial experience, not blood inheritance. When he blames Hester and heredity for his own actions, suggesting that he has “taken the disease” that “must run in the blood” from her father, John, through Hester as a sexual vector, the strain of his reasoning undermines the notion of hereditary character further. No matter what role might be played by nature and nurture, the final responsibility for making character rests, Oliphant’s novel insists, in a person’s active choices.

In its treatment of the place of character in business, then, *Hester* undercuts the contemporary interest in locating particularized, hereditary business qualities; though Edward has inherited the family trait, its meaningfulness is, finally, circumscribed by a nonphysiological model of moral character and psychology. Rather than providing a hereditary key to Edward’s commercial performance, family adds layers of affective experience that make his character less rather than more predictable and that present a hindrance to character reading. Again, the unconventional gendering of Vernon’s bank helps to emphasize the point. A female businessperson such as Catherine figures the blend of family and business more directly than might a father, for whom a distinction

between public and familial roles was commonplace. The affective ties that prevent Catherine from assessing Edward accurately—the sentiment that renders her normally “keen perceptions . . . of no more use to her than the foolishness of any mother” (245)—are framed as maternal. The ironic conversation in which they discuss speculation seems to point to a skepticism about feminine emotion in business, as Edward asserts that it would be “silly” to think of “a woman’s incapacity for business” in Catherine’s presence, prompting her misguided, motherly interpretation of his smile as “full of affectionate filial admiration and trust” (245). But as the chapter goes on, the salience of this feminine blockage to character reading comes to seem merely one aspect of a range of psychological issues and familial relationships that complicate understanding. Masculine intragenerational competition and sexual rivalry—a complex of familial relationships—help to energize Edward and to define him, producing his character as a discomposed “wonder” to himself and even to observers without affective predispositions (248). It is not, in other words, simply that emotional ties, captured by the example of maternal love, interfere with character assessment within a family firm. Instead, that confusion of affect and judgment is just one part of the novel’s insistence that family, defined experientially rather than merely through consanguinity, presents a complexity that easily trumps heredity’s promise to isolate inherited traits as the keys to reading business character. If character is to confer agency in the marketplace—a way to model and interpret the myriad of signals that each day’s economic interactions produced—then it will not be through an approach that seeks to fill in the blank in the family tree. Character’s contribution to the national wealth is not some quantum of biologically based talent; instead, Oliphant suggests, the habits of reading and the breadth of vision of the novel will be necessary to grasp the ways character may play out in economic exchanges.



Oliphant’s insistence on the relevance of a novelistic model of character within the world of later Victorian capitalism may seem to have been overtaken by events, as the course of economic life has come to appear ever more globalized, corporate, and intangible. Yet echoes of the Victorian preoccupations with character reemerge in economic discourse.³² From George Stephenson to Steve Jobs, the “companies and leaders” genre of business best sellers is one prominent holdover. But other, more curious reappearances may be cited.

In a 2009 article for the *New York Times* blog *You're the Boss*, for instance, Scott Shane, a management professor at Case Western University, poses the question, "Are Entrepreneurs Born or Made?" Citing his recent research, he asserts that "the tendency to be an entrepreneur is heritable."³³ The studies from which this striking announcement derived applied quantitative genetics techniques to large samples of monozygotic and dizygotic twins.³⁴ Arguing that their research provides a complement to theories emphasizing "psychological composition" or the factor of "being present in opportunity-rich situations," the authors offer a new "biosocial" approach to understanding "the role of individual differences" (as opposed to "environmental conditions") in developing entrepreneurship. They find that "genetic factors influence the tendency to become an entrepreneur," though they suggest that their results "do not indicate that entrepreneurship is genetically determined."³⁵ Nor does their study discount the importance of environmental factors or suggest which specific genes might be at work or how those genes come to influence entrepreneurial tendencies (for instance, by altering dopamine or testosterone levels or sensitivities to certain kinds of pleasure).³⁶

I want to focus here, by way of brief conclusion, on their discussion of the particular quality of "opportunity recognition," which contributes "an important part of the entrepreneurship process."³⁷ They differentiate the two traits of opportunity recognition and the tendency to be an entrepreneur (the variables they analyze) from other psychological traits that may also have a genetic origin and may contribute to the tendency for entrepreneurship but are not identical to it. Breaking opportunity recognition down further into component traits, they cite research identifying correlations between those traits and genes, even pinpointing particular origins. Creativity, for instance, may be a part of the capacity for opportunity recognition, and "studies show that 55% of the difference between people in creativity is genetic, with two genes—DRD2 and TPH1—having been found to account for 9% of the difference." "Openness to experience," another component, is linked to the DRD4 gene. "Strong social networks" are claimed to be "in part" genetic; these strong social ties "facilitate opportunity recognition because other people often provide entrepreneurs with information helpful to the process." And finally, they suggest, genes may influence "preferences for autonomy and job security," which might make people more or less likely to "search for entrepreneurial opportunities" and which "facilitate

opportunity recognition by making some people more interested in autonomy and less interested in job security than others.”³⁸

The entrepreneurial tendency conceptualized and analyzed through these quantitative genetics techniques is functionally very similar to Galton’s statesman’s or judge’s type of ability, offering at once a striking degree of occupationally oriented precision and a definitional capaciousness that continually undercuts specificity. If one were to look for a “born” entrepreneur—say, while looking for new company leadership or new investment opportunities—what exactly would one be seeking? The entrepreneurial tendency writ large? Its multiple, separate components? And even if one had at one’s fingertips a test that could pinpoint qualities of creativity, say, on the DRD2 and TPH1 genes, would that lead in a clear-cut way to entrepreneurship? Working from narrower to more broadly defined traits, the preference for job autonomy over security may be a component of a larger quality—tolerance for risk—that may raise as many questions as it answers in the context of entrepreneurship. The interpretive task of genetic analysis would appear by no means straightforward.

To be sure, the authors of these studies are careful to note their limitations: they, like Galton before them, deal in tendencies and probabilities, not certainties. Nonetheless, they—again like Galton—conceive of this biosocial understanding of character as a means of agency in economic life. Not that they recommend scientific breeding to improve the entrepreneurial stock. Rather, they suggest that their results provide information that may be useful at the level of public or corporate policy, helping to allocate training efforts and funds efficiently rather than wasting them trying to develop talents that are to a great degree innate. But they also are aware that the tantalizing possibility of precision may prove an irresistible temptation to human resources managers, who could through ethically problematic genetic tests seek to increase their control over the risk inherent in having a workforce made up of human beings.³⁹ The splashy, headline presence of the main finding in the *New York Times* speaks to the fascination genetics holds and the fantasies it animates.

Oliphant’s skepticism about heredity as an interpretive key to business character thus speaks to our current moment more than we might think. The novel insists that the story of character can be found in the social behaviors, emotions, and histories revealed as we observe individuals in action. Imagining Oliphant in historically impossible dialogue with the research on genetic origins of entrepreneurship, one might speculate

that she would be puzzled by a framework that could emphasize looking for a hereditary tendency to *have* a strong social network—the abstracted “sign”—when watching what a person *does* within that network, in all its messy detail, will bear more fruit. But no matter how compelling we may find Oliphant’s case for the continued relevance of novelistic character to economic experience, it is worth expanding the conversation further to ask whether our vision of agency must be limited by the terms in which that conversation is conducted—whether the way we live now requires a mode of agency that looks beyond (though perhaps not past) character altogether.

NOTES

1. Jim Collins and Morton T. Hansen, *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck—Why Some Thrive Despite Them All* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 2.

2. This chapter is drawn from a longer book project in which I explore more extensively the relation of character to Victorian commerce. See Aeron Hunt, *Personal Business: Character and Commerce in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

3. Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance*, ed. Peter W. Sinnema (1859; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 301.

4. Margaret Oliphant, *Hester*, ed. Philip Davis and Brian Nellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5. In the text, subsequent references to this edition will be noted in parentheses.

5. Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (London, 1883), 24.

6. “Romance in Business,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 131 (February 1882): 228. “Like father, like son” or “like breeds like” would be roughly equivalent English proverbs.

7. “The Low Moor Company,” in *Fortunes Made in Business: A Series of Original Sketches, Biographical and Anecdotic, from the Recent History of Industry and Commerce, by Various Writers* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1884), 1:127–28.

8. See, for instance, Samuel Roberts Wells, *How to Do Business: A Pocket Manual of Practical Affairs and Guide to Success in Life* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1857), 23, 42, 56; see also Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

9. Francis Galton, “Measurement of Character,” *Fortnightly Review* 36, no. 212 (August 1884): 185.

10. Francis Galton, “The Anthropometric Laboratory,” *Fortnightly Review* 31, no. 183 (March 1882): 334–35. On the history of energy as a physical-economic concept, see Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death,*

and *Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), chap. 4.

11. Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius* (1869; New York, 1891), 63, 110, 73.

12. See Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 92, 98; and Peter J. Bowler, *The Mendelian Revolution: The Emergence of Hereditarian Concepts in Modern Science and Society* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). See also G. J. Romanes, "The Darwinian Theory of Instinct," *Nineteenth Century* 16 (September 1884): 434–50.

13. Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 282; and Francis Galton, "Hereditary Talent and Character, Second Paper," *Macmillan's Magazine* 12, no. 70 (August 1865): 322 (quotation). See also Francis Galton, "A Theory of Heredity," *Contemporary Review* 27 (December 1875): 94.

14. See Henry Maudsley, "Materialism and Its Lessons," *Fortnightly Review* 26, no. 152 (August 1879): 256.

15. "Edison's Electric Light," *Times*, January 14, 1880, 8.

16. See Kathleen Frederickson, "Liberalism and the Time of Instinct," *Victorian Studies* 49, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 304.

17. "Mr. S. C. Lister and the Story of 'Silk Waste,'" in *Fortunes Made in Business*, 1:65.

18. "Promoters and the Public," *Saturday Review*, July 29, 1871, 142.

19. Ellis T. Powell, *The Evolution of the Money Market, 1385–1915: An Historical and Analytical Study of the Rise and Development of Finance as a Centralised, Co-ordinated Force* (London: Financial News, 1916), 258.

20. See Gail Turley Houston, *From Dickens to Dracula: Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), chap. 5.

21. The persistence of the family firm is a central theme in the historiography of British business. To take the (apparently) more abstract corporate forms—joint-stock ownership and limited liability—as representative risks limiting, and even misreading, Victorian commercial culture. In fact, as late as 1914 the three largest companies in Britain were family firms run by the families that had founded them. See Martin Daunt, afterword to *Victorian Investments*, ed. Nancy Henry and Cannon Schmitt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 202–20; Stana Nenadic, "The Small Family Firm in Victorian Britain," *Business History* 35 (October 1993): 86–114; Mary B. Rose, "The Family Firm in British Business, 1780–1914," in *Business Enterprise in Modern Britain: From the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Maurice W. Kirby and Mary B. Rose (London: Routledge, 1994), 61–87; and Tom Nicholas, "Clogs to Clogs in Three Generations? Explaining Entrepreneurial Performance in Britain since 1850," *Journal of Economic History* 59 (September 1999): 689.

22. Francis Galton, "The History of Twins, as a Criterion of the Relative Powers of Nature and Nurture," *Fraser's Magazine* 12, no. 71 (November 1875): 575.

23. See “Hereditary Qualities,” *Times*, February 24, 1877, 4.
24. For Galton’s views on the dangers of family property, see Francis Galton, “Hereditary Improvement,” *Fraser’s Magazine* 7, no. 37 (January 1873): 117.
25. Letter to the editor, *Bankers’ Magazine* (February 1881): 127, 128.
26. Leone Levi, “Scotch Banking—Lessons from the Bankruptcy of the City of Glasgow Bank,” *Bankers’ Magazine and Journal of the Money Market* 39 (July 1879): 555.
27. “The Late Baron Lionel de Rothschild,” *Bankers’ Magazine and Journal of the Money Market* 39 (July 1879): 541–42.
28. Margaret Oliphant, *Phoebe Junior*, ed. Elizabeth Langland (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002), 45. In the text, subsequent references to this edition will be noted in parentheses.
29. Tamara S. Wagner has discussed *Hester’s* rhetoric of inheritance in *Financial Speculation in Victorian Fiction: Plotting Money and the Novel Genre, 1815–1901* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 160–62.
30. See Linda Peterson, “The Female *Bildungsroman*: Tradition and Revision in Margaret Oliphant’s Fiction,” in *Margaret Oliphant: Critical Essays on a Gentle Subversive*, ed. D. J. Trela (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1995), 79.
31. See Eileen Cleere, *Avuncularism: Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).
32. For the way in which recent economic stories tend to repeat Victorian narratives and characterological models, see Audrey Jaffe, *The Affective Life of the Average Man: The Victorian Novel and the Stock-Market Graph* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 118n21.
33. Scott A. Shane, “Are Entrepreneurs Born or Made?” in *You’re the Boss* (blog), NYTimes.com, September 21, 2009.
34. See Nicos Nicolaou, Scott Shane, Lynn Cherkas, Janice Hunkin, and Tim D. Spector, “Is the Tendency to Engage in Entrepreneurship Genetic?” *Management Science* 54, no. 1 (2008): 167–79; and Nicolaou, Shane, Cherkas, and Spector, “Opportunity Recognition and the Tendency to Be an Entrepreneur: A Bivariate Genetics Perspective,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 110 (2009): 108–17. See also R. White, S. Thornhill, and E. Hampson, “Entrepreneurs and Evolutionary Biology: The Relationship between Testosterone and New Venture Creation,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 100 (2006): 21–34.
35. Nicolaou et al., “Is the Tendency,” 167, 173–76.
36. *Ibid.*, 168–69, 174.
37. Nicolaou et al., “Opportunity Recognition,” 108.
38. *Ibid.*, 109–10.
39. Nicolaou et al., “Is the Tendency,” 176–77.

CHAPTER TWO

Shifting the Ground of Monetary Politics

The Case of the 1870s

Roy Kreitner

Money was the hot point of American politics over the last third of the nineteenth century. The period came to a head in the 1896 presidential election, whose central issue was the nature of the American dollar. But within a short period after that election, monetary politics seemed to fade from the popular political agenda, and by the time the Federal Reserve was established in 1913, the issue had become a muted matter of bank reform. Thus, a fundamental question for any understanding of American capitalism is how monetary politics could go from center stage and fever pitch to nonpartisan technocratic reform within a generation. This chapter does not answer that question, but it sets the stage for an answer by supplying the necessary background for understanding the stakes of the conflict.

The money system indeed changed fundamentally from a decentralized and somewhat chaotic mosaic on the eve of the Civil War to one that was unified and prepared—perhaps even eager—for modern central banking by the eve of World War I. But for that material transformation to take place, a previous transformation in the political substrate was necessary: the politics of money had to be beaten down, tamed, as it were, placed in the context of the kind of expertise that could dampen conflict. What follows is an account of the early stages of the political transformation that led to the modernization of American

money. I concentrate here on the 1870s, highlighting the way Americans understood their monetary politics in the wake of the Civil War. That understanding was so different from the one modern Americans have inherited, and indeed, so different from the understanding that followed in less than half a century, that reconstructing it is far from an obvious task. Late nineteenth-century Americans were changing the language of conflict over money, they were changing its institutional setting, and they were changing the place of law in the conflict. They were in fact refiguring the understanding of money, and this chapter attempts to explain their starting point.

THE BACKGROUND MONEY SITUATION

During the Civil War and its immediate aftermath, the United States underwent a fundamental transformation of its money system. Deeply fragmentary after the demise of the second Bank of the United States (1836), the money system of the United States became more or less integrated during the Civil War, replacing a collection of money systems somewhat haphazardly coordinated.¹ The transformation of the money system was not simply another detail in some more general historical shift but rather a key to the direction of the development of American political economy.

The general background for the establishment of a new national money system was the crisis of funding the Union's war effort. The federal government had been running deficits since the panic of 1857, and by the end of 1860 the federal debt had risen to nearly \$80 million. By 1865 and war's end, the federal debt had reached over \$2.6 billion (that is, more than thirty times the prewar debt). Yearly federal expenditure jumped from just over \$63 million in 1860 to \$1.3 billion in 1865. Federal expenditure over the course of four years of the war exceeded \$3 billion.² Additionally, because prewar revenues were based heavily on taxing international trade that suffered during the war, funding the war effort was clearly a staggering challenge. The combination of taxing, borrowing, printing, and reorganizing that would become the money system was the response to this challenge, an exercise in financing war.

Within months of the outbreak of the war, gold more or less disappeared from internal circulation, and its monetary uses were limited to international trade and payment of customs duties.³ Congress pursued a multifaceted strategy centered on the introduction of two new types of paper money: first and most famous were the U.S. Notes, or greenbacks,

originally authorized in legislation in February 1862 and eventually totaling \$450 million;⁴ second, newly organized national banks were authorized to issue up to \$300 million in national banknotes.⁵

Soon after the end of the Civil War, the fixtures of a new money system were in place. The bulk of the money supply comprised two forms of paper money of equal value (greenbacks and national banknotes), neither of which was tied directly to gold. It was supplemented by deposits and a small amount of specie (reserved almost entirely for foreign trade). By the end of the war, the battle over resumption of the gold standard was already under way, including a short-lived attempt by the Treasury to retire the greenbacks to retract some of the wartime growth in the money supply. Financial conservatives supported quick resumption, while shifting coalitions of entrepreneurs, industrialists, farmers, and organized labor favored continuation of the paper standard, while paying lip service to the goal of eventual resumption. From the end of the war until resumption in 1879, the question was not only when and whether there would be a return to gold but also which brand of paper money (greenbacks or banknotes) should be dominant. Because greenbacks and banknotes had the same relationship to gold, the conflict over their use was not primarily a conflict over a fiat standard versus a commodity standard.⁶ Instead, it was a direct battle over who should create money and whether some (that is, note-issuing bankers) should profit from the creation of liquidity. This was the monetary situation that provided the conditions for debate in the 1870s, just as the panic of 1873 would throw the country into its worst economic depression to date.

THE STAKES OF MONETARY POLITICS; OR, WHAT WAS
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MONEY IN THE 1870S?

Every student of the 1870s agrees that money was a central organizing feature of political contention at least from the panic of 1873 until the resumption of specie payments in 1879.⁷ Commentators considering the extended outpouring of legislative and political energy onto the money question in the 1870s have often responded with more than a bit of puzzlement.

[B]oth sides were deluded. Both became hypnotized by money and their own rhetoric about it. Both believed a “proper” solution to the money question would bring “proper” solutions to the outstanding social and economic problems of the country and

fasten upon the country a happy and moral future. Both made money the surrogate of social concern—not just once, but twice, in the final third of the nineteenth century. For the great debate of the nineties was in a large sense only the second act of a comic opera that had begun just after the Civil War and had reached its first-act intermission at the close of the seventies.⁸

For this historian, then, Americans were “hypnotized” into playing out a “comic opera” about whose meaning they were in the dark. But to claim that the entire political spectrum could be “deluded” for so long seems like defeatism or at least evidence of a weak historical imagination. A more ambitious view is that the shift in perspective that followed this period and yielded our own assumptions about money has made it difficult to appreciate the stakes for 1870s America. By looking at the 1870s as one moment in a progression through which our assumptions were constructed, we can understand the debates as something other than a decade or more of mass delusion.

The first step toward gaining a better grasp of the stakes of the debates of the 1870s is a reevaluation of what served as common ground for the participants and what actually divided them. Over the course of the coming decades, three central elements constituting this period’s politics of money would lose their status as common ground: first, the proper locale for decision making on monetary policy; second, the connection between monetary policy ideals and the role of government vis-à-vis the market; and third, the relationship between politics and science. Together, these three issues do more than situate monetary policy. In essence, they combine to define a political economy of money, and they set off the 1870s in fairly stark terms from the ensuing periods that would revisit the money question: the 1890s and the 1910s.

THE INSTITUTIONAL LOCALE OF MONETARY POLICY

To the twenty-first-century eye, perhaps the most remarkable feature of the intense engagement with monetary policy and the level of the money supply over the course of the 1870s is the absolute centrality of congressional debate and legislation. The most striking aspect of 1870s monetary policy for us was completely taken for granted by 1870s Americans: the institutional locale for monetary policy and management of the money supply was Congress. This is likely the starkest distinction between their understanding of money and the view that

would take hold by early in the twentieth century and become a given in our time. That taken-for-granted sense of the institutional locale for monetary policy is not trivial, because if something is indeed taken for granted or forms the background understanding for debate, then no one is called upon to make the argument that it is in fact the case. Uncontested (or nearly uncontested)⁹ truths often remain unspoken.

The strongest positive indication that Congress was assumed as the locale for monetary policy is the intensity of congressional activity. For five years after the onset of the panic of 1873,¹⁰ Congress almost never rested from debate and action on the monetary front. The opening shots of this half decade of incessant activity were the debates leading to what was characterized in and out of Congress as “the Inflation Bill” of 1874. John Sherman, who chaired the Senate Finance Committee at the time, recalled that “[m]ore than sixty bills, resolutions, and propositions were introduced in the Senate in respect to the currency, the public debt and national banks, all bearing upon the financial condition of the country, expressing every variety of opinion, from immediate coin payments to the wildest inflation of irredeemable paper money.”¹¹ Months of debate yielded a bill that was utterly transformed from the moment of introduction until its passage: while the bill was initially intended to relieve momentary monetary stringency within the context of an attempt to resume specie payments, eventually both its name and its character were changed, and it came to be understood primarily as a means of inflating the money supply. What the monetary effects of the bill would have been in the long run are not absolutely clear: it contained both expansionary and contractionary elements. The bill raised the overall level of authorized paper money, but at the same time it did not mandate issuing all the money authorized. Sherman had introduced one version of the bill in committee but could not support it in its final version.¹² It passed both houses of Congress but drew a dramatic veto from President Ulysses S. Grant, whom most observers had expected to acquiesce and sign the bill.¹³

Neither side in the initial debate over what to do about the money supply in the wake of the panic believed that Grant’s veto was the last word. The attempt to override was unsuccessful, but by June Congress had passed another monetary bill with much less fanfare than the first. On the overt question of total circulation of paper money, the bill was less expansionary than April’s “inflation” bill. But because June’s bill in effect eliminated the reserve requirement against notes of the national

banks, it was potentially expansionary legislation. The act was understood primarily as a measure dealing with the lifting of restrictions on free banking and less as a money supply bill, though the fact that its money supply effects were significant would eventually become clear.¹⁴ Grant signed the bill and added encouragement to Congress regarding the move toward resumption.

Republicans got routed in the midterm elections in 1874, but Sherman and his party mates had no intention of relinquishing their majority without making use of its final days. During the lame duck session in December 1874, Republican senators caucused without their Democratic counterparts and formulated a straightforward bill whose primary goal was to set a firm date for the resumption of specie payments. They reached an agreement, and by leaving some of the crucial questions openly undecided and even refusing to clarify their intentions, they managed to push the bill through the Senate and then the House in January 1875. Grant signed the bill, but again few observers expected that it was indeed the last word on resumption, scheduled in the act for four years down the road. This was one of the few moments during the 1870s that the monetary issue divided Congress relatively neatly between Republicans and Democrats. Before the Resumption Act and after 1875, the parties showed internal tensions on the money issue, with Republicans leaning more toward resumption and Democrats leaning more toward various devices associated with soft money.

Congress revisited the money issue in 1876, 1877, and 1878, and there were numerous attempts to repeal the Resumption Act before it took effect, including a repeal bill that passed the house and was defeated in the Senate by a single vote. The 1876 election saw the slow rise of a national greenback party, which in 1878 would capture twenty seats in Congress and garner about 10 percent of the vote overall.¹⁵ And crucially, the decline in the market value of silver presented a specie-based inflationary option for those interested in expanding the money supply but not interested in perpetuating a fiat money system. Congress created a commission to study the money question, and it was overwhelmingly sympathetic to reinstating bimetallism. Although unsuccessful in repeated attempts to repeal the Resumption Act, Congress did enact a law establishing a partial monetization for silver (without providing, however, for free coinage) and providing for Treasury purchases of large quantities of silver, as well as overriding a presidential veto to make the bill law.¹⁶

Thus, in the space of five years Congress passed several laws whose primary goal was to affect the money supply; several laws dealing with coinage and touching on the question of monetization and demonetization of silver, thus also affecting the money supply; several laws on banking and especially on reserve requirements of banks, thus affecting the money supply yet again; and perhaps most centrally, a law mandating the return to specie backing for the currency, as well as several attempts to repeal the law. Money-focused legislative activity was incessant.

The assumption of legislative responsibility for the money supply can be seen in President Grant's addresses to Congress and his messages accompanying returned legislation, whether signed or vetoed. Grant's address at the height of the panic of 1873, for example, tellingly focuses much energy on monetary issues. The president detailed an impressive array of financial developments, ranging from banking regulation to modes of funding the federal debt and to direct components of the money supply. In the context of assuring an elastic money supply, Grant suggested a range of concrete measures and begged Congress's consideration, finally closing this section of the message with a general exhortation:

These suggestions are thrown out for your consideration, without any recommendation that they shall be adopted literally, but hoping that the best method may be arrived at to secure such an elasticity of the currency as will keep employed all the industries of the country and prevent such an inflation as will put off indefinitely the resumption of specie payments, an object so devoutly to be wished for by all, and by none more earnestly than the class of people most directly interested—those who “earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.” The decisions of Congress on this subject will have the hearty support of the Executive.¹⁷

Grant's language shows the extent to which he believes that congressional business as usual is to consider the elements of monetary policy and measures that will contribute to the elasticity of the currency. Grant sees monetary policy even in its intimate relations with the Treasury Department as a legislative, as much as or more than an executive, matter. The self-evidence of Congress as the primary agent responsible for monetary issues runs as a consistent thread through Grant's correspondence as well as his communication with Congress itself.¹⁸

This point bears special emphasis, as it illuminates the nature of Congress's activity throughout the period leading up to resumption.

This was not activity directed toward establishing, for the long term, an institutional structure or mechanism through which somebody else would conduct monetary policy. Instead, Congress understood itself as and acted as the initiator, formulator, and primary mover in monetary policy, including directing the level of the money supply. From our current perspective in which the independence of monetary authorities is sacrosanct and even oversight by the legislature is looked at askance, a view that held Congress to be responsible not only for structure but also for monetary policy decisions is striking indeed.¹⁹

In addition to the actual activity of Congress and the attitude exhibited toward that activity by the executive branch, a brief glance at the way diverse constituencies organized themselves to influence congressional action is instructive for understanding the widespread assumption of the centrality of legislative action. Outside government, the most obvious example of this kind of organizing is the establishment of the Greenback-Labor Party in 1874. Third-party organization could take on many forms and was motivated by issues that extended well beyond monetary policy. However, the fact that one of the major avenues for organizing a third-party movement was through a focus on decisions about the form of money is a strong indication that people understood money and monetary policy as a central aspect of popular politics to be conducted in the legislative sphere. And even when they were not joining or organizing a political party on the basis of a position on money, people were quite busy petitioning their legislators for direct relief on monetary questions.²⁰ Hard money advocates, too, were every bit as insistent in organizing and lobbying their representatives for appropriate legislation. They were much more focused on making sure that their positions would hold in the two major parties, especially (for the 1870s) the Republican Party. Importantly, both hard and soft money advocates were convinced, as a matter of course, that the proper way to make monetary policy was through the people's representatives in Congress.²¹

THE MONEY SUPPLY, THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE MARKET

There was a broad consensus across the political spectrum that Congress should make monetary policy, and as a result, there was an intense clash over the policy that Congress should carry out. Yet a close look at the proposals Congress debated reveals concrete measures far less polarized than the rhetoric employed by their proponents.²² But if the

actual policies being debated seem, in retrospect, rather close, how is it that so much political energy was poured into the issue? How could that political energy, with its capacity for mobilizing popular activity all the way from organizing existing groups to generating new coalitions, get funneled into an issue that seems, in its congressional output, rather arcane? Were 1870s Americans throwing their political energy into a pit from which nothing significant would emerge? Or more pointedly, were they actually confused about the connection between money and their real political contest, which was over a social vision and a mode of national development? Were they pouring their energies into a false or displaced issue in the form of the money question? Displacement on various levels is often a seductive claim, and especially when pursued by cultural historians it rings true on many of those levels.²³ Nonetheless, I will take a different tack and pursue the argumentation more directly. My reading of this political battle will require reconstructing a field of vision within which the argument over money was not a displacement but in fact the most direct and focused way to discuss and decide the central social issues of the day. In effect, 1870s Americans correctly understood monetary policy as the place where they directed the foundations for economic development. That understanding is a key to their historical moment, and its fading is a key to ours.

Perhaps it is easiest to approach the directness of the link between monetary policy and a broader set of social questions by expanding, momentarily, our historical frame. If we think back to the constitutional period and the founding of the First Bank of the United States, the direct link seems quite clear. Consider Thomas Jefferson's and Alexander Hamilton's positions on the founding of the bank: clearly, for them the question of whether bank-created money (and with it, a significant national debt) would be a central feature of the economy was a crucial social question, not limited in any way to the technicalities of monetary policy writ small.²⁴ Jefferson and Hamilton understood that the question of whether and how much bank money would be in the system was not a proxy for the social question but instead was the way to determine its answer: the money question itself was the key to development as either a commercial nation or a planter nation.

Looking back on their conflict over the bank, we are not inclined to think they had misplaced their political energy. The reason we can readily identify with the totality of this conflict is twofold: first, Jefferson and Hamilton were marvelously articulate about the role of money as

they understood it in their ideal visions for national development. Their membership in a small group of distinguished founders helps a great deal: whatever might be lacking in any particular programmatic statement has been filled in by generations of historians who have worked to make Jefferson and Hamilton into symbols of opposing totalizing coherent visions.²⁵ Second, when we look back to the historical situation of the 1790s, the idea that alternative roads to political-economic development were in fact open strikes most observers as plausible. Even for those who believe that something about American geography, character, destiny, spirit—or whatever—made commercial and industrial development inevitable, the notion that the perceived options for actual development could include both that commercial world and an opposing agrarian vision probably seems completely understandable. The point here is not to decide whether the options were truly viable or whether the path of development was already determined; instead, the point is to show how intuitive it is for us to consider the monetary and the wider social questions as intimately linked and even fused. The possibility of such fusion must form the backdrop for our understanding of how debates on money in the 1870s developed and drew their polemical energy. What now remains is to understand to what extent the 1870s still resembled the age of Jefferson and Hamilton in terms of the fusion between money and political economy, how far off that vision seems in the twenty-first century, and what role the 1870s or the decades immediately following them played in generating that distance. To answer those questions, we must investigate the role that 1870s Americans imagined for money policy and how that role impacted on who should be responsible for it.

Several factors indicate that a tight connection between money policy and national development remained intuitive for 1870s Americans. The first and most obvious is that in the early 1870s, the economic experience of the Civil War was fresh in the minds of every participant in this debate, and government direction of the economy through manipulation of the money supply seemed like part and parcel of the war experience. Some would eventually claim that this was something that ought to be limited to wartime, to the idea of emergency, to what the Federal Reserve Act would later call “unusual and exigent circumstances”; whatever the evaluation, the simple fact that Congress was making monetary policy during the war was no mystery.

Second, the impact of monetary policy was understood as different for the different geographic sections. Everybody understood that the

national banking system was not serving the South the way it was serving New York or New England, and everybody understood that money, despite being national theoretically, might not actually travel very well. This understanding was particularly salient because the supply of money was tied closely to the presence or absence of banks, and bank distribution was wildly uneven, geographically predictable, and highly visible.²⁶

Related to this is the fact that most people understood the impact of money as different for different sectoral interests—in other words, agriculture had one interest, while finance had another, railroads another, small manufacturers another, and wage laborers yet another. The overall effects might not be agreed on, but many people viewed the problem as one that would not yield a solution that was ideal for everyone, and they thought that what was at stake was a working compromise. The claim that there was one right money position for everyone was uncommon and underdeveloped, and it certainly had not yet become part of a taken-for-granted background. Recall that classical political economy was built on the idea of a fundamental tension between economic sectors represented by wages, rents, and profits (the classic formulation of this model is that of David Ricardo). The tradition of economic thought still dominant in the United States during the period owed much more to this view of national economic activity than to the mode of thought that would eventually become mainstream economics.

Taken together, these features make the tight connection between money policy and national economic development not simply plausible but intuitive. Monetary innovations were a highly visible legacy of war policy, connecting them to the most fundamental aspects of sovereignty. And money policy (especially the banking aspects) was directly tied to sectional and sectoral politics, which formed the organizing framework for debating national economic development.

SCIENCE, OR POLITICAL ECONOMY BEFORE ECONOMICS

The extent to which money was experienced as a live political issue was linked, one could speculate, both with the aftereffects of the upheaval of the war and with the new challenges brought on by the depression beginning in late 1873. As money emerges from the cauldron where it is formed and transformed, out of those basic constitutional moments that so often include money crises or combine with them, its embeddedness in a particular history and politics is obvious to the participants.

As money modernizes, as it moves away from its emergent constitutive moments, it not only forgets its history/politics but also suppresses them. Eventually, there will arise protagonists to present money as completely autonomous, as solely a facilitator, as nothing but a veil over real transactions, as completely neutral. But gaining this independence will be exhausting work, and making it the taken-for-granted attitude toward money is the defining feature of the modernization of money. Money will take on what Karl Marx terms its “dazzling money-form” by making itself seem neutral, natural, necessary.²⁷ But at that stage in American history, money was not quite modern.

Eventually, a new language of money and a new idiom of the economic did indeed naturalize money, though such naturalization took decades to establish. But what preceded them in the 1870s, and how did the language of money in that period retain politics? An answer to this question is more speculative and slightly more roundabout than the preceding demonstration that political discourse widely accepted Congress as the institutional locale for money policy. The complexity here lies in showing that actors from outside politics, including those formulating a science of money, understood money within a framework of thought that could not completely distinguish economics from politics and in a sense did not imagine doing so to be desirable (and certainly not necessary). This was the framework in which the view of money was not simply economic but a part of political economy. A look at some key sources offers a glimpse of what political economy looked like just before its transformation to economics.

When trying to pin down the economic thinking of the 1870s in the United States, science might seem like an odd place to start. Economic science was at that point barely inching toward the initial stages of professionalization. Courses in political economy appeared here and there throughout the nineteenth century, but they were taught for the most part by historians or moral philosophers, Francis Bowen of Harvard being perhaps the most famous example.²⁸ Indeed, a professional economics community did not coalesce in the United States until the late 1880s or early 1890s.²⁹

Nonetheless, there was a significant body of writing on monetary matters, and much of it aspired, at least in rhetorical posture, to the scientific. Even writers with no claim to systematic expertise in economic thinking were likely to pepper their monetary tracts with paeans to science and critique of popular discourse. Henry Bronson, for example (a

medical doctor who had written pamphlets on medical logic as well as pieces on the history of his hometown in Connecticut and the history of Connecticut currency), published a book titled *The Money Problem* in 1877. He opened by railing against the reliance on practical knowledge, particularly the knowledge of bankers and men of affairs: "Our business men who have [the] most to do with money have little time for study, none for abstract thought[;] . . . [they] cannot devote themselves to science, and would not succeed if they did. Notwithstanding this manifest unfitness, caused by occupation, the banker or capitalist who has spent his best years among money-bags and greenbacks thinks himself specially qualified by his experiences to dogmatize concerning the nature of money, and the laws which govern it. Nor does the unthinking world question his authority to teach."³⁰ Bronson, of course, was not alone, as the popularity of monetary science in titles of the period indicates.³¹ Bronson was probably responding to countless pamphlets written by bankers or journalist-publicists in their employ, or he could have had in mind more substantial texts, such as one produced by Henry Varnum Poor. Poor had developed an expertise in gathering and publishing information on railroad firms, and the value of this information for investors in railroad bonds was so great that the *American Railroad Journal* under his editorship became an important and widely used source of financial analysis for investors. It would later become the basis for the credit rating firm Standard and Poor's. But Poor's 1877 monograph, *Money and Its Laws*, was precisely the kind of dogmatizing that could give claims for science a bad name.

Poor claims that his account will put money on a completely scientific footing, but he opens with a thoroughly mythological account of money and the claim that preference for gold and silver as money "expresse[s] nothing less than an instinct or sentiment common to mankind" and further that "it is in overlooking the original and universal attractiveness which the precious metals have for the race that nearly all the errors in monetary science have arisen." The value of precious metals, Poor claims, is absolute and dependent only on their cost of production, and their presence as money is a precondition to anything of value in society: "Without them there could have been no exchanges, no wealth, no government, no institutions, no history; nothing but eternal iteration of savage or barbarous existence." Poor's fetishization of the metals seems almost a caricature, both in abstract theorizing and later in the book in his predictions about what government can or cannot

achieve. The precious metals are standards because without them there would be no civilization, and “the inference is irresistible that the universal demand for the precious metals at their cost, and the uniformity of their supply, are, equally with moral laws, part of God’s providence with man. . . . No commercial people have ever adopted, nor will they ever voluntarily adopt, standards of value other than those Providentially appointed.”³² In retrospect, Poor looks especially bad in his predictive capacity, when claiming that the greenbacks could not be brought to par with gold by the date set for resumption, less than two years from the date of publication of his book: “The impression now prevails that [the greenbacks] are to be retired by the first day of January, 1879. It is this idea that controls their present price. They can no more be retired by payment in coin, or brought to their par value by 1879, than the waters of Lake Superior can before that time be pumped into the ocean” (595). In fact, of course, greenbacks would trade at par just before resumption and almost uninterruptedly for decades thereafter.³³

However, popular attempts to rely on science as a rhetorical flourish do not do justice to the developments in more serious inquiry into political economy at the time. A look at some emergent monetary science offers clues as to how its authors negotiated the connection between politics and economics; indeed, it illustrates that their understanding of the term *politics* in connection with economics differed fundamentally from what later generations would understand as political.

The most comprehensive contemporary treatment of money from a scientific perspective was by Francis Amasa Walker, who was, by all accounts, the most prominent economist of his day. After reaching the rank of general during the Civil War, he served as chief of the Bureau of Statistics and then superintendent of the U.S. Census in 1870 and again in 1880. He held the chair of political economy at Sheffield Scientific School (Yale) beginning in 1872 and was president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1881 until his death in 1897. He was also the inaugural president of the American Economic Association, founded in 1886, and commissioner to the International Monetary Conference at Paris in 1878, the year his treatise was published.³⁴ In marked distinction to popular tracts on money, Walker’s treatise is marked by its balance, in both tone and content. It is not that Walker avoids taking a stance on the issues that divide conflicting parties; in fact, he clearly takes sides on most issues, both theoretical and practical, ranging from a divergence between classics (between David Hume and David Ricardo on the time

intervals at which the results of monetary policy will be visible) all the way down to the question of who benefits from changes in the value of the currency.

The particular question of the benefits and burdens of a fluctuating currency offer a window onto Walker's understanding of the distinction between politics and economics. The context for such a discussion is precisely the demonetization of silver and the resulting impact on the value of existing indebtedness. Walker treats the subject at a relatively high level of abstraction early in the treatise and returns to its concrete manifestation in a later discussion of bimetallism. Walker's talent for judicious balancing beams through his abstract discussion. He begins by explaining that the supply of monetary material fluctuates, and with it the value of money. Over long periods, because the value of money is unlikely to remain constant, one of the parties to every long-term contract stands to gain from the fluctuation while the other stands to lose. Walker explains that creditors can be seen as representatives of past production, while debtors represent present production, and on that ground, other things being equal, the debtors should be favored. This abstract question, Walker assures his reader, ought to be addressed on considerations he views as purely economical: "Having conducted the inquiry to this point, we reach the strict limits of the department of money. The matter is to be decided as a question in general economics. . . . If it were a question between sacrificing the present to the past, or the past to the present, all would agree in saying, let the dead bury its dead" (93–94). Gradual depreciation, Walker tells his readers, will favor those who live by current labor at the expense of those who live on the fruits of past labor, "whether their fathers' or their own." And this, he quotes approvingly from Michel Chevalier, will help advance "the developments which are brought about by that great law of civilization to which we give the noble name of progress" (94).

In a later chapter devoted to *The Battle of the Standards*, Walker re-plays the abstract preference for debtors over creditors in concrete form in the controversies over bimetallism. He opens the discussion by saying that the question of the single or double standard is "largely a political question" and opines that "the failure to distinguish between the political and the purely economical considerations which are concerned with this question, has been the cause of not a little of the confusion which has arisen in the discussion, as well as the acerbity, one might almost say animosity, with which that discussion has been carried on" (243).

A crucial question arises: what does Walker mean in distinguishing between political and economic considerations? On the economic plane, he reminds his reader that an increase in the money supply incites productive activity and diminishes the burden of existing obligations and is thus “in favor generally of the industrial classes.” The object of bimetallism is not to benefit debtors per se but rather “to prevent those debts being artificially increased by a diminution in the stock of money, through the demonetization of one of the precious metals” (268).³⁵ Walker relies on reasoning advanced by Alexander Hamilton to describe the mechanism by which demonetizing one of the metals tends toward a restriction of the money supply; with that explanation in place, he goes on to claim that the importance of Hamilton’s reasoning has grown with the increasing volume of indebtedness: “Whatever makes it harder to pay the war debts of the world, and the obligations contracted for purposes of public display or public convenience, works great injury to all productive interests, discourages enterprise, and breeds pauperism.” Walker’s position is clear, but again his balanced attitude remains central: “I do not say that no consideration could outweigh this increase of the burden of debts. . . . [I]t is a practical question, in which advantages and disadvantages should be fairly balanced; and that this may be done, it is very desirable that the question should be discussed without excitement or prejudice” (270).

But if the distribution of benefits and burdens among classes of the populace is an economic question, what is left, then, as a political consideration? Walker’s clear answer is nationalist pride, local chauvinism, as expressed in his opening of the discussion of the standard:

The question of a Single or Double Standard is really, like the question of Protection or of a National Bank, largely a political question. . . . I can entertain no doubt that the action of Germany in rejecting silver was largely influenced by political considerations on the part of her statesmen, and was rendered more acceptable to her people by the animosity felt towards France at the close of a desperate war. On the other hand, the very phrase, Latin Union, testifies to the strength of ethnical affinities operating upon governments and people, in inducing concerted action in matters of monetary standards and coinage. (43)

The analysis of the recent past of monetary action carries over directly into the political considerations determining its future. Great

Britain, Walker intimates, is too proud to “retrace the course in which she has persisted since 1816.” And even that improbable shift is “far more probable than that Germany would rescind her recent course, acknowledge before French economists her error, and join her late enemy in a monetary convention to put gold and silver on the basis which Napoleon established. But all these are political considerations which have no place in an economical treatise” (271).

The upshot of the analysis of Walker’s distinction between economics and politics is that for him, the science of economics still included a holistic view of classical questions, such as the distribution of relative benefits and burdens of monetary policy on different classes in society. The considerations Walker is concerned to banish as political and thus illegitimate are considerations of national pride or even “ethnic affinities.” His vision of economics is capacious, not in the sense that a later brand of economics might be considered imperialistic, but rather in the sense that hosts of considerations that would later be seen as extrinsic to economic science are still part and parcel of his view of the economic. It is a political economy that has not yet adopted parsimony as a central methodological value. And when translated into an analysis of money, it is thus able to accord money a crucial role in what we would consider, from the distance of nearly a century and a half, to be core political questions: should monetary policy favor debtors or creditors, bondholders or industrialists, farmers or the banks who have given them mortgages, and so on. Within this analysis, law and legislation clearly take the lead in determining the value of money and the basics of monetary policy generally. Walker’s political economy of money thus glances in rhetorical posture toward what would become neoclassical economics, but it is still a world away in substantive considerations.³⁶

THE BRIDGE TO MODERN MONEY

Within a generation, the relationship between science and the politics of money would change drastically. There were, of course, harbingers of this change early on, coexisting with what I have characterized as a common viewpoint. So although Walker and Horton thought that science would supply the knowledge for statecraft, whose eventual responsibility for money was paramount, others thought that only a certain kind of disengagement from statecraft could accord science its proper role. Convinced that politics could only express a struggle for advantage

among competing groups with no common interest, these harbingers of change hoped that expert knowledge could obviate the distributive struggle. The *Commercial and Financial Review* expressed the sentiment with sober hope, drawing on science as an alternative to politics or at least as a mode of reorganizing known political contests:

[N]ew issues, growing up into public notice everywhere, are entirely different in their nature from those which have of late divided parties. They are no longer questions of feeling and prejudice, questions of sections, classes or race, but are questions of opinion or scientific judgment, questions, in short, of financial and economic science. . . . It is too soon to discuss the probability of a new division of parties upon economical principles. The difficulties in the way of reconstructing great political organizations are immense, and will not easily be challenged by experienced statesmen. But however this may be, it is certain that these questions will occupy the minds of public men and the attention of all thoughtful people to a very great extent for some years to come. And it is certainly a great advantage to the country that political excitements of a fiercer character, involving stronger passions and bitterer prejudices than these, should, by any means, be supplanted and forgotten.³⁷

Finance capitalists were forming a new class, as Richard Bense has argued, created by the Civil War's reorganization of the financial system.³⁸ Eventually, they would supply one of the keys to transforming debates over money by developing views that purported to articulate the interests of the entire economy, and thus all of society, rather than narrow sectoral interests. But during the 1870s, economic science could not truly answer to the task set for it by this emerging class. Two decades of class redefinition were required, and as long again in consolidating an academic science of economics that could distinguish itself from political economy. Its fruits would be seen first in a shift in the monetary debates during the battle of the standards in the 1890s and finally in the complete change of scene in the legislative and executive move toward the establishment of the Federal Reserve less than twenty years later.

