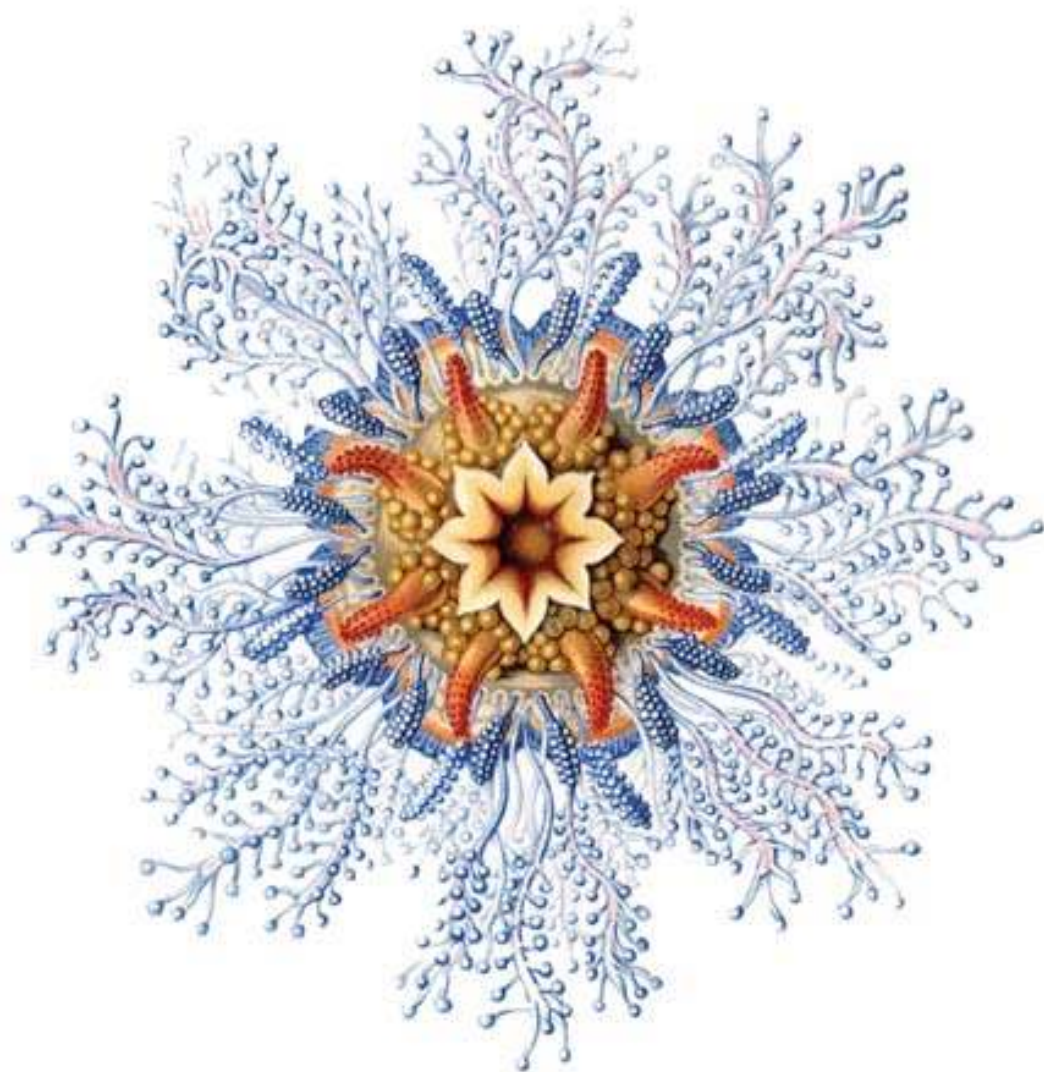


# A TALE OF TWO CAPITALISMS

Sacred Economics  
in Nineteenth-Century Britain



Supritha Rajan

*A Tale of Two Capitalisms*



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SACRED ECONOMICS IN  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

*Supritha Rajan*

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## Introduction

A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other. . . . No more can I look into the depths of this unfathomable water, wherein, as momentary lights glanced into it, I have had glimpses of buried treasure and other things submerged. . . . it is the inexorable consolidation and perpetuation of the secret that was always in that individuality, and which I shall carry in mine to my life's end. In any of the burial-places of this city through which I pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I am to them? As to this, his natural and not to be alienated inheritance, the messenger on horseback had exactly the same possessions as the King, the first Minister of State, or the richest merchant in London.

—“Night Shadows,” *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens<sup>1</sup>

Then the strong-rooms underground, at Tellson's [Bank], with such of their valuable stores and secrets as were known . . . , opened before him, and he went in among them with the great keys and the feebly-burning candle, and found them safe, and strong, and sound, and still, just as he had last seen them.

—“Night Shadows,” *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens (18)

*A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) is a novel replete with burials and resurrections—letters, secret plots, and bodies lie buried only then