Eventually, finance capitalists would learn to present a united front regarding *how* policy making should be conducted: monetary issues were susceptible to scientific reasoning, and party haggling or interest group politics were not only foreign influences but also generally destructive. Too much democratic influence would translate into inept

policy choices at best and corruption at worst. The alternative was to advance policy making by scientifically informed experts who should be shielded from the political process. But this was not a well-developed position in the 1870s. At that point, much more limited calls for expert administration of the Treasury were (in the framework of civil service reform, among other things), if not the first, at least a pivotal instance of an attempt to establish the market and its science as an alternative to politics. In short, the money question was the concern that drove the division of politics from the economy to become itself a political issue.

Money's depoliticization, the transfer of monetary policy from a directly political and contested realm to a realm of experts, marks a crucial stage in the intensification of capitalism. Whether the shift is from an electoral politics dominated by monetary policy (such as the 1870s or 1896 in the United States) to monetary policy as a rarefied expert field in the form of the Federal Reserve (1913), or whether the shift takes place in an atmosphere in which the question is primarily whose experts will decide (such as the establishment of the European Central Bank with ultimate and independent authority over the euro), the stakes are similar: moving monetary policy into a shielded environment and ostensibly taking political conflicts out of the calculus.

Seen in its historical sweep, the ideal of expertise in money management clearly is anything but apolitical. But the question of how this particular shift occurred remains a puzzle. Late nineteenth-century Americans famously battled over money and monetary policy, struggling with the question of whether money would be backed by gold, silver, or government fiat. At the same time, less famously, they were changing the language, the institutional locale, and the place of law in those struggles. At the outset of the postbellum money question, legislative politics was the accepted battlefield, as evidenced by the point-counterpoint response to the panic of 1873: legislation expanding the money supply; a presidential veto; and legislation mandating resumption of specie payments. By 1896, the high point of the battle of the standards, soft money advocates were still set on legislative politics, but many hard money proponents had shifted ground, claiming that only *non-intervention* in scientifically determined *laws of nature* would solve the money problem. By 1913, with the establishment of the Federal Reserve, soft and hard money men had reached a joint conclusion that management of the money supply should be in the hands of expert bankers, far from the legislative process. More than concluding a

particular monetary arrangement, the battle over the monetary standard transformed the relationship between politics and money and had, in effect circumscribed the realm of politics, taking certain kinds of political activity off the table. Money is not all that changed during the period; along with it emerged changes in the experiences of democracy, politics, and self-government.

NOTES

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1. This claim must be understood as a limited one, for several reasons: first, for earlier periods (especially during the existence of the first and second Bank of the United States) there was a money system; second, despite its decentralized and sometimes chaotic character, the immediate antebellum combination of systems was indeed a system, and not as disjointed as it appeared on its face (especially because of the correspondent banking system and bank clearinghouses that performed the work of unification with no federal government oversight); and third, during the war the South was not integrated in the money system, and during most of the greenback period, California was not integrated. Nonetheless, the immediate postbellum period does evince a serious move toward a national system.

2. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Bicentennial Edition (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 1975), 2:1104 (Series Y, 335–38).

3. Banks suspended specie payments in December 1861, and the government immediately did the same. The exception was California, where the economy was conducted primarily on a specie basis. See Robert L. Greenfield and Hugh Rockoff, “A Tale of Two Dollars: Current Competition and the Return to Gold, 1865–1879,” in *Money and Banking: The American Experience*, ed. George Edward Durell Foundation (Fairfax, VA: George Mason University Press, 1995), 207–20.

4. There were three Legal Tender Acts during the war (February 1862; July 1862; and March 1863), each authorizing the issue of \$150 million in greenbacks. Actual circulation of greenbacks fluctuated with Treasury policy and leveled off at \$346 million soon after the war.

5. National Currency Act, February 25, 1863; National Bank Act, June 3, 1864. The two are often referred to as the National Banking Acts.

6. The conflict over the standard was nonetheless implicated, because national banks were large-scale creditors (primarily public creditors, as holders of government bonds) and thus had a direct interest in revaluing the currency, i.e., in returning to the prewar price level of gold.

Shifting the Ground of Monetary Politics: The 1870s

7. There was intense congressional contention prior to the panic as well, almost always surrounding questions of whether to expand the money supply or contract it and which measures would be effective in doing so.

8. Walter T. K. Nugent, *The Money Question during Reconstruction* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), 21.

9. There were hints of opposition to congressional control of monetary policy, articulated forcefully by prescient opponents of the institutional arrangements that most of the participants took for granted. See quotation in note 37.

10. Going further back to include events such as Congress's suspension of the Treasury policy on retiring greenbacks, the declaration of the intent to resume specie payments, and the Coinage Act of 1873 would be even more appropriate. In the latter, Congress made what would turn out to be a momentous decision regarding the demonetization of silver, though at the time the implications of the act were not appreciated. In fact, contention over monetary policy began almost immediately after the war and maintained some consistency until resumption. For a brief rundown, see Milton Friedman and Anna Jacobson Schwartz, *A Monetary History of the United States, 1867–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 44–47.

11. John Sherman, *John Sherman's Recollections of Forty Years in the House, Senate and Cabinet: An Autobiography* (Chicago: Werner, 1895), 490.

12. *Congressional Record*, S. 617, March 23, 1874, p. 2350; John Sherman, *Selected Speeches and Reports on Finance and Taxation, from 1869 to 1878* (New York: D. Appleton, 1879), 402–35 (speech introducing bill); Sherman, *Recollections*, 504.

13. Grant's veto message is a fascinating document. On the one hand, he expresses doubt as to whether the measure would have expansionary effects, suggesting that the opposite might be the case. Despite the ambiguity, Grant concluded that he had to veto the bill because of its intention to increase the paper circulation and its potential to undermine "true principles of finance, national interest, national obligations to creditors, Congressional promises, party pledges (on the part of both political parties), and of personal views and promises" he had made. Herman Edward Krooss, *Documentary History of Banking and Currency in the United States* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1969), 3:1673–74. Grant's decision-making process regarding the veto is reported in several sources, all of them highlighting the tormented nature of his decision and the difficulty with which he reached the conclusion that the bill must be vetoed. See James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to the Final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), 62–63; and Edward Atkinson, "Veto of the Inflation Bill of 1874," *Journal of Political Economy* 1, no. 1 (1892): 117–19.

14. John Jay Knox, Bradford Rhodes, and Elmer Haskell Youngman, *A History of Banking in the United States* (New York: B. Rhodes, 1900), 274–79; Friedman and Schwartz, *Monetary History*.

15. A precise count, even of congressional seats, is tricky, because many of the party's candidates had backing from additional parties, usually the Democrats. See Irwin Unger, *The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 393-94.

16. Bland-Allison Act, 1878.

17. Ulysses S. Grant, 5th Annual Address, Dec. 1, 1873, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, American Presidency Project, available at www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29514#axzz1Y3sphwFA. Among his suggestions were that Congress consider prohibiting national banks from paying interest on deposits; requiring the banks to hold reserves in their own vaults (rather than lending in the call market); establishing clearinghouses; allowing the banks to diminish their note issue; and enacting some general measures regarding the absolute and relative contraction of the currency.

18. See, e.g., letter to Edward Atkinson, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, vol. 28: *November 1, 1876-September 30, 1878*, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005). Another clear example is Grant's message to Congress upon signing the Resumption Act in January 1875. Grant notes therein how unusual it was to return signed legislation with a message, and he explains, "But I do so, because I feel that it is a subject of such vital importance to the whole country, that it should receive the attention of, and be discussed by, Congress and the people, through the press and in every way, to the end that the best and most satisfactory course may be reached of executing what I deem most beneficial legislation on a most vital question to the interests and prosperity of the nation." Quoted in Sherman, *Recollections*, 518.

19. Irwin Unger seems to advance the idea that Congress stepped in only because the administration had abdicated the normal position of managerial leadership: "In the absence of Administration leadership, finance became everybody's business." Unger, *Greenback Era*, 216. But this view seems a bit unrealistic. As Unger notes, Congress was immediately inundated with proposals for monetary plans and began discussing them on the first day of its session following the outbreak of the panic. Such a quick recognition of a gap and assumption of authority seems hardly likely for a body such as Congress, hardly known for its institutional suppleness or quick bursts of creativity. Unger later also claims that congressional debate was actually replaying arguments already before Congress for nearly a decade. The idea that Congress was only responding to a lack of leadership from its traditional locus is also belied by the conflict over the authority of the Treasury secretary to reissue greenbacks from the reserve. The secretary assumed this authority when it was not specifically granted, and Congress then debated it intensely before confirming the action and explicitly limiting the authority.

20. A few years later, during the 43rd Congress (1873-75), the major issues of the petitions and memorials had to do with the depression that had struck the country and the kind of monetary policies that should be pursued to aid

recovery. For examples of such petitions and memorials, see *Guide to the Records of the U.S. House of Representatives at the National Archives, 1789–1989* (Record Group 233), Chapter 5, “Records of the Banking and Currency Committees,” <http://www.archives.gov/legislative/guide/house/chapter-05.html>.

21. A colorful example of this type of organizing from the hard money angle appears in *Proceedings of the Mass Meeting of Citizens in the Cooper Institute*, a convention held in New York in March 1874, during which some three thousand merchants, bankers, and industrialists from New York and other parts of the Northeast gathered at the Cooper Institute to appeal to Congress to act decisively on the money supply. All the speakers professed to support a limitation on new issues of paper money, though in truth many had differing ideas on precisely how that limitation should be implemented. Similar hard money organizing may be seen in the establishment of the Boston and New York Reform Leagues as early as 1869 and the American Bankers’ Association in 1875. American Bankers Association, *History of the Organization and Annual Conventions of the American Banker’s Association*, (Cincinnati: 1888); American Bankers Association, *First Report of the Executive Council of the American Bankers’ Association for the Year 1877, Including the Addresses and Proceedings before the Committee of Ways and Means of the House of Representatives at Washington* (New York: Evening Post Steam Presses, 1877). The American Bankers Association is a particularly interesting case. It was established to bring together the voices of bankers and initially also to represent additional commercial interests; one of its main goals was the resumption of specie payments. An additional example is the founding of the Young Business Men’s Republican Associations, which would eventually morph into the Sound Money Leagues of the 1890s. On the Brokers and Bankers Republican Club, see *Great Sound Money Parade in New York* (New York: Republic Press, 1897). On young men, unattached to banks per se, see M. A. De Wolfe Howe, *Portrait of an Independent, Moorfield Storey, 1845–1929* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932).

22. Friedman and Schwartz, *Monetary History*, 55–56.

23. T. J. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009); Walter Benn Michaels, *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

24. Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 2005), 42–49.

25. It matters little from my perspective whether Hamilton and Jefferson held, as individuals, these totalizing and coherent views. What is important is simply that regarding them, our historical consciousness finds it relatively easy to understand the connection between the monetary field and the grand social questions of national development.

26. Richard Sylla, “Federal Policy, Banking Market Structure, and Capital Mobilization in the United States, 1863–1913,” *Journal of Economic History* 29

(1969): 657–86; John A. James, *Money and Capital Markets in Postbellum America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

27. Karl Marx, *Capital* (1867; New York: Random House, 1977), 1:139.

28. Harvard established a chair in political economy for Charles Dunbar in 1871, in part because Bowen's views on money did not align with the hard money position favored by the alumni (Yale followed, establishing a chair in political economy in 1872). Dunbar was self-trained, and though he was hired to teach political economy and helped establish its independence, his courses were originally listed under the heading of philosophy. The *Quarterly Journal of Economics* was established in 1886 (and the *Journal of Political Economy* at the University of Chicago in 1892), and Harvard did not inaugurate a department of political economy until 1897. Edward S. Mason and Thomas S. Lamont, "The Harvard Department of Economics from the Beginning to World War II," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 97, no. 3 (1982): 385–86. According to Mason and Lamont, "Dunbar was a self-trained economist, but then, at that time, so were all other economists in this country. There existed no systematic training in political economy in American universities. The same was true in England. Chairs in political economy had been established at Cambridge and Oxford, but the subject was treated as a minor branch of moral philosophy. . . . Only in Germany had systematic training in political economy begun" (*ibid.*, 386).

29. George S. Tavlas and Joseph Aschheim, "Alexander Del Mar, Irving Fisher, and Monetary Economics," *Canadian Journal of Economics / Revue Canadienne d'Economie* 18, no. 2 (1985): 307.

30. Henry Bronson, *The Money Problem: Inquiries Concerning the Nature and Office of Money and the Source of Its Value* (New Haven, CT: Hodgson and Robinson, 1877), 1.

31. See, e.g., Hugh Bowlby Willson, *The Science of Money Considered: With Remarks on the House Bill, No. 1755, Entitled "A Bill to Diminish the Fluctuations in Gold and to Provide for a Return to Specie Payments"; Addressed to the Honorable Reuben E. Fenton* (Washington, DC, 1869); No Mistake, *The Science of Money, a Great Truth: Gold Legal Tender, Bills of Exchange, Exports and Imports, Balance of Trade, Favorable or Unfavorable Balance of Exchange; All Simplified and Made Clearly Manifest* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871); Henry Christmas, *The Money Market: What It Is, What It Does, and How It Is Managed, an Introduction to Financial Science* (London: F. Warne, 1873); John Adams Thayer and Benjamin F. Thayer, *Universal Civil Science: A Scientific, Practical Working-Plan of Exclusive Paper-Money Exchange, for the American People, and Thereafter for Other Nations* (Cambridgeport, MA: B. F. Thayer, 1878); Luther Vanhorn Moulton, *The Science of Money and American Finances: Containing a Philosophy of Money in Accordance with Scientific Principles, and Adapted to the Wants and Civilization of the Age; Also, an Analysis and History of the Financial Operations of the Government* (Grand Rapids, MI: [Co-operative Press], 1880).

32. Henry V. Poor, *Money and Its Laws: Embracing a History of Monetary Theories, and a History of the Currencies of the United States* (New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1877), 1–9. In fairness to Poor, while his mythologizing appears extreme today, it had significant echoes in popular debate, including in Congress. Even Sherman, so pragmatic when it came to actual regulation, could wax extreme regarding the axiomatic nature of the precious metals as a measure of value:

The most obvious of these axioms . . . is that a specie standard is the best and the only true standard of all values, recognized as such by all civilized nations of our generation, and established as such by the experience of all commercial nations that have existed from the earliest period of recorded time. . . . The axiom is as immutable as the law of gravitation or the laws of the planetary system, and every device to evade it or avoid it has, by its failure, only demonstrated the universal law that specie measures all values as certainly as the surface of the ocean measures the level of the earth. It is idle for us to try to discuss with intelligence the currency question until we are impressed with the truth, the universality, and the immutability of this axiom. (Sherman, *Selected Speeches*, 402–3 [“The Currency and Specie Payments,” January 16, 1874])

33. Even a very warm biography of Poor (by his great-grandson) does not try to turn his *Money and Its Laws* into quality financial analysis. See Alfred D. Chandler, *Henry Varnum Poor: Business Editor, Analyst, and Reformer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956). Poor’s pitiful performance as prognosticator is a minor historical detail but rich in irony when compared with Standard and Poor’s similarly dismal performance in assessing the creditworthiness of firms like Lehman Brothers on the eve of the recent financial crisis. On the other hand, Poor spent much of the book outlining a plan for a central bank in a discussion that was in some ways ahead of its time.

34. Francis A. Walker, *Money* (New York: Henry Holt, 1878). In the text, subsequent references to this volume will be noted in parentheses. For biographical sketches, see Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 3:101–12; Robert M. Solow, “What Do We Know That Francis Amasa Walker Didn’t?” *History of Political Economy* 19, no. 2 (1987): 183–90; and John Billings, “Francis A. Walker,” *National Academy of Sciences Biographical Memoirs* (1902), available at www.nasonline.org.

35. Walker continues by quoting approvingly from Émile Louis Victor de Laveleye: “It may be safely asserted . . . that the demonetization of silver is a great injustice, since it modifies all contracts to the detriment of those whose interests are most worthy to be considered, viz., the debtors” (*Money*, 268).

36. For some suggestive treatments, see C. B. Macpherson, “The Economic Penetration of Political Theory: Some Hypotheses,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 39, no. 1 (1978): 101–18; and Solow, “What Do We Know.” Walker is

singled out because of his centrality in the profession, but he was not alone. A fuller examination of similar figures would highlight two important money theorists: Samuel Dana Horton and Alexander Del Mar, both of whom wrote extensively and participated in international monetary conferences. See Marble Manton, "Currency Quacks, and the Silver Bill," *North American Review* 126, no. 260 (1878):162n; S. Dana Horton, *Silver and Gold and Their Relation to the Problem of Resumption* (Cincinnati: R. Clarke, 1876); and Samuel Dana Horton, *The Monetary Situation: An Address Delivered by Request of the American Social Science Association at Its Meeting in Cincinnati, May 21, 1878: . . . With an Appendix* (1878) and *The Position of Law in the Doctrine of Money* (London: Chiswick Press, 1882). Walker, like Horton, also favored an international arrangement, but his monetary analysis was, at least until late in his career, less insistent on the international dimension. For a late work, see Francis A. Walker, *International Bimetallism* (New York: Henry Holt, 1896). Del Mar wrote several books and planned an additional book on the politics of money. See Alexander Del Mar, *The Science of Money* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1885); Del Mar, *A History of Money in Ancient Countries from the Earliest Times to the Present* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1885); and Del Mar, *Money and Civilization* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1886). For analysis, see Tavlas and Aschheim, "Alexander Del Mar," 294–313; and Joseph Aschheim and George S. Tavlas, "Academic Exclusion: The Case of Alexander Del Mar," *European Journal of Political Economy* 20, no. 1 (2004): 31–60.

37. *Commercial and Financial Review* 63 (December 1870): 439. Part of this passage is quoted and analyzed in Richard Franklin Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859–1877* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), at 280–81. There were also popular writers who pursued the critique of politics without bothering to suggest science as an alternative. In an example of this more acerbic form, Charles Francis Adams Jr. pitched a ridiculing critique of congressional debate:

The space allotted to this article can better be devoted to the one truly salient feature in the Congressional debate,—its innumerable crudities, absurdities, and sophistries. With these it was most plentifully larded. Indeed, a well-culled selection of these gems of American forensic discussion would make a volume which would be interesting now and curious forever. That such vile sophistries should during the latter half of the nineteenth century be clothed in yet viler rhetoric and uttered in any deliberative body outside of a debating club in a lunatic asylum ought to constitute matter for special wonder to ourselves, and doubtless will to all future generations. (C. F. Adams Jr., "The Currency Debate of 1873–74," *North American Review* 119, no. 244 [1874]: 125)

38. Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan*, 363–64.

CHAPTER THREE

The Comparative Advantages of Survival

Darwin's *Origin*, Competition, and the Economy of Nature

Daniel Bivona

The spark that ignited a revolution in biology in the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) is also a signally important meditation on the fraught issue of competition in the Victorian period. One can hardly talk about competition in the nineteenth century, however, without invoking the lights of political economy. While many scholars, taking their cue from Darwin himself, have discussed the contribution made by Thomas Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) to Darwin's conceptualization of competition throughout nature in *Origin*, the evidence that another major political economist, Adam Smith, played a role in shaping Darwin's ideas on competition in *Origin* has been somewhat more difficult to pin down. For one thing, while we know that Darwin read some of Smith's work, we do not know whether he read *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Michael Ghiselin writes, "While a student at Cambridge University [Darwin] remarked in a letter dated January, 1829 that he was reading Adam Smith, but it is not obvious whether it was *The Wealth of Nations* or *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*."¹ Indeed, Ghiselin has traced the origin of Darwin's ideas about human social organization to the influence of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, thus suggesting that the existing evidence bolsters the claim that

it was most likely that book by Smith that Darwin was referring to in his letter.² Scott Gordon reinforces this interpretation by claiming that Darwin did not read *The Wealth of Nations*, because he is unlikely to have derived his use of the division of labor from that source, although other scholars—notably, Silvan S. Schweber—disagree.³ Gordon’s claim ultimately rests on his inference from internal evidence that Darwin’s notion of competition is “more extreme” than the model that appears in Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*.

Whatever Darwin’s familiarity with *The Wealth of Nations*—whether firsthand or secondhand—there is little question but that he was familiar with the work of the foremost popularizer of political economy in Britain in the 1830s, Harriet Martineau. While writing her didactic popular narratives, the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, designed to make the basic principles of political economy accessible to ordinary readers, Martineau was a frequent guest in the Darwin household, at one point carrying on a courtship with Darwin’s older brother Erasmus and engaging in long discussions with the young Charles Darwin.⁴

Thus, while the direct line of influence between Darwin and Smith may not be easy to reconstruct, there is little doubt that Darwin was fired by ideas absorbed, even if by osmosis, from *The Wealth of Nations* and other important political economic writings. This is not simply a matter of borrowing metaphors. Rather, Darwin was deeply influenced by both the language and the concepts of early nineteenth-century political economy. These concepts range from scarcity to the division of labor to specialization to—above all—competition. I contend here that Darwin’s *Origin* benefited in many ways from his abstraction of economic ideas, especially those cited above, that aided him in formulating a scientific argument to make sense of the evidence of evolutionary change. His sources undoubtedly varied, but the text of *Origin* reveals the great debt his scientific ideas owed to economic ideas abstracted, in one way or another, from political economic concepts.

A few scholars have noted the conceptual parallels with Darwin: scarcity, specialization, division of labor, and competition. Stephen Jay Gould, for instance, once succumbed to the temptation to make the broad, if overstated, claim that Darwinian evolutionary theory is “the economy of Adam Smith transferred to nature.”⁵ With this claim Gould comes up just short of Karl Marx’s better-known, and exaggerated, assertion that Darwin unconsciously naturalized political economy and so did not need to have read it. After reading *Origin* in 1862, Marx

remarked to Friedrich Engels that Darwin had “rediscovered” English society in nature with nature functioning as “civil society”—hardly a flattering tribute to the independence of Darwin’s thought, although Marx elsewhere recognized Darwin as an important scientific revolutionary.⁶ Terence Ball has argued that Marx’s partner Engels was the one chiefly responsible for the widely circulated claim that Darwin was to natural history what Marx was to human history. In the most important sense, however, Marx’s view of nature (if not Smith’s) departed dramatically from Darwin’s, for Marx saw nature itself as essentially a human construct.⁷ As a natural scientist, Darwin would never endorse the notion that nature is only a human construct. Rather, his theory of natural selection folds humanity back into a natural world that is indifferent to human wishes or human fears.

One of the central claims of *The Origin of Species*, however—the assertion that one of the two central mechanisms of evolution is natural selection—is based on at least two major premises that seem to owe something to Adam Smith’s work, not just to Malthus’s: first, the assumption that competition is universal (Smith devoted as much attention to competition as his student Malthus did); and second, the premise that the varieties of species we see around us today are the descendants of successful competitors from the past, in other words, that survival in the species sense is the chief measure of success in evolution. In this sense, Darwin’s theory is a theory of the role of competition within nature conceptualized as an evolving system. As Darwin puts it, “any variation . . . profitable to an individual” will tend to preserve that individual and be “inherited by its offspring.”⁸ Diversification, specialization, and profitability: these are the most important political economic themes reshaped to do service for natural history in the language of Darwin’s text. However, to call them metaphors would be a bit misleading, since Darwin’s theory of evolution through natural and sexual selection is the century’s most important meditation on economic goals and economic competition: that is, on how all organisms and species that survive for any amount of time manage to do so by solving what is the fundamental economic problem in nature—procuring the means of continued subsistence and reproduction. Both political economy and Darwinian natural selection theory attempt, through an analysis of competition, to address a problem fundamental to both nature and human society.

I point to a fruitful cross-pollination here of political economy and Darwinian theory in the nineteenth century, specifically, to the ways

in which ideas and language born originally in *The Wealth of Nations* helped Darwin to conceptualize evolution through natural selection in nature, and thus I am suggesting that Darwin arrived at his insights in part by abstracting political economic ideas (although only in part). Such a claim would seem to underplay the importance of biological evidence to the formation of natural selection theory, even though the persuasiveness of the argument in *Origin* rests in many respects on that evidence. Curiously, despite Darwin's adroit use of what evidence there was, the evidentiary basis for natural selection in 1859 was at best a bit thin, as even Darwin acknowledges many times in the text. Even if we concede that much of the evidence for natural selection cannot be observed directly in the nineteenth century but must be inferred from a very incomplete fossil record, Darwin's theory nonetheless offers persuasive theoretical insights into the meaning of that record and thus of the process of organic evolution.⁹ That this theoretical accounting relies, here and there, more on ingenious speculation than scientific evidence, however, has also been remarked by other readers of the text. Noting that Darwin built his theory around the "incontestable" fact of speciation, for instance, Daniel Dennett argues that, nonetheless, Darwin could not offer convincing evidence for the evolution of species boundaries in 1859 and that, in any event, even today this issue remains under dispute. As Dennett says, "It has taken a century of further work to replace Darwin's brilliant but inconclusive musings on the mechanisms of speciation with accounts that are to some degree demonstrable. Controversy about the mechanism and principles of speciation still persists, so in one sense neither Darwin nor any subsequent Darwinian has explained the origin of species."¹⁰ To assert that neither Darwin nor his intellectual heirs have given a fully persuasive account of the principle of speciation does not in the least diminish his accomplishment as a scientific revolutionary, any more than my assertion that Darwin made use of political economic conceptions and language in formulating the theory of natural selection diminishes the importance and originality of Darwin's theory. Indeed, I argue that this reveals Darwin to be a man intellectually of his time, a man whose thinking, no matter how revolutionary, was partly inspired by, and grounded in, contemporary debates about the nature of a not exclusively human concern with procuring the means of subsistence and reproduction.

Finally, I hope to develop and modify the large claim that the economist Robert Frank recently made (in *The Darwin Economy*, 2011)

that “the invisible hand will come to be seen as a more special case of Darwin’s more general theory.”¹¹ While I find Frank’s argument in *The Darwin Economy* compelling, Frank also engages there in somewhat fanciful speculation about the future. Thus, he predicts that Darwin will one day be seen as the intellectual founder of economics. Frank’s way of putting the issue seems to center “the economic problem,” the fundamental object of economics as a discipline but by no means its exclusive property, at the heart of natural history. As my argument will show, the central role of “the economic” in the broadest sense seems to have been precisely the problem that Darwin saw in nature and built his theory to take account of. In that sense, I do agree with Frank’s general claim that what Darwin accomplished was the formulation of a more general theory that can be called economic, but I would add the reminder that the theory seeks to explain nothing less than the patterns of change observable (or inferable) in all life-forms over the long span of evolutionary time and thus is broader in focus than economics the discipline, with its exclusive focus on the human world.

THE INVISIBLE HAND AND DARWIN’S
CRITIQUE OF INTENTIONALITY

Like Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, Darwin’s *Origin*, as Gillian Beer has noted, devotes itself to examining unintended or “systemic” consequences, an emergent order that becomes visible only in historical retrospect. As she argues, “Evolutionary theory emphasises human unawareness of the past and obliges us to study a world from whose history we are largely absent. . . . [Charles] Lyell, and later Darwin, demonstrated in their major narratives of geological and natural history that it was possible to have plot without man—both plot previous to man and plot even now regardless of him.”¹² While competition is the main motor of this process, *Origin* concedes that competition can also be seen to serve the goals of cooperation, depending on one’s standpoint—implicitly, depending on how one defines the “whole” (the species? the tribe? the family? the colony? the individual soma?). While a backwards way of reading intentions works to demolish the claim that benevolent intentions function as a “divinity [which] shapes our ends / Rough-hew them how we will” when we are least conscious of it,¹³ intentionality can only, finally, be forward looking—a plan present at the origin and unfolded over time, not a plan whose existence is inferred only after its accomplishment.

Darwin's *Origin* thus posits an orderly, law-like process, shaped by the operation of natural and sexual selection, that appears orderly only when one reconstructs its effects in retrospect. That there will have been order in natural evolution of a sort observable only in retrospect is a central plank of Darwin's theory.

In Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, the well-known metaphor of the "invisible hand" functions in a similar fashion to the law of natural selection that Darwin developed, somewhat mysteriously meshing self-interest with public interest, regardless of what the individuals involved in economic activity may consciously intend:

[E]very individual, therefore, . . . generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.¹⁴

Smith here both concedes the limits of the human ability to foresee the future and qualifies that assertion with the term *frequently*, a word that highlights his much-overlooked concession that the unbridled pursuit of self-interest is not always and inevitably a contributor to the public interest. Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is a pioneering commentary on the limits of intentionality and the inability of the subject's motives to be fully present to him- or herself; indeed, Smith therein anticipates the modern claim that purposiveness is often a systemic effect that can be inferred only after the fact of evolutionary change. In other words, nature did not "intend" the variety of plant and animal species we see around us today, certainly, because nature is not the kind of thing that can intend. But the reason these species are alive today is at least inferable from a functional analysis of traits that blessed these species' ancestors with advantages in the universal struggle to live and reproduce. As Daniel Dennett cautions, however, Darwinian evolutionary theory does not explain everything about individual destiny that we as individuals may be tempted to attribute to teleological sources. It explains why

plants and animals existing today have the features they do, but it does not explain why particular individuals have the features they do. Nor does it explain why “you” are “lucky to be alive”: the beneficiary of the fact that all your ancestors going back to the beginnings of life on earth reproduced successfully before dying.¹⁵

When Darwin begins his argument for natural selection as the agency with main responsibility for species change in *Origin*, he launches at first into an analysis of human selection activities (what he calls “unconscious selection”), confident that if he can demonstrate the limits of intentionality there, he will be able to demolish the notion of nature as the artifact of a divine designer (29). Thus, he mentions several instances in which humans have reshaped nature to fit human purposes—the most important, to him, of course, being the human domestication of various animal and plant species: “It has often been assumed that man has chosen for domestication animals and plants having an extraordinary inherent tendency to vary, and likewise to withstand diverse climates. I do not dispute that these capacities have added largely to the value of most of our domesticated productions; but how could a savage possibly know, when he first tamed an animal, whether it would vary in succeeding generations, and whether it would endure other climates?” (14). The important point here is that the “savage” did not know and consequently could not have intended such an outcome when he first chose a wolf to domesticate. Even in cases in which evolutionary change has been initiated by intentionalizing humans, Darwin argues, no single individual could have envisioned the end point of the process he or she began: the many species of domestic dog visible in the nineteenth century when Darwin was writing. Indeed, he uses the term *unconscious selection* (29) to refer to selection that—paradoxically—operates through the agency of presumably conscious human beings. Darwin refers to the example of the domestication of the pear, which the Roman historian Pliny assures his readers was a distasteful fruit in the first century, not even suitable for consumption by pigs (31). How could Pliny’s contemporary, the ancient Roman botanical experimenter responsible for being the first to preserve sweet pear varieties to produce a fruit his pigs would eat, have known he was initiating an evolutionary process that would lead—eventually—to the production of a very sweet fruit suitable for human consumption by the nineteenth century? As Darwin puts it, “[T]he gardeners of the classical period, who cultivated the best pear they could procure, never thought what splendid fruit we

should eat; though we owe our excellent fruit, in some small degree, to their having naturally chosen and preserved the best varieties they could anywhere find” (31). Darwin’s point is that the “gardeners of the classical period” could not have foreseen that they were initiating an evolutionary process that would grow to impressive scope. And if even intentional creatures such as humans are unable to envision the end of a conscious evolutionary process of selection, then what can one infer about the entire universe of species? The answer can only be that speciation is not a teleological process whose end is immanent in its beginnings and thus not one whose evolutionary path can be envisioned in advance. The patterns that evolution stamps in natural history become visible only when we look back. In Dennett’s words, “mitochondrial Eve” can only be retrospectively “crowned,” and thus all species origins are identified only through the same process of historical retrospect.¹⁶ I touch on the complex issue of “selection pressure” later in this chapter, although it does not undermine Dennett’s claim and, in any event, is not derived directly from Darwin’s work but is rather a by-product of contemporary discussions of emergent or “holistic” evolution.

Evolution through natural selection is a process that can be known only retrospectively, as one retraces the complex past history of competition among species and within species for the scarce means of survival—“the doctrine of Malthus applied to the whole vegetable and animal kingdom,” as Darwin says (7). While Adam Smith seeks to offer reassurance that the pursuit of self-interested economic gain not only does not undermine public interest but also actually serves the public interest despite appearances to the contrary, Darwin generalizes about a process that has been largely out of human hands to make the point that if intentional creatures cannot control or even envision the outcome of evolutionary processes they initiated, then the process of natural selection over hundreds of millions of years when no humans inhabited the earth can hardly be seen as an intentional process. What we have here is the appearance of order without intentionality.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE AND COOPERATION

As I have already argued, Darwin relies to some extent on metaphorical language that has its ultimate source in the vocabulary of Smithian political economy, but his borrowing is more conceptual than metaphorical: to take another example, the notion of comparative advantage, which was

discussed but not named as such by Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*. Although Smith does not develop the concept as fully as David Ricardo would in 1817, he does make a powerful argument tying specialization to profit, citing, among other things, the advantage the French have in producing wine over their neighbors in mountainous Switzerland (*Wealth*, I.II.43). In his chapter “On Foreign Trade” in his *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, Ricardo gives a more elaborate example of how comparative advantage works by showing that if England can make and sell cloth more cheaply than Portugal, then it will be able to export that cloth to Portugal at a profit. Likewise, since Portugal can make and sell wine more cheaply than England, it can export its wine profitably to England. The result is a “comparative advantage” for both countries in the products in which they specialize and thus are able to sell at a lower price than their competitors can.¹⁷ Because wine grapes cannot be made into wine more cheaply in England than in Portugal (at least not in the eighteenth century), it is not in England’s self-interest to specialize in wine making, for it has no comparative advantage over Portugal.

Compare this discussion of comparative advantage with a key passage in *The Origin of Species* in which Darwin asserts that “diversification” of structure promotes adaptation through successful competition and, thus, population growth within individual species: “So in the general economy of any land, the more widely and perfectly the animals and plants are diversified for different habits of life, so will a greater number of individuals be capable of there supporting themselves” (89). Clearly, Darwin saw the issues raised by universal competition and natural selection as fundamentally economic issues, for they address the question “What accounts for survival?” Not only does his metaphor “general economy” convey the implication that he is focused on the “wealth of species” occupying specific ecological niches, but also Darwin implies that diversification of structure and habits promotes the proliferation of a maximum number of individuals through a kind of “invisible hand” effect. Darwin’s vision of biological “prosperity” is rooted in the notion that one can measure the wealth of nature by gauging the degree to which species have proliferated and filled a variety of evolutionary niches—his implicit macrocosmic standard of biological prosperity. Darwin, of course, does not use the word *niche*. Rather, he adopts explicitly political economic language in the passage where he discusses what later biologists would call “ecological niches.” His phrase for them is “places in the polity of nature” (83).

Darwin insists that the route to prosperity is related to diversification (or, in Adam Smith's term, *specialization*) rather than simply defined by the proliferation of countless individual members of a small number of species that find conditions in their particular niches favorable at a certain moment in time. In other words, he favors a diverse over an unbalanced ecosystem, and he includes in *Origin* a well-known tree diagram to illustrate that the process of evolution tends, over the long run, to fill in niches and thus to proliferate more and more diverse species, although there is no biological reason why this increasing complexity cannot one day be reversed through major extinction events precipitated by the right change in environmental conditions or predator/prey imbalances (conditions that many biologists would argue have been especially precipitated by human activity and whose negative effects have become increasingly visible in recent years). As he says, "So in the general economy of any land, the more widely and perfectly the animals and plants are diversified for different habits of life, so will a greater number of individuals be capable of there supporting themselves" (89). Free trade produces maximum wealth when it diminishes direct competition in favor of complementary specialization—when, for instance, England sells to Portugal what Portugal cannot sell to England at a profit, and vice versa. Indeed, Darwin offers a comparable definition of "the wealth of nations" in natural terms when he celebrates biological diversity in the chapter on natural selection (89). His conclusion? Biological diversification in general promotes the growth of a dense variety of species that may cooperate more than they compete (89). Moreover, intense competition may often precipitate a movement toward what Smith calls "monopoly" conditions, or, in other words, the reduction of competition through successful extinction events (*Wealth*, 4.2.1). Because competition is often most intense among closely related organisms, it is also most likely to lead to rapid extinctions, Darwin says: "Hence the improved and modified descendants of a species will generally cause the extermination of the parent-species, the nearest allies of that species" (*Origin*, 236).

The claims Darwin is making about how competition is usually more intense among more closely related species (which are most likely to compete for the same sources of food) might be seen in a related political economic light. When Ricardo cites England's "comparative advantage" in selling cloth to Portugal (and Portugal's "comparative advantage" in selling wine to England), he also implies that comparative advantage

diminishes (and competition intensifies) the more closely “related” the exportable products to one another. In other words, England’s “comparative advantage” in exporting butter to Italy may diminish considerably because of what later economists would call “the substitution effect.”¹⁸ Italy presumably has a comparative advantage over England in producing olive oil. Yet olive oil is easily substituted for butter for many purposes, and because it may be substituted, Italian olive growers will often find themselves—to some extent—in direct competition with importers of butter. Because wine cannot substitute for cloth, English exporters of cloth are not in competition with Portuguese exporters of wine. In Darwinian terms, these two commodities—cloth and wine—are not “related.”

Specialization (and its biological equivalent) generates payoffs for cooperative rather than competitive behavior at times, although both Smith and Darwin nonetheless see some advantages to unrestricted competition as well. Just as Smith attempts to console his readers with the reflection that, however destructive it may be of primary production, free trade can nonetheless clear the way for the development of more-profitable forms of secondary production within a nation, Darwin offers an analogous consolation—indeed, a vision of natural “prosperity”—that often follows on the heels of major extinction events. These events are, of course, the effects of unrestrained competition that nonetheless open up opportunities for other species or varieties to thrive. At times this Darwinian argument reaches near-ludicrous extremes, as when, for example, in the second edition of *Origin*, Darwin attempts to assuage his readers’ fears about the apparent viciousness of natural selection in operation with a hard-to-accept moralization of the effects of the “struggle for existence”: “When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief, that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply” (62). Even if we allow that cooperation is as fundamental as competition to natural selection and that that is one of the things that Darwin might have meant here by “the war of nature is not incessant,” his claim “no fear is felt” can only be asserted of animals that are biologically incapable of what humans call “feeling fear.” It makes no sense whatsoever to make this claim of animal species closely related biologically to humans. Moreover, the consolation Darwin offers in the last line (“the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply”) is finally only an intellectual consolation reserved mainly for the survivors who have had the luck to become

conscious of how natural selection invigorates nature—natural scientists, for example, such as Darwin and his sympathetic readers. If the “more fit” tend to survive, it is because we define “fitness” tautologically, using the criteria of survival and reproduction. Those who have survived and reproduced successfully will necessarily have been the “most fit.”

At moments in *Origin*, Darwin seems excessively confident in his ability to identify competition among plant and animal species (or, to put it more accurately, the effects of competition). But it is not as simple as it may seem. This problem of defining competition seldom seems to haunt our understanding of competition in the works of Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus, who are writing, of course, about human social existence. While it may seem rather obvious—even if a touch anthropomorphic—to identify the dominant male walrus’s relationship with the other males with whom he “fights” as “competitive,” most of us are probably comfortable with that claim.¹⁹ However, identifying competition in nature becomes a touch more problematic when one claims to find it, as Darwin does, operating to shape the variety of plant species we see in the world around us. In what sense can plants be said to “compete” with one another or with animals? As Peter Corning reminds us, identifying competition in nature usually requires a finding that species are competing over the same thing. In most cases of competition that leads to natural selection, this involves identifying what contemporary biologists refer to as “selection pressures” that come into play when competing species go after the same source of food. And this cannot be determined without an analysis of the “organism–environment” situation. Thus, Corning argues, using an old example from Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, that the evolution of a taste for a certain type of food creates a “selection pressure” that implicitly maps out a possible evolutionary path. The competition for tree leaves generally rewards proto-giraffes with longer necks than their fellows with success in the competition for tree leaves because they are the only ones that can reach leaves located higher in the trees. However, the taste for, and ability to digest, leaves marks out a possible evolutionary path that, only in retrospect, allows us to see how natural selection might have favored proto-giraffes with longer necks over those with shorter necks in the competition for leaves. Corning summarizes the process: “A change in the organism–environment relationship among ancestral giraffes, occasioned by a novel behavior—a teleonomic selection [eating tree leaves]—precipitated a new selection pressure for morphological change.”²⁰

To a certain extent, the whole notion of phenotypic “competition” seems to presuppose a world composed of identifiable individuals that are pitted against one another in a fight to the death (or a fight to avoid reproductive failure), and thus animals, because of their physiological resemblances to humans, would seem to embody competition in the most visible way.²¹ However, Darwin implicitly concedes the complexity and even comes near to celebrating explicitly competition’s opposite number—cooperation. At times in *Origin*, Darwin seems to see the world in terms of a struggle to the death among competing animal predators. Yet that type of predation is only one small instance of a much larger, and all-encompassing, natural process, for Darwin relates physical structure directly to the operation of competition. In other words, competition among top predators, which seems to offer the most obvious model for “competition” in the natural world, is itself an effect of the evolution of structures selected over many generations. Thus, in the chapter “Struggle for Existence,” Darwin asserts that “the structure of every organic being is related, in the most essential yet often hidden manner, to that of all other organic beings, with which it comes into competition for food or residence, or from which it has to escape, or on which it preys” (61). Competition, in this sense, is actually enabled by a kind of systemic interdependency, in this case, of predator and prey, as the number of wildebeests in an area of the savanna may set an upper limit to the number of large predators—lions and hyenas, for instance—that that niche can support. Moreover, the evolved “structures” that enable certain species to compete successfully with others are themselves effects of the operation of competition over evolutionary time. Competition and cooperation are closely linked activities, one might say. If we return to the political economic example cited earlier, we can say that England ultimately competes successfully (that is, “profits”) by “cooperating” (that is, “refusing to compete”) with Portugal in the sale of wine, instead offering Portugal cheaply produced English textiles, which Portugal cannot produce as cheaply. A system of “free trade” is ultimately a cooperative system paradoxically based on the principle of competition. In the Darwinian model, cooperation has been selected for over the long course of evolution precisely because it has proven itself to be a superior form of competitive strategy over the long term.

If cooperation can often foster the ultimate goals of competition, then that would seem to open up the need to redefine the meaning of the term *competition*: Perhaps what looks like “competition” is really

“cooperation” in disguise, or perhaps complex systems, whether biological or economic, must be understood as combining competition at one level with cooperation at another. Perhaps the question of how one defines the “whole” unit in either biological evolution or economic exchange needs to be rethought to properly situate the role of the “individual” and “individual self-interest”—hence, the central importance of division of labor to both economics and biology.

DIVISION OF LABOR

The concept of “division of labor” in economics presupposes a social whole within which tasks are divided among a variety of people: in Smith’s treatise, this “whole” is often the political unit he calls the “nation.” Division of labor allows a nation to circumvent some of the effects of unrestricted competitive relationships, because the allocation of tasks to different people ensures that many individuals do not compete with one another directly and thus that the Hobbesian nightmare of a war of all against all does not offer a good analogy for how this system works. That said, however, one must concede that the process known as *proletarianization*, which has often accompanied the development of the modern industrial division of labor and which troubled political economists beginning with Adam Smith, seems to imply that a dystopic future lies in wait for the majority of humanity. Smith’s discussion of division of labor in *The Wealth of Nations* is anything but Panglossian. There he announces that he has made the dismal discovery that the majority of people are not going to lead lives of relative comfort under competitive capitalism, because they lack specialized job skills. Indeed, this is one of the central ironies built into the vision of complex social interdependency in *The Wealth of Nations*. While celebrating to some extent the advantages that specialized skills give to someone forced to compete in the marketplace for customers or employment, Smith was also aware that specialization for the majority of the population often meant *de-skilling*, a reduction of one’s skills to the level of a narrow ability to perform only one form of work (oftentimes menial drudgery) very competently. This accounts for Smith’s rather grim view of the future as one in which de-skilling increasingly comes to predominate among the working and lower classes. As he argues,

The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is

possible for a human creature to become. . . . His dexterity at his own particular trade seems, in this manner, to be acquired at the expence of his intellectual, social, and martial virtues. But in every improved and civilized society this is the state in to which . . . the great body of the people, must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it. It is otherwise in barbarous societies, . . . [There,] invention is kept alive, and the mind is not suffered to fall into that drowsy stupidity, which, in a civilized society, seems to benumb the understanding of almost all the inferior ranks of people. (5.1.179)

The multiple forms of expertise that Smith attributes here to the people of “barbarous societies” leads him to draw the conclusion that the modern economic order is gradually reducing the skill level of most workers, leaving them vulnerable and unable to compete successfully against others with a similar dearth of specialized skills. The very narrowness of an ordinary worker’s abilities, his “stupidity,” is what allows him, according to Smith, to make a productive contribution to the work of a larger entity—the factory, say, or the farm. While Smith was writing in the very early days of modern industrial organization, before the use of steam power had transformed the nature of work in Britain (for example, James Watt and Matthew Boulton formed Boulton and Watt in 1775—only a year before the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*), Smith was nonetheless aware of the systemic function of specialization that is, from the point of view of the worker, stultifying. He is aware, in other words, of the role that specialization plays in enhancing productivity—and hence, profitability—of the larger enterprise even if that increase in profitability comes only through reducing most forms of work to repetitive drudgery requiring few skills. Moreover, by reducing individual workers’ skills to easily mastered single abilities, this process has enabled capitalists to drive down wages through the threat of replacing troublesome or less productive workers, for it was and is often easy to find workers with adequate basic skills. Indeed, the so-called iron law of wages, which posits that the general wage rate will eventually be driven down to the level of subsistence, the level just adequate to induce workers to continue to work, sets a lower limit to this process. As Smith noted (many years before Malthus), there is an inverse relationship between biological productivity and economic status: “A half-starved Highland woman frequently bears more than twenty children,

while a pampered fine lady is often incapable of bearing any, and is generally exhausted by two or three" (1.8.36). The inevitable result of this would be a rapidly increasing supply of lesser-skilled labor, were it not for the high likelihood that few of the children of the "half-starved Highland woman" would survive to an age at which they might help to lower the general wage rate. Indeed, starvation operates as systematically in Smith's vision of the future as in Malthus's: "But in civilized society it is only among the inferior ranks of people that the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to the further multiplication of the human species; and it does so in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children which their fruitful marriages produce" (*Wealth*, 1.8.38).

The dystopic social effects of competition in an economic order characterized by intense competition among workers with reduced but largely unspecialized skills is dramatized in Harriet Martineau's *Manchester Strike*, which appeared as one of her *Illustrations of Political Economy* in 1834. In this story, various characters represent allegorically economic forces driven by different, indeed antithetical, interests. When the workers decide to strike to prevent a further reduction of their pay by the masters, the main character, Allen, joins them as one of the strike leaders, at least partly to ensure that a voice of moderation will be at the table to temper the hotheads. The strike fails within a few weeks when the masters refuse to budge, and the workers—most of them—are forced to reapply for work at lower wages. The accommodating millworker Allen attempts to function as a mediating figure in the text, by acting as a go-between between the strike committee and the most reasonable of the masters. But his mediation ultimately fails. As a didactic tale, *A Manchester Strike* is dedicated ostensibly to teaching the value of grappling intellectually with the social issues of industrialism, especially the issue of unrestricted competition for jobs. It also is intended to appeal to the minds more than the hearts of its readers, to teach them a political economic lesson about the need for resignation in the face of immutable economic laws.

In Martineau's tale, the strike ultimately fails; most of the striking workers are left worse off than before the strike because they are forced to accept new jobs at lower wages. In the end, the mediating figure, Allen, is reduced to working as a street sweeper because no master will hire him back into a factory job. Mediation is thus revealed as useless, for the "iron law of wages," which posits that the wages of workers with proletarianized skills will always tend to fall to subsistence levels

as long as the supply of lesser-skilled labor continues to grow, makes it impossible for workers to better their lot. Submission to unchangeable economic laws is all one can do in the end, a position that seems to completely undermine the value of Allen's heroic attempt to bring humane order to a tragic social conflict of interests. A pall of Ricardian and Malthusian pessimism descends upon the scene. And Martineau ends her tale with a didactic summary of the political economic principles abstracted from the tale: eternal laws to which we can only submit.

If *A Manchester Strike* tells the dystopic story of the inevitable beggaring of an overpopulated class of workers with unspecialized skills, Martineau's tale *Life in the Wilds*, the first of her *Illustrations of Political Economy* to be published (1832), offers a much more hopeful vision of the operation of division of labor in the form of a utopian parable. The story begins in the aftermath of a brutal attack by Bushmen on an English settlement in South Africa. Escaping with their lives but with their houses and farms destroyed, the survivors of the attack must regroup and reconstitute their disrupted community. At first taking refuge in a sparse semiarid landscape, the village elders (in particular, the Captain and the pastor, Mr. Smith) organize the survivors into a division of labor that soon grows notably complex. This division of labor is responsible for not only the survival of the refugees but also the reconstitution of a fully flourishing community that soon produces an economic surplus. In other words, the community accumulates wealth in the form of more and more productive labor that, as Adam Smith would predict, is capable of not only meeting basic needs but also satisfying new needs that are themselves by-products of the growth of labor productivity.

The tale is very much in the tradition of the nineteenth-century Robinsonade, a tradition best represented by best-selling adventure novels such as Johann Wyss's *Swiss Family Robinson* (1818) and Frederick Marryat's *Masterman Ready* (1841), which dramatize isolated families or communities rather than, as Daniel Defoe mainly does in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), individual survival. Whereas Defoe's hero is a solitary castaway on his island for a good portion of the novel, submitting himself in his isolation to the painstaking process of teaching himself how to perform a variety of tasks, Martineau's community is depicted as dedicated to quickly evolving a complex division of labor among its members. Everyone improvises and specializes in Martineau's tale. The boys learn how to make bows and arrows and to make the arrows lethal by coating the tips with the venom of snakes. The girls teach themselves

how to weave baskets and collect honey. Adult women and men allocate their labor to a wide variety of different tasks according to individual skills and abilities, from hunting to fencing pastureland to building irrigation trenches to building houses to forming and firing clay pots and to performing a wide range of other domestic chores, especially those that call upon the skills directly involved in feeding the group (butchering and salting meat, grinding corn, making bread, and cooking and serving meals, for example). Indeed, Martineau carefully invests the division of labor depicted here with an inherent evolutionary dynamism, as individuals teach themselves how to subdivide even specialized tasks more and more finely. One example is the way the boys who specialize in the making of bows and arrows soon learn how to assign the best shaft makers to concentrate on shaft making and the best arrowhead makers to dedicate their labor exclusively to that task.²² We readers are even given glimpses into the metaphorical early days of coevolution among species as one character, young Betsy, discovers how to make use of honeycuckoo birds to find honey for the group: a form of cooperative labor divided between the human and the animal.²³

Darwin encourages his readers to think of the natural world as one in which some forms of specialized structures or qualities bestow advantages on their owners in the universal struggle for survival. In the early chapters of *The Origin of Species*, Darwin prepares his readers to accept his later argument for natural selection as the chief mechanism of evolution by discussing how nature's equivalent of "specialized abilities"—adaptive variations—promote success in the continuing struggle for existence (many "variations," as Darwin was well aware, perhaps the vast majority, do not at all promote success in the struggle for existence; they are not "adaptive"). He discusses the "struggle for existence" as one that rewards a certain degree of specialization of "structures" and "habits" produced by what he calls, in the absence of a genetic theory, "variation": "[A]ny variation. . . if it be in any degree profitable . . . will tend to the preservation of that individual, and will generally be inherited by its offspring" (50). In effect, Darwin is giving a central role to variations—the natural equivalent of specialized skills in the marketplace of nature—that allow plants and animals possessing them to outcompete those that do not possess those traits. While the doctrine of "comparative advantage" was generally discussed by political economists as a means of diversifying an economy to reduce competition that does not serve self-interest, there is no question but that the doctrine is also

about economic specialization that leads to successful competition. The most important difference between Darwin and political economy here, though, has to do with how one measures the outcome of successful competition. Political economy tends to see reduction of import duties and successful free trade as a winning strategy for all trading partners. Darwin's view of competition, by contrast, is binary (and thus implicitly tragic from the point of view of the losers): successful competition means continued life and, more important from the perspective of species, successful reproduction; unsuccessful competition means death or, from the point of view of species, extinction.

Despite the progressive view of history that is encoded in the political economic discussion of free trade as a process that enriches all who engage in it, political economy of the early nineteenth century, especially of the Malthusian and Ricardian variety, justly earned the name that Thomas Carlyle later applied to it: the "dismal science." The issue that most troubled critics such as Carlyle in the "Hungry Forties" was the way political economists seemed almost to welcome an unrestricted competition for proletarianized jobs, which led to the bidding down of workers' wages to the natural limit of subsistence. In a time of stagnating economic growth, this often meant severe unemployment or underemployment as well as reductions in pay for those who could still work. If, as Malthus argued, population growth among the lower classes will eventually outstrip food supply, then all economic "progress" implies the eventual need to pay a tragic price: the price of eventual starvation of the surplus population, for starvation is the only natural control on the growth of the masses competing for limited numbers of jobs (that is, if they are not encouraged to emigrate to reduce competition for jobs in Britain). As many at the time realized, this specter of mass starvation, of an economic order unable to produce and distribute enough wealth to sustain the very workers needed for its production, sounds a disturbing undertone to the self-congratulatory celebrations of increasing productivity and economic growth heard elsewhere. The question it raised in many minds, though, was ultimately a question about the morality of capitalism as a system: is it possible to reconcile the vision of a gradual immiseration of countless workers with the bright promise of growing wealth through the improved productivity of specialized labor? In Darwin's *Origin of Species*, this contradiction is implicitly posed in different terms, although the logic is very similar and the moral questions it raises just as pressing and just as insufficiently addressed by him.

However, as Martineau's *Life in the Wilds* attempts to suggest in fictional form, a division of labor that produces a surplus can, under the right circumstances, foster improved health and the reproductive vitality of a species in a certain niche—at least for a time. If direct competition among workers with low-level skills leads them ultimately to the brink of starvation, competition among workers with higher-level, and more differentiated, skills can often produce greater wealth through greater productivity, accompanied by a reduction in direct competition. This is certainly what economic historians argue became true in the industrial niche that is the British textile mills in the 1850s and '60s—the heyday of Britain's economic dominance of the globe.²⁴ Whether Darwin drew directly from the works of Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo for his inspiration or only indirectly from the work of Martineau, the point remains that his views of competition in the natural world were strongly shaped by ideas of economic competition that dominated the first half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, Darwin's tone seems to have taken on more of the coloring of Martineau's and Smith's optimism than the gloominess of Malthus and (to some extent) Ricardo. The fact remains, though, that political economy predicts tragic results for the uncompetitive, utopian results for the specialized. Darwin's almost giddy optimism ("When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief, that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply" [*Origin*, 62]) manages to capture something of Martineau's coldly rational, but distanced, view of capitalism as a competitive system as well as her warmly utopian hope in the future prospects of success for those survivors who have battled successfully.

NOTES

My thanks to all who commented on previous versions of this chapter when I delivered it as a paper at the Nineteenth Century Studies Association conference in March 2011, as well as to Samantha Briggs, who read and commented on it at a later stage of development.

1. Michael T. Ghiselin, "Darwin and the Evolutionary Foundations of Society," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 71, no. 1 (July 2009): 6.

2. *Ibid.*, 7.

3. Scott Gordon, "Darwin and Political Economy: The Connection Reconsidered," *Journal of the History of Biology* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 452–53; Silvan

S. Schweber, "Darwin and the Political Economists: Divergence of Character," *Journal of the History of Biology* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 1980): 211.

4. Gordon, "Darwin and Political Economy," 452–53.

5. Stephen Jay Gould, *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History* (New York: Norton, 1992), 12.

6. Marx to Engels, June 8, 1862, quoted in Piers J. Hale, "Labor and the Human Relationship with Nature: The Naturalization of Politics in the Work of Thomas Henry Huxley, Herbert George Wells, and William Morris," *Journal of the History of Biology* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 253.

7. Terence Ball, "Marx and Darwin: A Reconsideration," *Political Theory* 7, no. 4 (November 1979): 470–71.

8. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, ed. Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 50. In the text, subsequent references to this edition will be noted in parentheses.

9. *Ibid.*, 130.

10. Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 44.

11. Robert H. Frank, *The Darwin Economy: Liberty, Competition, and the Common Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 30.

12. Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17.

13. William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. Tucker Brooke and Jack Randall Crawford (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1947), act 5, scene 2.

14. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (London: Methuen, 1904), bk. 4, chap. 2, p. 9. In the text, subsequent references to this edition will be noted in parentheses.

15. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 215.

16. *Ibid.*, 98–99.

17. David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, 3rd ed. (London: John Murray, 1821), 144–46.

18. Godfrey Cadogan, "A Trade Policy Perspective on Import Quotas and the Substitution Effect," MPRA Paper no. 25862 (September 2010), <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/25862>.

19. It is worth noting Frans de Waal's view of dominance struggles in primate species as serving both "cooperative" and "competitive" functions. These struggles often involve building coalitions with others to compete successfully for dominance. Discussed in Peter Corning, *Holistic Darwinism: Synergy, Cybernetics, and the Bioeconomics of Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 165.

20. *Ibid.*, 127.

21. For the now-classic argument that the struggle for existence involves primarily genotypic competition, see Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

22. Harriet Martineau, *Illustrations of Political Economy, No. 1: Life in the Wilds, a Tale*, (London: William Clowes, 1832), 77.

23. *Ibid.*, 15.

24. See E[ric] J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: The Birth of the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 87–III.

PART TWO

Particular Abstractions

Economics and Culture

CHAPTER FOUR

Art Unions and the Changing Face of Victorian Gambling

Cordelia Smith

In 1828, the final prize draws of the British state lottery were held. Earlier in the century, lotteries had been declared by the government of the day to be “pernicious, and . . . unproductive.”¹ They were a force for evil: bound to ruin their participants, morally and financially, and opposed to economic productivity and commercial prosperity. It was assumed that their primarily working-class participants would ruin themselves by repeated gambling in an attempt to win back money that they could ill afford to lose. Out of this world of irresponsible working-class gamblers and moral panic, the art union movement emerged. Unusually in the history of British lottery gambling, the art unions attracted an overwhelmingly middle-class audience. This middle-class audience was responsible—however inadvertently and obliquely—for blurring the moral opposition between art and gambling. In the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century lottery gambling, the largely “respectable” audience that the art unions attracted marked a shift in Britain’s gambling culture. An observation about the late twentieth-century National Lottery in Britain might well have been written of the art unions: “Traditional middle-class dislike of gambling has been overcome in this state-sanctioned activity, which further assuages uneasy consciences with the reminder of the ‘good causes’ that benefit from participation.”²

The degree to which the major art unions became an acceptable and accepted part of British cultural life, despite their lottery element,

was due in no small part to the extent to which they undermined traditional assumptions about lottery gambling and the kinds of people who took part in it. Lotteries' distinction from other kinds of gambling also helped to confound more general assumptions about and objections to, for instance, the gender of the gambler and the locations in which gambling took place. It is significant that lottery gambling is by its nature more restricted than, say, gambling on a roulette wheel or a card game: there is little opportunity to engage in the kind of continuous, uncontrolled spending that those other forms of gambling allow. Similarly, lottery gambling involves few of the "situational influences" that encourage continued participation in other types of types of gambling.³ In a casino or at the racetrack, the gambler is influenced by such factors as the presence of food and drink, lighting, and other gamblers. Yet, crucially for the art unions, most of these factors are absent from lottery gambling. A lottery is a peculiarly domestic form of gambling.⁴ Participants have no need to be in a particular place or to interact with or even be aware of the existence of other gamblers. A lottery has little of the inherent seductive glamour of the casino or the racetrack or the excitement of their immediate financial gains and losses.⁵

The art unions' entanglement in the world of lotteries, gambling legislation, and nineteenth-century art market speculation was largely accidental. The art union movement aimed to bring art to the masses and to inject money into the British art market. Despite their obscurity today, the art unions were little short of a phenomenon, spreading from Germany (where they were known as *Kunstvereine*) and France in the 1820s to Britain, the United States, and much of the rest of the Anglophone world in the 1830s and 1840s. In Britain, on which this chapter concentrates, they flourished for a little over a century, with the last art unions still in operation as late as the 1940s.⁶ Simply put, an art union was a lottery in which the prize was a work of art. In reality, there was scope for tremendous variation within this concept; the main distinctions within the movement are set out below. Despite this variety, the art unions' overarching aims were at root educational and philanthropic. The movement was united by these objects, as well as by the common feature of a prize draw, which was shared by all art unions. In exchange for an annual membership fee, subscribers to an art union were guaranteed entry in its lottery draw. Prizes were either works of art chosen in advance by the organizing committee or the right to select a work worth a specified amount of money from a particular exhibition or gallery. Ownership of, rather than just access to, art was of especial importance: the art unions sought to allow "those who, although possessed of taste, [were] not wealthy" to own works that they could not otherwise have afforded.⁷

Over the course of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the art unions underwent numerous changes in their organizational structures and in the kinds of people who ran them, as well as those who took part as subscribers. These changes and developments permit the identification of three distinct types of art union, which arose in broadly chronological succession: major art unions, local art unions, and charity art unions. This chapter concentrates only on the major art unions and the local art unions, from the 1830s until the end of the nineteenth century. Major art unions were established beginning in the mid-1830s, while local art unions came to prominence starting around 1860. Charity art unions—which aimed to raise money for good causes—developed in the closing years of the nineteenth century. They came to particular prominence during World War I and therefore fall outside the chronological scope of this chapter.⁸

Major art unions were large-scale organizations, generally based in large towns and cities, such as London, Birmingham, and Manchester, and often had many thousands of members. Their ambitions were national and even international: the Art Union of London (AUL), for example, had subscribers from as far away as New York, Bombay, and Nova Scotia.⁹ Other major art unions were less successful in attracting an international audience, but the Royal Birmingham and Midland Counties Art Union (RBMC), for example, had honorary provincial secretaries and subscribers throughout Britain.¹⁰

The annual subscription rates of major art unions were high: generally a guinea. As the nineteenth century progressed and cheaper local art unions came to prominence, some major art unions, such as the Liverpool Art Union in 1859, lowered their annual subscription rates to keep pace with their cheaper competitors and encourage new members.¹¹ During the first twenty years of the art union movement, however, the relatively expensive membership fee, together with consistently high subscriber numbers, allowed the major art unions to accumulate substantial prize funds, with individual prizes often worth several hundred pounds. In her study of the AUL, Lyndel Saunders King suggests that to spare a guinea for a year's membership, a family would have required an income of £250–300 per annum.¹² For a clerk, a laborer, or even a gallery attendant at the AUL's annual exhibition, the yearly subscription fee for a major art union would have equated to around a week's wages.¹³ This put major art union membership out of the reach of the poorest members of society, although it was precisely those poor whom the AUL and other art unions had originally aimed to reach.

The local art unions came to prominence in the wake of the 1846 Art Unions Act, which sought to clarify the legal position of the art union

movement (until the act was passed, the art unions were technically illegal private lotteries). At first glance, the local art unions appear to have been a smaller-scale version of the major art unions. Indeed, this is broadly how they were regarded during the nineteenth century. The 1845 report of the Select Committee on Art Unions described all “the other [major and local] Art Unions of England” as “differ[ing] little from that of [the Art Union of] London in their objects or constitution.”¹⁴ In reality, the objects and constitutions of this second kind of art union were frequently sufficiently divergent from those of the major art unions to mark them out as a distinct strand within the art union movement, however.

Local art unions were altogether more modest in their ambitions than the major art unions, with much lower subscription rates (frequently of one shilling); top prizes with a value of around ten or fifteen pounds; and a body of subscribers drawn primarily from the immediate vicinity of the town in which the art union was based. They were generally organized in conjunction with the exhibition of a local art society and fell under the auspices of that society rather than existing as independent organizations, as did the major art unions. They did not aim to equal either the longevity or the broad reach of the major art unions. They were, rather, important expressions of mid-Victorian civic pride. Instead of seeking to improve the lot of the nation’s artists, the local art unions sought to promote the work of artists from one particular town or city.

The art union movement originated as part of a much wider, radical project to bring education and self-improvement to the masses, in the form of public libraries, mechanics’ institutes, government-run schools of design, and public museums. The major art unions went to great lengths to maintain their activities throughout the year and not just to focus on the prize draw. As part of this endeavor, it was common practice for major art unions to distribute an exclusive engraving to their members in exchange for the annual subscription fee. This was predominantly intended as a way of ensuring that even those subscribers who failed to win anything in the lottery prize draw were able to own a piece of art, albeit in reproduction. It was also a way of engaging with the contemporary art world and an opportunity for the art unions to put their money where their mouths were by patronizing living artists and offering financial support to the British art market.

Additionally, the practice of distributing prints went some way towards negating the accusations of gambling that were leveled at the art unions throughout the nineteenth century, by presenting art union membership as a safe investment. Every subscriber was guaranteed a return for his or her money: “There is the certainty of the engraving and only the chance of the [prize] picture,” as George Godwin, a founder of

the AUL, pointed out to the 1845 Select Committee on Art Unions.¹⁵ As the RBMC noted in 1844, “It will be kept in mind that the prints being much above the value of the amount subscribed, the chance of obtaining a prize is an additional premium to the Subscriber.”¹⁶

To extend the range of people who might gain access to the supposed moral and social benefits of art, some major art unions, such as the AUL, also held exhibitions of their prizes.¹⁷ The AUL was unusual in opening its prize exhibition to the general public free of charge.¹⁸ For the first two weeks, admission was for AUL members and their guests only, but the final week of the exhibition was open to all.¹⁹ This proved hugely popular, and the press reported with some surprise that this experiment had passed off successfully, noting particularly “a large influx of visitors of the middle class.”²⁰ This policy of admission offered a clear statement of the managing committee’s commitment to extending access to art as widely as possible and was innovative at a time when moves to establish public galleries and museums in Britain were in their infancy.

LOTTERY GAMBLING AND THE ART UNIONS

The art union movement traced its origins to several interwoven factors, including the German *Kunstvereine*, the 1835–36 Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, and increasing efforts to extend the reach of the visual arts in Britain, as suggested above, but also a rich history of British lottery gambling. Despite the wide range of influences on the foundation of the early major art unions, the lottery element soon attracted controversy, and that shaped official responses to the art union movement for much of the nineteenth century.

The first officially approved British lottery occurred in 1569, with a royal warrant rather than at the government’s instigation; nevertheless, it established the form that was taken by later state lotteries. Its purpose was to raise money, as a proclamation announced, “towards the reparation of the havens [i.e., harbors] and strength of the Realme, and towards such other publique good workes.”²¹ This lottery marked the start of the use of lotteries as an official means of raising money for the state at times when revenue gained by ordinary taxation was insufficient to meet the Treasury’s needs. The state lotteries of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were interest lotteries.²² The original investment was guaranteed to be returned to the participant after a specified period of time—sometimes having accumulated a prearranged rate of interest, sometimes not—with the incentive to invest increased by the chance, decided by lot, of winning a higher interest rate.²³

By the late 1760s, interest lotteries had largely been replaced by more “conventional prize lotteries.”²⁴ With the move away from interest lotteries, which had required a significant amount of money to invest, there emerged the stereotype of the soon-to-be-destitute working-class gambler, as participation was opened up to increasingly large numbers of people.²⁵ This shift was prompted mainly by the government’s desire to increase the lotteries’ potential for generating profit, by increasing both the number of potential participants and the opportunities during the sale of tickets at which profit might be made.²⁶

The Treasury did not have *carte blanche* to announce a lottery as and when it pleased; a new act of Parliament was required for each year’s series of draws. There were further restrictions on the number of draws that could take place in any one year and on the number and value of prizes that could be offered. These limitations on the government’s lotteries continued even during the so-called lottery mania of the eighteenth century and highlight a persistent unease among those in power about lotteries as a means of raising revenue. Such reservations became increasingly prominent after the turn of the nineteenth century, when a perceived increase in the number of working-class lottery gamblers led to existing gambling legislation being tightened. This was in part a reaction to the belief that “servants, children, and unwary persons” were at risk of succumbing to the temptation of lottery gambling.²⁷ Despite the restrictions inherent in lottery gambling mentioned earlier, the suggestion was made that unlucky working-class gamblers would ultimately turn to crime in their efforts to recoup their small but significant financial losses.

In 1802, an act was passed that was designed “to suppress certain games and lotteries not authorised by law.”²⁸ This was prompted by the apparent increase in the number of illegal private lotteries, particularly, one egregious case in which a great many people were said to have been cheated.²⁹ The passage of the 1802 Gaming Act hinted at a growing discomfort among those in government about the continuation of the state lotteries. This was given fuller expression six years later, in the inquiries of the 1808 Select Committee on the Laws Relating to Lotteries.³⁰ The publication of the committee’s report marked a sea change in the government’s position on lottery gambling. Whatever financial benefits lotteries might once have brought to the Treasury, by the early nineteenth century their moral impact had become of overwhelming significance.

That the moral influence of the lottery was negative was beyond question even before the select committee sat: its task was “to enquire how far the Evils attending Lotteries have been remedied by the Laws passed respecting the same; and to report . . . upon such further Measures

as may be necessary for the Remedy thereof.”³¹ It is notable that the lottery’s “Evils and Calamities” were assumed to be attendant only on “the lower classes of Society”: “whether successful or unfortunate, [they] are, generally speaking, either immediately or ultimately tempted to their ruin; and there is scarcely any condition of life so destitute and abandoned, that its distresses have not been aggravated by this allurements to Gaming, held forth by the State.”³²

It is here that the relative oddity of the art unions becomes apparent: not only were their participants middle class, but the art unions also undermined the idea that lottery gambling was a waste of money, by providing engravings to subscribers and injecting money into the British art market. These were lotteries that saw their participants’ money put to productive use rather than wastefully frittered away. This combination of factors diluted the supposed moral opposition between art and gambling. The art unions offered a low-risk form of carefully prescribed lottery gambling to a middle-class audience. Out of the financial reach of supposedly vulnerable and feckless working-class gamblers, the art unions unwittingly effected a significant shift in British gambling culture. This cultivation of a middle-class audience was arguably as great a change as the movement away from primarily aristocratic investment to working-class participation in lotteries that had occurred in the mid-eighteenth century.³³

GAMBLING ON THE ART MARKET

As already suggested, the major art unions were assiduous in ensuring that their subscribers received direct and tangible returns for their “investment” in membership. Art unions of all types succeeded in removing or at least minimizing the appearance of risk with great deftness and were therefore better able to deflect charges of encouraging gambling. For the major art unions in the 1830s and early 1840s, it was a simple matter of ensuring the appearance of legality in the face of existing lottery laws. The presentation of annual engravings acted as a very obvious return for the annual membership fee, turning subscription into, on one level, an entirely straightforward exchange of money for a print: the claim was made that subscribers simply paid their guinea membership fee for a print that was worth a guinea.³⁴

With their relatively low subscription fees, the local art unions generally lacked the financial resources to provide their members with annual engravings. Nonetheless, they still offered a clear return for subscribers’ money, albeit in a more oblique fashion. Because of the relatively narrow circle of subscribers and artists within which the local art

unions operated, subscription money was distributed among a correspondingly small group of local artists or went towards a local art school or museum. This meant that the ultimate destination of their membership fees would have remained apparent to local art unions' subscribers. Whether the fees supported the work of an individual local artist or funded a museum or gallery, there remained a direct connection between the subscription fee and a concrete outcome that it had enabled. Rather than representing a loss of money to a lottery gamble, the art union system retained an element of what Arjun Appadurai calls "reciprocal sacrifice."³⁵ Both the subscriber and the art union were each required to surrender something of value to the other: a painting, a print, or access to an exhibition; or the cost of the year's subscription.

The art unions also reflected an increasingly widespread acceptance of art as a sphere of investment or financial speculation, as well as a potential source of wealth. The contemporary art market was perceived as an unusually productive and financially secure facet of the nineteenth-century marketplace.³⁶ The tangible nature of a painting, drawing, or sculpture increased the perception of art as a "safe" investment and minimized the extent to which the investor appeared to be betting on the movement of the market, even in cases where this was the explicit intention.³⁷ In an economy that was anxious to eliminate idle or unproductive capital, purchasing art was viewed as a particularly productive way to spend money, whether that money belonged to an individual or an art union. Writing in 1839 of the collection of Benjamin Godfrey Windus, the *Art-Union* offered the following view:³⁸

[H]e who spends a part of his fortune in works of art, has the knowledge that he contributes to his country's glory, and the welfare and prosperity of her most meritorious citizens;—he has the continual enjoyment of objects fitted to produce it, and, at the same time, a certainty that his descendents will not suffer because he has had the indulgence of his tastes. Whenever a well selected stock of modern pictures have been sold, they have brought a larger sum than was originally paid for them . . . ; and . . . in some instances a single work has sold for as many guineas as it originally cost shillings. There are higher and better feelings which stimulate collectors of paintings and drawings; but this point should not be lost sight of.³⁹

The *Art-Union's* coverage of Windus's collecting practices reveals the different status of art market speculation compared to, for instance, stock market speculation. Whatever the collector's ultimate plans for

his collection, for as long as the pictures were in his possession he had, as the *Art-Union* put it, “the indulgence of his tastes” and “the continual enjoyment of [those] objects.” The works of art retained other kinds of value—cultural, aesthetic, spiritual—even while their owner waited on favorable movements in the art market to exploit their financial value. The possibility of financial gain was subsumed by the fact that a painting continued to exist as an object to be experienced and enjoyed.

In the 1830s and 1840s, the AUL had fiercely resisted the idea that its subscribers might make a financial profit from its prize draws,⁴⁰ and attempts to exploit the system met with public denouncement.⁴¹ This was partly due to the art unions’ wish to distance themselves from accusations of gambling or the perception that their subscribers were motivated by financial gain rather than a love of art. By the 1870s, however, the AUL’s annual reports had come to reveal a very different attitude. The ideological emphasis on the spiritual and social benefits of art of the AUL’s early years had given way to a more pragmatic acceptance of the possibility of small-scale art market speculation as an acceptable motivation for art union membership: “A simple small picture,” such as might be won in an art union, “may exhibit, in its degree, as much truth, beauty, and artistic knowledge as a large canvas. Apart from these considerations, too, it is undeniable that a picture judiciously bought is a valuable investment, and will at any time realize its cost.”⁴² The 1870 report went on to cite the case of an anonymous AUL prizewinner “of 20*l.* [who] purchased a marine subject at the Old Water-colour Gallery”: “Since then he has accumulated with great judgement a collection of drawings which may be valued at between 5,000*l.* and 6,000*l.*”⁴³ Collecting art with a view to increasing the value of the works is here, in the 1870s, implicitly encouraged. The prizewinner’s “great judgement” is clearly related to the financial value of the collection he has amassed rather than its artistic merits; the subjects and artists of the drawings in his collection are left unmentioned.

This shift in attitude on the part of the AUL’s managing committee was largely determined by the changing nature of the British art world in the years after the art union movement’s inception. Once public galleries and museums had begun to be established not just in London but throughout Britain, the major art unions’ original aims became less urgent, as the AUL acknowledged in relation to its 1869 exhibition of prizes: “The works selected by the prizeholders of last year were, as usual, exhibited in the Gallery of the Institute of Painters in Water-colours, and large numbers visited the rooms; although from the greatly increased numbers of exhibitions open to the public in the present day, our gallery does not attract the throng of visitors which, in former times, on the

evenings when it was open, made Suffolk-street well nigh impassable."⁴⁴ The changing nature of the late nineteenth-century art world meant that the AUL had little choice but to embrace the likelihood of some kind of speculation or financial motivation among its subscribers. By 1870, its founding aims and ambitions were in many respects out of date. In openly acknowledging that its subscribers might make a profit from art union prize pictures or from collections that were inspired by an art union prize, the AUL was able to ensure its continuing relevance in a very different cultural environment from the one in which it had originated. Such art market speculation attracted little of the controversy that had surrounded the art unions' lottery draws earlier in the century.

However much the AUL had resisted the possibility of overt financial motivation among its subscribers in its early years, it (like other major art unions) was arguably involved in its own, more ambiguous kind of art market speculation, particularly in relation to the annual prints. The role of annual engravings in deflecting charges of gambling rested on the claim that they had a market value equal to or greater than the guinea membership fee. In the case of the AUL, at least, there was no way that this claim could readily be substantiated. The engravings were produced exclusively for the AUL each year and were therefore not available for sale on the open market before they were issued to subscribers. Other major art unions tended to buy directly from printsellers the copyright to existing but as-yet-unpublished plates. As a result of the prints' supposed value of a guinea, there was little incentive for anyone to try to buy an AUL engraving on its own once it had been issued: the more sensible approach would have been to purchase art union membership and receive the engraving for free, as well as a chance in the lottery draw. The opportunities for the prints' value to be tested on the open market were therefore extremely limited.

The AUL's choice of print depended on a speculative assessment of the financial value, as well as the aesthetic worth, of the images that it selected to be engraved. The AUL's managing committee risked undermining its assertion that art union membership was at root a straightforward exchange if its judgment about the value of the annual engraving was perceived to be inaccurate. The committee's assessment of the financial value of the annual engravings did more than just counter accusations of gambling, however. The monetary value that was ascribed to the prints also acted as an implicit guarantee of their artistic value and cultural worth.⁴⁵ The indication of the financial value of the annual engravings allowed subscribers to know that they had received a work of art that gave them "value for money" insofar as it established a fair exchange for their membership fees.⁴⁶

In principle, distributing prints worth a guinea should have been relatively straightforward; in practice, however, this apparently simple aim presented a host of problems for the AUL in particular. Originally, the AUL had intended to select the subject of that year's engraving from among the prize pictures from the previous year. The hope was that prizewinners would be encouraged to select a "picture of sufficient importance" to do the art union justice, while exercising judgment, seeking advice, and educating themselves in the process.⁴⁷ This idea reflected the AUL's didactic principles and the importance of the active participation of its members. It encapsulated many of the AUL's founding aims, but it was fraught with problems surrounding both the aesthetic and the financial value of the engravings, as well as the logistics of printing and distributing them.

One of the most persistent criticisms leveled at the AUL was that in publishing reproductions in such large numbers—anything up to fifteen thousand in the art union's more successful years—it was fundamentally cheapening art in its broadest sense. The technology that allowed a print to be issued in an edition of many thousands was relatively new: the process of engraving on a steel plate had not been developed successfully until the 1820s, prior to which copper plates had allowed for editions of only a few hundred at most.⁴⁸ Debates about the status of reproductions of original artworks are beyond the scope of this chapter, but suffice to say that the AUL intended its prints to be works of art in themselves rather than simply records of other works.

The greatest threat to the AUL's plan to distribute to its members financially and aesthetically valuable prints was a lack of time. The logistics of selecting a suitable painting from among the prizes, securing the services of an engraver, having the painting reproduced, and distributing it to members in the furthest reaches of the empire proved almost impossible to manage. In the AUL's first few years, the engravings were delivered to subscribers only after long delays. When they finally did arrive, despite being the work of well-respected engravers, observers not only remarked on their lateness but also raised questions about their quality. *Punch* had much fun at the expense of the AUL's prints, as the following extract acidly suggests:

The subscribers of the Art-Union [of London] were surprised last week with the distribution of a print which has been due we cannot tell how long. Many could scarcely believe their eyes; others sent it back as a mistake. . . . We have taken the trouble to look at the print twice, and must say . . . it is just as bad as any of the prints that have preceded it. We could trace a great deal that

was unfinished—as if the engraving had been done in too great a hurry. . . . We are sorry to see such a fine Society hastening its own ruin. We are loth to condemn, but it must be recollected we have proofs of the very blackest dye before us.⁴⁹

The first print that reached the AUL's subscribers was William Giller's mezzotint after William Simson's *A Camaldolese Monk Shewing the Relics in the Sacristy of His Convent at Rome* (fig. 1). As intended, the original painting was a prize that had been selected by a winner in the AUL's 1837 lottery draw. That winner, however, was Benjamin Bond Cabbell, a member of the AUL's managing committee, and an Oxford-educated barrister and member of Parliament: hardly the disadvantaged, self-educated subscriber that the art union had originally aimed to attract.



FIGURE 1 William Giller, after William Simson, *A Camaldolese Monk Shewing the Relics in the Sacristy of His Convent at Rome*, mezzotint on paper, issued by the AUL circa 1838, British Museum. Author's photograph.

Furthermore, Cabbell added a staggering £132 10s. of his own money to his prize of £25 to buy the picture. (To put that figure in context, an Anglican parson received a stipend of around £140 a year.)⁵⁰ The reason the AUL's committee settled on Simson's painting as the subject for the first engraving is not recorded, but the person who chose it and its high financial value must surely have been significant factors.

However unenthusiastic the press's critical reaction to the prints, they were evidently a popular and successful aspect of AUL membership. The AUL continued to issue annual engravings to its subscribers until it ceased operation in 1912, adopting new printing technologies such as chromolithographs and Goupil gravures to keep pace with changing expectations about and the increasing availability of reproduced images. By the mid-1840s, the AUL had abandoned its attempts to choose a picture, commission, and distribute a print in under a year and instead selected images for reproduction several years in advance. This alleviated many of the time pressures incumbent on the engraver and in many cases resulted in images that were far more detailed and carefully executed than the earliest prints had been. Engravings such as C. W. Sharpe's *Life at the Seaside* (fig. 2), which was issued to the AUL's subscribers in 1859, are truly impressive examples of mid-nineteenth-century printmaking. Irrespective of the artistic merits of the annual engravings, however, the guarantee of subscribers receiving a print in exchange for their membership fee secured the idea that the art unions provided something more than a simple lottery gamble. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the major art unions had established themselves as a legitimate cultural activity, whose lottery element was merely one facet of their activities.



FIGURE 2 C. W. Sharpe, after William Powell Frith, *Life at the Seaside*, steel engraving on paper, issued by the AUL in 1859, British Museum. Author's photograph.

LOW-RISK LOTTERIES

The prevalence of local art unions during the last third of the nineteenth century paints a revealing picture of the increasingly prominent (and largely uncontroversial) place of small-scale lottery gambling within British cultural life. If the major art unions had succeeded in establishing themselves as a legitimate economic and cultural activity during the 1830s and 1840s, the local art unions secured the movement's place in the British art world. By the final third of the nineteenth century, when the local art unions came to prominence, participation in an art union lottery draw was firmly established as a routine aspect of many cultural activities in Britain. The early major art unions' ambitions of encouraging "high art" had largely dissipated by the time the local art unions emerged, and the movement became increasingly associated with entertainment and recreation rather than the high-minded didacticism that had motivated the founders of, for instance, the AUL. Although the most common price was a shilling, local art union membership could cost as little as a single penny.⁵¹ Along with these lower subscription prices, the local art unions saw a slight downward shift in the social class of art union members. While the local art unions continued to be organized and patronized by prominent figures from the local community, just as the major art unions had been, their subscribers were largely lower-middle and middle class.⁵²

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, both major and local art unions had ceased to attract the kind of widespread press attention that had surrounded the major art unions earlier in the century. In part, this was a reflection of the changing social status of art union organizers and participants.⁵³ Crucially, however, it also reveals the extent to which the 1846 Art Unions Act had crystallized the distinction between these and other (illegal) lotteries. No longer the subject of media or legal scrutiny, local art unions were free to exploit the public's appetite for low-risk, small-scale lottery gambling. As with the early major art unions, the absence of cash prizes in the local art unions decreased the appearance of subscribers' financial motivation and emphasized entertainment and education above monetary gain: this was gambling for fun, not profit.

The wholesale acceptance of local art unions as an acceptable and legitimate aspect of cultural activities is strikingly demonstrated by the Alexandra Palace Art Union (APAU). First opened in 1873, on Queen Victoria's fifty-fourth birthday, the Alexandra Palace was intended to be a new "Palace of the People" for north London, fit to rival Joseph Paxton's relocated Crystal Palace in the south of the city. The new palace would be a place of recreation, education, and entertainment, situated in many acres of attractive, landscaped parkland and surrounded by newly built suburban villas.⁵⁴

In March 1874, it was proposed that one-fifth of the revenue from sales of Alexandra Palace season tickets should be devoted to the purchase of paintings, drawings, and sculptures. These works would then be distributed in an art union prize draw. There would be no explicit subscription to this art union, however. Rather, every season ticket holder would automatically become an art union member and be entered in the draw. To purchase a season ticket was also to purchase art union membership, whether the ticket holder wanted it or not.⁵⁵

The cost of membership of the APAU was much higher than most local art unions—an adult's season ticket cost a guinea, while a child's cost half that.⁵⁶ Just as the major art unions' distribution of annual engravings served to negate accusations of gambling, so too did the incidental nature of subscription to the APAU place it firmly in the realm of legitimate expenditure. The purchaser of an Alexandra Palace season ticket gained yearlong access to the edifying attractions of the park and palace. The excitement of the gamble and the chance of winning a loosely "artistic" prize were presumably secondary for most season ticket holders. Indeed, some season ticket purchasers might not have realized that they were buying art union membership.

The way in which the APAU acquired its subscribers was highly unusual. Nonetheless, the fact that season ticket holders were automatically included in a lottery gamble, whether they wanted to be or not, does not seem to have troubled either the press or the Board of Trade, under whose jurisdiction the art unions fell.⁵⁷ The only objections to the APAU that were recorded in the board's minutes relate to its commercial aspect and its apparent function as "an inducement for persons to take Season Tickets."⁵⁸ Private profit, not the inducement to gamble, was the greatest concern. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the local art unions had succeeded in cementing the idea—engendered by the major art unions—of a morally neutral lottery. The local art unions had become so ubiquitous an aspect of British cultural life that their status as lotteries largely disappeared from public perception.

The increasing toleration of the local art unions and of small-scale lottery gambling that emerged in the final decades of the nineteenth century was a far cry from the views that had been expressed by the 1866 Select Committee on Art Union Laws. The select committee's report asserted that almost all art unions other than the AUL and the Art Union of Glasgow did little more than encourage gambling.⁵⁹ Had that truly been the case, it seems highly unlikely that an institution such as the Alexandra Palace—which sought to establish itself as a source of education, entertainment, and edification for all classes of society and

all ages of visitor—would have organized an art union in the first place or that otherwise respectable visitors would have allowed their children to hold tickets in their own names for such a lottery.⁶⁰ Yet so they did, and in large numbers.

Although the APAU's method of subscription was unusual, its involvement of children in art union gambling was not. The involvement of children and women in the art union movement corresponded to the rise of the local art unions, beginning around 1860. Children's involvement was likely rendered uncontroversial by the didactic purpose of the art union prize draw. Had art unions offered cash prizes, for example, the gambling element would arguably have been more obvious, and the likelihood of children's involvement would presumably have been reduced. The APAU was part of the Alexandra Palace's didactic project; as such, children's involvement in that, as in other art unions, could be understood as an activity that was more closely related to education and cultural refinement than to gambling and financial risk.

In 1891, the first prize in the Derby Art Union, a local art union, was won by Miss Edith Hannah Haslam, described by the *Derby Mercury* as "the Mayor's little daughter."⁶¹ Her appearance is revealing of shifting attitudes towards the art unions' perceived status as lotteries, as well as changing attitudes towards lottery gambling more generally. That such a prominent figure in the life of the city should have allowed his young daughter to participate in the art union under her own name, rather than that of either of her parents, is a clear demonstration of the changing status of small-scale lottery gambling within British cultural life that had occurred after the 1830s and 1840s. It also reveals the increasingly nuanced understanding of certain kinds of lottery gambling that had emerged by the closing decades of the nineteenth century. This increasing toleration of lottery gambling within certain prescribed limits was in no small part due to the ubiquity and success of the art unions.

These changing attitudes, together with the proliferation of local art unions, tie in with much wider art union participation in terms of age, gender, and to a certain degree, class. The exact extent of that participation is impossible to chart, however, because of the extremely limited amount of surviving evidence of local art union subscribers. The evidence that does survive in newspaper reports and in the Board of Trade's files does not suggest that the relatively cheap subscription rate of around a shilling resulted in significant working-class involvement. Despite the movement's longevity and widespread popularity, the art unions' didactic and philanthropic ambitions remained unfulfilled. The

AUL's aim of offering art to all classes of society—including “those who, although possessed of taste, are not wealthy”—was never achieved.⁶² As we have seen, early ambitions of bringing art to a working-class audience were hampered by the major art unions' subscription costs. While the cheaper local art unions might have offered an opportunity for broader membership, their close association with the middle-class world of art societies, provincial galleries, and rational recreation largely prevented this.

In many respects, the story of the art union movement is one of failure: failure truly to bring art to the masses, and failure to encourage or engage with critically lauded works of “high art.” Instead, they trod a middling path, almost wholly ignored by the art establishment after the 1840s and making only a limited effort to encourage working-class participation after midcentury. Yet while the art unions had sought to reinvigorate and revolutionize the British art market, their most lasting—and unexpected—impact was on the country's gambling legislation and on popular attitudes towards lottery gambling. The passage of the 1846 Art Unions Act was a clear statement that the moral benefits of art outweighed the deleterious impact of gambling. Although the necessity of amending existing lottery legislation had been acknowledged in Parliament as early as the 1860s, not until the 1932–33 Royal Commission on Lotteries and Betting and the 1934 Lotteries and Betting Act did the possibility of morally acceptable lottery gambling that was not an art union become enshrined in British law.⁶³ The widespread popularity of the art union movement throughout the nineteenth century demonstrated clearly that there was a respectable middle-class market for small-scale lottery gambling. Concurrently, the major art unions' involvement in art market speculation, as part of their production of annual engravings, served to underline the moral and categorical ambiguity surrounding investment, speculation, and gambling in the art world.

The art union movement was more than just a curiosity of the mid-Victorian art world. The art unions influenced the shape of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gambling legislation and contributed to widespread perceptions that small-scale lottery gambling could be not just morally acceptable but a force for good. The “good causes” that are supported by revenue from the present National Lottery in Britain are central to removing it “from the arena of gambling proper.”⁶⁴ The founders of the first major art unions could scarcely have imagined how far-reaching and multifaceted the influence of the art union movement would turn out to be.

NOTES

1. "Second Report from the Committee on the Laws Relating to Lotteries," *Parliamentary Papers*, 1808, p. 11.
2. Gerda Reith, *Age of Chance: Gambling in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 99.
3. Mark Clapson, *A Bit of a Flutter: Popular Gambling and English Society, c. 1823–1961* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 187.
4. Emma Casey, *Women, Pleasure and the Gambling Experience* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 7.
5. Clapson, *Bit of a Flutter*, 187.
6. "Exeter Art Union," Art Unions (Code No. 2), 1943–47, Board of Trade and Successors, Companies Department, Correspondence and Papers, National Archives (UK), BT 58/355.
7. "The Art-Union of London," *Art-Union* 1 (1839): 20.
8. An article about the charity art unions is currently in preparation by the present author.
9. "Art-Union of London," *Art-Union* 7 (1845): 133.
10. A list "of the Towns in which the Society has Agencies established" was sent to the committee of the RBMC in the 1840s; the list included, among others, London, Bristol, Dublin, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, Glasgow, Portsmouth, King's Lynn, and Hastings. Birmingham City Archives, RBMC leaflets 1842–49, 520432. Identifying subscribers to art unions other than the AUL is nearly impossible: many art unions did not maintain records, and little has survived of those that were kept.
11. Roger Smith, "The Art Union Movement in England c.1835–1866" (doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 1980), 100.
12. Lyndel Saunders King, *The Industrialization of Taste: Victorian England and the Art Union of London* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 43.
13. Liza Picard, *Victorian London: The Life of a City, 1840–1870* (London: Phoenix, 2005), 378; AUL Minutes, II, British Library, Add. MSS 38866.
14. "Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions," *Parliamentary Papers*, 1845, VII.1, p. iv.
15. *Ibid.*, 21.
16. RBMC, "Report of the Managing Committee" (Birmingham, 1844), 4.
17. The Edinburgh-based major art union, the Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts (APFA), also opened its exhibition to anyone who applied for admission. This exhibition was open only on the day of the prize draw, however, and in practice its visitors appear to have been confined to the APFA's members and their associates. "Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions," 70.
18. The AUL's first exhibition in 1839 was open only to members, however. AUL Minutes, I, British Library, Add. MSS 38865.
19. AUL Minutes, II, British Library, Add. MSS 38866.
20. "Varieties: Art-Union Prizes Exhibition," *Art-Union* 5 (1843): 249.

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21. Quoted in John Ashton, *The History of Gambling in England* (London: Duckworth, 1898), 223.
22. Roger Munting, *An Economic and Social History of Gambling in Britain and the USA* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 56.
23. C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes* (London: Heath Cranton, 1932), 129; John Ashton, *A History of English Lotteries* (London: Leadenhall Press, 1893), 49.
24. Munting, *Economic and Social History*, 56.
25. Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes*, 246–49.
26. *Ibid.*, 246.
27. “Report of the Select Committee on Lotteries,” *Parliamentary Papers*, 1808, p. i.
28. “An Act to Suppress Certain Games and Lotteries Not Authorised by Law,” 1802 (known as the 1802 Gaming Act), 42 Geo. 3 c. 119, s.2.
29. Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes*, 287.
30. “Select Committee on Lotteries.”
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, 11–12.
33. Reith, *Age of Chance*, 71.
34. See, for instance, “Art-Unions: Their Legality or Illegality?” *Art-Union* 5 (1843): 87.
35. Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4.
36. See, for example, “Visits to Private Galleries: The Collection of B. G. Windus, Esq., at Tottenham Green,” *Art-Union* 1 (1839): 49.
37. Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 40–44.
38. Despite the name, *The Art-Union: A Monthly Journal of the Fine Arts* had no formal links to the art union movement. The magazine changed its name to the *Art-Journal* in 1849, possibly to avoid this confusion. It was a consistently staunch supporter of the art union movement, however.
39. “Collection of B. G. Windus.”
40. It was partly on this ground that the AUL argued its case for allowing winners to select their own prize pictures when the Board of Trade sought to alter this system in 1848. Winners who were given paintings that were not to their taste were supposed to be more likely to sell them than if they had selected the prizes themselves. “Memorial of the Art Union of London requesting that the Board of Trade abandons its proposed alterations. . . ,” 1848, Board of Trade, General In-Letters and Files, 1037–2413, National Archives (UK), BT 1/469/26.
41. See, for instance, *Athenaeum* 16, September 7 (1844): 814.
42. AUL Annual Report, 1870, p. 5.
43. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

44. *Ibid.*, 5.
45. The relationship between financial cost and broader notions of value here is understood in terms of the work of Karl Marx and Georg Simmel. See Karl Marx, *Capital*, ed. David McLellan, abridged ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004).
46. Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities," 4–5.
47. AUL Minutes, II, British Library, Add. MSS 38866.
48. Hilary Beck, ed., *Victorian Engravings* (London: Victoria and Albert Publications, 1975), 19.
49. "A Genuine 'Doo,'" *Punch* 7 (1848): 91.
50. Picard, *Victorian London*, 379.
51. Various documents concerning establishment of local art unions, Board of Trade and Successors, Companies Department, Correspondence and Papers, National Archives (UK), BT 58/9; "Manchester School of Art, As to establishment of Art Union . . .," 1884, Board of Trade and Successors, Railway Department, Correspondence and Papers, National Archives (UK), BT 22/33/12.
52. In describing local art union subscribers as lower-middle class, I follow Geoffrey Crossick's definition of the term in "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion," in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870–1914*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 11–60.
53. The charity art unions, which were generally organized and run by aristocratic and upper-middle-class society women, saw a corresponding increase in the amount of media attention that they garnered.
54. *Morning Chronicle*, November 11, 1858, p. 3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. "Earls Court Art Union (formerly Alexandra Palace Art Union)," 1906, Board of Trade, Finance Department, Registered Files (F Series), National Archives (UK), BT 15/53.
58. *Ibid.*
59. "Report from the Select Committee on Art Union Laws," *Parliamentary Papers*, 1866, VII.1, p. iv.
60. Francis Fuller, *Description of the Alexandra Park Tontine and Art Unions* (London: Alfred Boot, 1870), 15.
61. "Derby Corporation Art Gallery Art Union. Prize Drawing," *Derby Mercury*, January 14, 1891, p. 5.
62. "The Art-Union of London," *Art-Union* 1 (1839): 20.
63. "An Act to amend the law with respect to betting on tracks where sporting events take place . . . ; [and] to amend the law with respect to lotteries and certain prize competitions; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid," 1934, 24 and 25 Geo. 5 c. 58.
64. Reith, *Age of Chance*, 103.

CHAPTER FIVE

El Metálico Lord

Money and Mythmaking in Thomas Cochrane's 1859
Narrative of Services in the Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil
from Spanish and Portuguese Domination

Jennifer Hayward

Loup de Mer, El Diablo, El Metálico Lord: these are some of the epithets applied to Admiral Thomas Cochrane, self-styled Liberator of South America, by allies and enemies alike as he sailed the South American coast from 1818 to 1823.¹ The last of these phrases, “El Metálico Lord,” exposes powerful connections between the Cochrane myth and money. Throughout his life, Cochrane exulted in his reputation as a brilliant naval commander. Throughout his life, too, he fought persistent accusations that beneath the epaulettes, sword, and grand titles he was no more than a money-grubbing adventurer. Despite his lifelong concern with the pecuniary advantages his fame ought to have assured him, not until the end of his life did Cochrane—who was perennially strapped for cash—successfully cash in on his own reputation.

Cochrane began his career in the British Royal Navy and soon became a popular hero for his audacious conquests of enemy ships. Within the navy, though, his capital plummeted as he became equally notorious for risky and insubordinate acts; moreover, his superiors did not appreciate his relentless and very public denunciations of naval corruption.

By 1814, things had gone from bad to worse: he found himself imprisoned for debt, forced to relinquish his position as member of Parliament, expelled from the navy, and stripped of the Order of Bath he had earned for his sensational naval victory in the Basque Roads in 1809. In all these actions, Cochrane saw a conspiracy to ruin him. He retaliated by abandoning his home country to fight as a mercenary in South America, where—with a tiny fleet of repurposed ships manned mostly by foreigners—he led stunningly successful naval campaigns. His rebel navies succeeded in routing the Spanish and Portuguese from the South American coasts and winning independence for Chile, Peru, and Brazil.

Ever since, Cochrane has claimed a central role in the British cultural imaginary. Despite the fact that he achieved his major victories when fighting under foreign flags, Cochrane was lionized back home. Just after Cochrane liberated Peru from colonial rule, for example, his fellow Scotsman, the poet Lord Byron, wrote to his editor John Murray, “[T]here is no man I envy so much as Lord Cochrane. His entry into Lima, which I see in today’s paper, is one of the great events of the day.”²² And Sir Walter Scott, inspired by a standing ovation Cochrane received in an Edinburgh theatre, wrote a poem in honor of his countryman. Across the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the Cochrane myth continued to grow, circulating through discourses ranging from popular broadsides and ballads to naval history, travel literature, and finally maritime fiction by wildly popular authors such as Captain Frederick Marryat and George Alfred Henty. As naval historian Brian Vale observes, “Even during his lifetime, Cochrane was clearly recognizable as the heroic commander of Captain Marryat’s midshipmen *Frank Mildmay* and *Peter Simple*, and fifty years later G. A. Henty produced his gung-ho boy’s adventure story, *With Cochrane the Dauntless*, based on his adventures in South America. In the twentieth century, the trend continued [with] . . . C. S. Forester’s hero Horatio Hornblower . . . and Patrick O’Brian.”²³ But while these authors profited from recounting Cochrane’s exploits, Cochrane repeatedly found himself near bankruptcy.

In 1858, forty-one years after he first sailed south and decades after his heyday as a naval hero, Cochrane finally found a way to convert the social capital of the Cochrane myth into economic gain for himself. Capitalizing on the rise of popular genres such as travel writing and military memoir and building on the nineteenth century’s increasing fascination with mythic heroes, Cochrane hired a ghostwriter to help him pen his memoirs. The resulting texts, *Narrative of Services in the*

Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil from Spanish and Portuguese Domination (London, 1859) and *The Autobiography of a Seaman* (London, 1860), achieved both of Cochrane's goals: they restored the social and economic value of the Cochrane myth, and they enabled him to convert that value into the cash he desperately needed.



In this chapter, I examine Thomas Cochrane as a pivotal figure in the nineteenth-century economy of fame. All his life, Cochrane struggled with the popular conflation of money with value, as discussed in this volume's introduction: throughout his career, he was awarded generous praise as well as promises of untold riches, and his desire for wealth led him to believe that abstract promises held concrete worth. Compounding his expectations was the fact that as a popular hero, Cochrane—or rather, the Cochrane image created by the popular press—acquired considerable symbolic value. And because Cochrane saw himself, like the promissory notes he accumulated, as embodying that value quite literally, he never understood why he could not simply cash in on his golden reputation. This is the story of a rebellious Scotsman who fought for freedom in the New World. But the Cochrane myth, as it intersects with the rise of the mass media, imperial and economic ideologies, and shifting constructions of national identity, illustrates the ways that core Enlightenment principles including liberty, enlightened self-interest, and progress toward a commercial society were both abstracted and literalized in the popular realm in Cochrane's time and after. In turn, the mythic stature and individual stories of Cochrane and other Romantic-era heroes helped to shape nationalist movements worldwide.

Distinguishing among economic, cultural, and social capital, Pierre Bourdieu's essay "The Forms of Capital" argues that from the eighteenth century onward, European economic theory placed increasing weight on money as the central medium of exchange; other forms of capital, while retaining their importance for social advancement, were increasingly marginalized. Social capital, in Bourdieu's view, is "made up of social obligations ('connections'), which [are] convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility."⁴ As a result, social capital retains some degree of visibility. By contrast, Bourdieu argues that cultural capital's "transmission and acquisition [is] more disguised than [that] of economic capital, [and therefore] it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e., to

be unrecognized as capital and recognized [instead] as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition, e.g., in the matrimonial market and in all the markets in which economic capital is not fully recognized.⁷⁵ Here Bourdieu helps us to understand Cochrane's confusion as, abstracting Adam Smith's theory of value, he expected the cultural capital he had so laboriously acquired to be recognized as legal tender in the marketplace. As he works to close the gap between his public reputation as a national hero and his private conviction that he was inadequately compensated for his heroic deeds, Cochrane demonstrates the interdependence of all three forms of capital.

As a nobleman who would inherit a title, the Earl of Dundonald, Cochrane's social capital served him well early in his career. For example, his uncle's influence won him a more advanced position in the British Royal Navy than he would otherwise have enjoyed; social connections also enabled his election as a member of Parliament. But his connections were Scottish rather than English, and as such they could also work against him; thus he did not rise through the naval ranks as quickly as his abilities and spectacular victories would seem to have warranted.

In terms of cultural capital, too, Cochrane felt simultaneously advantaged and inadequate: his naval knowledge and abilities were unquestioned, but his formal education had been neglected because of his father's impoverishment (a common state among nineteenth-century Scottish peers). As a result, he felt self-conscious throughout his life, as demonstrated in his letters and other private papers as well as his compensatory behavior: he hired a succession of tutors for his young, socially inferior wife, invested in the best education he could manage for his sons, and continually policed his family to ensure that their conduct accorded with their social station. By his relentless efforts to increase his family's standing, Cochrane demonstrated his conviction that social capital could be reinforced by the symbolic or cultural capital derived from his professional abilities and his family's accomplishments, and that together these proofs of social and cultural relevance should be easily convertible to the economic capital he needed to support his family and invest in his many (generally failed) inventions. But he would learn that the equation was not so direct.



Long after his career peaked, Cochrane was still a popular figure in British national mythology as well as that of Chile and Brazil. Therefore, in the 1850s Cochrane determined to publish accounts of his travels and

victories in the hope of achieving several goals simultaneously: making money on the sales of the volumes themselves; shaming the current governments of Chile and Brazil into awarding him back pay for services rendered and (as Cochrane saw it) inadequately compensated; and setting the record straight about his past deeds, since he believed his reputation had been tarnished by the accusations of several of the South American military leaders alongside whom he had fought. In writing his memoirs, then, he intended to communicate his cultural capital, increase his social capital (and thus his leverage in bargaining with Chile and Brazil), and translate both into economic capital to invest in the future of his family.

Before exploring his memoirs, however, an overview of Cochrane's intellectual influences and professional trajectory will provide context for his belief that Britain had betrayed him, and his consequent fascination with South America. As he sought to prove his status as a British hero—which entailed justifying his actions in fighting as a mercenary for the liberation of countries not his own—Cochrane drew directly on the intellectual heritage of the Scottish Enlightenment. He absorbed ideas of political economy at Edinburgh University, which he briefly attended while on leave from the Royal Navy in 1801, studying under the dominant intellectual influence of the time, Dugald Stewart.⁶

In 1800—just a year before Cochrane's time at the university—Stewart introduced the formal study of economics at Edinburgh with his series of lectures on political economy, inspired by his book *Life and Writings of Adam Smith* (1793).⁷ Cochrane clearly absorbed the central tenets of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*; Stewart's lectures may have been a key influence, one that could hardly have been better suited to Cochrane's specific interests and experiences. As Samuel Fleischacker explains, *Wealth of Nations* is known as a very "American" book, published in 1776 and inspired by the American Revolution. The idea of a New World strongly appealed to Smith, since it promised unlimited possibility for experimentation with new forms of government; Fleischacker notes that Smith's proposals seemed to have "the best chance of success in a newly formed country that could design its politico-economic institutions and policies free of the weight of old legal and popular superstitions."⁸

When the navy recalled him in 1803, Cochrane's intellectual apprenticeship under Dugald Stewart came to an end. But echoes of Scottish Enlightenment ideas reverberated in Cochrane's writings throughout his life, as we will see later in this essay.



From its beginning, Cochrane's naval career followed a mythic trajectory. Cochrane begged to be allowed to go to sea from late childhood on. His father initially resisted, but in 1793—the year his father was finally forced to sell the family estate to cover his debts—he was at last permitted to join the navy, serving as a midshipman under his uncle, Captain Alexander Cochrane of the ship *Hind*.⁹ He quickly acquired a reputation in Great Britain as a bold, thorough, and exceptionally inventive seaman, achieving stunning—though highly unorthodox—victories against the French at the helm of the thirty-eight-gun frigate *Imperieuse* and later, against seemingly overwhelming odds, while commanding the tiny fourteen-gun brig *Speedy*. Cochrane's tactics included ingenuity, surprise, and meticulous preparation.¹⁰

But even as he was lionized as a brilliant seaman and was highly successful in virtually all of his naval assignments, Cochrane was not promoted as quickly as he expected, possibly as a result of English prejudice against Scots (which he inadvertently fed through his own, stereotypically Scottish rebellion against authority).¹¹ By 1809, Cochrane's naval career was stalled. He was widely regarded as a loose cannon by his superiors, and he had become disenchanted with the corruption and favoritism of the Royal Navy.

In 1814, as the result of a confluence of circumstances much too complicated to go into here, Cochrane's political career abruptly ended as well: he was convicted of stock market fraud and lost his naval commission and his seat in Parliament simultaneously. Here, too, he was driven out by what he perceived as prejudice but others may well have seen as his own hotheadedness.

Cochrane's future in England did not look bright. He had no money, and his house, Holly Hill, was seized to repay his debts. Moreover, he had lost all interest in fighting for his own country; he was furious with an English establishment that he saw as deliberately persecuting him through jealousy and prejudice. Two years after the arrest and trial, in the spring of 1816, he wrote to his wife, Katherine:

My dear and lovely Kate

God grant that fortune may smile on us at [last] for we have had anxiety and distress enough. It is now drawing to a close; the result of the next six days will show whether this Country is to be my abode or a foreign land—but wherever I go my dearest Kate

shall accompany me. Let us hope for fortune elsewhere if denied in our native Country.¹²

Cochrane had clearly lost faith in England as a land of opportunity. As a result, he began to turn his thoughts to the New World.



The larger historical context of British involvement in South America puts Cochrane's adventures in perspective: British obsession with the liminal space of South America at this time demonstrates that Cochrane was hardly unique in pinning his hopes on "the voyage out." By one estimate, roughly seven thousand European mercenaries fought in South American armies and navies under independence leader Simón Bolívar between 1816 and 1825;¹³ by another, ten thousand British troops served in the wars of independence altogether.¹⁴ Of these troops, the great majority were Irish or Scottish. As a Scotsman seeking his fortune far from home, then, Cochrane was in good company. Indeed, the Scottish served in such great numbers and held so many top administrative posts that some scholars claim the British Empire was largely dominated by a "Scottish mafia."¹⁵

Popular attention to the Americas as potential sites for imperial adventuring peaked in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as one independence movement followed another. As early as 1806, Robert Southey captured early nineteenth-century views on the Americas when he claimed that the England of his day was "South American mad."¹⁶ Beginning with the American Revolution and continuing into the 1820s with the freeing, one by one, of former colonies from Spanish and Portuguese rule, the New World revolutionary spirit had a profound effect on Britain; Tim Fulford notes that these revolutions appealed strongly to the public during the Romantic era because they fit squarely with the Romantic emphasis on individual freedom, sensibility, and sublime nature as a vehicle for self-discovery.¹⁷

Once independence had been declared across the former colonies, fledgling South American governments capitalized on this wave of enthusiasm by "float[ing] approximately £20 million in bonds while British capitalization of Spanish American mining companies reached over £30 million."¹⁸ The centuries-long struggle for imperial dominance between Spain and Britain meant that the British had a strong economic and political stake in helping American colonies to achieve

independence from Spain. One conspiracy theory posits that José de San Martín, the Argentinean general whose leadership proved essential to routing the Spanish from Latin America, worked as an agent paid by the British to open the continent to British trade; Moises Enrique Rodriguez, author of a history of British mercenaries in the South American Wars of Independence, examines the sources of the rumor and concludes that while this “serious allegation indeed . . . can neither be proved nor refuted conclusively . . . we can say that the events of 1811 confirm the happy community of interests between South America and the United Kingdom during the Wars of Independence.”¹⁹ Evidence of this “happy” convergence includes the surge of British investment in the fledgling South American republics—which led, by the late 1820s, to the collapse of the South American investment bubble.

A short notice published in the Edinburgh newspaper the *Caledonian Mercury* in August 1817 explicitly links British imperial policy in South America, Scots emigration, and Lord Cochrane’s decision to set sail for South America, emphasizing the ways that the trajectory of Cochrane’s career intersected at every turn with larger historical developments. First, the article dramatizes the Spanish ambassador’s visit to Lord Castlereagh, the Irish peer who served as British foreign secretary from 1812 to 1822. The Spanish ambassador, says the *Caledonian Mercury*, “made use of some warm expressions” in complaining that British officers were assisting the revolutionaries in South America “in their contest with the mother country,” but Castlereagh “took his Excellency up short,” replying “that there was no law in existence in England to prevent a British officer on half-pay from leaving the kingdom, or from throwing up his commission.” And indeed, in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, the glut of British officers languishing on shore needed somewhere to go. Immediately after this account, the same article includes the following brief notice: “The passion for military enterprise in South America continues—every day sees the departure of a great number of British officers for the scene of action. Lord Cochrane has set off, it is supposed, for the Spanish main.”²⁰ Castlereagh’s rival and successor as foreign secretary, George Canning, revealed an even higher level of hubris regarding Britain’s New World ambitions when he told Parliament in 1826, “Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain it should not be Spain ‘with the Indies.’ I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old.”²¹



For his part, Cochrane seems to have gone “South America mad” as soon as the Chilean emissary José Antonio Alvarez invited him, in early 1817, to join their cause. In March of that year he took out an advertisement in the *Times* that read,

LORD COCHRANE,
HAVING resolved to view (during a few months) the operations going on in South America, will give to . . . any gentleman immediately interested in the commerce or mercantile concerns of that country the most ample security for the LOAN of £10,000, to be repaid with interest within 12 months.²²

Not surprisingly, Cochrane does not seem to have had any takers on his offer (though his effrontery in requesting such a large loan signals his curious overconfidence in his own prospects and influence).

Bankrupt, dispossessed, and reduced to begging for loans, Cochrane had good reasons to be caught up in the wave of New World enthusiasm. Again the trajectory of his life became entangled with larger forces, as we see in a follow-up to the *Caledonian Mercury* article on South America quoted above:

Notwithstanding the prohibition, said in a Ministerial evening paper to have been signified at the Commander in Chief's office, against half-pay officers repairing to the Insurgent Spanish provinces . . . we understand that a considerable number of gentlemen of that class have actually set out with the intention of entering into the service of the Patriots. They are abundantly supplied with money, and means of comfortable conveyance, by a South American General, who is agent for the Patriots in London.

The “South American General” here referred to was, most likely, Alvarez, who had indeed been sent to London to recruit officers and purchase supplies and had hired Cochrane to develop a Chilean navy. The *Caledonian Mercury* article continues,

It is still understood that Lord Cochrane persists in his intention of proceeding to the Spanish Main. . . . We learn that the purchase of arms of the gun manufacturers here and in Birmingham is brisk to a degree that cannot well be accounted for, without supposing they are destined for the Spanish Patriots.²³

Note that the South Americans fighting for independence are slightly referred to as “Insurgent[s]” in the context of Spain’s prohibition—but then the author shifts to the positive term “Patriots,” a change implying that despite the supposed neutrality of its reporting on South American affairs, this Scottish newspaper harbored some sympathy for those fighting for independence against a colonial power.

In 1818, Cochrane did indeed sail for South America, making his decision in reaction to the persecution—legal, political, and professional—he believed he had suffered as a Scotsman stalled in his efforts to rise within British naval and political hierarchies. He retaliated by fleeing the vaunted liberties and opportunities of Great Britain to fight beside independence seekers in a land under Spanish rule. Once in South America, too, Cochrane became far more than a disinterested mercenary. He clearly identified with the peoples whose independence he hoped to win. Primed by William Robertson and other Scottish Enlightenment authors to celebrate the “peculiar magnificence” of the New World and see limitless potential in its new nations,²⁴ Cochrane eagerly embraced the cause of Latin independence.

Over the next few years, Cochrane achieved astonishing naval victories on this new continent as well. He continued to perfect the strategies for which he was already famous: ingenuity and surprise, coupled with meticulous preparation. But because the fledgling Chilean navy was ludicrously undermanned and underpowered, he added a new element of sheer bravado to his arsenal. With his tiny fleet, he seized key ports in Chile, Peru, and later Brazil. His most spectacular victories—as when with only two ships and three hundred men he captured the fully garrisoned, seven-fort-strong port of Valdivia from under the noses of the Spanish—were communicated by British eyewitnesses to audiences back home, chief among them travel writers such as Basil Hall, Maria Graham, and William Miller, who were instrumental in ensuring that Cochrane’s fame continued to grow. As Tim Fulford argues, Cochrane and his equally romantic wife, Kitty, became key figures in British imaginings of South America: “It was a tantalizing zone of possibility, cleared of its colonial masters, and ripe for British enterprise. . . . Now that Cochrane had helped bring independence about in a blaze of publicity not only merchants and manufacturers, but also the general public, hoped to cash in. His taking of Valdivia had helped Chile to float a loan from London bankers. Similarly, the clearing of the Spanish from Peru and the Portuguese from Brazil led to an investment boom.”²⁵

Cochrane's mythic victories led to direct economic gain for both South America and Britain, as well as the host of writers who recorded them. Is it so surprising, then, that Cochrane was bewildered to find that he alone seemed unable to profit from his international reputation?



This paradoxical state of affairs came about, in part, because the Cochrane myth did become tarnished in the wake of the Wars of Independence. Cochrane left Chile's service on poor terms with its leaders, particularly General San Martín, who regarded him as little more than a money-grubber. Just as Cochrane's decision to set sail for South America was inspired by a combination of personal, cultural, and economic factors (especially his knowledge that South America offered unique possibilities for economic advancement), so too his decision to publish his travel memoirs four decades after sailing for South America resulted from a combination of the same factors—including, most transparently, his interest in boosting his own symbolic and economic capital simultaneously. By the 1850s, Cochrane was again mired in debt. He was haunted by his enemies' claim that he had served Chile and Brazil for purely mercenary rather than altruistic motives and—fully aware of the rapidly growing influence of the mass media—devastated by his tarnished reputation, since his longing for material gain was equaled only by his craving for public admiration. Moreover, he seems to have been genuinely sad that his idealism in fighting for South American independence had been misinterpreted. He decided it was high time he reclaimed the Cochrane myth for himself, to ensure that its circulation rebounded to *his* credit and profit and not that of others.

In 1858, Cochrane began writing two books, his *Narrative of Services in the Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil from Spanish and Portuguese Domination* and *Autobiography of a Seaman*. Each illustrates the interplay among literature, more popular genres, and commercial society. Although clearly nonliterary—in pursuit of profits, and open about it—both texts draw on a range of literary genres, capitalizing on these genres' evolution in tandem with market demands. Thus, *Autobiography of a Seaman*, more heterogeneous than its title implies, includes elements of adventure and maritime fiction as well as the travelogue, although it also conforms quite closely to the established traditions of autobiography.²⁶ Defining the genre of his *Narrative*—a unique (not to say bizarre) amalgamation of travel narrative, naval adventure, autobiography, apologia,

and demand for payment of a decades-old debt—is more difficult. Like many travel texts, then, Cochrane’s uneasily straddled the borders of literary, commercial, and even economic and scientific discourses.

In *Genres of the Credit Economy*, Mary Poovey examines the ways that literary and economic discourses evolved along distinct lines over the course of the eighteenth century. As Poovey explains, “[I]t was not until Literature was declared to be a different *kind* of imaginative writing that a secular model of value completely at odds with the market model was articulated.”²⁷ Cochrane made no pretense of writing Literature; instead, he deliberately incorporated narrative strategies from genres that he thought would boost the book’s value as a commodity. The book’s composition process situates it in the specific nexus of literary, mercenary, and political factors that inspired its creation: this “memoir” was patched together with the help of a ghostwriter, G. P. Earp, as well as Cochrane’s former secretary William Jackson, not only from the original contracts, letters, proclamations, and other official documents saved from his time in Chile but also from the contemporary accounts that his fellow British travelers in the New World had written *about* him.

Thus Cochrane’s self-mythologizing was built on the scaffold of the very Cochrane myth that had already been circulating for decades. In letters to Jackson in January 1858, Cochrane explained that his primary motivation for compiling his memoirs was to claim back pay from both Chile and Brazil.²⁸ In a letter written later that spring, he expanded on his reasons for publishing: he was determined to correct the “unfavorable impressions” created by General San Martín’s charges that Cochrane was money-hungry and to amend the “falsehoods propagated by the Portuguese faction in Brazil.”²⁹

In April, having finished a draft manuscript, Cochrane hired a translator, explaining to Jackson,

My idea at present is to print the Chilean memorial and that to Peru, and give them in charge to my son; but to consider in what manner the Scoundrels in Brazil can best be moved to a sense of justice, whether by translating it and circulating the Document in the Country, or by publishing it in English, (for it will be, I hope, a Document that may be read even by indifferent persons) and so let the shame of such conduct operate, if possible, obliquely on the Villains.

My health remains tolerably good, but my mind is obviously giving way fast as to my remembrance of events, to which disagreeable circumstances have greatly contributed.³⁰

In discussing his difficulties in facing his long-repressed memories, Cochrane was disarmingly open about his weaknesses; he revealed the extent to which the Cochrane myth had shaped his memory of his life, retroactively constructing his life as an adventure novel featuring a hero and numerous nefarious "Villains."³¹ He consistently returned to two not necessarily harmonious themes: the need to set the record straight concerning his past deeds and debts owed, and the need to write a compelling narrative that would appeal to the reading public. In September 1858, for example, he thanked Jackson for (finally) providing some assistance to Mr. Earp and then continued, "It has materially assisted the narrative especially by giving dates. My fear however is that this narrative of dry facts will not be read by the Public—but we can publish a cheap Edition for the railroad Libraries, in which you may insert some of your [fun] to enliven the narrative. The trip to Boulogne has done me good, but my mind is still sadly oppressed by having all the injustices done to me during a long life brought to my recollection, in too overwhelming a form."³² And finally, probably sometime in December, Cochrane wrote morosely to Jackson, "I send you the proof sheets complete. The work has been more troublesome than anticipated, by reason of the confusion of my papers. . . . I am [miserably] low in spirits and cannot assign the cause. I hoped when the Memoir was completed I should have felt relieved."³³

He should indeed, because his initial confidence in the power of the pen was not misplaced. Cochrane's *Narrative* (published just as the British Empire began to reel under new threats to its expansion, for example the so-called Indian Mutiny of 1857) satisfied a public thirst for old-style imperial heroes. As a result, despite its occasionally shrill tone of victimization and the virtual absence of typical travel-narrative descriptions of the flora, fauna, and customs of the foreign land, the *Narrative* sold very well, going into a second edition within the year and becoming the foundation for future pirated or excerpted accounts of his adventures that were reprinted into the early twentieth century.

Cochrane arranged to have the book simultaneously translated into both Portuguese and Spanish, and excerpts were sent to governmental authorities in Britain, Chile, and Brazil to ensure that his demands for

retroactive payment were officially recognized. Thus Cochrane applied both direct pressure, from personal demands, and indirect leverage, from the weight of public opinion, to Brazil and Chile. Because Cochrane was increasingly revered as a key hero of independence in those countries, his very public demands received a rapid response in the form of precisely the financial windfall Cochrane had banked on in publishing his books: the Chilean government awarded him £6,000, and the Brazilian government arranged for bills of exchange for £34,000.³⁴ At last, symbolic capital proved its value: the Cochrane myth was converted into the cold hard cash he had long sought.

The history of the book's publication and reception indicates Cochrane's (and, by extension, his time period's) reliance on the publishing industry as a means to leverage publicity for profit. At the same time, its narrative strategies indicate the extent to which life writing had developed clear conventions by the 1850s. Cochrane attempted to adhere to these both directly (as in his self-construction as a bold, hypermasculine hero) and indirectly (as in, for example, begging Jackson to "insert some of [his] fun" so that the book would be accessible to the reading public).

Cochrane's memoirs succeeded not only in extracting payment from Chile and Brazil, but in reinvigorating their author's fame. As David Cordingly explains, Cochrane's *Autobiography of a Seaman* "would reinforce his reputation as the most brilliant naval officer of his generation."³⁵ The publication of the *Autobiography* and *Narrative* so close together flushed Cochrane fans from the woodwork, inspiring praise such as the following in the *Quarterly Review*: "On his eighty-fourth birthday Lord Dundonald has given to the world the history of the brilliant triumphs and bitter disappointments of his own memorable career. The famous Lord Cochrane of the great naval war, the terror and then the idol of the Spanish coast, the hero of Basque Roads, and the founder of the liberties of Chili and Brazil, has attained . . . to honour after unmerited and heartbreaking disgrace."³⁶ This reviewer helped revive the Cochrane myth by means of strategies that parallel those of Victorian melodrama: hyperbole and binary oppositions jostle for position in juxtaposed phrases such as "brilliant triumphs" and "bitter disappointments," "terror" and "idol," and "honour" and "heartbreaking disgrace." Next, the review waxes poetic about Cochrane's abilities as well as his enemies' persecution in full "block that metaphor" mode: "Like a noble ship driven by a violent storm high on shore and left by the receding tide helpless and useless to her owners, so was Lord Dundonald, in the

prime of his vast abilities, forced by unpitying destiny from his country's service just when the appearance of a new enemy opened to him a field for glorious exploits. . . . If we were to examine the history of all our defeats by the Americans we should find that the whole might have been turned to victories if only there had been a Cochrane to command."³⁷ This unlikely praise indicates the public thirst for old-style Romantic heroes of a kind increasingly rare in a media-saturated age.



Despite its success, Cochrane's *Narrative* is less readable than he had hoped. His obsessive cataloguing of prize money won and lost, payments evaded, and promises broken becomes a litany of victimization that ultimately engulfs the more compelling narrative of his contributions to South American independence. In the end, then, Cochrane's *Narrative* succeeds mostly in illuminating intertwined issues of social, symbolic, and economic capital: Cochrane's public persona as a peer of the British Empire as well as a naval hero of increasing reputation; his almost uncanny ability to win battles against much larger naval forces; and his consequent expectation that his social prestige and professional skills would, together, reap enormous economic rewards.

In his preface, Cochrane bluntly explains that he published the *Narrative* in part to shame Brazilian and Chilean authorities into awarding back pay for services rendered. After dwelling on these debts, Cochrane then abruptly shifts ground from economic to social and cultural capital, telling his readers that despite his determination to reclaim what is owed him, a still more pressing goal is to redeem his reputation as a brilliant and knowledgeable admiral of the fleet. He wants to set the story straight, as he puts it, "for the sake of my family—to whom my character is an heir-loom,—[so] that no obloquy shall follow me to the grave, for none have I merited. On the day these volumes see the light . . . I shall have completed the eighty-third year of a career strangely chequered, yet not undistinguished; and, therefore, the opinions of either Chilians or Brazilians are now of small moment to me in comparison with a reputation which has been deemed worthy of belonging to history."³⁸ In his metaphor of character as heirloom, Cochrane fuses Bourdieu's three forms of capital, indicating that he understood how deeply they are intertwined.

Paradoxically, however, his metaphor also reveals Cochrane's misunderstanding of Adam Smith's economic principle of value. For Smith,

an object's value is determined by its use to an individual, as well as by the labor that individual is willing to expend to obtain it. As Smith explains, "The word VALUE, it is to be observed, has two different meanings, and sometimes expresses the utility of some particular object, and sometimes the power of purchasing other goods which the possession of that object conveys."³⁹ In other words, commodities have both use value and exchange value: Smith uses the examples of water (which has high utility but may have little exchange value) and diamonds (which have little utility but high exchange value) to point out that these types of value do not often coincide.

Cochrane's "character," by contrast, is not a commodity; it is not even an heirloom in the sense of a concrete legacy that might be exchanged—like family silver or an art collection—for its value in the marketplace. It is true that character, in the small, incestuous, and relentlessly competitive world of the early nineteenth-century British navy, encompassed personal, social, and professional worth and could thus be considered a kind of legacy to one's heirs, in that a family's reputation was key to obtaining promotions. Nevertheless, Cochrane's metaphor is flawed: a sterling character is not equivalent to economic value. Thus Cochrane could not simply "cash in" on the currency of his still-circulating reputation, claiming for his family's benefit the rewards that had accrued to other writers who had published popular accounts of his exploits.

However, Cochrane could—like earlier writers—create a book that would sell, thus realizing the value of his character indirectly. When he begins the memoir proper, from its opening pages Cochrane develops an unmistakable narrative persona: a hypermasculine naval commander uninterested in trifles such as personal comfort, social niceties, and other nations' naval policies. Invited by Don José Antonio Alvarez to assume command of the Chilean navy on page 1, he lands in Valparaíso by the end of page 2, after which he loses no time in distinguishing his active, forceful, and iconoclastic habits from those of his more ritual-bound Chilean hosts: "A variety of *fêtes* was given at Valparaiso in honour of our arrival, these being prolonged for so many days as to amount to a waste of time. The same scenes were, however, re-enacted at the distant capital, whither the Supreme Director insisted on taking us, till I had to remind His Excellency that our purpose was rather fighting than feasting."⁴⁰ Contrasting his no-nonsense focus on fighting with his hosts' (presumably Latin) preference for feasting, Cochrane depicts himself as

a true British hero with all the “virtues” of that national character. But he also feels driven to emphasize his alienation from the Britain that had so grievously wounded his national pride. He tells his audience, “[T]he reception we had met [with] impressed me with so high a sense of Chilian hospitality, that, heartbroken as I had been by the infamous persecution which had driven me from the British navy, I decided upon Chili as my future home” (3).

In the narrative that follows, Cochrane pursues his plan to live the rest of his life as a Chilean. Although he does not explicitly say so, he clearly hoped his fortunes would rise in tandem with the South American investment bubble. We know from letters that he intended to invest his anticipated prize money in a new shipyard he planned to build north of Valparaíso, along a coast with almost boundless potential for sea trade but severely limited infrastructure to support such trade. The *Narrative* describes Cochrane's progress towards this goal as he imports furniture and machinery from England and is given a generous grant of land at Quintero Bay by his staunch friend and ally, Chile's supreme director Bernardo O'Higgins. Cochrane expected, then, to both contribute to and profit from a post-Independence Chilean maritime industry. In his *Narrative*, Cochrane accordingly constructs Chile as a paradise of unbounded opportunity—a direct counterpoint to England—and proclaims his intention to adopt it as his new homeland.

Cochrane's declaration of Chilean citizenship immediately upon arriving in the New World inevitably recalls his vexed relationship with English authorities. Throughout his life, Cochrane remained obsessed with earning enough money to buy back the family estate in Scotland⁴¹—but “home,” to him, would ever remain an alien concept as he remained trapped in the place of the *unheimlich*. It is no wonder that even before arriving in the New World, buoyed by the powerful current of British economic and cultural interest in South America discussed above, he had announced his intention of finding a home at last.

While actively engaged in the wars of independence, Cochrane articulated his desire to help Chile to achieve Adam Smith's fourth stage of human development—the commercial society. As he explains in a letter to Chile's leader, Bernardo O'Higgins, in 1821,

Nothing is wanting to render the South a happy land, but fixed laws; the impartial administration of justice; and a wise commercial policy; in which no Spanish colonial restrictions shall

find place—in which everything enacted by them shall be avoided as the beacon of destruction. Will you permit me humbly to state that I was grieved lately to see a [decree shutting up the port in Maule], instead of opening every creek, port, bay, and river from end to end of Chile. No pretence, of duties being evaded, will recompence your Excellency for the want of a nursery of seamen. . . . The day is not distant when you will want seamen, more attached to the Country, than those I now command are, from circumstances which I need not again detail to your Excellency.⁴²

Here Cochrane implicitly contrasts Spanish “colonial restrictions” with the informal empire Britain was beginning to establish in South America through trade. But clearly the free trade he advocates here would benefit Britain enormously, though of course Cochrane refrains from mentioning this obvious fact. When he turns to discuss naval matters, by contrast, Cochrane interestingly seems to think more of Chile’s interest than of Britain’s, asserting that opening the ports to free trade will encourage Chileans to take to the sea at last, now that maritime activity will no longer be forbidden by the Spanish colonists.

So Cochrane attempted to shape the future political economy of Chile by directly advising its supreme director on trade policy and investing in its mercantile potential. He also attempted more indirect influence through publishing and distributing political propaganda. Importing a printing press from England, he mistakenly claimed in his *Narrative* that his was the first in South America: “The above addresses were printed by a lithographic press in my house at Quintero, this being the first introduced into the Pacific States. I had sent for this press from England, together with other social improvements, and a number of agricultural implements, hoping thereby, though at my own expense, to give an impetus to industry in Chili” (252). Similar to his lauding of free trade as the best way to advance Chilean naval interests, Cochrane implies in this passage that importing industrial and agricultural machinery from Britain was the best way to develop Chilean manufactures.

Chile disagreed, desiring that Chilean industry should develop internally, without interference from European imports and investors. But the government’s demurrals had no effect on Cochrane. As his tiny fleet of ships swept south to Valdivia and north to what is now Ecuador, seizing control of harbor after harbor through brilliant naval strategy, Cochrane littered the coast with addresses that he wrote and then set and printed (with the help of travel writer Maria Graham) on his press.

He reprints some of this propaganda in his *Narrative*. Describing the events surrounding his “liberation” of Peru in May 1819, for example, he explains that “the best effect [on Peruvian citizens] was produced by the circulation of the following Proclamation”:

Compatriots! The repeated echoes of liberty in South America have been heard with pleasure in every part of enlightened Europe, more especially in Great Britain, where I, unable to resist the desire of joining in such a cause, determined to take part in it. The Republic of Chili has confided to me the command of her naval forces. . . . By their co-operation must your chains be broken. Doubt not but that the day is at hand on which, with the annihilation of despotism and your now degraded condition, you will rise to the rank of a free nation, to which your geographical position and the course of events naturally call you. (18)

This proclamation combines many of the strands of late Enlightenment thought that Cochrane absorbed through Dugald Stewart's lectures: European fascination with New World constructions of liberty and natural rights; the Dispute of the New World, which posited the Americas alternately as sites of degeneration and primitive nature and as sites of unbounded fertility and possibility; and the Black Legend of Spanish colonization. In the proclamation, Cochrane also echoes the language of his philosopher models, repeating key terms such as “enlightened” and “liberty”; invoking important causes of his time, particularly abolition; and echoing the stadial theory of Adam Smith and others in constructing inhabitants of the New World as inhabiting an earlier stage of human development.

In Cochrane's view, at least, publication and distribution of this proclamation had a performative effect: his distributed documents officially liberated the country from Spanish rule. As he says in his *Narrative*, “This proclamation was accompanied by another from the Chilian government, declaratory of the sincerity of its intentions, so that these combined caused us to be everywhere received as liberators” (18). Because the proclamation was a form that was generally used to enact legislation in colonies, the document reveals Cochrane's hubris: he presumed that he had the right to proclaim the independence of the citizens of foreign shores.

Cochrane also used the press to promulgate his views of individual liberties and the Rights of Man. In his “Address to Guayaquilenos” in

1822, which he again proudly reprints in his *Narrative*, Cochrane proclaims,

May you be as free as you are independent, and as independent as you deserve to be free! With the liberty of the press, now protected by your excellent Government, which [disseminates] enlightenment from that fount, Guayaquil can never again be enslaved. . . . Remember your former ideas on commerce and manufactures. . . . Accustomed to the blind habits of Spanish monopoly, you then believed that Guayaquil would be robbed, were not her commerce limited to her own merchants. All foreigners were forbidden by restrictive laws from attending even to their own business and interests. (170)

Here Cochrane again echoes Scottish Enlightenment ideals in praising “the liberty of the press” for bringing enlightenment, in arguing against monopolies, and most of all (courtesy of Adam Smith again) in urging free trade as the cure for all evils. Cochrane also echoes the language of the abolitionist movement, constructing Spanish colonization as metaphorically akin to slavery and using chiasmus to intertwine freedom with independence. Having established Spanish domination as an evil stifling an abstract “freedom,” Cochrane goes on to set up British commerce and, more generally, capitalist consumption as a good productive of freedom, assuring the Guyaquileños that after they gain independence from Spain: “Your river will be filled with ships, and the monopolist degraded and shamed. Let your customs’ duties be moderate, in order to promote the greatest possible consumption of foreign and domestic goods. . . . Let every man do as he pleases as regards his own property, views, and interests; because every individual will watch over his own with more zeal than senates, ministers, or kings. By your enlarged views set an example to the New World” (171).

Adam Smith’s influence can be traced not only in Cochrane’s ideas but also in his imagery and language. Just one of many sources for Cochrane’s ideas in the address above is chapter 7 of the *Wealth of Nations*, in which Smith excoriates monopolies and warns us,

The monopolists, by keeping the market constantly understocked . . . sell their commodities much above the natural price, and raise their emoluments, whether they consist in wages or profit, greatly above their natural rate.

The price of monopoly is upon every occasion the highest which can be got. The natural price, or the price of free competition, on the contrary, is the lowest which can be taken.⁴³

Leaving aside the intriguing implications underlying Smith's phrase "the natural price," we can see Cochrane echoing Smith's tone and points almost directly here as he abstracts Smith's economic principles and applies them to his own experiences in South America.

What Cochrane leaves unsaid in all this is his adaptation of Adam Smith's principle of enlightened self-interest, which Smith developed in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). A key passage comes in the chapter "Of the Influences and Authority of Conscience," where Smith sets up the problem of selfishness and then counters it with an idea of an internalized monitor: "When our passive feelings are almost always so sordid and so selfish, how comes it that our active principles should often be so generous and so noble? . . . It is a stronger power, a more forcible motive, which exerts itself upon such occasions. It is reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. . . . [T]he natural misrepresentations of self-love can be corrected only by the eye of this impartial spectator."⁴⁴ As D. D. Raphael observes, critics have pointed to an inconsistency, dubbed the "Adam Smith problem," between Smith's ethics and his economics, located in a potential contradiction between the ethical principles as laid out in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* above and the self-interested roots of human action claimed in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). A famous passage from the latter reads, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities, but of their advantages."⁴⁵

Cochrane himself straddles this contradiction in notions of enlightened self-interest: as he looked back over his service to South American independence, Cochrane positioned himself squarely with the "generous and noble" impartial observer. As he considered his own financial embarrassments, by contrast, Cochrane joined ranks with the self-interested butcher and baker. In his published *Narrative*, when Cochrane begins to consider the consequences, for trade policy, of Chilean independence, his tone quickly shifts from initial celebration of a new phase in South American history to almost obsessive harping on a

policy that would work to his own enlightened self-interest, transferring the monopoly on South American trade from Spanish to British merchants and businesses—including Cochrane's own planned shipyard in the harbor granted to him at Quintero.

Implicit in Cochrane's proclamation to Guayaquil, and explicit in later proclamations, is the belief that for these South American republics, the goal must be to move toward the kind of commercial society that Adam Smith had identified as the fourth or highest stage of civilization, and that requires relatively free trade with other nations. In his memoir, not only does Cochrane claim to have liberated South Americans politically but also he takes full credit for increasing the trade routes available to Britain, and he rebukes the British for not having rewarded his initiative. Because, of course, his free trade policies benefited—primarily—the British mercantile houses that poured into South America as soon as Spanish and Portuguese restrictions were lifted. Not incidentally, Cochrane's version of free trade would also have benefited him personally had he been permitted to develop the Quintero harbor.



But despite his attempts to shape the economic policy and national character of the South American countries he embraced, Chile, Peru, and Brazil exceeded the colonial spaces Cochrane defined for them. As Cochrane became increasingly invested in a view of himself as naval hero, increasingly convinced that he deserved enormous sums in prize money, and increasingly determined to open South American ports to free trade for the benefit of British commerce, the newly independent republics began to distance themselves from Cochrane. He confronted the limits of his power to shape the future of the nations he had helped to liberate when his vision of a primitive, picturesque New World of infinite possibility returned the gaze, making Cochrane's own problematic identity the object of surveillance.

Carlos López Urrutia, whose balanced and rigorously researched *Más allá de la audacia: Vida de Thomas Cochrane* (Beyond audacity: Life of Thomas Cochrane) is one of the best of the crop of recent studies of the admiral, tells us that the abhorrence of Cochrane is so strong in some Chilean historians that they have affirmed false rumors (for example, that Cochrane first offered his services to Spain to fight against Chile's independence before switching allegiances because Chile's bid

was higher).⁴⁶ We see the seeds of this future loathing planted in Cochrane's own time—often, unsurprisingly, by the ever-paradoxical Cochrane himself.

Early in his *Narrative*, Cochrane proudly claims that the Spanish fleet called him “El Diablo” out of fear of his surprising methods of attack (12). But he forgets to mention his less flattering nicknames, like those cited earlier. Perhaps most damning was “El Metálico Lord,” a title given him by San Martín when Chileans tired of his constant demands for money. Indeed, Chilean accounts of Cochrane are full of criticism of his behavior and motivations. To cite just a few examples, San Martín's aide-de-camp James Paroissien commented that Cochrane was “sólo ansioso de ganar dinero” (only anxious to gather loot) (López Urrutia, 228). San Martín himself acknowledged that Cochrane was indispensable to the cause of independence but added that “Cochrane es un niño grande que nos causará muchas molestias; pero cuyos servicios pueden ser inapreciables” (Cochrane is a big baby who will cause us plenty of trouble—but his services may be inestimable) (*ibid.*, 208–9). And later in life, San Martín called him a “gringo badulaque, Almirantito que cuando no podía embolsicar lo consideraba robo” (gringo rogue, the little admiral who, when he couldn't fill his purse, considered himself robbed).⁴⁷

Some of these accusations arose from Cochrane's quite jingoistic assumption that British economic theory and political practices should shape the policies of other nations: to cite just one example in addition to the free trade debate discussed above, Cochrane continually sought to impose British guidelines for the distribution of the prize money when he seized enemy ships, known as “prizes.” In Britain, the captain and crew were awarded the lion's share of profits from these prizes. In Chile and Brazil, by contrast, ships seized by naval personnel in the course of duty were considered the property of the state. So when Cochrane captured Spanish, Portuguese, and even occasional British or American ships, he assumed that he was enriching himself enormously. The Chileans and Brazilians, by contrast, were horrified by what they perceived as his shameless piracy in refusing to hand the prizes over to the fledgling nations, which desperately needed funds to secure their independence.

Amid these and many other misunderstandings, Cochrane, far from remaining above the fray, found his reputation tarnished by his ceaseless demands for money as well as continued conflicts with his South American employers—hence his need to revise the Cochrane

myth at the end of his life, as if to erase those haunting accusations. In his *Narrative*, Cochrane's self-proclaimed motive for leading the Chilean and Brazilian navies to independence from Spain and Portugal was his altruistic desire to help colonized nations achieve liberation from oppression—and as a Scotsman expelled from the British navy, Cochrane understood all too well the consequences of marginalization. At the same time, this averred motive contradicts his actual role in the South American wars of independence: like so many of his fellow British officers, at the end of the day he was essentially a mercenary hiring himself out to the highest bidder.

The geopolitical dynamics of Thomas Cochrane's involvement in South American independence—and the class, gender, and national anxieties that accompanied his service there—demonstrate the extent to which an individual life can become mythologized, as well as the profits such a reputation can bring to those who successfully capitalize on it. Cochrane's life and the Cochrane myth also reveal the intertwined development of British and South American national identities over the course of the nineteenth century, as well as the entanglement of individual life stories and changing ideas of nationhood.

Cochrane published his *Narrative* for multiple reasons. As we have seen, he used it to convince Chile and Brazil to pay him for past services rendered. At the same time, he hoped to redeem his reputation as well as to cash in on the increasing commodification of the figure of the hero in British mass culture. His published travel memoir, itself straddling the nexus of literary and commercial discourses, marks his final—and somewhat successful—attempt to convert his social and symbolic capital into cash. Although his embarrassingly obsessive self-promotional narrative tarnished the “heir-loom” of a sterling character that he had hoped to leave his heirs,⁴⁸ his memoirs did succeed in producing the desired profits, both from their sales and from the back pay granted by Chile and Brazil.

In its reliance on codes of imperial masculinity no less than its restless idealism and its anxious rehearsal of the meanings of *liberty*, *freedom*, and even *free trade*, Cochrane's *Narrative of Services in the Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil* speaks to the self-construction of the British hero abroad in the empire. In turn, the Chilean response to him points to the distinctions between British and South American perspectives on liberty, ideal government, free trade, and stadial theory. When juxtaposed against popular representations of Cochrane, then, his own narratives

helped to crystallize public discourse about the circulation of goods and capital in British imaginings of the New World—discourses that had direct economic repercussions. The stories about and profits of Thomas Cochrane—military genius, eccentric Scot, or *lord metálico*—that continue to circulate through our culture help us to understand the complex and reciprocal processes by which myths and money are imagined, invested, and ceaselessly intertwined.

NOTES

1. These phrases translate, respectively, as Sea Wolf, Devil, and (in Brian Vale's alliterative though not literal translations) Baron of Bullion or Count of Cash (Brian Vale, *Cochrane in the Pacific: Fortune and Freedom in Spanish America* [London: I. B. Tauris, 2008], 202). Lord Cochrane, as the eldest son of the ninth Earl of Dundonald, became the tenth earl on his father's death in 1831 and thenceforth should properly be referred to as Dundonald. But because the central focus of this chapter, his involvement in South American independence, took place while he was still Lord Cochrane, for clarity and consistency I refer to him as "Cochrane" throughout.

2. Quoted in David Cordingly, *Cochrane: The Real Master and Commander* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 1.

3. Vale, *Cochrane in the Pacific*, 11–12.

4. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy (Chichester, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 82.

5. *Ibid.*, 84.

6. Cochrane's class anxiety was fuelled, in part, by the fact that his father's relative poverty had prevented him from attending university. Early in his naval career, Cochrane found himself temporarily without a ship and took advantage of this period of enforced unemployment to patch this crack in his aristocratic veneer by attending the University of Edinburgh for as long as his leave lasted. It is telling—though perhaps not surprising given Scotland's long-standing emphasis on education—that despite his long residence in London, he did not consider pursuing his studies anywhere but in Scotland.

7. Stewart transmitted his knowledge of Thomas Reid, Adam Smith, William Robertson, and other Scottish Enlightenment philosophers to many intellectual and cultural leaders in the early nineteenth century.

8. Samuel Fleischacker, "Adam Smith's Reception among the American Founders, 1776–1790," *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (October 2002): 897–924; 903, 905.

9. Cordingly, *Cochrane*, 21.

10. For example, several of his most spectacular victories (including both his controversial attack on French warships lying at anchor in the Basque Roads and his much more straightforward victory against the Spanish in the Capture of Valdivia, Chile, in 1820) were carefully planned, with Cochrane personally studying and taking soundings of the harbors before the attacks.

11. As part of his critique of English authority, Cochrane decided to run for political office; helped by the political journalist William Cobbett, he won election as the representative to Parliament first of Honiton, Devon, and the next year, with the radical candidate Sir Francis Burdett, of Westminster (1806–7; Cordingly, *Cochrane*, 105–28). Once elected, Cochrane used his new position to offend as many high-ranking government officials as he possibly could; for example, his first motion (intended to uncover corruption) read “that a committee be appointed to enquire into an account of all offices, posts, places, sinecures, pensions, situations, fees, perquisites, and emoluments of every description . . . held or enjoyed by any member of this House, his wife, or any of his descendants” (1807; quoted in *ibid.*, 131). Unsurprisingly, this motion was not well received in either house of Parliament. Although Cochrane was right that naval abuses were in urgent need of reform, his methods were ineffective.

12. Cochrane to Katherine Barnes Cochrane, May 21, 1816, Dundonald Archive, National Archives of Scotland (Edinburgh), GD233/13/6/1/1.

13. Matthew Brown, *Adventuring through Spanish Colonies: Simón Bolívar, Foreign Mercenaries and the Birth of New Nations* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 1.

14. Moises Enrique Rodriguez, *Freedom's Mercenaries: British Volunteers in the Wars of Independence of Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2006), 2.

15. See, for example, Michael Frye, *The Scottish Empire* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002); and Tom Devine, *Scotland's Empire and the Shaping of the Americas, 1600–1815* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Press, 2003).

16. Rebecca Cole Heinowitz, *Spanish America and British Romanticism, 1777–1826* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 1.

17. Tim Fulford, *Romantic Indians: Native Americans, British Literature, and Transatlantic Culture, 1756–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

18. Heinowitz, *Spanish America*, 182.

19. Juan Bautista Sejean, quoted in Rodriguez, *Freedom's Mercenaries*, 57.

20. “Private Correspondence,” *Caledonian Mercury*, August 16, 1817.

21. Canning, *Speeches of the Right Honourable George Canning*, ed. R. Therry, 3rd ed. (London: Ridgway and Sons, 1836), 6:III.

22. “Cochrane, Having Resolved . . .” (advertisement), *The Times* (London), March 25, 1817, 2A, available online at *The Times Digital Archive, 1785–1985*.

23. “Private Correspondence,” *Caledonian Mercury*, September 6, 1817.

24. Robertson, *History of America* (1777), quoted in Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World*, trans. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), 159.

25. Tim Fulford, "‘El Diablo’ and ‘El Angel del Cielo’: Tomas and Kitty Cochrane and the Romanticisation of Revolution in South America," in *Romanticism and the Anglo-Hispanic Imaginary*, ed. Joselyn M. Almeida (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 103.

26. Autobiography was fairly well established as a genre with its own conventions by the time Cochrane began his writing; see William Spengemann, *The Forms of Autobiography: Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).

27. Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 2.

28. Cochrane to Jackson, Dundonald Archive, National Archives of Scotland (Edinburgh), GD233/28/215.

29. Cochrane to Jackson, Letter 8, n.d., Dundonald Archive, GD233/28/215.

30. Cochrane to Jackson, Letter 7, n.d., Dundonald Archive, GD233/28/215.

31. Jackson nevertheless seems well able to resist his former boss's dubious charms. Reading between the lines of Cochrane's replies, one can infer Jackson's reluctance to assist with the compilation and writing of the irritable admiral's apologia; Jackson apparently pleaded—repeatedly—that the ill health of his sister made it impossible for him to help with the manuscript. As the eighty-three-year-old Lord Dundonald's letters become longer and longer and increasingly insistent on his continued relevance to the world political situation, Jackson's long-suffering sister sounds more and more like a convenient fiction—which lends extra poignancy to Dundonald's hope that, for example, "the fine weather now setting in will contribute to relieve your sister and consequently place your mind more at ease (Cochrane to Jackson, Letter 7, n.d., Dundonald Archive, GD233/28/215)."

32. Cochrane to Jackson, September 13, 1858, Dundonald Archive, GD233/28/215. Words enclosed in square brackets represent my best guess at illegible or partially missing text in the original letters.

33. Cochrane to Jackson, n.d. (sometime after December 4, 1858), Dundonald Archive, GD233/28/215.

34. Cordingly, *Cochrane*, 351.

35. *Ibid.*, 35.

36. "Earl of Dundonald," *Bentley's Quarterly Review* 2, no. 4 (January 1860): 575.

37. *Ibid.*, 579.

38. Cochrane, *Narrative*, xvii. Brian Vale notes that "as a work of history, the *Narrative of Services* is deeply flawed. It is therefore unfortunate that for

more than 150 years, the book has been accepted at its face value and has had a perverse effect on the way the wars of independence in the Pacific has [*sic*] been recorded by British, Spanish and—indeed—Chilean historians” (*Cochrane in the Pacific*, 202). Vale redresses this imbalance in his book, drawing on Chilean and Brazilian sources to correct Cochrane’s “disturbingly distorted” account of many of the events he experienced.

39. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Hampshire, UK: Harriman House, 2007), 18.

40. Cochrane, *Narrative*, 3. In the text, subsequent references to the *Narrative* will be noted in parentheses.

41. Cordingly, *Cochrane*, 316.

42. Earl of Dundonald to Bernardo O’Higgins, March 10, 1821, Dundonald Archive, GD233/28/215.

43. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 4:1.

44. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 158.

45. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 9–10.

46. Carlos López Urrutia, *Más allá de la audacia: Vida de Thomas Cochrane* (Mexico City: Editorial Andres Bello, 2001), 172n17. In the text, subsequent references will be noted in parentheses.

47. Perez Rosales, quoted in *ibid.*, 255.

48. One of those descendants, planning a reissue of the *Autobiography* with a secretary, conveyed the family’s perspective on the tone of Cochrane’s memoirs: “I have to say that I entirely agree that much elimination could be made in the Tenth Earl’s Account of services in Chile, Peru and Brazil. Such elimination would be confined to such passages as (1) might affect the popularity of the book in South American countries and (2) might detract from the dignity of the writer and the value of his great work by their insistence upon a note of personal complaint. . . . The book, with all doubtful passages omitted, and greater brevity secured, might become a South American classic.” Earl of Dundonald to Miss Dibbin, May 31, 1928, Dundonald Archive, GD233/187/4/111.

CHAPTER SIX

From Cooperation to Concentration

Socialism, Salvationism, and the “Indian Beggar”

Suzanne Daly

The charlatan, the swindler, the beggar, the unemployed, the starving, the wretched petty criminal—these are figures that exist not for [political economy] but for other eyes, those of doctors, judges, gravediggers, beggar-overseers [*Bettelvogts*], etc.

—Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*¹

Put the waste labour of the world on the waste land by means of the waste capital, and thus convert this trinity of waste into a unity of production.

—Frederick Booth-Tucker, 1905²

The idea that India is poor, or at least full of poor people, has been for the past half century perhaps the single most prevalent received idea about South Asia current in the global North; conversely, the degree to which British imperialism caused Indian poverty remains a vexed but crucial question among historians and economists, one unlikely ever to be settled to the satisfaction of all parties.³ What is clear, however, is that Indian poverty as a British master trope gathered force throughout the nineteenth century, as various interests insisted on its veracity to shore up a range of ideological positions. By

incorporating poverty into the grammar of colonialism over the course of a century, writers with widely divergent agendas gradually instantiated a new truth about India that persists into the present, carrying with it a multitude of aftereffects.⁴ This chapter considers one aspect of the poverty narrative: how “the Indian beggar” became a Victorian concept-metaphor that embodied the idea of Indian poverty, and how this metaphoricity affected the lives of the actual beggars who in the early twentieth century fell under the control of the Indian Salvation Army (ISA).

Alongside the representational history of the beggar, I trace Salvation Army founder William Booth’s conception of cooperation, or communal living, from its roots in utopian socialism, and specifically Robert Owen’s elaborations of “self-supporting home colonies,” to its end point in his son-in-law Frederick Booth-Tucker’s designs for concentrating South Asian beggars and putting them to work in controlled areas known as “camps” and “homes.” In his bestselling book *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, William Booth (and his uncredited coauthor, W. T. Stead) selectively appropriated the form and content of socialist proposals to remake society through the formation of model communities; this framework provided Booth-Tucker with the means by which he would eventually redefine the aims and scope of Christian missionary work in British South Asia. Situating utopian socialism as the vanishing mediator between earlier forms of imperial philanthropy and the state-sponsored regimes of control carried out by the ISA in the early twentieth century allows us to comprehend the dense web of political economies and imperialist-capitalist discourses in which beggars both real and imagined gradually became ensnared.

William Booth published *In Darkest England* in 1890, twenty-five years after founding the Salvation Army in London; in it, he outlined schemes for cooperative communities including city colonies, farm colonies, and overseas colonies in which the destitute could labor productively and regain the power to lead virtuous lives. Although Booth explicitly rejects any association with “Socialistic claptrap” and never cites Owen by name, he states a desire “to renew the Experiment of Mr. E. T. Craig,” the Owenite socialist who in 1831 organized a cooperative community in Ralahine, Ireland, and includes a magazine article praising Ralahine in an appendix to the book.⁵ Beyond that, however, the influence of Owen’s work (direct or otherwise), particularly his 1841 book *A Developement [sic] of the Principles and Plans on Which to Establish*

Self-Supporting Home Colonies, is evident in the structure and language of *In Darkest England* as well as in its optimistic belief in the power of rational principles rigorously applied to perfect human character.⁶ Owen was certainly not alone in designing and implementing cooperative communities, but as the founder of the Home Colonisation Society and a prolific author, he was one of their best-known proponents. And while Owenite ideals had diffused widely through British culture by 1890, Owen in particular stands out as a precursor because his economic theories were inextricable from a program of moral improvement to which Booth’s frequently corresponds, despite their manifold ideological differences (Owen bitterly opposed marriage, wage labor, private property, and organized religion). My point is not to argue specifically for an Owenite influence on Salvationism, however, but to suggest that in both what it takes from utopian socialism and what it rejects, the text of *In Darkest England* lays the groundwork for Booth-Tucker’s schemes, which might otherwise appear to break with Booth’s ideas rather decisively. In other words, if one were to borrow from *In Darkest England* as selectively as *In Darkest England* borrows from utopian socialism, one could arrive at a plan in which cooperation appears nearly indistinguishable from concentration. And in late nineteenth-century British India, the beggar, at once needy and threatening, ubiquitous and powerless, emerged as the ideal figure around which to contrive such a program.

Beggars abundantly populate the nonfiction prose of British India. Individually or collectively, they appear regularly in travel narratives, missionary literature, and tourists’ guides, ostensibly to add verisimilitude but in reality serving as exotic spectacles, economic indicators, or objects of pity as the occasion demands, gradually acquiring metaphoric resonance across the nineteenth century to become living embodiments of place. Typically gendered male,⁷ the figural beggar claims a central role in two of ISA founder Frederick Booth-Tucker’s key works, *Darkest India* (1891) and his memoir *Mukti Fauj* (1923). *Darkest India*, an authorized recasting of *In Darkest England*, draws on popular understandings of Indian beggary as it writes beggars into a secularized philanthropic mission from which religious conversion has largely dropped out, while *Mukti Fauj* recounts how, in an apparent break with his earlier theories, Booth-Tucker joined the colonial governments of India and Ceylon in criminalizing and incarcerating beggars beginning in 1913. Booth-Tucker’s reimagining “the Indian army of beggars”⁸ in 1891 as what Marx called the “industrial reserve army or surplus-population”⁹

of potential workers idled by the vagaries of the labor market provides a point of connection between his early work and the draconian imperative he articulates in 1913: "Control . . . Concentrate . . . [and] Employ"¹⁰ the most visible poor of India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), by compulsion if necessary. By committing the ISA's "soldiers" to the implementation of plans to resettle, oversee, and extract labor from urban beggars, Booth-Tucker inserted Salvationism into the profitable process of making colonial South Asia not more Christian but more capitalist.

The 1882 establishment of the ISA by Frederick Booth-Tucker (1853–1929) marks the moment at which apparently incommensurable conceptions of British domestic and imperial poverty were yoked together through the demographic imagination of General William Booth.¹¹ Booth-Tucker's history made him an unlikely convert but a highly qualified missionary; born Frederick Tucker in Bihar to a deputy commissioner in the Indian Civil Service, he lived in India until age thirteen, attended Cheltenham College, and entered the Indian Civil Service in 1874.¹² While on leave in England in 1881, Tucker joined the Salvation Army, returning to Bombay in 1882 to resign his government post and establish the ISA. Having lost his first wife to cholera in 1887, Tucker married William Booth's daughter Emma the following year, adding her surname to his own, as was the Booth family custom. *Darkest India*, his first book, appeared in 1891, one year after *In Darkest England*. While the authorial voice is clearly Booth-Tucker's, the book largely follows its predecessor in outline if not in detail. The topic of beggars, unique to *Darkest India*, constitutes a key exception. Asserting his authority as an Anglo-Indian, Booth-Tucker compounded the language of missionary tracts, travelogues, and English slum reform to produce a new version of a familiar type: a now-statistically verifiable Indian beggar.

Arguing that beggars' stark material need demanded a British response, *Darkest India* propounds a multifaceted plan to convert beggars to the gospel of wage labor. But the redemption that Booth-Tucker envisioned remains squarely within the realm of the economic; this is not the path outlined in the preface to *In Darkest England*, whereby temporal rescue leads to eternal salvation through the laborer's conversion to Christianity. Booth-Tucker preferred the language of capitalist political economy: in *Darkest India*, beggars represent "human capital" (114) whose economic productivity will cause "new markets [to] be created both for produce and for labour" (54). "Builders, shopkeepers, [and]

food producers," he claimed, stood to "profit by [beggars'] redemption" (55). Tracing the Indian beggar through nineteenth-century British prose and into Booth-Tucker's writings reveals one path by which the ISA, initially the object of intense official hostility, became within a few decades an agent of the British government, paid to oversee surplus populations including beggars, criminals, and (most notoriously) the so-called criminal tribes.¹³ Beggars in British India found themselves implicated in, and necessary to, a Salvationist political economy in which they nevertheless failed ever to materialize fully as workers but remained caught between capitalism and the carceral. Portrayed by Booth-Tucker as avatars of a recognizable but uniquely indigenous form of poverty that might be ameliorated but never eliminated, beggars initially personified an ideal challenge for Indian Salvationists in need of both urban visibility and a perpetual mission. Yet as the ISA gained government sanction, the beggar became more than a challenge; he became a threat to be contained and an opportunity to exploit. At once all too real and wholly invented, beggars in Salvationist literature thus look backward toward an earlier model of imperial religious philanthropy directed largely toward the poor and forward to the century that would invent both structural adjustment and emergency villages.

DETERMINING THE BEGGAR:

CULTURALIST, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS

The Indian beggar as a Victorian concept-metaphor bears a contradictory relation to imperial time and space: as a signifier of need, the beggar at times crystallizes or stands in for the multifarious causes and consequences, both new and old, of Indian poverty. Yet he also embodies the common claim that India was a static and unchanging society; stripped of historicity, understood to be an immutable part of the landscape, the literary beggar stands in the path of modernity and progress.¹⁴ In either case, his presence signifies imperial labors unfulfilled, while his very identity constitutes an invitation to act: he wants something from us. As such, he easily slips into the role of problem-to-be-solved, like sati or thuggee before him; yet the aura of eternal presence that settled around the Indian beggar by the century's end made the problem of Indian poverty seem all but insoluble and thus another alibi for a continued British presence. Unlike hereditary bandits or suicidal widows, his kind could not easily be hanged, criminalized, or legislated out of existence.¹⁵ For

Nicholas Dirks, such formulations reflect “the special perversity of colonial modernity”: “The colonizer held out modernity as a promise but at the same time made it the limiting condition of coloniality: the promise that would never be kept. The colonized could be seduced by the siren of the modern but never quite get there, mired (if colonialism was to continue to legitimate itself) in a ‘traditional’ world.”¹⁶ Dirks refers here to the European understanding of the caste system as that which kept India out of the stream of history and thus made colonial rule both necessary and perpetual. Caste and poverty operate differently in this regard, yet they are related; those who misapprehended the caste system as an unchanging and highly rigid social order often cited beggary as its symptom. As Dirks demonstrates, caste (in the British sense) and poverty were frequently intertwined in official narratives that claimed the Indian people were impoverished by inept and rapacious hereditary monarchs. The social stagnation engendered by the caste system, it was claimed, allowed these rulers to “shamelessly exploit their subjects” even as they “fail[ed] to exploit economic opportunities.”¹⁷ Furthermore, the Indian practice of obtaining divine favor by feeding beggars at once perpetuated and legitimated beggary, obviating beggars’ need to perform what British observers considered to be honest labor.

Thus, even when poverty is understood to be an effect of a political system and not an eternal verity, the root of the problem is figured as the very thing that India cannot be rid of: caste. To comprehend beggars as a product of or adjunct to the caste system and the ruling class it supports is to shift the burden of causality from economics to culture, and from England to India. At the same time, this reading at least sees beggars as an element of a social structure, not a surplus or remainder that is parasitic upon it. Booth-Tucker acknowledged but rejected this older, culturalist framework and insisted that Indian beggars be seen as “waste labour,” an untapped labor pool whose problem was a lack of or refusal to work. In claiming that Salvationism’s labor-based philanthropy could render beggars appropriately productive, he slotted them into an emergent model of capitalist imperialism. This formulation, adapted from Booth and heavily inflected by the English context in which it was first fashioned, reveals the extent of Salvationists’ investment in work as that which could first instill moral worth and then, when willingly performed, demonstrate it.

While any number of Victorian writers espoused some version of this belief, putting it into practice meant testing the degree to which

one was willing to compel resisters to toil for their own good. Here the most glaring structural differences between Owen's and Booth's imagined communities become relevant. Unlike Owen's, Booth's colonies were designed specifically for the lowest rung of society, from the economically disadvantaged to criminals, addicts, and other incorrigibles. While both Owen's and Booth's colonies were ostensibly to be populated solely by volunteers, Salvationist schemes assumed that Salvationist officers would exercise a significant level of authority; Booth, apparently without irony, wrote that he "believ[ed] in co-operation as the ultimate solution, if to co-operation you can add subordination."¹⁸ A few such moments aside, *In Darkest England* contains little reference to the overtly militaristic organization and ideology undergirding Salvationism, which may be more easily discerned from its internal documents.¹⁹ Booth-Tucker, enamored of Salvationists' proven capacity for laboring in what were often truly arduous circumstances, appears willfully blind in *Darkest India* to the problems inherent in promoting labor as a universal solution to social and moral ills in an industrializing colonial context. His unequivocal insistence on the fact of Indian poverty and the extent of the suffering it engenders, however, tends rhetorically to overshadow the problematic elements of his remedies. The moral and statistical certainty and the commonsense, optimistic tone that drive *Darkest India* offer a bracing contrast to governmental discussions of the Indian economy.

In British India, any attempt to define or address poverty faced—in addition to manifold logistical, demographic, and cultural difficulties—the real possibility of governmental resistance. Colonial officials, frequently accused of ignoring poverty or underreacting to famine, regularly countered such charges by either denying the problems' existence or insisting on the wisdom of noninterference. Implicit in such responses is a culturalist logic that suggests that what looks like poverty to the British may be the normal state of affairs elsewhere. Although debates regarding the extent and severity of Indian poverty punctuate parliamentary records throughout the nineteenth century, a set of early examples will suffice to suggest the limited ambit of many such inquiries. In an 1830 parliamentary report, former East India Company official Robert Rickards, a bitter critic of company rule, insists, "The effect of [the British revenue collection system] is in every part of India universal poverty and ignorance, as regards the great mass of the people. It has been observed by all of our ablest public servants."²⁰ In an 1832

report, his fellow Bombay Council member Francis Warden counters, “Notwithstanding its poverty . . . there is scarcely an individual in India who has not his daily food and a hut to shelter him at night. There is more general comfort and happiness than in other countries.”²¹ Ideological difference here underpins definitional confusion: huts, which signify poverty in England, in India define its absence. Yet the claim that India is not poor even in relation to “other countries” appeared regularly in the mainstream press, and an 1852 essay in *Fraser’s Magazine* baldly asserts, “[P]overty, as we understand it, and meet with it face to face in this country, in India is absolutely unknown.”²² In his account of the Bombay Presidency in the 1820s, the former chief justice Sir Edward West captures the contradiction between India’s profitability and its poverty in speaking of “that small band among the shareholders and office-holders of the Company [who] . . . worked with a higher aim than that of collecting gold in a poverty-stricken land.”²³ Others turned the critique implicit in West’s statement on its head: if India had always been poverty-stricken, then wealth extraction was no sin. Rather, it created economic opportunity.

By the early 1830s, both proponents and opponents of British rule used India’s ostensible poverty to justify their positions: while opponents such as Rickards claimed that England had impoverished India and thereby forfeited any right to rule it, others took Indian poverty as *prima facie* evidence of the need for English governance. Scholars of the period have explored at length the tension expressed here between the cultural justifications for imperialism and its economic imperatives; my point in this context is simply that the “poverty argument” served to support any number of ideological positions, and this multivalent utility both guaranteed its ubiquity in British political discourse and meant that the Indian poor themselves rarely figured as the object of concern in such debates. Repetition in different registers advanced Indian poverty toward the status of received truth, lending credence to literary representations of omnipresent beggars and, eventually, to Booth-Tucker’s somewhat dubious statistics regarding their numbers and his proposals for reforming them.²⁴

While politicians debated the policy implications of Indian poverty, nineteenth-century travel writing tended to treat the visible poor as mildly disturbing instances of local color, as with Frederick Wyman’s 1866 evocation of a “noisy beggar, exposing his sores, yelling forth his woes, and soliciting alms” in the Lucknow marketplace,²⁵ or as reminders of

England's ostensibly beneficent rule, as when Harriet Tytler describes a "Hindu beggar with both hands cut off at the wrist," his punishment for theft prior to the advent of British supremacy (and legal reform) in the Punjab.²⁶ Letters, memoirs, and published diaries frequently mention religious mendicants, or fakirs, and do so in uniform fashion: fakirs are fraudulent, disorderly, immoral, and outlandish in appearance. French diamond merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier recorded in 1676 what would come to be a Victorian commonplace: "It is estimated that there are in India 800,000 Muhammadan *Fakirs*, and 1,200,000 among the idolaters [Hindus]. . . . They are all vagabonds and idlers, who blind the eyes of the people by a false zeal."²⁷ Tavernier's assumption regarding mendicant fakirs proved remarkably durable; H. A. Rose, in his 1911 *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, calls fakirs and yogis "rascally beggar[s] who [pretend] to be able to tell fortunes or to practice astrological or necromantic arts."²⁸

Despite the two statements' rhetorical similarity, however, the European perception of Indian religious mendicants shifted radically in the two centuries that divide them. As David Gordon White has demonstrated, yogis and fakirs (he calls the two terms "virtually synonymous") were not merely solitary wanderers but often belonged to powerful religious orders that eighteenth-century British merchants and imperialists "were forced to acknowledge . . . as their economic, political, and even moral rivals for the wealth, power, and soul of India." He notes that from 1773 on, the British attempted to curb the yogis' influence through "a combination of legislation and police action."²⁹ In the early nineteenth century, then, expressions of contempt for religious mendicants may have masked a genuine sense of political threat. Yet by the century's end, fakirs retained a vague aura of menace but were portrayed primarily as a source of touristic mock horror.

In *Darkest India*, Booth-Tucker writes fakirs out of his catalogue of the Indian poor in a single dismissive phrase; having subdivided beggars into four categories, "the blind and the infirm," their guides, "the able-bodied," and "the religious mendicants," he declares that he will henceforth ignore the latter group "for obvious reasons" (27). His reasons, however, are anything but obvious; Booth-Tucker claimed that he preferred to work with incorrigibles and frequently quoted Booth's dictum "go for the worst!"³⁰ The elision suggests an unstated acknowledgment that fakirs, who would almost certainly cite religious grounds for refusing to work and had the potential to mount stronger forms of

resistance, marked the limit of possibility for any labor-based program. Their claims to religious authority, moreover, would oppose his own. Booth-Tucker's dismissal of fakirs, like that of previous missionary organizations, hints at an unacknowledged rivalry for doctrinal supremacy.

Although fakirs or yogis occasionally appear in earlier missionary works, the more serious literature pays far less attention to beggars of any kind than to the poor more generally.³¹ While Victorian missionary writing constitutes a vigorous if unwitting collective effort to foreground India's poverty, popular missionary magazines for children were the most likely to feature instructive stories about ordinary beggars. Mission memoirs sometimes portray beggars sympathetically but are more likely to condemn them for idleness or hold them up as products of a faulty belief system. Indian poverty more generally is typically figured as spiritual poverty and folded into a conventional progress narrative in which heroic missionary labor, supported by British alms, might someday Christianize a heathen people; Pramod Nayar terms this aesthetic the "missionary picturesque," in which a spiritual wilderness is tamed and cultivated through Christian labor.³² At the same time, the endlessly iterated poverty/beggar trope in missionary literature naturalized and dehistoricized Indian poverty. Despite missionary writing's explicit concern with converting the poor, conversion's cultural concomitants (Christian habits of industry and so forth) carried powerful economic resonances that Booth-Tucker would later both exploit and transform.

SALVATIONISM IN THE COLONIAL CONTEXT

Booth-Tucker stood out from his British missionary predecessors in two striking ways: not only was he raised in India but he began his Salvationist work in India as a beggar. He and his initial group of four Salvationists adopted Indian names and dress shortly after beginning their missionary labors but found the effort inadequate, as their "attire might identify [Salvationists] with India but not with the poor."³³ Substituting the dhotis commonly worn by beggars, the group began traveling as mendicants, carrying no "money, food, [or] change of clothes," and successfully gathering adherents if not actual converts.³⁴ *Darkest India* emphasizes the power of its author's multiple identities and identifications; as an impoverished Indian beggar and British hunter of souls, backed by Booth's imprimatur, Indian census data, and his insider's knowledge, Booth-Tucker makes claims (and claims on the public) that are, he implies,

irrefutable. His argument for reforming beggars is a clever recombination of familiar elements that draws on, confronts, and transvalues earlier representations from religious tracts and travel narratives. It also borrows from contemporary tourist literature. In late-century guidebooks, Indian beggars form an element of the imperial picturesque, a genre that, in its sanitizing and sentimentalizing impulse, renders the poor both ubiquitous and inert. Their neediness, at once essentialized and performative, ceases to register as need and becomes a part of the scene that exists for the tourist's consumption. *Darkest India's* insistence on the serious nature of beggars' need and England's moral obligation to assist them therefore marks a powerful departure from literary convention, but the book also differs substantially from earlier missionary literature: it borrows *In Darkest England's* ambitious, multifaceted community-building approach and emphasizes appeals to demography and moral duty rather than the need for religious conversion. Most strikingly, it literalizes the missionary metaphor of toiling in the fields while expanding its purview from the missionary to the beggar.

Although the idea of putting the poor to work in order to save their souls appears in earlier missionary literature, the primary laborers in such texts are the missionaries themselves. Their writing barely bothers to conceal that they work to relieve the poor as a means to an end: their mission is to gain converts, and need makes the poor vulnerable to persuasion if not outright manipulation. At the same time, material need is easily metaphorized—the lack of/need for food figures a lack of/need for God—in a formulation that all but demands to be read as explanatory: Indians lack food *because* they lack God. The Salvation Army's innovation, expressed through the slogan "soap, soup, and salvation," was to expand and systematize the theory lurking in the hunger metaphor: provide for the poor and some will accept God as well.³⁵ Compelling the poor to labor for their food raises the specter of the workhouse even as it looks forward to twentieth-century workfare schemes, although the language of compulsion in *Darkest India* is muted, or at least qualified, in part by its socialist-inflected rhetoric of collectivity and combination.³⁶ Yet whether Booth-Tucker truly differentiates between the categories of "willing worker" and "convert" remains an open question; his book's vision is modernizing rather than theological. The beggar, lacking any trade or skill, was hardly the ideal subject on which to try experiments in reform through labor, and William Booth's enthusiasm for bringing the poor to God once their most pressing needs were relieved is

largely absent in *Darkest India*.³⁷ Its bureaucratized solutions and decreased emphasis on religion would prove timely, however, because the nascent Indian independence movement, in reviving the question of Indian poverty, triggered a series of rear-guard imperialist reactions that eventually proved conducive to the adoption of Salvationist schemes for disposing of surplus populations under British control.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the question of India's poverty took on new political urgency in the hands of Indian nationalists. Despite the carefully worded pro-British rhetoric of the early Indian National Congress, its very founding in 1885 and its demands, however mild, for greater inclusion of Indians in government necessarily raised the related questions of England's imperial legacy and Indian self-rule. At the second congress, in 1886, the following resolution was passed: "That this Congress regards with the deepest sympathy, and views with grave apprehension, the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population of India, and . . . desires to record its fixed conviction that the introduction of Representative Institutions will prove one of the most important practical steps towards the amelioration of the condition of the people."³⁸ The predictable British reaction was to claim that precisely the opposite was true: India's poverty predated British rule, and British rule alone could alleviate it. A typical if intemperate response to the linking of Indian poverty and "Representative Institutions" was that of John Murdoch, an official of the Christian Vernacular Education Society, who in 1887 published one of his many "papers on Indian reform," titled "Is India Becoming Poorer or Richer?" In it, he rejects any claim that the British have impoverished India, enumerates the benefits of British rule, castigates its critics (including the Indian National Congress) for inciting "race hatred," and warns, "Every man of any intelligence acknowledges that it would be a great misfortune to India if the English were to withdraw from it at present."³⁹ Although he acknowledges that forty million Indians "go through life on insufficient food," he argues that representative government will do nothing to solve this problem, which he attributes primarily to overpopulation.⁴⁰ His preferred solutions include agricultural reform, increased manufacturing, "requiring idlers to work for their living," emigration, "religious and moral reform," and individual "self-help," most of which would require extensive bureaucratic intervention.⁴¹

For late-century imperial apologists such as Murdoch, India's poverty represented not a failure of British government but an age-old

problem that the British alone could solve: the existence of forty million impoverished Indians constituted empirical evidence that India needed England for the foreseeable future. The notion that alleviating Indian poverty would require long-term structural solutions emerged from a few different quarters, but *Darkest India* avoids the stridency of Murdoch and his kind and, aside from briefly mentioning the government's unwillingness to aid the poor, eschews political rhetoric. Yet in its zeal to regiment, uproot, and re-educate the already-colonized, it is, as Daniel Bivona has argued of Henry Stanley's adventurism in the Congo Free State, "deeply beholden to the ideology of economic modernization" and "suggests closer parallels to the thinking of the Agency for International Development in the late twentieth century than to . . . [nineteenth-century] evangelical moralism."⁴²

Stanley's writing bears an even closer family connection to Booth-Tucker's: *In Darkest England* opens with an extended discussion of Stanley's tales of "darkest Africa," from which Booth derived his analogy to England and his metaphor for sin and redemption. *Darkest India's* opening paragraph cites both Stanley's forest and Booth's theological refashioning of it: "It is unnecessary for me to recapitulate the parallel drawn by General Booth between the somber, impenetrable and never-ending forest, discovered by Stanley in the heart of Africa, and the more fearfully tangled mass of human corruption to be found in England" (15). Yet *Darkest India's* proposals derived less from Booth's ethos of individual redemption than something like Stanley's vision of what Bivona describes as "a new Africa coming to be defined as less in need of moral transformation by Christian missionaries than of economic and political transformation by colonial bureaucrats and economic imperialists."⁴³ Unlike Stanley, however, Booth-Tucker *was* a Christian missionary, at least in name, although he soon came to be better known in the press as a "colonizer."

INDIAN BEGGARY AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMAGINATION

Whereas *In Darkest England* unsettles the idea of "darkest Africa" as Europe's opposite by deploring the monstrous moral state of supposedly progressive, civilized, Christian England, *Darkest India* unself-consciously returns the metaphor of darkness to the colonial context by arguing that England may relieve Indian poverty by establishing

workers' "colonies" (63) and sending its surplus labor pool overseas. Booth-Tucker first divides the estimated population of 264 million into five classes, at the bottom of which is the "submerged tenth," the approximately 25 million "who earn nothing at all, and who are dependent for their livelihood on the charity of others" (17–18). This bottom tenth, which exists "so closely on the border-land of starvation as to need our immediate sympathy and assistance" (23), falls into eight classes:

- I. The Beggars, excluding religious mendicants.
- II. The out-of-works,—the destitute, but honest, poor, who are . . . anxious for employment . . .
- III. The Houseless Poor.
- IV. The Destitute Debtors.
- V. The Victims of Famine and Scarcity.
- VI. The Victims of Pestilence.
- VII. The Vicious, including (a) Drunkards (b) Opium eaters (c) Prostitutes.
- VIII. The Criminals. (24)

These categories follow but do not precisely replicate *In Darkest England's* division of the submerged tenth into paupers, the homeless, the starving, and the very poor, which itself contains echoes of utopian socialist writings such as Owen's 1817 "Development of the Plan for the Relief of the Poor," which divides the destitute into similar subcategories as a means of ascertaining what roles they might best assume in his proposed cooperative villages.⁴⁴

As mentioned earlier, *Darkest India* diverges sharply from *In Darkest England* in its extensive attention to beggars, to whom two chapters and several discussions are devoted. The chapter titled "Beggars" begins, "One of the chief problems of Indian Society is that of beggary. India is perhaps the most beggar-beridden country to be found. Nor would it be possible under present circumstances to pass any law forbidding beggary. In the absence of a poor-law, it is the last resource of the destitute" (25). Here sympathy for the beggar begins to evaporate, replaced by positive regret that beggary must for the time being remain legal. Nor is any attempt made to humanize the objects of Booth-Tucker's scrutiny. Whereas the British indigents of *In Darkest England* are given brief first-person narratives, *Darkest India* barely gives voice to the poor, attending primarily to categories of people and large-scale solutions.

The only individuals it describes are a few criminals and addicts, and for the latter Booth-Tucker merely borrows passages from a tourist guidebook rather than writing them himself. In his discussions of beggars, he neither names them nor sketches those scenes of suffering to which readers of Salvationist literature or other missionary magazines would have been accustomed. Instead, he voices concern that the Indian people would object to his plan to rid the country of beggars: "Begging has come to be such a national institution and is so much a part and parcel of the Indian's life and religion, that any proposal to extinguish the fraternity may cause in some minds positive regret. . . . To such I would say that we do not propose to *extinguish* but to *reform*, and . . . I must beg them, before making up their minds, to study [my proposal] carefully" (28). Booth-Tucker playfully begs to counter an Indian objection, yet the book addresses a British audience, and this slippage is telling. It suggests that while beggars played a role in Indian cultural and religious life, they served a purpose for the British as well. That purpose, however, was not philanthropic but aesthetic and political.

While literary beggars might signify lack of many kinds, Nigel Leask has argued that in visual culture, Indian beggars functioned as instantiations of the imperial picturesque, an aesthetic that both underpinned and justified British rule. Although critics have argued that an "aesthetics of poverty" characterizes the nineteenth-century British picturesque, it might seem counterintuitive to categorize Indian beggars as picturesque, because the picturesque functions in part to shut out, or at least screen the viewer from, such unpleasant spectacles as the urban poor.⁴⁵ Yet as Leask explains, "[T]he [imperialist] painterly eye had the power of separating the pleasing visual qualities of picturesque objects from other sensory effects: bad smells, excessive heat or cold, sympathy for the poor or socially marginalized. . . . The picturesque eye could thus imagine the scene as a *representation*, and by identifying with the rules of painterly composition put the copy in place of the unsightly original."⁴⁶ In Leask's reading, even as the tourist's painterly eye transforms reality into representation under its gaze, it subsumes humanity to that landscape, rendering the poor not as representations of actual people but as subordinate elements in a composition.⁴⁷ Viewed through this sanitizing lens, the beggar's image cannot act upon British tourists or readers effectively; that is to say, it will produce in neither the sympathetic desire to give. In earlier missionary literature, evocations of the missionary picturesque, or the satisfying result of heroic Christian effort, were

intended to stimulate readers to engage in or fund similar labors. The late-century imperial picturesque of tourist literature, conversely, failed to spur the spectator's sympathetic or philanthropic impulses.

The guidebook from which Booth-Tucker drew his examples of addicts, M.P. William Sproston Caine's 620-page *Picturesque India*, situates beggars rhetorically in relation to the shrines, palaces, and ruins around which they congregate so as to render them an essential component of the imperial picturesque. Caine writes, for example, that Sehwan has a "large number" of "professional beggars, supported by the charity of pilgrims to the great shrine of Lal Shahbaz, an old Musalman saint, whose tomb, dating back to 1356 A.D., is a beautiful specimen of encaustic tile-work."⁴⁸ And of Varanasi (Benares), he observes, "The temple of Anapurna, the goddess of plenty, patroness of beggars and the poor, is worth visiting to see the groups of beggars sitting in front of the gate with their bowls."⁴⁹ Yet the temple of Anapurna is not included in the book's two hundred illustrations, and neither are the beggars whose presence Caine evokes so frequently, as if to inure prospective tourists to their presence. Drawings of individuals are identified by occupation, region, and/or religion (Parsi merchant, Bombay Brahmin, Madras barber); buildings drawn from the middle distance might include one or two human figures for scale, and street scenes are crowded with people, but no beggars appear as such. They are only words, never pictures. Real or represented, they are meant to be neither noticed nor avoided; Caine offers no advice on how to interact with or evade them. They exist for tourists to look at and for readers to imagine. Late-century guidebooks thus perpetuate the representational and ideological dimensions of the imperial picturesque in that they require the beggar *and* require him to be written out. The individual beggars common in midcentury texts, moreover, have metastasized into undifferentiated masses attached to India's ancient sites.⁵⁰ This persistent association of beggars with ruins does more than objectify the beggar, however; imperial tourism as industry and as ideology offers the tourist a self-satisfied relationship to temporal as well as geographic distance, and the ostensibly perdurable beggar, no less than ruins, evokes the pastness of the Indian present. Sneering at New York's garish modern marvels and pondering Delhi's antiquities, human and architectural, served equally to confirm the Victorian tourist's faith in England's superior ability to mediate tradition and progress. Primers in selective perception, Indian guidebooks modulate alterity's potential to shock by teaching readers to experience new scenes through familiar

perceptual frameworks, in this case the idea of the beggar's being at once timeless and out of joint with the present. Imperial tourism, like salvage ethnography, simultaneously threatens and promises that what is observed today may not be here tomorrow.

Drawing on the guidebooks' conventions, Booth-Tucker revivifies the stale image of the beggar by suggesting that Salvationist labor schemes may well render these masses extinct. Eschewing individual narratives, Booth-Tucker instead emphasizes the scope of the problem to present beggars collectively as threat, obligation, and opportunity. Although *Darkest India's* occasional evocations of their suffering cut sharply against the grain of expectation, the book's aggregating impulse undergirds its glancing suggestions that the presence of beggars is a blight and their elimination more a social benefit than an act of compassion (27). The most telling moment in this regard occurs in the "Beggars" chapter, when Booth-Tucker remarks that if the government would only assist the Salvationists, a "wisely handled . . . Bavarian experiment," outlined in appendix 3 of Booth's *In Darkest England*, might be tried (28). He does not describe the experiment but instead scouts the possibility of a governmental partnership and states that his plan for a beggars' brigade will serve equally well. The appendix reveals that in the Bavarian experiment, vagrants were subjected to mass arrest by the military, then offered the choice of entering a "Military House of Industry" or going to prison.⁵¹ This vague reference to a scheme that was appended without comment to *In Darkest England* attains significance when considered in light of the plan to control beggars that Booth-Tucker would eventually enact in Colombo and Bombay.

With the exception of its plan for beggars, *Darkest India's* labor schemes largely follow those of *In Darkest England*: city colonies, farm colonies, emigration, homes for the fallen. Booth-Tucker acknowledges that relief for beggars "does not form a part of General Booth's original scheme" (27) but explains that Indian beggars need reform not least because beggary may "pave the way for lives of imposture and crime" (28). This coupling of beggary and criminality, while voiced from an Indian context in which beggary was not illegal, prefigured Booth-Tucker's eventual embrace of a British model of criminalized "vagrancy" for its colonies. Yet the "beggars' brigade" that *Darkest India* proposes as a culturally sensitive means not "to *extinguish* but to *reform*" (28) Indian beggars retains the utopian socialist veneer of Booth's "household salvage brigade" from which it derived. Volunteer beggars would be

placed in regiments, issued badges, and assigned to wards from which they would daily collect food, clothing, and household refuse to be sorted at headquarters and sold or distributed. Beggars' individual efforts in an endeavor at which they had already proven capable—asking for things—would thus be redirected toward the collective good. Despite its language of collectivity, inclusion, and redistribution, however, this plan bore only surface resemblance to utopian socialist movements; reimagining hegemonic social and economic structures played no part in it. As time would show, Booth-Tucker's early claims—that “we do not intend to be hard taskmasters,” that only “rewards and promotions” rather than physical coercion be used, and that participation be voluntary (84–85)—evaporated once Salvationists became in effect subcontractors for the British government. Before that came to pass, though, Booth-Tucker took a long and unexpected detour.

THE CEYLONESE EXPERIMENT

The beggars' reform was destined for deferral. Just as the publication of *Darkest India* opened new opportunities for Booth-Tucker to expand and systematize his Indian operations, his wife Emma's ill health compelled their departure for England in 1891. They remained in London until 1896, when Booth dispatched them to head the U.S. Salvation Army. There, Booth-Tucker undertook the development of farm colonies for indigent city dwellers, approvingly observed that the movement of “Red Indians” onto reservations had effected their “successful and complete pacification,”⁵² and corresponded with such dignitaries as H. Rider Haggard, England's commissioner to the secretary of state for the colonies, as to whether Great Britain might profitably adopt similar designs for emigrant farming.⁵³ Diane Winston notes that under the Booth-Tuckers' leadership, “the Army began calling itself a religious and philanthropic organization, as opposed to an evangelical mission. . . . That difference, initially one of emphasis, betokened a more significant shift in orientation.”⁵⁴ While Winston refers only to the United States, Booth-Tucker's subsequent return to India marks an analogous shift in orientation, one prefigured in those portions of *Darkest India* concerned with control, concentration, and labor. Booth-Tucker's wife Emma died in 1903, and he and his six children left for England the following year. In 1907, he returned to India with a third wife; they would remain in South Asia for the next twelve years, building an

unprecedented partnership between the Salvation Army and the colonial government to "support" India's criminal tribes by concentrating them in villages, forcing them to labor for wages, and overseeing innumerable details of their everyday life.⁵⁵ This work preceded (and followed) the implementation of Booth-Tucker's long-delayed plan to reform Indian beggars, elements of which he had tried successfully in the United States. Although the differences between the plan as outlined in *Darkest India* and that which was implemented in colonial Ceylon, the site of Booth-Tucker's first South Asian antibeggary campaign, suggest that the Salvationists' efforts were influenced by their intervening work with the criminal tribes, intimations of the new plan's ideological substrate are discernable within *Darkest India*.

In the chapter of his memoir *Mukti Fauj* titled "The Beggar of the East," Booth-Tucker recounts how the Salvationists came fortuitously to exercise a remarkable level of control over Ceylon's houseless poor:

A discussion had for some time been occupying the attention of the papers as to the causes of the unhealthiness of Colombo, when a doctor of that city brought to the notice of the public the large number of beggars in the streets, and the loathsome diseases [they carried]. . . . He suggested that a census should be taken of the beggar population. . . . The figures [alarmed] the public, and Government was urged by the Press to take immediate action. It so happened that my wife and I were visiting Colombo at that time. . . . Some of the papers suggested that the best agency for dealing practically with the question would be The Salvation Army, and that . . . it would be well for the Ceylon Government and the Colombo Municipality to consult them. . . . Some interesting negotiations of a prolonged character ensued. (194-95)

In this telling, a public health crisis is identified, quantified, and traced to a source. The press, the public, and the government call upon the Salvationists for assistance. Booth-Tucker, coincidentally on the spot and willing to lend his expertise, "suggests" that nonnatives be repatriated and the able-bodied "compelled to return to . . . labour" (195). The story then jumps to Booth-Tucker's present: "Since the House of Detention was opened in 1913, 5,260 vagrants have been dealt with" (196). Written in an uncharacteristically hazy and indirect style marked by abrupt shifts in time and place, the chapter forces the reader to piece together the year of Booth-Tucker's serendipitous visit (it was 1913) and the fact

that the House of Detention did not exist prior to the Salvationists' assumption of responsibility for Colombo's beggars, by then deemed "vagrants." What did exist as of 1907, Booth-Tucker carefully explains, were laws, "wise and business-like" vagrancy ordinances (196), which had remained regrettably unenforced until 1913. These ordinances, echoed in Booth-Tucker's suggestions, authorized the arrest of beggars, the deportation of foreigners, the resettlement of Ceylonese—typically to "the tea gardens, where their labour [was] required"—and the jailing of repeat offenders (196–97). Booth-Tucker's negotiations procured "a large disused jail" for "the repulsive task of taking charge of the hopelessly diseased, and the permanently, or temporarily, incapable" beggars (197); he neglects to mention that Salvationists also oversaw imprisoned vagrants. The chapter then veers off into a narrative of a subsequent commission to control the beggars of Bombay, whose officials desired to replicate Colombo's system in all regards but one: they "could not see their way to adopt [Colombo's] plan of compulsory segregation [incarceration]" (197).

The Colombo passage, which abandons the rhetorical exuberance of earlier Salvationist prose in favor of clipped Orwellian euphemism, contains few identifying details. A survey of English-language newspapers fails to address these lacunae; the *Ceylon Observer*, for example, has no record of debates regarding public health issues or vagrants. The December 11, 1912, edition does, however, announce the Booth-Tuckers' upcoming lecture tour, noting, "The Commissioner's [lecture] subject is 'Crime Policy for Ceylon.' [It will explain] what the Salvation Army is doing in dealing with the criminals in India and elsewhere. The lecturer will also introduce . . . The Vagrant Question." The January 7, 1913, edition of the *Observer* contains an admiring account of Booth-Tucker's lecture, including his remarks on Colombo: "In speaking of Ceylon he said that there were 12,200 vagrants and loafers in the Island; the Colombo streets were infested with 1,187 of these miserable people . . . and the Salvation Army was willing to tackle the job. They were willing to feed and cloth [*sic*] each beggar at the rate of R2 a head per month. He heard that the Mutwal Jail was vacant and that would suit them." Three days later, on January 10, the *Observer* reports that Booth-Tucker had met with the governor and had agreed to implement a plan to control Colombo's vagrants. The colonial secretary's official statement, incorporated into the article, explains that persons charged with vagrancy would be placed in a house of detention to be repatriated or sent to

tea estates. It continues, “Where neither alternative can be applied, the vagrants will be . . . handed over to THE HOME—OR WORK-HOUSE—established by the Salvation Army on the grounds . . . of the Mutwal Jail—where the House of Detention will be located. . . . The Home will be . . . controlled by the Salvation Army, who will be entirely responsible for the inmates and provide them with work, food, [and] medical attendance.” This regimentation of beggars turns the beggars’ brigade of *Darkest India* on its head; rather than collecting for the common good, they have become “human sweepings” to be “collected from the streets.”⁵⁶ *Mukti Fauj* offers no explanation for the shift; while Ceylon in 1913 differed significantly from Bombay in 1891, nothing suggests that the change was motivated by acquired experience or a perception of cultural difference. When *Darkest India* appeared in 1891, Booth-Tucker had led the ISA for nine years, commanding 263 officers in 57 corps, and had lived extensively among beggars; he was hardly naïve about his potential charges.⁵⁷ In the United States, he frequently spoke against institutionalizing the poor,⁵⁸ and his U.S. implementation of a beggars’ brigade proved so successful that collection efforts quickly evolved into a chain of resale stores that continue to thrive in the United States today, as does Salvationists’ annual tradition of Christmastime alms collecting.

Yet barely a decade later, Booth-Tucker reconceived Colombo’s beggars as Westernized “vagrants” and abandoned Booth’s idea of redirecting their mendicant energies in favor of concentrating them in a structure variously named a “home,” “work-house,” “jail,” and “house of detention.” What, then, changed Booth-Tucker’s course? Analyzing Booth-Tucker’s work with the criminal tribes, Jeffrey Cox concludes that Salvationists’ eagerness to serve produced a “blind spot” toward the government: “The very enthusiasm of their attempt to storm the boundaries of race and culture set them up for . . . [an] in some ways disastrous entanglement with the principalities and powers of imperial rule.”⁵⁹ Meena Radhakrishna notes that economic factors played a role: the ISA “had a robust commercial interest in the criminal tribe settlements, and . . . managed to legally control the products [including bricks, tents, and carpets] churned out by the ‘damaged labour’ under their charge.”⁶⁰ Henry Schwarz offers a blunter appraisal. The ISA, he writes, “made concentration camps profitable.”⁶¹ Cox observes that as early as 1920, the *Indian War Cry* registered lower-level Salvationists’ dismay at the divide between the ideals that drew them to the ISA and their work as prison guards in all but name. He continues, “Officials

responded to this disquiet with rhetoric familiar in missionary circles, drawing clear distinctions between government policy and Salvation Army policy, pointing out the distinctive motives, purposes, and goals of their cooperative work. But once the criminal tribes policy had to be defended in a new political climate of the 1920s, it became indefensible theologically and politically.⁶² Nevertheless, Salvationists' work with controlled populations continued in various forms until India became independent in 1947. Perhaps this is why, while writing *Mukti Fauj* in the early 1920s, Booth-Tucker consciously or unconsciously suppressed what the newspapers clearly reveal: the deal to incarcerate Colombo's paupers had been struck long before he ever sailed for Ceylon. The control of Ceylonese and Indian beggars formed a much smaller part of Salvationism's South Asian narrative than did their management of the criminal tribes, yet the Salvationists' treatment of the two groups, dating back to 1913, prepared the way for a series of antivagrancy acts in the 1940s that Radhakrishna argues "actually targeted the nomadic tribes."⁶³ As Mahasweta Devi has argued in numerous works, the fact "that the 1871 [Criminal Tribes] Act is kept alive by the Government of India is proved by countless instances."⁶⁴

Booth-Tucker's willingness to work with the colonial authorities might plausibly be attributed to various events or influences: his family background or intellectual formation at Cheltenham, his experiences in the United States, his geographic and ideological distance from other branches of the Salvation Army, changes in leadership after Booth's death in 1912. From whatever matrix the course of action emerged, one textual source of his plan to concentrate India's beggars is undoubtedly the third appendix to *In Darkest England*, which recounts how Count Rumford not only "banished beggary" in Bavaria but also effected "an entire change in the manners, habits, and very appearance of the most abandoned and degraded people in the kingdom" (n.p.). This powerful, seductive claim is one that Owen repeatedly made regarding his home colonies, but even Owen conceded that effecting such a change would take at least a generation.⁶⁵ And as subsequent social reformers knew, Owen's model communities, like everyone else's (including the Salvationist farm colonies started by Booth-Tucker in the United States), had all failed. Although *Mukti Fauj*'s descriptions of the prevailing collective cheer in the beggars' "camp" at Rowli Hill, Bombay, retain residual echoes of utopian socialist rhetoric, Booth-Tucker's claims—that the beggars came "of

their own free will” (199) and that the Salvationists’ work was “purely humanitarian” (202)—sound more defensive than explanatory once he was no longer outlining a utopian future but describing an ongoing, profit-driven enterprise. Neither Christian missionary nor utopian visionary, Booth-Tucker in *Mukti Fauj* writes himself into the role of Marx’s beggar-overseer, or *Bettelvogt*, a petty government functionary tasked not with aiding beggars but with controlling them.

In the Victorian period, the Indian beggar’s literary shapeshifting—from the exotic of travel accounts to the mutable figure of missionary literature, the government statistic, or the static, aestheticized object of tourist literature—culminated in the transformation effected by Booth-Tucker, who between 1891 and 1913 remade beggars first as laborers and then as copies of the British criminals defined in Great Britain’s 1824 Vagrancy Act. While earlier writers understood Indian beggary as an atavistic cultural or religious tradition, Booth-Tucker in *Darkest India* insisted on the beggar’s dire economic need and potential for reform, thus distinguishing himself as more compassionate and more modern in outlook. The turn to economic explanation and cure, however, allowed beggars eventually to be redefined as defective to the needs of colonial capitalism and caught up in Booth-Tucker’s burgeoning enthusiasm for concentration and forced labor, an enthusiasm whetted by the financial support and honors of a colonial government that had previously imprisoned him for his work with the Indian poor. In hindsight, George Bernard Shaw’s preface to *Major Barbara*, written in 1906, suggests the nature of the contradictions with which Booth-Tucker’s program was riven: “This is why no tolerated Church nor Salvation Army can ever win the entire confidence of the poor. It must be on the side of the police and the military, no matter what it believes or disbelieves; and as the police and the military are the instruments by which the rich rob and oppress the poor (on legal and moral principles made for the purpose), it is not possible to be on the side of the poor and of the police at the same time.”⁶⁶

NOTES

1. Karl Marx, “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844,” in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke* (Berlin: Dietz, 1968), 40:523–24. My translation retains the literal historical meaning of Marx’s “*Bettelvogts*,” which, lacking an English equivalent, has been rendered as “bumbailiff” in Martin Milligan’s translation of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (New York: International, 1964), 121, and “beadles” in that of Thomas Bottomore. See

Karl Marx: Early Writings, ed. and trans. T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 138.

2. Quoted in “The Salvation Army as Coloniser: Commander Booth Tucker” [interview with W. T. Stead], *Review of Reviews* 32 (July 1905): 38.

3. For an overview of the debates between what Peter Robb terms “nationalists” and “imperialists,” see Robb, “British Rule and Indian ‘Improvement,’” *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 34 (1981): 507–23. For an older but still useful bibliography of works on the Indian economy, see the appendix to B. R. Tomlinson, “The Historical Roots of Indian Poverty: Issues in the Economic and Social History of Modern South Asia, 1880–1960,” *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1988): 77–89.

4. Daniel Bivona’s *British Imperial Literature, 1870–1940: Writing and the Administration of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) theorizes imperialist constructions of colonial lack, particularly in chapter 2, “Why Africa Needs Europe: From Livingstone to Stanley.” While Stanley and Booth-Tucker differed greatly in personality, aims, and beliefs, Bivona’s reading of Stanley is relevant here, especially his point that “in constructing Africa as land of need, Stanley reveals how deeply implicated the illusion of charismatic individualism is in the historical reality of bureaucratic power” (43–44).

5. William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890; reprint, Boston: Indypublish, 2011), 71, 125. In the text, subsequent references to the Indypublish edition will be noted in parentheses. The article appears to be a slightly rewritten version of William Booth, “History of a Co-operative Farm,” which appeared on pages 15–19 of Alfred Storey’s *Phrenological Magazine* in January 1883. For an analysis of Ralahine, see R. G. Garnett, *Co-operation and the Owenite Socialist Communities in Britain, 1825–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), chap. 4.

6. See, for example, Robert Owen, *Self-Supporting Home Colonies* (1841; reprint, New York: AMS, 1975), 58–59; and Booth, *In Darkest England*, 76–80, on the necessity of implementing their respective schemes.

7. When understood by British observers as either a potential worker or a dweller in public places, the Indian beggar is almost inevitably gendered male, and female beggars appear far less frequently in British literature. I therefore do not address them here.

8. Frederick Booth-Tucker, *Darkest India* (1891; reprint, Lexington, KY: Bibliobazaar, 2006), 27. In the text, subsequent references to the Bibliobazaar edition will be noted in parentheses.

9. Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: International, 2003), 1:593.

10. “Commissioner Booth Tucker in Colombo,” *Ceylon Observer*, January 7, 1913.

11. The figure most readily associated with late Victorian demography is Charles Booth, not William (to whom he was not related). William Booth

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used Charles’s statistics and terminology in *In Darkest England* as the basis for his own calculations. See, for example, chap. 2, “The Submerged Tenth.”

12. He served as an assistant commissioner in Amritsar, Simla, and later Dharamsala, where he also served as an assistant magistrate.

13. Booth-Tucker’s work with the criminal tribes has been the subject of several recent studies. See Mark Brown, *Penal Power and Colonial Rule* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 233–42; Harald Fischer-Tiné, “Reclaiming Savages in ‘Darkest England’ and ‘Darkest India’: The Salvation Army as Transnational Agent of the Civilizing Mission,” in *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development*, ed. Carey A. Watt and Michael Mann (London: Anthem, 2011), 125–64; Meena Radhakrishna, *Dishonoured by History: “Criminal Tribes” and British Colonial Policy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2008); Henry Schwarz, *Constructing the Criminal Tribe in Colonial India: Acting Like a Thief* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007); and Rachel J. Tolen, “Colonizing and Transforming the Criminal Tribesman: The Salvation Army in British India,” in *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*, ed. Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urda (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 78–108.

14. On the history of the claim that India has no history, see, for example, Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), chap. 1; and Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World-History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), chap. 2.

15. Sati was first outlawed by Governor General William Bentinck in the Bengal Presidency in 1829; legislation in other East India Company-controlled territories followed. Suspected Thugs were jailed or hanged under the EIC’s Thuggee and Dacoity Suppression Acts, passed between 1836 and 1848.

16. Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 10.

17. *Ibid.*, 11; see also 64.

18. Booth, *In Darkest England*, 206.

19. The Salvation Army’s series of “Orders and Regulations” for members outline this structure in great detail. See also Fischer-Tiné, “Reclaiming Savages,” 130–31.

20. Testimony of Robert Rickards, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords Appointed to Inquire into the Present State of the Affairs of the East India Company* (London: House of Lords, 1830), 276. Rickards published *India; or, Facts Submitted to Illustrate the Character and Condition of the Native Inhabitants*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1829, 1832), to defend the “much injured and oppressed” Indian people (1:2).

21. Letter from Francis Warden, in *Appendix to the Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, 16th August 1832* (London: House of Commons, 1833), 16. Warden's remarks were reprinted in the *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*, n.s., 14, no. 33 (May 1834), under the title "Natives of India" (66–78). As Gauri Viswanathan notes, Warden was an early proponent of Christian instruction to produce not converts but "reliable, industrious servants of empire." Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 89.
22. "How India Is Governed," *Fraser's Magazine* 46 (December 1852): 724.
23. Edward West, *Bombay in the Days of George IV*, ed. F. Dawtrey-Drewitt (1828; London: Longmans, Green, 1907), 2.
24. In *Darkest India*, Booth-Tucker states that his figure for the total population, 264 million, derived from the 1881 Census. No further citation is given.
25. Frederick F. Wyman, *From Calcutta to the Snowy Range* (1866; reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2004), 187.
26. Harriet Tytler, *An Englishwoman in India: The Memoirs of Harriet Tytler, 1828–1858*, ed. Anthony Sattin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 27. Tytler dates this incident to 1848.
27. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans. Valentine Ball (London: Macmillan, 1889), 2:139. Tavernier's book was translated into English in 1684, republished in 1808, and retranslated in the 1880s by Ball, an Irish geologist who worked on the Geological Survey of India.
28. H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province* (Lahore: Government Printing Office, 1911), 2:389. Rose's text was compiled from the Punjab census reports of 1883 and 1892.
29. David Gordon White, *Sinister Yogis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 199, 236–37, 239–40. See also William Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 82–93.
30. See, for example, Frederick Booth-Tucker, *Mukti Fauj; or, Forty Years with the Salvation Army in India and Ceylon* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1930), 160, 163.
31. While I have not conducted an exhaustive survey, the following missionary texts do not mention beggars: Claudius Buchanan, *Apology for Promoting Christianity in India* (1813); Church Missionary Society, *The Tinnevely Mission* (1885); William Clarkson, *India and the Gospel* (1850); Alexander Duff, *India and Indian Missions* (1839); Anthony Grant, *The Past and Prospective Extension of the Gospel by Missions to the Heathen* (1844); Sylvester Horne, *Story of the LMS* (1894); James Hough, *History of Christianity in India* (1839); John Kaye, *Christianity in India* (1859); Joseph Mullens, *Missions in South India* (1854); and Sarah Tucker, *South Indian Sketches*, pt. 1 (1848). Pramod Nayar, in *English Writing and India, 1600–1920: Colonizing Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2007), demonstrates that the rhetoric of missionary tracts "consistently tropes India as poor, focusing on low life and suffering" (101).

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32. Nayar, *English Writing and India*, chap. 4.

33. Harry Williams, *Booth-Tucker: William Booth's First Gentleman* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), 88. While Salvationists in England also dressed as members of the groups to whom they ministered, British men dressed as Indians carried a different set of connotations. See chapter 2 of Bradley Deane's *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), titled “Cultural Cross-Dressing and the Politics of Masculine Performance.”

34. Frederick Booth-Tucker, “Circular Letter from Major Tucker, Ranipur, September 7, 1884,” *All the World: A Monthly Record of the Work of the Salvation Army in All Lands* 1, no. 1 (November 1884): 5.

35. Henry Gariepy, *Christianity in Action: The International History of the Salvation Army* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 2.

36. For example, “The lack of combination among the congested mass of workers is another serious evil . . . Collectively they are capable of becoming a mighty power” (Booth-Tucker, *Darkest India*, 101).

37. See Booth, *In Darkest England*, 38. Viswanathan has documented that as far back as 1830, colonial officials were “less interested in the conversion of their subjects . . . than in the possibilities offered by Christian instruction for strengthening commercial pursuits, increasing productivity, and streamlining the administration of government” (*Masks of Conquest*, 88–89). Booth-Tucker's work speaks to a cruder version of this enterprise: not producing Anglicized civil servants but forcing the poor into the mold of capitalist productivity.

38. This second resolution is quoted in Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom: The Story of the National Congress Told from Official Records* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1915), 29.

39. John Murdoch, *Papers on Indian Reform* (Madras: Christian Vernacular Education Society, 1889), 9.

40. *Ibid.*, 31.

41. *Ibid.*, 50–62, 63–69, 76, 79, 80. Murdoch apparently saw no contradiction in rejecting Indian calls for self-rule while exhorting Indians to practice individual self-help: “Blaming Government and neglecting their own duty, will not help the people of this country. The perusal of the valuable work by Smiles, *Self-Help*, is strongly recommended” (*ibid.*, 80).

42. Bivona, *British Imperial Literature*, 44.

43. *Ibid.*, 45.

44. Robert Owen, “Development of the Plan for the Relief of the Poor” (1817), in *Selected Works of Robert Owen*, ed. Gregory Claeys (London: William Pickering, 1992), 1:217.

45. Malcolm Andrews, “The Metropolitan Picturesque,” in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics since 1770*, ed. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 283.

46. Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840: “From an Antique Land”* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 169.

47. As Jonathan Crary has noted in another context, the “pure perception” of the trained eye must “exclude or submerge that which would obstruct its functioning: language, historical memory, and sexuality.” Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 96.

48. William Sproston Caine, *Picturesque India: A Handbook for European Travellers* (London: Routledge, 1890), 191.

49. *Ibid.*, 311.

50. See, for example, Rev. A. D. Rowe, *Every-Day Life in India: Illustrated from Original Photographs* (New York: American Tract Society, 1881), 187; and James Hingston, *The Australian Abroad: From the Main Routes Round the World, Series 2* (London: Sampson Low, 1880), 56.

51. Booth, *In Darkest England*, appx. 3, unnumbered page. Booth’s account appears to have been extracted from an article in the March 1875 issue of *Herald of Health* by T. L. Nichols, M.D., titled “How Count Rumford Cured Beggary in Bavaria” (110–14).

52. Booth-Tucker, quoted in Andrew J. Major, “State and Criminal Tribes in Colonial Punjab: Surveillance, Control and Reclamation of the ‘Dangerous Classes,’” *Modern Asian Studies* 33, no. 3 (1999): 675.

53. Haggard toured the Salvation Army’s farm colonies in 1905; his report, titled *The Poor and the Land* (London: Longmans, Green, 1905), includes the Booth-Tucker correspondence and interview notes. By 1905, the three colonies had lost £10,000 (Haggard, *Poor*, vi–vii) and were abandoned or repurposed after Booth-Tucker left the United States. See Clark C. Spencer, *The Salvation Army Farm Colonies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 101–14; Herbert A. Wisbey Jr., *Soldiers without Swords: A History of the Salvation Army in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 129–39; and Diane Winston, *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 117–18.

54. Winston, *Red-Hot and Righteous*, 103–5.

55. Booth-Tucker, *Mukti Fauj*, 163.

56. *Ibid.*, 198, 199.

57. Williams, *Booth-Tucker*, 132.

58. Booth-Tucker, quoted in Winston, *Red-Hot and Righteous*, 118; see also p. 119.

59. Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 239.

60. Radhakrishna, *Dishonoured by History*, 17.

61. Schwarz, *Constructing the Criminal Tribe*, 11.

62. Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 241, 242.

63. Radhakrishna, *Dishonoured by History*, 175.

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64. Mahasweta Devi, “Year of Birth, 1871: India’s Denotified Tribes,” *India Together*, www.indiatogether.org/bhasha/budhan/birth1871.htm.

65. See, for example, Owen, *Self-Supporting Home Colonies*, 52; and Robert Owen, introduction to *The Book of the New Moral World* (New York: G. Vale, 1845).

66. George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara* (New York: Brentano’s, 1917), 37–38.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Walter Scott's Two Nations and the State of the Textile Industry in Britain

Kathryn Pratt Russell

This volume focuses on the abstraction of economic concepts in the nineteenth century. Yet Walter Scott, the subject of my research, set very few of his novels in the nineteenth century, preferring to construct imaginative scenarios in the eighteenth century and before. Scott's historical novels undertake the ambitious project of defining British modern subjectivity through engagement with an imagined national past.¹ To the critical consensus on Scott's nostalgia, I add in my argument below the idea that Scott's economic life in the nineteenth century was troubled by the very anxieties about money and morality described by Nicholas Shrimpton in his important essay in the collection *Victorian Literature and Finance* (2007). Shrimpton writes, "However contradictory their texts may seem, it was a new, secular ideal of money, like Aristotle's 'Liberality,' which Victorian authors were struggling to establish."² Although Scott was by birth and literary inclination a Romantic writer of the previous generation, his capitalist approach to his literary career was in many ways ahead of its time: he speculated on the projected profits from his novels and routinely spent the money before he had it, to his eventual financial ruin.³ Scott looks like a Victorian, struggling to establish a moral model of exchange and profit, in which the source of legitimacy for him is not religious but

national. Scott's vision of a moral *political* nation ultimately depends on the proper functioning of the moral *economic* nation, as Scott imagines it.⁴ In his moral economic order, the traditional British textile industry is the core of the nation's virtue. In Scott's novels, the quintessentially British fabrics of linen and wool are the once-homespun textiles that, when they are properly produced and consumed by loyal British subjects, become abstracted (from their use as clothing or domestic comforts) into representations of a moral commercial nation in which the moneyed classes support their social inferiors while maintaining their proper place in the economic order.

In his novels, Scott concentrates on building a complicated literary and historical fantasy of a nation; traditionally, critics have interpreted this fantasy as a conservative Tory or British imperialist ideal.⁵ While not denying his political allegiances, critics including Caroline McCracken-Flesher and Regina Hewitt have recently pointed out the limitations of reading Scott's novels as entirely the product of a specific literary or political agenda.⁶ As these scholars suggest, Scott's novels definitely function as more than just political propaganda. It is certain, though, that his private letters and his journal reveal actual political activism in his strongly conservative response when confronted with the real conditions of the British nation in his own day. In his historical novels, Scott constructs an imaginary national past that has bequeathed not its political character but its moral and practical strength to his idealized version of present-day Britain.⁷ However, when he commented to friends and acquaintances (and to himself or for posterity in his journal) on the real economic condition of the nation and its people, Scott's attention to the details of individuals' lives became a liability to his national boosterism. In light of Scott's often pessimistic view of British commoners and their lack of patriotism (as he defined it, a willingness to sacrifice one's own welfare out of national loyalty), Scott's novelistic creation of the nation appears to be a consciously crafted ideal to oppose to the lived conflict of a nation facing significant economic hardship and unrest.⁸ While many readers of his time and ours have noted that a crucial element of Scott's nationalist endeavor is his use of authentic historical details, no one has yet observed that Scott's imaginary national community is given historical authenticity largely through his representation of clothing and fabric and its connection to the economic foundation of the modern British nation: the textile industry. While this tendency of Scott (or any other novelist) to describe fabric

makes logical sense—after all, what is more important to daily life than clothing, second only to food in its necessity for the maintenance of life?—the larger patterns formed by Scott’s chosen details suggest that from 1814 to 1832, his novel-writing period, Scott’s view of the textile industry was crucial to his construction of a unified, progressive national identity that he wished to cast as exemplary, in comparison with the chaotic, selfish, and immoral climate he feared had become the new national reality for Britain.

When Scott moved with his family in 1812 to the small farmhouse he had purchased in the Scottish Borderlands, he was accompanied by a ceremonial procession. He writes to Lady Alvanley, “I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading poneys, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsy groups of Callot upon their march.”⁹ The “neighbours,” with all of their rustic charm conducive to painting (or fictionalizing), would prove an important presence in Walter Scott’s letters and, indirectly, in his novels for the next two decades, the last of his life, as he built his estate of Abbotsford on the new farmland, which was located near the village of Galashiels. Galashiels was a weaving center for the area, contributing woolen fabrics to the Scottish textile manufacture. Scott would find himself involved in the life and trade of the Galashiels weavers at several points in his life and for the most part saw his involvement as a modernized version of the responsibility of a “laird” or landowner of the Scottish Borders.

At first, Scott’s attitude toward his working-class neighbors in Galashiels was a suspicious one, made tense by the war with France and the ensuing economic slump that provoked many British weavers to protest. In a letter to Robert Southey dated June 4, 1812, Scott reveals his punitive, authoritarian role as landowner of the district and former military officer:

Last week, learning that a meeting was to be held among the weavers of the large manufacturing village of Galashiels, for the purpose of cutting a man’s web from his loom, I apprehended the ringleaders and disconcerted the whole project; . . . it appeared that the Manchester Weavers’ Committee corresponds with every manufacturing town in the South and West of Scotland,

and levies a subsidy of 2s. 6d. per man—(an immense sum)—for the ostensible purpose of petitioning Parliament for redress of grievances, but doubtless to sustain them in their revolutionary movements. (*Letters*, 3:125–26)

The Manchester Weavers' Committee was a political group organized to fight exploitation of handloom weavers arising from the post-1807 recession caused by the war. As histories of the Industrial Revolution record, "In May, 1808, the Weavers' Minimum Wage Bill was rejected by the House of Commons. Five days later, 6,000 weavers gathered on St. George's Fields in Manchester to protest and call for a 33 per cent wage increase."¹⁰ When 15,000 workers gathered the next day, a weaver was killed by soldiers in the confusion, and a strike followed. Unrest was spreading throughout the country, and Scott's letters, including this one, show his anxiety and his feeling that the nation is in danger. He continues this complaint to Southey: "An energetic administration, which had the confidence of the country, would soon check all this; but it is our misfortune to lose the pilot when the ship is on the breakers. But it is sickening to think of our situation" (*Letters*, 3:126). However, he actually blames foreign influence for the national peril caused by the workers' dissatisfaction, for the sentence immediately preceding this passage attributes all the turbulence to French radical thought: "You are quite right in apprehending a *Jacquerie*; the country is mined below our feet" (3:125).

While Scott's letters at this time to closer friends such as Joanna Baillie show his concern about the Frenchified angry mob of textile workers,¹¹ his letters to aristocratic ladies refer only to what the upwardly mobile lawyer Scott obviously considered to be the tasteful, upper-class, and certainly not rebellious form of textile manufacture. To the Duchess of Buccleuch, Scott writes in March 1812 of his new estate: "I am here as busy as possible dressing up this little spot which is to say truth as bare a doll as any of your Graces young ladies ever made bibs and tuckers for" (3:91). To Lady Abercorn in September, he repeats his conceit: "And my principality here has all the merit which my girls give to an undressed doll for I have the entire pleasure of cloathing it" (3:156). Finally, he writes to Miss Clephane, "I am here busy as ever a Miss was in dressing her new doll and my little farm is fully as much in need of attire as the young lady's doll is likely to be" (3:233). Only genteel play with textiles is appropriate conversation for the ladies, and only when

the textile is far removed from the homely handspun wool that Galashiels produced. In November 1814, Scott participated in a practical discussion of textiles with Lady Abercorn, writing of his wife, "Charlotte held a committee of table linen with the assistance of Mrs. Kemble and the result was that there was none in Edinburgh at that time which she thought likely to maintain the reputation of our Scottish manufacture. She has now formed what she thinks a very handsome one & we will send it to Mr. Wright to be forwarded. . . . I hope it will come safe and give satisfaction" (3:520). Scott was looking for a very fine linen tablecloth for Lady Abercorn. Fine linen was still the mark of the aristocrats and the wealthy, and so Scott had his wife commune with local ladies to discover the finest cloth available for Lady Abercorn. The favor or errand that Scott did for Lady Abercorn in procuring for her a textile (albeit a fine one) from traders extended over the next two letters. On January 10, 1815, he wrote,

Charlotte bids me enclose the bill of the linen draper as the best answer to your Ladyships question—the note below refers to a table cloth which Mrs. S. thinks very handsome & which will dine 22 people but it is single not double damask & though it looks as well will not be so durable as the other. Mrs. S. however says it is very beautiful & any commands your Ladyship honours her with she will of course have great pleasure in attending to. (4:6)

Despite his politeness, Scott did not ordinarily use the language of a vassal under "command" when speaking to aristocratic friends. Is it coincidence that after the tablecloth transaction, the next letter from Scott did not come until November 1816 and that in it he speaks of a long cessation in correspondence? He wrote, "I think I have much greater reason than your Ladyship to complain of a certain fair friend having sufferd her Scotch acquaintance to drop out of her memory for I wrote your Ladyship before I went to the Continent last year & also a long epistle from Paris" (4:283). Lady Abercorn had told him that no letters from Scott had reached her: was Scott telling the truth about having written, or was he somewhat alienated from Lady Abercorn by her request that he function as a middleman in trade, a status through which she would condescend to him in her titled wealth? No matter which scenario is true, Scott reveals here in his correspondence with Lady Abercorn the signifying economic power of linen when it is produced as a luxury textile bought by the wealthy, made by the common, and traded

by those in between. In Scott's novels and letters, the linen trade became one of the most important of all the components of the textile industry to his project of writing a national history of Britain.

The British linen industry had expanded at a phenomenal rate after the 1721 prohibition of cotton cloth imports (largely from India), a law promoted by the dominant wool industry. This large British linen industry produced not only pure linens but also linen-cotton blended fabrics that became extremely popular with all classes of society. While the industry was expanding, however, there was still a flourishing practice of home-spinning flax for linen and even home-weaving rougher forms of linen for use by commoners.¹² When entrepreneurs assembled large groups of weavers and spinners, Glasgow and other Scottish towns became centers of mass production of linen cloth, which began to be worn by all classes. However, in the outskirts of cities and in traditional Scottish homes, women still spun thread. Over the course of the eighteenth century, this practice declined, a historical detail evoked in Scott's novel *Guy Mannering*, in which the action occurs between 1760 and the early 1780s, and in which spinning at home is a sign of a vanishing way of life. Scott actually wrote the novel in 1814, thirty years after its action ends. By 1814, most weavers across Scotland and Britain, like the Galashiels weavers, were producing cloth in mills, from thread spun by spinning jennies and mules.¹³ From his historical vantage point in the period of his authorship spanning from 1800 to 1832, Scott was able to view the entire course of linen production before the introduction of the power loom in Britain, from Scottish linen's importance to the Union of Scotland and England in 1707 to the industry's boom, lasting into the 1770s, and its long decline after the 1790s as the cotton industry roared to power. Through details in *Redgauntlet* (set in 1715), *Waverley* (set in 1745), *Guy Mannering* (set in the 1750s–1780s), *The Antiquary* (set in 1794), and *St. Ronan's Well* and *Chronicles of the Canongate* (both texts in which the narrator is writing during the 1820s), Scott portrays the proper consumption and display of linen as one of the crucial defining acts of a properly "moral" British citizenship, while both archaic flax-spinning and overly modern cotton-wearing represent unviable, foreign ways of life.¹⁴ Scott's retrospective novels make the linen trade a concluded story of virtuous national economic development, which anchors his romantic characters and plots in an authenticating past-and-present history.

Unlike wool fabrics (including the coarse, woolen cloth called "Galashiels Greys," which was a very common fabric available to all but

mostly used by the lower classes), linen fabric had so many uses that it spanned social gaps in its multiple connotations of luxury and necessity.¹⁵ N. B. Harte explains linen's increasing economic significance between 1740 and 1790 in "The Rise of Protection and the English Linen Trade":

With production in England increasing rapidly, and growing amounts being exported from Scotland and Ireland (though less and less from the Continent), English demand for linen was rising more rapidly than the rate of population growth. Demand for the fabric was widening and deepening. In large measure, linen comes into that category of consumer goods between actual necessities and what are really luxuries which Dr. Eversley, following Nassau Senior, calls "decencies." Linen satisfied household demands for tablecloths and napkins, for toweling, for bedding and for various furnishing purposes, as well as personal demands for clothing of a variety of kinds, especially shirts. It also satisfied an important group of industrial demands. . . . Linen met a wider range of types of demand than other textiles. The marked growth in its per capita consumption in the eighteenth century and especially in the period after 1740 speaks for an expanding economy and a rising standard of living.¹⁶

For a history buff and antiquarian such as Walter Scott, the conversion of linen from luxury into "decency" as a household and clothing item would have been one of the glaringly obvious hallmarks of the eighteenth century's progression. As Anne Buck writes,

The wearing of clean linen was one of the features of English dress noted by foreign visitors and its wear extended, though lessening in quality and quantity, through all ranks, down to the two new shirts and one new shift a year of Davies's laboring people of the 1790s. Gilbert White wrote in 1778: "The use of linen changes of shirts or shifts, in the room of sordid and filthy woolen, long worn next to the skin, is a matter of neatness, comparatively modern."¹⁷

Scott's eighteenth-century settings present the possession and display of linen by the common people as both a historical authenticator and a mark of the national virtues of industriousness and cleanliness.

The local farmer and his wife are the ones who bring linen to the forefront of the narrative in *Guy Mannering*, Scott's second novel, written in 1814. Most of the novel is set during the late 1770s and early 1780s,

during the time of the war with the American colonies. A major character in the novel is the exemplary common farmer Dandie Dinmont, who (along with his wife) represents the best of the British commoner made prosperous through hard work. Andrew Lincoln writes of Dandie Dinmont, "His community is as yet almost untouched by improvement ('No inclosures, no roads,' p. 127) or by metropolitan conventions, and seems both self-contained and self-sufficient. Here local superstitions and traditions are represented not as cultural curiosities but as part of the daily routine."¹⁸ The hero of the novel, Brown (actually the long-lost Bertram child and heir to the Ellangowan estate), is given shelter at the Dinmont farmstead in a crucial scene:

A very small bedroom, but a very clean bed, received the traveler, and the sheets made good the courteous vaunt of the hostess, "that they would be as pleasant as he could find ony gate, for they were washed wi' the fairy-well water, and bleached on the bonny white gowans, and bittled by Nelly and hersell, and what woman, if she was a queen, could do mair for them?" . . . They indeed rivaled snow in whiteness, and had, besides a pleasant fragrance from the manner in which they had been bleached.¹⁹

The domestic, homespun nature of the linen marks its British origin (as opposed to the linen used at this time by the gentry and aristocrats, which would have been more likely to be Continentally produced). Yet the Dinmont way of life is not cut off from the present modern nation—as is the culture of Scott's earlier eighteenth-century Highlanders in his first novel, *Waverley*—but is instead a hospitable and open community for the traveling "English" visitor. Mrs. Dinmont is so scrupulous about her linen that when Brown enters with her husband, Dandie, who has been wounded by ruffians, she checks her table linen for cleanliness in front of the guest. Before binding his bloody head, Mrs. Dinmont "glanced at a table-cloth not quite clean, and conned over her proposed supper a minute or two, before, patting her husband on the shoulder, she bade him sit down" (162). Mrs. Dinmont's labor to produce her linen is ceaseless: the idea that the tablecloth is "not quite clean" is coming from her perspective. Even Mrs. Dinmont understands that the maintenance of her reputation as a virtuous, hardworking woman requires control of her linen and its production.

Other commoners show their lack of virtuous citizenship through their failure to control and maintain their linen. When the gentleman

Brown (now called Bertram by the narrator) is arrested on charges of injuring a man named Charles Hazlewood, his comedown in the world is illustrated by the brutal change in the availability of good, clean linen. His jailer Mrs. Mac-Guffog says to Bertram: "There's your bed and the blankets; but if ye want sheets, or bowster, or pillow, or ony sort o' napery for the table, or for your hands, ye'll hae to speak to me about it" (314-15). Bertram responds with obvious alarm: "In God's name," said Bertram, 'let me have what is decent, and make any charge you please'" (315). The necessity of linen makes it a "decency," as Harte claims above—an essential need for living at a level above poverty (economic failure). Although Mrs. Mac-Guffog complies with Bertram's wishes, "she proceeded with unwashed hands to arrange the stipulated bed-linen (alas! How different from Ailie Dinmont's!)" (315). In the novels set later in the eighteenth century, bed linen and clothing still take the place allotted to them in *Guy Mannering* in the hierarchy of decencies and luxuries. In *The Antiquary*, set in 1794, the antiquary Oldbuck's sister, Grizel, returns to the newly arrived traveler, Lovel, and proves her worth by saying that his bedroom now has clean sheets and is well-aired.²⁰ In the story collection *Chronicles of the Canongate*, told from the vantage point of 1826, the narrator, Chrystal Croftangry, writes of his friend Martha Bethune Bailiol's wearing of valuable jewels: "She wore them because her rank required it, and thought no more of them as articles of finery, than a gentleman dressed for dinner thinks on his clean linen and well-brushed coat, the consciousness of which embarrasses the rustic beau of a Sunday."²¹ The cleanliness of linen stands for a comfortable British way of life, accessible even to the rustics as a decency, and to the middle classes and above (by 1826) as an entitlement. The Britishness of linen in Scott's novels might be questionable were it not for the fact that, in each novel in which linen plays an important role, Scott pairs linen with a fabric opposite to it in its connotations of virtue, domesticity, and cleanliness. This opposite fabric is cotton, the third great player in the eighteenth-century textile economy in Britain.

In *Guy Mannering*, the gypsy Meg Merrilies shows by her dress and actions the foreignness that cloth and its origins can represent in relation to British identity. In the 1750s, Meg tells the Bertram baby's fortune while she is alone, and Mannering just happens to overhear it. The historical origin of her practice is highlighted by the context of the prediction: she is sitting in the ruined, old castle of Ellangowan (adjacent to the modern mansion) and spinning with distaff and spindle, "those ancient

implements of housewifery, now almost banished from the land" (42). At this point in the story, her foreignness becomes foremost, rather than just being located in the word *gypsy*. The narrator describes Meg as "[e]quipt in a habit which mingled the national dress of the Scottish common people with something of an Eastern costume" (42).²² The fabric of the Scottish common people is not necessarily less threatening or foreign to bourgeois British identity than the "Eastern" costume: Meg spins "a thread, drawn from wool of three different colours, black, white and grey." The wool threads of the common people have no associations with modern Britishness but rather with an antique, regional identity that is not even completely definable as "Scottish."²³ In addition, at this point in the story, Meg is revealed to have dealings with the Dutch (non-British) smuggler Dirk Hatteraick, who will soon steal the Bertram baby. Meg's Eastern, gypsy identity emerges in her language itself, when she tells the smuggler to be polite to the now-discovered Mannering: "She answered in the same tone of under-dialogue, using the cant language of her tribe—'Cut ben whids, and stow them—a gentry cove of the ken'" (44). Now emerging as a member not of a Scottish "clan" but of a gypsy "tribe," Meg becomes a foreign threat like the Dutch smuggler.²⁴ She shows herself as a threatening foreigner again on the dire occasion when she pronounces doom on the Bertram house after the gypsies have been evicted from their tumbledown village on Ellangowan lands.

Crucially for the significance of fabrics in the novel, the gypsies are being ousted for the commission of petty crimes, including the theft of the Ellangowan landlord's good "linen stolen from the lines or bleaching ground" (60). These crimes, however, are committed only in retaliation for the crackdown on gypsies begun by the lord of Ellangowan. As the gypsies retreat from their long-inhabited village (64), Ellangowan thinks bitterly of his own actions: "The race, it is true, which he had summarily dismissed from their ancient place of refuge, was idle and vicious; but had he endeavoured to render them otherwise? They were not more irregular characters now, than they had been while they were admitted to consider themselves as a sort of subordinate dependants of his family. . . . Some means of reformation ought at least to have been tried" (64). Ellangowan has become a magistrate, or agent of the British government, and as this agent, he betrays his ancient feudal obligation to his tenants, even the lowliest "subordinate dependants." As Meg appears on a bank above the horse-mounted lord, her non-British, foreign allegiances become clear:

[T]here was in her general attire, or rather in her manner of adjusting it, somewhat of a foreign costume, artfully adopted perhaps for the purpose of adding to the effect of her spells and predictions, or perhaps from some traditional notions respecting the dress of her ancestors. On this occasion, she had a large piece of *red cotton* cloth rolled about her head in the form of a turban, from beneath which her dark eyes flashed with uncommon luster. (65; emphasis added)

Cotton hardly ever appears in Scott's historical novels set in pre-1800 Britain. What is important is not that Meg is Eastern European, or specifically Romany, but that she is simply "foreign" to the domestic virtues of British-Scottish peasant culture, as exemplified by the farmer Dandie Dinmont, who welcomes the British imperial soldier Brown (Bertram). Dinmont and his wife are characterized by the fastidious use of locally produced household linen, whereas Meg is wearing cotton, a fabric notoriously foreign since the banning in Britain of Indian cotton in 1721. The ban on cotton imports was not lifted until 1774, which means that Scott's characters living in the mid-to-late eighteenth century would all be acquainted with the propaganda that cotton was both foreign and wickedly destructive of British textile production.²⁵ Although Meg may be wearing domestically made cotton (usually cotton-linen blends) rather than smuggled Indian cotton, her choice of cotton for her turban emphasizes her adoption of an outsider's identity in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland.

At the climax of *Guy Mannering*, Meg's foreign hostility to modern British culture is redeemed by her actions in favor of the restoration of the proper heir, Harry Bertram (Brown), to Ellangowan and the punishment of the foreign criminal who had stolen him. With a party of avengers including Bertram, Meg the gypsy enters a smuggler's cave to arrest Hatteraick, the smuggler who kidnapped Harry many years earlier. Because she was previously Hatteraick's accomplice and thus has his trust, Meg appears alone in the cave to tell Hatteraick that his smuggling band is dispersed or dead, while Bertram, Dandie Dinmont, and Hazlewood lurk behind a large pile of brushwood, awaiting the signal to attack Hatteraick. Interestingly, the conversation that takes place between Hatteraick and Meg and the fighting that follows are entirely dominated by images of flax and other linen-making materials. When Meg intimates to Hatteraick that the time has come for him to pay for his crimes through death or hanging, Hatteraick responds, "[T]he

hemp's not sown that shall hang me" (394). Meg contradicts him with a very specific image of the agricultural and laborious production of the hemp, also known as flax, that will hang Hatteraick. Meg says, "It's sown, and it's grown, and it's heckled, and it's twisted" (394). Here Meg refers to a production process that would have taken place both outside of and within Britain's national boundaries. If the reader is not aware that flax or hemp would be grown outside of Britain and then imported, the action scene immediately following Meg's warning makes clear this transnational origin of the hemp rope.

Kindling light in the cavern, Meg prepares to give the spoken signal to her allies, so that they will rush forward to apprehend Hatteraick: "During the dialogue, Meg was heaping some flax loosely together. Before [giving an] answer to this question, she dropped a firebrand upon the flax, which had previously been steeped in some spirituous liquor, for it instantly caught fire, and rose in a vivid pyramid of the most brilliant light to the very top of the vault" (394). Right after Meg has referred to hemp as the executioner of Hatteraick, she uses some hemp to illuminate the scene of his apprehension. The flax or hemp is lying in the cave only because the smugglers have brought it in: there is no other reasonable explanation for this flax heap. Smuggling flax during this period of the late 1770s and early 1780s was a way to avoid the duties placed on flax imported from other countries. Flax, though, would not have been a high-profit smuggled commodity, and so the presence of the flax in the cave shows that Hatteraick is a common smuggler and "ruffian" (394) rather than a romantic or gentlemanly smuggler.²⁶ Meg's use of flax, a foreign-grown substance that is worked by British hands into a traditional British product (hemp rope), highlights her foreign origins and her conversion into a loyal subject through her return to Bertram's cause after an interval of seventeen years. Meg's use of the flax as a planned return to British loyalty is highlighted by the detail that it was previously steeped in liquor—Meg must have already set the trap in the cave by steeping the flax in (smuggled) liquor beforehand.

Although linen and cotton dominate the imagined Border landscape of *Guy Mannering*, wool also takes a place in the moral symbolism of textiles in the novel. Despite the somewhat threatening effect of Meg's spinning of wool thread in the novel's opening, wool becomes another sign of the virtuous British common worker in the middle of the novel (after the appearance of Meg's cotton turban has already signaled that the true threat to British order and inheritance is not archaic

regional life but actual foreign economic influence, epitomized by Hatteraick). Upon ending a stay at the Dinmonts' farm, Brown (Bertram) feels his impending loss of their "kind hearts." This kindness derives from the Dinmonts' connection to their heritage, as Scott makes clear: "The good dame too, with matron modesty, and an affectionate simplicity that marked the olden time, offered her cheek to the departing guest" (175). Yet the Dinmonts are not isolated from the larger Scottish and British cultural life of the 1770s but intimately involved in it, as the next lines show. Brown asks Mrs. Dinmont to make him a cloak: "[W]ould you but have the kindness to weave me, or work me, just such a grey plaid as the goodman wears?" (175). Brown is asking for Mrs. Dinmont's sewing skills, not because he needs a cloak but because his request honors the quality of her work. Scott writes of Brown, "He had learned the language and feelings of the country even during the short time of his residence, and was aware of the pleasure the request would confer" (175). Mrs. Dinmont's response shows that she is a grateful and loyal British subject, rather than a rogue spinner and prophet. Scott has Mrs. Dinmont reply gratefully: "A tait o' woo' would be scarce among us,' said the gudewife, brightening, 'if ye shouldna hae that, and as gude a tweel as ever cam aff a pirn. I'll speak to Johnnie Goodsire, the weaver at the Castletown, the morn" (175). "Tweel" here means twill cloth, and the "pirn" is the reel of the shuttle. Mrs. Dinmont refers to the wool as "among us" because the cloth and fabric are produced by the community, working together. Mrs. Dinmont is tied to her community by their mutual labor, and in the spirit of cooperation and local pride, she will give Brown this gift of her work. In this moment, Scott sees a way for upper-class British subjects to relate to the pride of British commoners through the moral value of their everyday work. It would be hard to see this episode as utterly divorced from Scott's extraliterary life and his relations with his weaving common neighbors.

Settling into his role as landowner and literary celebrity of Abbotsford, Scott showed a more positive attitude toward the textile workers of Galashiels, even though he cast his role as "laird" or economic ruler and benefactor of the area. In the ongoing furnishing of Abbotsford, Scott took the local economy more seriously. Instead of writing self-deprecatingly that he was dressing up a baby doll, Scott gave detailed and serious instructions for the textile making for his estate. In 1822, Scott wrote to William Stuart Rose, "The silk damask, I fancy, we must have for the drawing-room curtains; those in the library we

have of superfine crimson cloth from Galashiels, made out of mine own wool" (*Letters*, 7:301). Scott was obviously proud that his wool curtains made in Galashiels were woven from what he called "mine own wool." His use of the archaism "mine" suggests how deeply he felt the weight of tradition in commissioning curtains from the local weavers, made from the wool of sheep living on his estate. This patronage of the local weavers was the closest Scott could come to a feudal relationship of benevolent lord with dependent peasants. His desire to provide for the locals in a way that supported their virtue (seen through Scott's eyes as love for and patriotic duty to the upper classes) showed itself in many comments in his letters throughout this later period of Scott's prosperity, before he lost his fortune in 1826.

In this period after he established himself at Abbotsford, but before his bankruptcy, Scott showed gratitude toward the Galashiels weavers as they chose not to join the revolts of the economic depression of 1819. This time, there was no question of the origin of the rebellious actions of the poor: neither France nor any other foreign country was encouraging "disloyalty," as Scott saw it in 1812. Instead, the violence was of British origin, pitting the country against itself. Writing to Lord Melville of the rebellious mood of the commoners in December 1819, Scott said of the town of Berwick that "with the advantage of Berwick bridge at which a *tete du pont* might be immediately raised a company of soldiers would keep the town against all Northumberland" (*Letters*, 6:61). For Scott, the town had to be kept safe against the rebelling county. However, Scott's growing identification with the commoners of his region led him to boast of their difference from the disloyal commoners elsewhere: "As yet my corner is steadily & firmly loyal, high and low—so is Galashiels—250 men in the parish of Melrose have offered to take arms" (6:61). Scott was suggesting that the men of his area would rise up to defend the upper classes and their established order. Not only did Scott commend these men, but also he was willing to help support them economically, through their profession of weaving. He wrote, "The equipment would be very cheap as we should give them a jacket & pantaloons of Galashiels grey cloth which would aid the manufacturers of the place" (6:61). He continued, "We could raise large subscriptions for the equipment independent of what government might give us" (6:61). These subscribers, who would pay for the uniforms of the loyal commoners, would be of the upper-middle and upper classes, of course: Scott was proposing another version of patronage for loyal

British citizens. He wrote (quite emotionally), “I will pledge my life for the mens fidelity and good conduct” (6:61). The contemptuous tone he had used when talking of the conspiracy at Galashiels in 1812 was quite gone by 1819. Scott made explicit his trust in the lower orders of his area and the moral influence he perceived in their loyalty:

But in a moral point of view the appearance of such a corps would operate forcibly on the morale of the people. It would confirm the loyal of the lower orders by showing confidence in them and it would intimidate the disaffected by showing plainly they cannot rely on even the neutrality of the Scottish peasantry. The resolution not to trust arms but in the hands of the better classes is so far a good one but it is possible to carry too far for if we are to come actually to a struggle the numbers of the disaffected would carry it in the long run. (6:62)

Scott was opposing more conservative voices in the “better classes” by advocating the arming of the loyal lower classes. His tone in this passage is far removed from the punitive language of his 1812 response to “disaffected” commoners, when he was not worried about distinguishing the loyal from the disloyal.

Continuing in this vein, Scott wrote to William Laidlaw of this design to arm the lower classes: “Mr. Scott of Gala agrees with me in thinking we should appeal at this crisis to the good sense and loyalty of the lower orders . . . to invite our labourers and those over whom circumstances and fortune give us influence, to rise with us in arms, and share our fate” (6:65). Interestingly, at this point, Scott made an exaggerated claim about his benevolent patronage of his local commoners: “You know, as well as anyone, that I have always spent twice the income of my property in giving work to my neighbours, and I hope they will not be behind the Galashiels people, who are very zealous” (6:65). Biographers have shown that Scott can indeed be accused of spending “twice the income” of his property, but not on giving work to his neighbors. His great expenses were the building and furnishing of Abbotsford, along with the quite lavish entertainment of his frequent guests.²⁷ Apparently he felt the need to assert his own loyal patronage of his local commoners, possibly to align himself with “Mr. Scott of Gala,” the real hereditary “laird” of Galashiels. Scott’s “lairding” of himself is even more pronounced in his next description of the situation, in a letter to Robert Surtees: “Mr. Scott of Gala my kinsman and I have offerd

to raise a body of marksmen of 300 men among our own neighbours to serve any where in Scotland or England North of the Humber. The peasantry with us are zealously loyal and attached to *their Lairds* and we find that far from being puzzled to make up our numbers we may select any number of the handsomest and stoutest men in the country" (6:68; emphasis added). Throughout December 1819 and January 1820, Scott continued in this vein in letters to Lord Montagu, his brother Thomas Scott, his son Walter, Joanna Baillie, and Lady Abercorn (6:71, 76, 79, 96, 110, 115). His identification of himself as leader of his people was complete: to Joanna Baillie he wrote, "I have recommended a more active commander but engaged to go with them. . . . I am looking out for a good horse" (6:96).²⁸ While he had taken on the role of the laird, he certainly had not lost the contemptuous attitude toward textile workers in general, which he had shown in 1812. He wrote to his son in November 1819, "Lockhart writes me that in Lanarkshire they will have in the course of ten days 3000 steady volunteers besides yeomanry which number may manage 30,000 psalm singing weavers if well armed and led" (6:18). For Scott, the local commoners had become his pride and responsibility, but as for the commoners elsewhere who would demonstrate or riot for better working conditions, he continued to portray them as contemptible textile workers.

Although Scott wrote in his journal of the dangers of insubordinate weavers, who demanded too much for their labors, rather than willingly contributing to the national prosperity and asking for nothing more than they already had, Scott turned to fiction to show how British subjects could be corrupted by an immoral participation in the production and consumption of textiles. Scott's depiction of "improperly" produced textiles that threatened Britain's virtuous economy is most explicit in the novel most controversial during his lifetime, *Saint Ronan's Well*, which is also the novel most contemporary in its setting.²⁹ *Saint Ronan's Well* displaces anxieties about textile production at home by representing foreign fabric as the sign of British corruption. *Saint Ronan's Well* was written in 1822 (in the period when Scott was showing a benevolent interest in his weaver neighbors and in commoners in general), and the novel is set a mere decade before that. H. Michael Buck writes of the novel, "Knowing Scott's animosity toward reform at this time, one can understand how he would write *St. Ronan's Well*, a novel which vilifies a peculiar band of displaced, shallow-minded bourgeois—a group that he would probably see as potential 'visionary constitution mongers.' He

sets the novel in 1812, as well, the very year that liberal revolts around Europe were getting started.”³⁰ The irresponsible laird Mowbray of *Saint Ronan’s Well* runs his family and estate into debt, and still spends, buying the central emblem of vanity in the novel, an expensive Indian shawl for his sister, to impress the neighbors.³¹ Even when reformed, Mowbray lacks the true character of a gentleman, according to Scott’s narrator, having become too “mean” or cheap to display a laird’s benevolence to those around him (372).

Saint Ronan’s Well was published before Scott’s own bankruptcy of 1826, and its vision of upper-class “meanness” versus a more desirable liberality definitely accords with Scott’s views during the years of his prosperity. The previously mentioned collection, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, which he published in 1827 after his financial ruin, can shed light on Scott’s possible change in perspective on affluent decadence after his financial embarrassment.³² Walter Scott’s bankruptcy in 1826 occurred because of his long habit of borrowing against the success of his future novels. Because he and his publishing house (in which he had a large stake) both borrowed against the future, when the publisher was brought down, Scott went with it.³³ Interpreting the catastrophic change in Scott’s economic outlook, Matthew Rowlinson writes that Scott was paid in advance for his novels in bills, which became the financial responsibility of each subsequent endorser of the bill, including Scott himself. Rowlinson continues, “When he [was] paid with a bill, Scott involve[d] himself, and his proxies, in an indeterminate series of *future* transactions and obligations.”³⁴ In his journals after the bankruptcy, Scott turns toward the future as a source of anxiety, but in *Chronicles of the Canongate*, Scott turns away from the present-day decadence of *Saint Ronan’s Well* and heads back into the imaginary past to more safely depict a threat to British social and economic order.

If Scott could no longer accuse his local peasants of treachery and greed concerning their everyday work in woolen textiles, he certainly could use his fiction in *Chronicles of the Canongate* to project anxieties about money (and the possible threat of economic power tied to textiles) onto cotton, the fabric stigmatized as a foreign economic threat by Britons during the eighteenth century (the setting of most of his fiction). In 1826, the setting of narrator Chrystal Croftangry’s retelling of the eighteenth-century adventures of the *Chronicles*, cotton had begun to defeat linen in Scotland and Britain as the main industry in lightweight textiles. By telling stories of the eighteenth-century past,

Croftangry can place blame for the luxury of cotton not on his contemporaries the British cotton-mill owners (who appear in the introduction to the volume) but on the past importers of Indian fabrics, who thus promote foreignness and exotic decadence. In the story "The Surgeon's Daughter," set during the 1770s in India,³⁵ Scott's sympathies are on the side of Britain and empire, but he definitely tests the limits of British national virtue in this story. Claire Lamont writes that "[i]n 'The Surgeon's Daughter' the increasing power of the British is predicted to be unstoppable despite the defeat in India of the three young Scots whose fate the reader is following."³⁶ However, the defeat of the young Scots is nevertheless effected by foreigners and their treacherous allies, and all of the foes wear the muslin and cotton prohibited in eighteenth-century Britain after 1721, the same fabric that marks Meg Merrilies of *Guy Mannering* as un-British. The traitor Richard Middlemas's Spanish-Jewish mother appears swathed in muslins and shawls (*Chronicles*, 229). Richard is in the retinue of a scheming, Easternized Scottish procuress, who wishes to sell the Scottish heroine Menie Grey to an Indian prince. Luckily, Menie's British childhood friend, Adam Hartley, is working as a surgeon in India and sees her in danger. Upon seeing Hartley for the first time in India and telling him of her father's death, "Menie Grey's handkerchief was at her eyes" (256). This very British linen handkerchief, and Menie's display of sentiment with it, ties her to simple Scottish virtue as it has appeared in handkerchiefs in Scott's previous novels.³⁷ In the climactic scene of "The Surgeon's Daughter," the foes of Menie's British virtue stand before her arrayed in "robes of muslin embroidered with gold" (the politician Paupiah [264]), a "muslin robe" (Prince Tippoo [284]), "rich silk dresses, rendered sabre-proof by being stuffed with cotton" (Prince Tippoo's troops [279]), and "veiled with silver muslin" (the Scottish procuress, Madame Montreville [280]).³⁸

Menie escapes with her virtue, and the entire shocking tale must be preserved and written down by the 1826 narrator, Croftangry, and read aloud at a genteel British tea party, at which are ready the British props to support proper moral feeling: "[T]ea had been carried round, the handkerchiefs and smelling bottles prepared" (286). In the present-day setting of "The Surgeon's Daughter," the past foreign threat to British moral and economic order is negated by the reaction of the British audience in 1826, wielding their linen handkerchiefs to contain the emotions provoked by the story. While Croftangry's narrative has been foreign and highly shocking to polite British auditors ("one Miss of fourteen

actually screamed" [287]), they immediately start questioning him about his representation of India. Scott thus covertly defends his own narrative as properly British-Scottish through Croftangry's response to the ladies. One says, "How could you, Mr. Croftangry, collect all these hard words about India?—you were never there" (287). Croftangry responds, "No, madam, I have not had that advantage; but like the imitative operatives of Paisley, I have composed my shawl by incorporating into the woof a little Thibet wool, which my excellent friend and neighbour, Colonel MacKerris, one of the best fellows who ever trod a Highland moor, or dived into an Indian jungle, had the goodness to supply me with" (288). Scott shows that his tale, filled with muslin and shocking foreign deeds as it may be, is in its makeup thoroughly British—the "Thibet wool" is obtained in the stories of a doughty British-Scottish soldier who has brought back this raw material for weaving by Croftangry (or Scott himself). Just like Croftangry, Scott expects that his story will be recognized by the working of its fabric as a trial and rescue of British national virtue, just as an imitation-Indian shawl made at Paisley is "not to be known from the actual Country [Indian] shawl, except by some inimitable cross-stitch in the border" (287). Like Mrs. Blower in *St. Ronan's Well*, Croftangry has a commonsensical approach that sees no real difference in the quality of an authentic Indian cashmere and an imitation Paisley shawl, but the price and the homemade origin are much more virtuous in the Paisley shawl.³⁹ However, the Paisley weavers to whom Scott alludes in his fiction are an abstraction, fictionalized and separated from the economic unrest of the 1820s and 1830s that continued to provoke his ire, raise his anxiety about the future, and keep him suspicious of all weavers, even, ultimately, the textile workers at Galashiels.⁴⁰

While Scott's relationship with the Galashiels weavers certainly improved over the course of his life at Abbotsford, becoming in his eyes the relationship of a patron lord to his admiring but socially inferior neighbors, he arguably never changed his political attitude toward workers in the textile trade who did not obey their superiors and accept low wages. Kept between November 1825 and April 1832, Scott's journal records his continuing dislike for and alarm about economically caused unrest in the common classes. In his political alarm, Scott even came to suspect his seemingly loyal neighbors, the weavers at Galashiels. On May 20, 1831, he wrote in his journal, "I am afraid there is something serious at Galashiels. Jeffrey is fairly funk'd about it and has written

letters to the authorities of Roxburghshire and Selkirk shire. . . . Yet I think he would have made arrests when the soldiers were in the country. The time which I settled at Abbotsford, 1811 Whitsunday, I broke up a conspiracy of the weavers. I[t] will look like signaling my removal if another takes place just now.”⁴¹ Scott seems to have been strangely convinced that, if a conspiracy of the Galashiels weavers transpired again, it would reflect on him as sometime-patron and benefactor of their town. His urge to regard himself as their local lord, responsible for ruling and disciplining, continued to be strong, and he was willing to see violence done to suppress unrest, writing in the same letter of an M.P. nearly killed at Dunbarton: “Why should he not have brought down fifty or an hundred ‘lads with the kilts’ each with a good kent in his hands fit to call the soul out of the body of three weavers?” (657).

He extended this wish for violent suppression to the approval of murder by his soldier son in October 1831: “A letter from Walter with better news. He has been at hardhead[s] with the rogues and come off with advantage, in short practized with success the art of drawing two souls out of one weaver” (665). The note gives the literary reference as one made to a phrase in act 2 of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, indicating that Scott was indifferent enough to the weaver’s death to make literary jokes about it. He gave his larger view of his country’s troubles as he waited in the Bay of Gibraltar during November, quarantined on his way to Malta and Italy: “There has been a tumult at Bristol and some rioters shot, it is said fifty or sixty. I would flatter myself that this is rather good news since it seems to be no part of a formd insurrection but an accidental scuffle in which the mob have the worst and which, like Tranent, Manchester and Bonnymoor, have always had the effect of quieting the people and alarming men of property” (678). Scott here refers to (among others) the infamous Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, and he describes such brutal crackdowns as good means for quieting the protesters. His next comments show his loyalty to the Tory political commitment to keep the people subdued: “The Whigs will find it impossible to persuade men to be plunderd by a few blackguards by them called the people” (678). Here Scott, predicting a political future to his liking, separates popular unrest (“by a few blackguards”), widespread though he has previously admitted it to be, from the good “people” he has patronized in the past. He predicts confidently, “Property will recover an ascendance which they have only lost by faintheartedness” (678). The final lines of the journal entry promise woe to the common

people for their temerity, not exempting the “good” folk: “But this happy privilege of freemen English have ceased. One happiness it is they will soon learn their error” (678). Scott was writing of the curfew that would take away the evening pleasures, or work for profit, of even law-abiding common folk, and he was blaming this loss on their own error. As he insisted in his letter of May 21, not even Galashiels weavers were free from the taint of political dissatisfaction and activism among the laboring poor. Scott’s loyalties to the people perhaps lay finally not with his present-day neighbors but with his imagined “respectable” working classes depicted in his novels, who are deferential to the upper classes. Through his novels, Scott fictionalizes the past and present history of the linen and wool industries so that they become a powerful source of virtuous labor for the British people, as is Mrs. Dinmont’s communally produced plaid garment for her upper-class guest.⁴² Nevertheless, the cultural tensions and conflicts in the production and consumption of fabric cannot be completely excised from Scott’s narratives, and so each fictionalized act of producing and wearing linen, wool, or cotton takes an intentionally political, but perhaps ideologically unstable, symbolic place in Scott’s moral schema of the British nation.

NOTES

1. See Ian Duncan, “Primitive Inventions: *Rob Roy*, Nation, and World System,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 15, no. 1 (2002): 83–102; see 82–83 for Duncan’s summary of the arguments of Benedict Anderson, Katie Trumpener, and Saree Makdisi. See also Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991). Ferris argues that “Scott succeeded in *Waverley* in transforming folklore into the national-historical time that was central to the development of the historical sense in the nineteenth century” (133).

2. Nicholas Shrimpton, “‘Even These Metallic Problems Have Their Melodramatic Side’: Money in Victorian Literature,” in *Victorian Literature and Finance*, ed. Francis O’Gorman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 17–38 (quotation from 38).

3. See Matthew Rowlinson, *Real Money and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Rowlinson proposes that Scott’s *Waverley* novels form a “body of capital” and that the formal features of and representations of exchange in the novels actually reveal the “indeterminacy” of the objects and novels to be exchanged and, ultimately, the symbolic social value of Scott’s fictional representations of the protocapitalist economic order (57).

Walter Scott's Two Nations and the Textile Industry

4. See Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). Duncan argues that in Scott's fiction, his modern nation is "articulated in aesthetic categories, sustained through acts of commercial and sympathetic exchange" (279).

5. See Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 12. Makdisi sees Scott's novels as essential to the construction of an imperialist perspective that was highly desirable for British subjects of his time. See also Bruce Beiderwell, *Power and Punishment in Scott's Novels* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992). Writing of Scott's "profound desire to make fiction correspond to wishes," Beiderwell comments that "[t]hese inherently conservative projections of wishful ideals are most apparent in Scott's later works" (ix).

6. See Caroline McCracken-Flesher, *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the World of Tomorrow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). McCracken-Flesher reviews arguments for Scott's work as either history or romance, before concluding that Scott was "constantly circulating between alternatives and across fashions located but not contained within place and time" (8). See also Regina Hewitt, *Symbolic Interactions: Social Problems and Literary Interventions in the Works of Baillie, Scott, and Landor* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2006). Hewitt writes, "Scott creates worlds that differ from the traditional models on which they are based. In these reconstructions, Scott not only develops his social vision but engages in social criticism of any elite that failed to uphold an ethic of care" (34). See also Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1994), 4.

7. See Jerome McGann, "Walter Scott's Romantic Postmodernity," in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 113–29. McGann observes that Scott's ideological project "necessitates the invention of the present as well" (118).

8. In "Primitive Inventions," Duncan argues that the "primitive" category in *Rob Roy* actually gives the novel an "uncanny contemporaneity" and thus "dramatizes an internal splitting in the conception of the modern secular collectivity within which the novel circulates" (89). Although Duncan's reading is in many ways compatible with the direction of my project, he does not read Scott's private writings about his own "real world" to illuminate Scott's political view of the modern nation.

9. Walter Scott, *The Letters of Walter Scott*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson (New York: AMS Press, 1971), 3:122. Subsequent references to this edition appear parenthetically in the text.

10. See Doug Peacock, "Workers," *Cotton Times: Understanding the Industrial Revolution*, December 28, 2014, www.cottontimes.co.uk/workers1.htm.

11. See, for example, Scott's letter of January 17, 1812, *Letters*, 3:61–62.

12. See Anne Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979). See also Alastair Durie, "The Fine Linen Industry in Scotland, 1707–1822," in *The Textile Industries*, vol. 2, *Cotton, Linen, Wool, and Worsted*, ed. Stanley D. Chapman (New York: Tauris, 1997), 582–96; and N. B. Harte, "The Rise of Protection and the English Linen Trade," in Chapman, *The Textile Industries*, 2:509–39.

13. See Robert Hall, *History of Galashiels* (Galashiels, Scotland: Alexander Walker and Son), 316. Mules were introduced to Galashiels in 1814.

14. See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1701–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992). In her chapter titled "Profits," Colley shows how economic profits were connected with patriotic sentiment.

15. See Hall, *History of Galashiels*, 343–48.

16. Harte, "Rise of Protection," 529.

17. Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, 197–98.

18. Andrew Lincoln, *Walter Scott and Modernity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 101.

19. Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1942), 165. Subsequent references to this edition appear parenthetically in the text.

20. Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. David Hewitt, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 90.

21. Walter Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, ed. Claire Lamont, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 62. Subsequent references to this edition appear parenthetically in the text.

22. See Lincoln, *Walter Scott and Modernity*, 93.

23. Makdisi argues that Scott's Highlands are antique and foreign (*Romantic Imperialism*, 81–84). Also see Susan Oliver, "Crossing 'Dark Barriers': Intertextuality and Dialogue between Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott," *Studies in Romanticism* 47 (2008): 15–35. Oliver reads the Highlands and the picturesque foreign East as similar fictional constructions for Scott.

24. See Ayse Celikkol, "Free Trade and Disloyal Smugglers in Scott's *Guy Mannering* and *Redgauntlet*," *ELH* 74, no. 4 (2007): 759–83. For Celikkol, Hatteraick the smuggler represents an outsider to Britishness, and also there is an ongoing tension in Scott's novels between economic interest and loyal patriotism.

25. See Stephen Broadberry and Bishnupriya Gupta, "Cotton Textiles and the Great Divergence: Lancashire, India, and Shifting Competitive Advantage, 1600–1850," paper prepared for "The Rise, Organization, and Institutional Framework of Factor Markets," the Global Economic History Network conference, June 23–25, 2005, archived on the International Institute of Social History website, www.iisg.nl/hpw/papers/broadberry-gupta.pdf, p. 7. Broadberry and Gupta show that foreign cotton did reach British consumers before the

1774 lifting of the ban, although there was not an obvious flouting of the import law by the East India Company.

26. E-mail conversation with Alistair Durie, August 7, 2010.

27. See John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 155–57, 203, 253–54.

28. In 1824, Scott still retained his brighter vision of the common people, the virtuous working class, as evidenced in both his novels and his letters. Andrew Lincoln writes of Scott's vision of an ideal nation as it is constructed in his novel *Redgauntlet* (1824): "[A] political ideal: the alliance of the urban professional with enlightened landowner in Hanoverian Britain, constituting a benevolent ruling class" (*Walter Scott and Modernity*, 204).

29. See Erik Simpson, "A Good One though Rather for the Foreign Market: Mercenary Writing and Scott's Quentin Durward," *Studies in Romanticism* 48 (2009): 667–85. Simpson discusses Scott's concern with "proper" commercialism and its opposition to foreign mercenary profit seeking.

30. See H. Michael Buck, "A Message in Her Madness: Sociopolitical Bias in Scott's Portrayal of Mad Clara Mowbray of *Saint Ronan's Well*," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 24 (1989): 182–83. In contrast to Buck, Mark Weinstein, the editor of the Edinburgh edition of Walter Scott's *St. Ronan's Well* (see the next note for publication information), argues that there is not an exact year that can be determined for the novel's setting (443).

31. Walter Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well*, ed. Mark Weinstein, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 167. Subsequent references to this edition appear parenthetically in the text.

32. See Emily Allen, "Re-marking Territory: *Redgauntlet* and the Restoration of Sir Walter Scott," *Studies in Romanticism* 37, no. 2 (1998): 163–82. Allen proposes that in his next novel, *Redgauntlet*, Scott corrected the misstep of writing *St. Ronan's Well*, a bleak contemporary exposé, by making the character Darsie another typical Waverley hero, "described by Alexander Welsh as being less a hero than an ideal citizen of the new, commercial Britain" (178).

33. See Sutherland, *Life of Walter Scott*, 281–98.

34. Rowlinson, *Real Money and Romanticism*, 65; emphasis added.

35. See Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, n.449.

36. Claire Lamont, "Scott and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism: India and the Scottish Highlands," in *Configuring Romanticism*, ed. Theo D'haen, Peter Liebrechts, and Wim Tigges (New York: Rodopi, 2003), 50. For a global perspective on "The Surgeon's Daughter," see also Tara Ghoshal Wallace, "Thinking Globally: *The Talisman* and 'The Surgeon's Daughter,'" in *Approaches to Teaching Scott's Waverley Novels*, ed. Evan Gottlieb and Ian Duncan (New York: MLA, 2009), 170–76.

37. Handkerchiefs appear as signs of moral feeling in Scott, *Antiquary* (240, 267) and in Scott, *Guy Mannering* (110).

38. See James Watt, "Scott, the Scottish Enlightenment, and Romantic Orientalism," in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 94–112. Watt sees Scott's favoring of the British citizen over the foreigner as far less marked in this story (99).

39. While Mowbray is parading his sister in the ruinously expensive Indian shawl, Mrs. Blower defends her own shawl with the words, "[T]here are braw shawls made at Paisley, that ye will scarce ken frae foreign" (*Saint Ronan's Well*, 192).

40. See "1820 Insurrection," *Radical Glasgow*, Glasgow Caledonian University, December 28, 2014, www.gcu.uk/radicalglasgow/chapters/1820_insurrection.html. See also Seumas Mac a'Ghobhainn and Peter Beresford Ellis, *The Scottish Insurrection of 1820* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2001). Weavers in Paisley had rebelled in the Radical War of 1820, but this rebellion had been thoroughly quashed and neutralized immediately and would not have appeared to Scott as a particularly threatening incident by 1826.

41. Walter Scott, *The Journal of Walter Scott*, ed. W. E. K. Anderson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 657. Subsequent references to this edition appear parenthetically in the text.

42. See Ian Duncan, "Scott, the History of the Novel, and the History of Fiction," in *Approaches to Teaching Scott's Waverley Novels*, ed. Evan Gottlieb and Ian Duncan (New York: MLA, 2009), 88–96. Duncan writes of "the new kind of world of which modern Great Britain is a part—an imperial, immanently global political economy in which jaggedly uneven times and spaces, from commercial hub to wild hinterland, are bound in a complex web by trade and military force" (95).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Antidomestic

The Afterlife of Wills and the Politics of Foreign Investment, 1850–85

Marlene Tromp

Wills have an extraordinary afterlife. They are not neutral or independent documents that distribute wealth and property and then get filed away in the proper pigeonhole. They operate in a complex social matrix of human relationships, economic structures, desires, and politics, and, I would contend, they are framed by the social systems they inhabit and have the power actively to shape the systems into which they enter. Wills have effects not only because the “dead reach out of the grave” to manipulate the behavior and the life circumstances of the individual beneficiaries (or disappointed heir-hopefuls) but also because they have a highly social afterlife that is worth investigation. Their impacts are broadly distributed, and they shape economics and the social consciousness outside the family circle, marking norms of status assignment and social relations. Moreover, because they operate in a network of ideas, even subtle shifts in willing can have social impact. “Bad wills” in particular—those that defy or disrupt the social norms of the moment—can reveal a great deal about unspoken cultural values, and specific enactments of (or failures to enact) those values can affect the social consciousness, not just the individual lives they directly touch, particularly because wills were a public affair and were widely reported in the nineteenth century. Raising wills to this

level of social and structural analysis renders them visible as highly significant social and personal investments—a transfer of assets with the hope of their growth or maintenance in the future. Wills transmit entire bodies of wealth (inherited wealth accounted for 80–90 percent of national wealth in the Victorian period, according to Thomas Piketty¹) to sites the testators perceive as being most worthy of investment, frequently the family.² Because wills are deeply enmeshed in both the economic and the social, examining bad wills in the mid- to late nineteenth century can give us a lens through which to view economic anxieties during a period in which the economic terrain was rapidly shifting.³

In this chapter, I explore how real, material testamentary practices in mid-Victorian England became abstracted into the social consciousness and came to engage with deep social concerns, as well as to open an assessment of how these two elements impacted one another. I want to better understand, through this analysis, how testamentary events—where the money went—became abstracted through and into emotional anxieties and across landscapes to the investment of national wealth more broadly. This is not, then, just a study of metaphor (how personal bequests represented an “investment” in the domestic—or away from it) but also a study in metonymy: how a specific event (an individual’s will gifting a particular dollar amount to a person or organization), as a part of an enormous body of events (bequests across the nation), came to represent much deeper and broader social anxieties (about “where the money went”). In other words, I examine how an act such as Uncle Albert gifting his wealth to a society, instead of his nephew, came to represent a broader social concern about economically draining not merely the family but even the nation and willing “away” came to be seen as an un-English investment of resources.⁴ I hope, in this way, to bring to the study of this testamentary economic history a new insight born of my training in literary and cultural analysis, believing that such a transgression of field boundaries will have the capacity to enrich both areas and to render visible patterns in economics that are often far more detectable in/as movements of language, metaphor, and metonymy.

A last will and testament offers a particularly significant point of analysis because it was a transfer of wealth that was nearly always expected to be domestic (familial and local)—so much so, in fact, that we rarely even consider the possibility of it operating as a kind of antidomestic investment. What were, socially speaking, considered “bad wills” can be linked with foreign investment. Bad wills reveal more than an

anxiety about the integrity and preservation of family, bloodlines, or the social elite; they also, in an abstraction of the economic into the social, reveal an anxiety about foreign investment. Posthumous investments of wealth, such as buying foreign lands, investing in foreign governments or foreign goods, and bequeathing wealth to foreign-born or antidomestic (illegitimate or clandestine) children often provoked a powerfully negative response. In this way, such wills spoke to a deep social anxiety about the foreign more broadly, what I have called elsewhere “economic xenophobia.”⁵ A will that leaves family wealth to those outside the domestic space becomes “unnatural” and serves as a metaphor for the “unnatural” failure to make domestic investment in the nation.

THE DANGER OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT

My interest in the social politics of economic investment, particularly investment in foreign states and industries, led me to this project. Very often, studies of economic patterns focus primarily on economic *behavior*, giving human affect wide berth as a predictive tool. In other words, the human elements of investment are perceived to be too volatile and irrational to provide meaningful insight into the movements of the market. Just as meaningful as the economic practices of a people (in what did they invest? how much did they save? what did they bequeath to surviving family and friends?), however—though not for their predictive value—are the affective impulses that underlie those practices. One can experience deep fear or anxiety about a practice and still engage in it. Reluctance to explore these affective patterns in addition to their behaviors can leave gaps in our understanding of the Victorians. While studying these attitudes cannot provide information about economic practices (though it may help us understand disruptions of patterns or anomalies), it can tell us about the culture: in this case, about certain attitudes in Victorian Britain toward foreign investment in its myriad forms.

In a recent article, I argue that we can detect an important affective trend—anxieties about the dangers of foreign investment—before they were expressly named and addressed in policy by the late-century parliamentary acts and financial literature.⁶ By the century’s end, despite the ongoing practical enthusiasm for foreign investment, there was a great deal of articulable anxiety about it as well. By 1875, the House of Commons had created a committee to investigate and report on financial investment in the foreign. Their report, “Loans to Foreign States,”

issued warnings about disreputable foreign states and their agents, who solicited investment in morally bankrupt and fiscally dangerous nations and their growth.⁷ A year later, in 1876, Alexander Innes Shand noted that in the glory days of the past, “domestic trade” was brisk and people were wealthy, and that it might have been better if the money had been “confined to England.”⁸ Unfortunately, he indicates, “many investors strongly fancied foreign” investment.⁹ While they may have been aware of risks (as one might be with all economic speculation), the impulse to earn, and potentially earn big, kept them in the market. Indeed, as Ranald C. Michie notes, the government, too, felt compelled to stay in the game and avoided regulation of such investment and the serious fraud that they argued plagued it until 1939, even while they regulated other arenas in the public interest, such as employment and food adulteration.¹⁰ Michie suggests that the move to foreign investment helped investors find the high “yields they desired” when domestic development slowed.¹¹

Significantly, because we can trace high rates of investment in the foreign, we have often failed to attend seriously to the cultural anxieties that circulated around and accompanied this investment. Take, for example, Shand’s compellingly xenophobic critique, in which he complained that British investors became “dazzled” by foreign investment in India, Turkey, Egypt, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and St. Domingo but that such practices were based on the mistaken notion that “the swamps were solid land” like the “New Forest or the Home Park at Windsor.” Moreover, he warned, the British investor might “[j]udg[e] foreigners by his experiences of our own honorable Stock Exchange[;] it no more struck him that there might be an easier standard of financial morality among Indians, and half-breeds, and curly-headed negroes, than that there might be a bottom to the deposits even of those innumerable sea-fowl that whiten the islands of the Peruvian seaboard.”¹² Though one might earn a fortune in foreign investment or lose profoundly in an entirely domestic investment—as many did with railway shares crashes—the domestic debacles receive only a mention, and the bulk of Shand’s essay concentrates on detailing foreign dangers, along with his fear that the English would not see these dangers until it was too late.

This discussion of foreign investment clearly indicates economic xenophobia: a perception of an inherent financial danger in the foreign that, itself, created real risk for the English investor, rather than that risk

being created by the various economic projects in which one might invest. Others agreed with Shand. *The Accountant*, for example, remarked that “upon the whole we adhere to this country because it is not certain that any foreign investments can be converted at the day of need readily in large quantities and without excessive loss.”¹³ These ideas were mirrored in other publications,¹⁴ such as *The Economist*. In an oft-repeated theme, they noted, “We are not much inclined generally to recommend foreign investments [because] the best class of English industrial securities, the ordinary stocks and shares of the leading railways and banks [are] decidedly preferable as they are more secure and yield a better return[. Still,] the disposition of investors who have a predilection for foreign securities towards South American Governments is now very noticeable.”¹⁵

Ironically, of course, railways and banks, though often profitable investments, were also the source of the most spectacular domestic crashes of the nineteenth century. Still, the experts depicted potentially volatile domestic investments as preferable to foreign ones. The turn to international investment has often—even in analyses in this century—been perceived as the source of Britain’s ultimate financial decline. Despite a widely shared and tenacious belief among the Victorians and their children that such investment was harmful to the British economy, recent research has indicated that this belief was mistaken.¹⁶ This is not to say that the decline of the British economy at the turn of the century has some other simple cause. The source of a bank failure, let alone a shift in economic precedence in the global marketplace, cannot be pinpointed to a single event. Economic relations are complex, and economies and businesses never exist in a vacuum but are interdependent. This interdependency makes narrow attribution of causes (“foreign investment caused the decline of the British economy” or “foreign investment fostered the growth of the economy”) incomplete. What is striking is the story that gets told about foreign investment, the social narrative that is revealed by and helps produce these anxieties.

The persistence of a limited and flawed narrative—that foreign investment was necessarily and inherently more dangerous and that such investment would ultimately cause a national collapse—tells us a great deal about the ideologies from which that narrative emerged. In other words, the widespread, but often misplaced or disproportionate, anxiety about foreign investment (particularly in non-Western foreign landscapes) on behalf of the individual and the homeland can provide

insight into Victorian attitudes more broadly, even if it did not decrease such investment. The willingness to place money in the “foreign,” despite the sometimes catastrophic losses that drove the creation of the select committee on foreign investment in the House of Commons, indexes an economic xenophobia that escalated alongside the increasingly globalized economy.

In this chapter, I turn from the investments of the living to those of the deceased to look for similar patterns. I examine testamentary documents against the backdrop of increasing anxiety about foreign investment in the period, particularly focusing on 1850–85. While any time window might be revelatory, I have chosen these years for two reasons. First, they close in on 1875, a year in which a spate of articles emerged discussing the particular dangers of foreign investment. Second, these years bracket the 1866 financial panic triggered by the collapse of Overend, Gurney and Co., a major financial event that brought down almost all the international/foreign trade financial houses in London (an event that might be said to parallel the fiscal crises of this decade, which saw the near-collapse of Citigroup and Bank of America, as well as insurance giants such as AIG).¹⁷ In this chapter, then, I explore domestic wills (and, relatedly, national *will*) as a part of the chartable anxiety about the movement of wealth abroad. Understanding a will as a particular kind of investment with an afterlife in the social world, reaching far beyond the individuals named beneficiaries, can help us flesh out the narrative of foreign investment in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Testators, I propose, increasingly submitted to fears about foreign investment as the years passed and the economy became increasingly global. As xenophobic anxieties increased nationally, testamentary documents and debates came to speak about the dangers of antidomestic investment, both literally and as a metaphor for the national fiscal landscape.

THE STORY OF WILLS

Turning first to fictional representations of wills can help us to flesh out the social narrative around testamentary documents and also give us some sense of their significance to Victorians. In his massive study of capital, Thomas Piketty notes that nineteenth-century novels “are full of detailed information about . . . the contours of wealth and its inevitable implications for the lives of men and women, including their marital strategies and personal hopes and disappointments. [They

depict effects] with a verisimilitude and evocative power that no statistical or theoretical analysis can match.”¹⁸ Examining fiction also situates wills in the frame of their broader social work, rather than marking them as isolated, individual documents with no afterlife. They can often seem isolated because there is typically little additional archival documentation to provide contexts for historical wills, unless they were the wills of public figures or involved significant contested wealth. Fiction throughout the period anticipates the anxieties that were later subject to legislative inquiry. A novel that just precedes the widespread attack on foreign investment in the mid-1870s and might be said to revolve around wills and their codicils is George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1872).¹⁹ This novel speaks, often quite explicitly, to a pressing anxiety about antidomestic wills.

Many of the novel’s tensions, for example, emerge around a less-studied will in the novel: that of old Featherstone and his widely condemned choices. Not only does he give pitifully small bequests to his grasping siblings (who call his a “fool’s will” [339]) but also—most shockingly—his will primarily benefits his “frog-faced” illegitimate son, Joshua Rigg, publicly disinheriting his dear nephew Fred Vincy (413). Moreover, Rigg’s “vile accent” gives him away as a foreigner and the shrewd Mrs. Cadwallader identifies him as being “of another blood” (328). Featherstone’s devastating bequests damage his whole community by denying the care of his home and property to his domestic circle, for those family members not only would have tended it best but also would have kept the money at “home.” (His deathbed repentance for this terrible error does not come in time to more properly invest his wealth and shape the future of his estates but instead points up his choices as a failure.) While no one, perhaps, regrets him cutting his out-of-town siblings, who have wealth enough of their own, and Fred Vincy morally benefits from making his way in the world, Featherstone’s will is still depicted as cruel and mistaken. The failure of this will is demonstrated when Rigg, an “alien” in the community (472), sells the estate and lands out of the family to the soon-to-be-shamed Bulstrode, an equally dangerous investment that fiscally enriches the antidomestic Rigg but leaves the estate improperly attended.

Strikingly, given the parallel I wish to make here, Rigg plans to become a money changer in a seaport—a highly materialized form of foreign fiscal engagement, matching the antidomestic investment Featherstone made in him. Despite the fact that he usurps other legatees,

Rigg wants nothing more than “to look sublimely cool as he handled the breeding coins of all nations” (520). Such a practice might be profitable (the coins, here, propagate), but it also reflects an anxiety about national and fiscal miscegenation, metaphorically represented by Rigg. Deepening this narrative of domestic failure, Bulstrode, who buys the estate, is the progenitor of a bad will. He deceived his first wife about her daughter from a previous marriage, so that he comes into the money that should have been the daughter’s—undermining the very domestic investment his wife sought to make. A pretentiously pious liar and cheat, Bulstrode experiences an exposure and fall that demonstrates what a poor investment both his lost wife’s and Featherstone’s willed money has made. The resolution to this drama comes only when local boy Fred, who has made an honest living on home soil, can return as the caretaker to Stone Court and live happily ever after with his chosen and properly English bride.

With similar callousness and cruelty, Casaubon altered the will he had prepared with the “reliance and knowledge” of Dorothea’s family to limit the transfer of his wealth to his wife Dorothea. By threatening to disinherit her if she marries his cousin, this will is a double blow. Not only was Casaubon’s family left in poverty through a prior bad will, but the new will prohibited keeping the money in the family. Sir James Chettam calls the codicil a mean “and ungentlemanly action” (484). While the changes were designed to prevent money from going to Casaubon’s European cousin—a diversion considered appropriate by the majority of the community—to do so at the cost of disinheriting his thoroughly English wife (and casting aspersions on her fidelity and judgment in the same act) was an intolerable price to pay and, ultimately, served to transfer the body of the wealth outside the family altogether.

What no critic has yet suggested is that the wills in *Middlemarch* all enact antidomestic investment: each disinherits a member of a normalized, domestic family circle and redistributes domestic wealth—cutting a nephew for a foreign illegitimate son; a daughter for an unethical second husband; and an English wife for an indefinite “away from Dorothea.” Their afterlife disrupts normative patterns, and their most shocking acts are antidomestic: Featherstone’s distribution of money to an illegitimate foreigner (Joshua Rigg) and Casaubon’s disinheritance of his English wife. Moreover, the narrator tells us, in reference to the tale of wills, that “while I tell the truth about loobies, my reader’s imagination need not be entirely excluded from an occupation with lords; and

the petty sums which any bankrupt of high standing would be sorry to retire upon, may be lifted to the level of high commercial transactions by the inexpensive addition of proportional ciphers” (341). These stories of wills, for Eliot, metaphorically offer larger statements about the system in place. These men’s failures—the failure to make a domestic investment—plague the community.

In her excellent discussion of promissory obligations, Melissa J. Ganz has noted that “Eliot makes clear that an ‘indefinite promise of devotion to the dead’ is too broad and exacting,”²⁰ but, in fact, this is precisely what wills often demand and what we demand of them. Wills call for indefinite promises of devotion (in life and beyond), and we expect such devotion in return. Compellingly, as Cathrine O. Frank has noted, as the form of the will became more and more regularized over the course of the century, the layperson’s testamentary power became increasingly limited.²¹ Significantly for my argument, it became increasingly difficult legally to give money outside the family. As the *Morning Chronicle* put it, “[T]he law gives [land] to a man’s heirs and [money] to his next of kin.”²² In virtually every contested case of a “bad will” reported in *The Law of Charitable Bequests*, which details at great length foreign investments in wills, the finding is in favor of the “heir in law and next of kin,” returning the money to the domestic and away from the foreign landscape that would have received it as a testamentary gift.

We can even find this fictional representation of the dangers of willing away money to the foreign much earlier than the mid-1870s. In Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*, a similar disinheritance of a family member is enacted by Philip Fairlie (Laura Fairlie’s father) with his sister the Countess Fosco—a fact that is often given little attention in analyses of the novel. As the narrator puts it, Mr. Fairlie “had lived on excellent terms with his sister Eleanor, as long as she remained a single woman. But when her marriage took place, somewhat late in life, and when that marriage united her to an Italian gentleman[,] . . . Mr. Fairlie disapproved of her conduct so strongly that he ceased to hold any communication with her, and even went the length of striking her name out of his will. . . . [H]e hated the foreigner simply and solely because he was a foreigner.”²³ Fairlie, as it turns out, is right to be wary—Eleanor no longer seems properly English, and Fosco is the worst kind of villain. Indeed, the drama of the novel takes place largely because the clever Italian mastermind has an interest in dispatching Laura to gain a £10,000 legacy that Eleanor would gain from her brother’s will only

upon Laura's death (perhaps Philip's error, then, is to leave any loophole at all by which the foreigner could get access to his wealth). Also striking about the will is the insistence on domestic investment that underpins Laura's will. Her solicitor proposes in the event of her death that she might give her money to "any relative or friend whom she might be anxious to benefit," unless she dies leaving children, in which case "their interest, naturally and necessarily, superseded all other interests whatsoever" (150). The domestic investment is the "natural" investment, and her solicitor is outraged when the marriage can only be settled if Laura's will benefits Sir Percival directly (and not as a life interest, which would have been normative, but as real property), rather than those whom she has elected. Not only was Percival born a foreigner and raised and tutored abroad, but also this transmission of wealth fails the blood test of domestic investment. Rather than simply having the life interest due someone who has married into the family, Percival gains the right to take Laura's real property out of the Fairlies' domestic circle.

Similarly, in Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861), Lady Isabel's father squanders his fortune, leaving an empty will with nothing for his daughter. So grotesque are his sins that moneymen, "half of them" Jews, who are marked in strikingly anti-Semitic ways as "internal foreigners,"²⁴ gain access to what he has left behind.²⁵ The community feels it was incumbent upon the Earl to have "made some settlement" for his beautiful, unmarried daughter, Isabel (143), but they learn, instead, that the lost Earl failed to channel some share of his former wealth into his most important domestic investment: his family. Every penny of his disposable goods goes to the "foreign," a failure described in the strongest terms as "iniquitous," "[u]npardonably improvident," and "rank madness" (145). Indeed, had some fortune been settled on his daughter, the most "natural" investment for a portion of his fortune, rather than with the foreign money men, the dramas at the center of the novel could never have occurred.

In Dickens's novels, these same patterns abound. In *Little Dorrit* (1857), for example, the eponymous heroine has her beloved burn the secret will that would have made her rich, while the money goes instead to support a family business in China, so that they might purify the family story of this great crime. Indeed, so great is the need for purification, that the new, young Clennam family must begin their lives without the benefit of foreign monies. Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) works to right the failed will, cleansing the dangers of "foreign" wealth

and returning the rightful power to will domestically to the English home. In this novel, the “wicked” Colonel Herncastle has stolen a valuable Indian diamond. While his will attends to his own well-being by commanding that the Moonstone be cut up in the event of his violent death, this protection does not extend to others, and through his will he intentionally endangers his family. He dies of natural causes and leaves the diamond to his niece, Rachel Verinder. A holy Indian relic, the Moonstone has pursuers who are willing to rescue the diamond from the hands of the English at any cost. It is, as Franklin Blake describes it, a “legacy of trouble and danger to his sister, by the means of her child.”²⁶ This, then, is a thoroughly dangerous bequest of foreign goods in the domestic English family. The will produces death, debt, and heartbreak, before the troubles can be unraveled along a circuitous path to a homely domestic marriage, free forever of the diamond’s taint.

Many critics have defined wills and the problems they can create as a trope of Victorian fiction. Few, however, have looked at the patterns of testation to ask what fictional wills might suggest about the larger social context that Victorians inhabited. These wills provide a social backdrop simultaneously underscoring the importance of the will to the social life of Victorians and pointing up anxieties about the ways in which wills invested the wealth of the deceased. Against this backdrop, the larger structure of social anxieties and metaphors into which each individual will entered, I now turn to the legal documents themselves and to anxieties about testation in the mid-nineteenth century to explore what else they can tell us about the Victorians.

WILLS THAT MADE STORIES

Wills in the nineteenth century followed increasingly standardized forms. In fact, as Charles I. Nelson and Jeanne M. Starck have noted, while wills seem to give an extraordinary power to a testator (you can will your goods to whomever you like and under whatever conditions), court cases throughout the written will’s relatively short history embody a “struggle . . . in the courts between the desire to give effect to the manifest intent of the testator and the hesitancy to do so because of formalities imposed by statute.”²⁷ Frank concurs, indicating that there was a “strong preference in trials concerning the validity of wills to trust to the sufficiency of the form itself and to measure its faults by how far it deviates from the rules of statute.”²⁸ The regularization of the will

left less control in the hands of the testator than some fiction might have suggested, making fiction a more powerful indicator of anxieties than of consistent material practice. Virtually every will in the National Archives of Great Britain executed for sailors at sea in the nineteenth century (a legal requirement for military personnel), followed a standard form, with nearly every one leaving the sailor's "Wages, Prize Money Allowances, and other Sum or Sums of money, as now are, or hereafter may be due to [him] for [his] service on board the said Ship, or any other Ship or Vessel, of the Royal Navy, together with all . . . other Estate and Effects whatsoever and wheresoever" to his wife, children, or parents—the standard legatees for bequests. While one could certainly place some boundaries or limitations on monies—for example, Georgiana Quentin could quite composedly (and legally) bequeath wealth to her daughter, Augusta Compton, and her devoted servant, Maria Smallwood, "for [their] sole and separate use and benefit, *exclusive* of [their] present or future husband," ensuring that their new wealth would be free from any man's "debts, control, [or] interference"²⁹—one could not so easily disinherit one's blood relatives. Antidomestic investments happened, to be sure, but not without friction and cost. Practically exempt, of course, from these expectations were people without living immediate family. Philemon Phippen and Septimus Worrell, for instance, could bequeath money to an array of distant relatives and even friends, because neither of them had a wife or children, and such practices did not actively disinherit closer relatives.³⁰

Significantly, these formulaic means of executing wills helped normalize social conventions in legacies, exercising the *social will* over the *individual will*. Violating these forms with antidomestic investments—leaving money away from the family or the nation was an unusual but not unprecedented phenomenon in Victorian wills—produced significant resistance. One could not simply dispose of one's property as he or she pleased; the social sanction for producing domestic investment was high, though to act otherwise was, in some cases, possible. Baron Holland, for example, left control of his properties exclusively to his wife, who had quarreled with her sons. She restricted their access to the wealth and estates, and five years later (1845) died with a will that the heir to the title described as "unnatural, her children being almost excluded."³¹ "Her will," as Pat Jalland explains in her excellent book *Death in the Victorian Family*, "detailed an immense list of legacies and annuities, *chiefly to those outside the family*, as well as the £300 to her executors to pay for her own

monument.”³² Indeed, so naturalized is the assumption that the wealth should remain in the domestic circle that Jalland herself is unremittingly critical of the choices made by Elizabeth, Lady Holland. In an entirely different fashion, but with similar effects, Woronzow Greig made antidomestic investments. He died legally intestate in 1865 because his official will, deposited with his banker, had been lost (Greig was a clerk of the peace in Surrey and had followed all the legal forms), and the family could at first only discover a codicil.³³ This sent the bulk of his wealth to his mother and sisters as next of kin. Worse yet, a later uncovered “unproved” will shocked his widow, Agnes, after a long and loving marriage—just as Featherstone’s had his expectant family—with the news that her husband had an illegitimate daughter, by then forty years old and living in Australia, to whom he had secretly been sending money for years.³⁴ Such antidomestic investment inevitably drew negative public attention. As early as 1861, the *Daily News* was complaining about “strange bequests” but noting that John Stuart Mill had written about the “readiness which jurors exhibited to convict of lunacy men whose ways and opinions depart[ed] in any degree from the beaten tracks of custom.”³⁵ In other words, the strange bequest would always be noted, but what made a bequest “strange” were the social customs it violated and what those customs meant individually and socially to the Victorians.

This might not seem a stunning revelation, but we have so naturalized the expectation that our wealth should benefit our immediate families, our domestic space, that a social phenomenon at stake here has escaped our attention. These very unquestioned expectations have often rendered it invisible. If we explore these examples in depth, they suggest that just as anxiety about foreign investment began to peak culturally, domestic investment in the shape of wills became a major fictional construct, one designed to enact “right” outcomes in the event of failed investments or to purge the evidence of the failure. The fictional wills, in addition to the accounting they provide of dramatic legal examples, serve as an index of real people’s anxieties about where the nation’s money was going, and they may have served as one means of calling that money home. The obsession with wills in Victorian narrative, an obsession Richard C. Burke points up in his discussion of last wills in Trollope’s fiction,³⁶ has historically been accounted for as merely mirroring the impact of wills on the lives of real individuals.

I would argue, however, that there is more at play. In these complex social documents, the articulations of domestic investment were

national, as well as familial, and bad fictional wills began to bend and shape the consciousness of the public narrative of familial values, primogeniture, and the gender and social codes that mapped its landscapes. Frank locates this relationship in the debates over the individual's rights in willing, explaining that the conservative position on property embodied precisely the relationship I have described: that "the land represents the nation (in the same way possessions represent familial identity) and as such is meant to be preserved for its [*sic*] own sake."³⁷ Certainly, most laws supported such values.

As early as 1837, the Victorian Wills Act (1 Vict. c. 26, xviii) provided "that every will made by a man or woman shall be revoked by his or her marriage except a will made in exercise of a power of appointment when the real or personal estate thereby appointed would not in default of such appointment pass to his or her heir, customary heir, executor, or administrator or the person entitled as his or her next of kin under the statute of distributions."³⁸ Frank notes that, while regularizing the legal structure under which property and wealth were transmitted, the range of legal findings across the nineteenth century and into the next granted "freedom from the testator's potential caprices or mercurial moods [but also] completed the will's transformation from the 'speaking likeness' of the testator's personal character to a uniform and utilitarian legal text of his social identity."³⁹ This was reinforced by the Mortmain Acts, which were increasingly utilized by the middle classes and more fully developed during the nineteenth century, particularly in their nineteenth-century incarnations (the much-used "9 Geo II c. 36 commonly but inaccurately called the Statute of Mortmain" and the Mortmain and Charitable Uses Act of 1888).⁴⁰ Indeed, by 1855, section 22 of the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act stipulated that "[a]ny trustee or other person may . . . transfer *any stock* or pay any money to the Official Trustees of Funds in trust for any charity" but "not, *of course*, investments in foreign stocks or bonds."⁴¹ "Of course"—because individual wills have a larger life in the metaphors of the social fabric. When one left one's immediate family the bulk of his or her wealth, the testator was praised. When Catherine Elizabeth Boscawen's will was described in the *Englishwoman's Review and Home Newspaper* and a catalogue of her legatees was given, the journal reassuringly remarked that her "eldest son [was] amply provided for."⁴² These were the wills that matched the social will and produced domestic investment that was both individually domestic, within the family circle, and socially domestic, for the good of the nation.

The vexing will of Mr. T. Brown dedicated a significant portion of a wealthy man's monies to professorships in Oriental languages and gave a £30,000 legacy for a "hospital or sanatorium for animals" with a "view to the promotion of their own happiness and the advancement of knowledge."⁴³ So distressing was this will that a bill was introduced in Parliament against it by the charity commissioners with the hopes of altering its very specific terms. Earl Granville remarked that the will "almost invite[d] opposition," to which the House rousingly declared, "Hear, hear!" Lord Cairns responded that the "question was not whether Mr. Brown had made the wisest will in the world, or whether their Lordships could make a better will for him. Perhaps it would have been wiser if that gentleman had left his large property to the members of his family," but that the testator had been clear in his intentions and they were thus obliged to honor them. The administrators of the University of Dublin were not permitted to carry out their plan to distribute the money differently, though the great debate on the matter indicates the kind of rupture in social norms an antidomestic will represents. Particularly ruffling were the companion animals that benefited by the will, as they could not properly be read as a "domestic" investment, however homely they were.

The expectation that one might wish to leave money abroad for "charity" increased as the economy became more global, and along with that increase came a similar increase in the codes for such testation. So troubled was this kind of investment that foreign testation also became increasingly subject to a legal tug-of-war—evidence of cultural anxiety. In 1867, the British and Foreign Bible Society actually printed instructions in their annual report defining how to make a bequest to the society, as they had been "deprived of several valuable Legacies."⁴⁴ This anxiety on the part of the British and Foreign Bible Society was matched only by the anxiety that money might be left away from the family (and the nationally domestic space) to benefit other nations. One fiercely contested will disinherited an heir-at-law in favor of a Bible society that would distribute Bibles in "China or India."⁴⁵ Another will in 1870 dedicated a bequest for "strictly educational purposes" in India.⁴⁶ While agencies and religious organizations benefiting from charitable bequests outside the domestic family circle and national space devoted themselves to the broader "Christian family," these kinds of bequests came in for the most bitter satire in publications such as *Punch*, particularly as forms that disinherited the "natural" legatees.

Punch, for example, acerbically describes the will of a “Sir Pultus Potboiler,” who granted a variety of charitable organizations his wealth but left his “orphan daughter (a cripple) to the kind care of the Relieving Officer.” In another, “Firebrass Netherby Millstone” left his millions to the likes of the Society for the Propagation of Epidemic Diseases, the Society for the Encouragement of Corporeal Punishment, and the Society for Putting Down the Poor, giving his only sister “£100 in Turkish Bonds, £100 in Mexican do., £100 in Spanish do.”—all worthless shares—and “to his only son, Thomas (who married without the testator’s consent), he leaves the sum of one shilling sterling.” The only figure in this satire who leaves reasonable bequests, generously providing for his nieces and nephews, really has nothing to leave. Major Timothy O’Dear of Cork had been “thrice bankrupt, and . . . departed this life in a condition of complete insolvency.”⁴⁷

The case of Sarah and Mary Ann Bruce provides one striking example of a contested will that plays out this anxiety about foreign and domestic investment. Though daughters of an indigo planter in India, the sisters had been largely brought up in London, and they came into a sizable £100,000 fortune upon his death in 1827. Neither ever married, and Sarah, the eldest and beneficiary of £60,000 of the fortune, managed the business. The two lived together harmoniously until 1850, when they moved apart over a dispute. Sarah, who had come into £40,000 upon her father’s death, took up residence in Brighton, where she grew close to her first cousin’s daughter, Mrs. Irving, and Irving’s two daughters—Bruce’s closest living blood relatives apart from her own sister. In 1873, the two Bruce sisters were reconciled and executed a joint will. Sarah had previously contacted the India Office and expressed her desire to leave her fortune to a charitable cause benefiting Indian girls, and according to the court documents, she later “persuaded” Mary Ann to follow her lead. Together, their fortune would found an institution for half-caste female orphan children in Calcutta. In October 1874, however, Mary Ann executed a new will, which benefited Mrs. Irving and her family. At Mary Ann’s death, the case immediately went to court: the Irvings appealing to have the new will recognized, the state arguing that Mary Ann had not been of sound mind when the new will was penned. The sides settled outside of court—in a dramatic interruption of the proceedings with an offer for a plea bargain—and Mary Ann’s fortune was split between the founding of the Indian institution and the Irving family. While the women’s wealth still generously contributed

to the founding of the girls' orphanage (making an investment in the well-being of Indian girls), what is striking about the case is the willingness of the court to domesticate the money and the language of the papers that suggested that it was the antidomesticity of the will that was in dispute.

The government openly argued in internal memos that the Irvings' case was weak. Indeed, as A. G. MacPherson (later a judge of the High Court of Calcutta) explained, the witnesses who had already come forward in the case did not favorably present evidence for the Irvings. As MacPherson put it in a legal memo, "the Witness Gardiner," a medical doctor present at the execution of the second and contested will, "said a good deal which told very much against the Plaintiff's [Irvings'] case." Indeed, he went further: "Up to the present time, nothing has occurred to make me doubt that the Secretary of State had a good case"—in other words, that the state could have shepherded all the money to the Indian charity—"and [that he] would have succeeded."⁴⁸ Still, the state agreed to a striking compromise with the Irvings in which half of Mary Ann Bruce's wealth was rechanneled to the domestic: nationally and familiarly. Moreover, the Irvings even initiated two other complicated and costly proceedings, on the rather absurd grounds that the much wealthier Sarah was indebted to her younger sister, Mary Ann, in hopes of gaining additional sums from Sarah's estate—money that had already been unquestionably bequeathed to the Indian charity. Even though these proceedings were ceased (on the advice of the Irvings' council, as he had not "legal proof" for the claims), the state financed over £800 of the Irvings' attorney's fees in the actions.

Remarkable in this circumstance was the fact that despite the weakness of the Irvings' case, MacPherson willingly acceded to granting a stunning 50 percent of Mary Ann Bruce's wealth to the Irvings, to the domestic investment over the antidomestic. While this still left a significant sum to the charity that Sarah Bruce had held so dear, the loss of £20,000 was not trivial in the building and financing of the project. Striking, too, was the fact that MacPherson described the reportage on the testimony in court as "substantially correct," with one significant exception; he noted that the reporting on the Gardiner testimony was "incorrect and incomplete" in that it failed to indicate the damage it made to the Irvings' case. Moreover, the papers foregrounded the fact that both Sarah and Mary Ann Bruce had been illegitimate children. Although they were disturbingly antidomestic themselves,

the transmission of their complete fortune out of the nation-state was intolerable, even against the weakest claims, and was constituted to “provide for . . . friends and relatives.”⁴⁹

Such charity as that in which the Bruce sisters participated became a vexing condition for testamentary documents, because it became a likely location for foreign investment. Increasingly, the courts found that “unless it appeared on the face of the will that the charity was foreign, it should be presumed to be a domestic one,”⁵⁰ a rule that protected wealth against legacy duties. Legal debates increasingly identified principles with regard to bequests to foreign charities. The first principle identified is “whether the proposed object would be a good charity in England; and if it is not so the gift is void.”⁵¹ Moreover, the courts found that “land in England [could not] be devoted by will to foreign charities.”⁵²

Ritu Birla, in her study of economics, empire, and India, argues that “[i]n England, the particular definition of charity as a gift benefitting the public, and so the very category of the public trust, was clarified by a series of statutes beginning in midcentury with the Charitable Trusts Act of 1853,” which saw increasing revisions and statutes through 1894.⁵³ She notes that in 1888, “the Mortmain and Charitable Uses Act repealed the Georgian Mortmain Act of 1736, a measure that had been directed specifically at the explosion of ‘mischief’ of *improvident alienations* or dispositions made by languishing or dying persons . . . to uses called charitable uses.”⁵⁴ Such “improvident alienations” were both domestic and national and became a “public mischief” that violated “common utility.” Of particular concern in these acts was the alienation of property to another state. As Birla argues, “[s]uch deathbed alienations” were believed to be “designed to transfer property away from lawful heirs. The interest in clearly defining charitable uses, and so public benefit, thus began as a control mechanism for the legitimate transfer of property across generations, and the legitimate reproduction of wealth—questions that would plague case law in India.”⁵⁵ While Birla’s interest is in how the laws bifurcated public and private life in a way that Hindu and Muslim traditions did not, she notes, “The regulation of charitable and religious endowments in India began with developments in case law in the 1870s,”⁵⁶ precisely the period in which I note increased anxiety about foreign bequests and squarely in the period in which the Bruces’ estate could be parsed to make the domestic investment that simply was not supported by the evidence at hand.

By 1877 the anxiety about such antidomestic investment had reached nearly a fever pitch (one we can see in much U.S. rhetoric today), and *Reynold's Newspaper* could explicitly remark of foreign charity, "Nearly £500,000 have been raised for the famishing people of India. Is nothing to be done for the famishing Britisher at home?"⁵⁷ Antidomestic wills proved equally disturbing, and they provide us one locus for evaluating the increasingly more fervent "control mechanisms" (in Birla's words) to manage the distribution of English monies outside of the family and the state. The afterlife of wills is one we can continue to study to this day. Even though testamentary documentation from the nineteenth century is incomplete and often comes to us most fully when a case was contested in the courts, future research might examine more fully the exploratory claims I have made here about the increasing anxiety about antidomestic investment across the last half of the century. Available to us are the hundreds of documents in the British Library and National Archive as a means to understand in what ways, precisely, the control of the testator might have been repressed in the "national interest" and, in this way, to better understand how the Victorians' sense of wills and testaments might have been shaped by larger economic structures and anxieties that plagued the period.

NOTES

1. Thomas Piketty, *Capital*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 401.

2. Even when particular heirs are not considered high value by the testator, for example, the bequest might still favor the family, valuing the long future of the bloodline. Indeed, so socially significant was such familial investment that antilapse statutes designed to prevent unexpected factors (such as the death of a legatee prior to the execution of a will) from permitting wealth to "lapse" into intestacy became increasingly explicit in the nineteenth century and ensured that wealth remained in tight familial circles. See 1 Vict. c. 26, xxxii and xxxiii (1837); and Richard Trott Fisher, *An Act for the Amendment of the Law with Respect to Wills (1 Vict. c. 26) with Remarks Explanatory of Several Clauses, the Object of Their Enactment, and the Alteration in the Law Thereby Effected* (London: Saunders and Benning, 1837), 19–20. I discuss these statutes at greater length below.

3. Of course, wills are also powerful lenses into familial relations, social contexts, the construction of subjectivity through material goods, anxieties about death and the persistence of identity, and many other aspects of Victorian life.

4. Structurally, we might think of the way that it could be seen as “unpatriotic” or “un-American” to criticize the “Shock and Awe” attack on Iraq in the wake of September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States and of the way in which the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency’s interrogation techniques were considered justified—both of which overbroadly rendered what it means to support your nation and its values and too narrowly rendered what it means to criticize an act of war or torture.

5. For a fuller discussion of economic xenophobia, see Marlene Tromp, “The Pollution of the East: Economic Contamination and Xenophobia in *Little Dorrit* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*,” in *Fear, Loathing, and Victorian Xenophobia*, ed. Marlene Tromp, Maria K. Bachman, and Heidi Kaufman (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013), 27–55.

6. Tromp, “Pollution of the East.”

7. “Loans to Foreign States,” *Reports from Committees* (London: House of Commons, 1875), 4:xlx. See Tromp, “Pollution of the East.”

8. Alexander Innes Shand, “Speculative Investment,” *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* 120 (September 1876): 298.

9. *Ibid.*, 301 (emphasis added).

10. Ranald C. Michie, “Gamblers, Fools, Victims, or Wizards? The British Investor in the Public Mind, 1850–1930,” in *Men, Women, and Money*, ed. David R. Green, Alastair Owens, Josephine Maltby, and Janette Rutterford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 157.

11. *Ibid.*, 160–61.

12. Shand, “Speculative Investment,” 301.

13. “Low Rate of Money,” *Accountant*, October 9, 1875, 10.

14. In the same year, a letter to the editor of the *Accountant* more strongly stated this fear, charging that we must “open the eyes of the nation to the necessity of bringing about some radical changes in our present mode of trading and financing” and noting that England’s future might be made bright only when the state’s investors realized that “the whole of [their] losses under the heading of money lent to foreign states and undertakings which were never intended to pay . . . will have to be written off some day and then perhaps English people will learn that there is some connection between high interest and low security.” Expert Comptable [chartered accountant], “Is a Crisis at Hand,” letter to the editor, *Accountant*, July 10, 1875, 5.

15. “Bank Returns and Money Market,” *Economist*, October 21, 1871, 1274.

16. Benjamin R. Chabot and Christopher J. Kurz, “That’s Where the Money Was: Foreign Bias and English Investment Abroad, 1866–1907,” *Economic Journal* 120 (September 2010): 1056.

17. This incident, at the heart of these two decades, embodies many of the concerns raised in this essay. Overend, Gurney and Co. was a discount house that bought and sold promissory notes and bills of exchange, the latter of which

were primarily used in international trading and linked the house to most foreign trade in the country. While the house had been on shaky financial ground for years, making bad loans on little security, Walter Bagehot still described the response of British interests, the government, and the Bank of England as “sound, cautious, and admirable” ([Walter Bagehot], “The Panic,” *Economist* [London], May 19, 1866, 581–83, available at *The Economist Historical Archive, 1843–2006* [uploaded December 20, 2011], 582, <http://gdc.gale.com/products/the-economist-historical-archive-1843-2007/>). Though Bagehot acknowledged that the managers had “evidently misused” money, he believed that the British system had triumphed in reasserting order, and he went on to remark that the “worst bitterness of the panic [was] already spent and past” a little more than a week after Overend’s collapse. Further, this event was described by Bagehot as a “credit panic,” a fear of not being able to access loan money. Given Overend, Gurney and Co.’s primary work in foreign markets, the failure to access credit for investment speaks to the central theme I address here. Finally, to speak of economic “panics” underscores the role of affect and anxiety in the movements of markets, even when questions of reality or rationality are put aside.

18. Piketty, *Capital*, 2.

19. George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (New York: Penguin, 1994). In the text, subsequent references to this edition will be noted in parentheses.

20. Melissa J. Ganz, “Binding the Will: George Eliot and the Practice of Promising,” *ELH* 75, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 579.

21. Cathrine O. Frank, *Law, Literature, and the Transmission of Culture, 1837–1925* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

22. [“Validity of Litigated Wills”], *Morning Chronicle*, January 19, 1850, 4.

23. Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 149. In the text, subsequent references to this edition will be noted in parentheses.

24. Heidi Kaufman’s “Jewish Space and the English Foreigner in George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda*” (in *Fear, Loathing, and Victorian Xenophobia*, ed. Marlene Tromp, Maria K. Bachman, and Heidi Kaufman [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013], 249–66) fleshes out the insider/outsider status of Jews in Victorian Britain, demonstrating how Jews triggered xenophobia anxiety, even when they were admired citizens.

25. Ellen Wood, *East Lynne* (New York: Broadview, 2000), 134. In the text, subsequent references to this edition will be noted in parentheses.

26. Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (New York: Penguin, 1998), 54.

27. Charles I. Nelson and Jeanne M. Starck, “Formalities and Formalism: A Critical Look at the Execution of Wills,” *Pepperdine Law Review* 6 (1979): 331.

28. Frank, *Law*, 88.

29. “Last Will and Testament of Dame Georgiana Quentin, 11 Great Cumberland Street, Middlesex,” National Archives [of Great Britain], February 26, 1853, catalogue reference PROB 11/216 (emphasis added).

30. "Will of Philemon Phippen, Gentleman of No 11 Charlotte Street, Bath, Somerset," National Archives of Great Britain, April 28, 1856, catalogue reference PROB 11/2231.
31. Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229.
32. *Ibid.*, 249 (emphasis added).
33. "Court of Probate," *Law Times Reports*, February 3, 1865, 681.
34. Jalland, *Death*, 227.
35. "The House of Lords Was Engaged . . ." *Daily News*, June 26, 1867, 2.
36. Richard C. Burke, "Accommodation and Transcendence: Last Wills in Trollope's Novels," *Dickens Studies Annual* 15 (1986): 291-307.
37. Frank, *Law*, 19.
38. "Revocation of Wills by Marriage by Birth of Child by Both at Common Law and under English and American Statutes," *New York Law Review* 1, no. 3 (March 1895).
39. Frank, *Law*, 219.
40. Leonard Syer Bristowe and Walter Ivimey Cook, *The Law of Charity and Mortmain* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1889), 26.
41. *Ibid.*, 544-45 (emphasis added).
42. "Wills and Bequests," *Englishwoman's Review and Home Newspaper*, October 8, 1859, 123.
43. "Brown's Charity Bill," *Daily News* [London], June 26, 1867, 2.
44. *Sixty-Third Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Benjamin Pardon, 1867), ii-iii.
45. "Law Intelligence," *Newcastle Courant*, November 14, 1851, 6.
46. "The Presbyterian Church," *Belfast News-Letter*, February 10, 1870, 3.
47. "Wills and Bequests," *Punch*, August 20, 1881, 81.
48. A. G. MacPherson, Judicial Department, Minute Paper, "The Action Irving v. The Marquise of Huntington," June 28, 1881, British Library, J&P 922/81.
49. Probate and Divorce Division, *The Standard*, June 27, 1881. [clipping], British Library, J&P 922/1881.
50. "Law Intelligence," *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, November 12, 1875, 2.
51. Amherst D. Tyssen, D.C.L., *The Law of Charitable Bequests* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1888), 288.
52. *Ibid.*, 291.
53. Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 69.
54. *Ibid.* (emphasis added). The Mortmain Act of 1736 was designed to "restrain the disposition of lands whereby the same become unalienable": "Whereas Gifts or Alienations of Lands Tenements or Hereditaments in Mortmain are

prohibited or restrained by Magna Charta and divers other wholesome Laws as prejudicial to and against the common Utility nevertheless this public Mischief has of late greatly increased by many large and improvident Alienations or Dispositions made by languishing or dying Persons or by other Persons to Uses called charitable Uses to take place after their Deaths to the Dishonour of their lawful Heirs For Remedy whereof be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons" the Mortmain laws. 9 George II c. 36.

55. *Ibid.*, 69.

56. *Ibid.*, 72.

57. "Christmas Appeal," *Reynold's Newspaper*, December 23, 1877, 4.

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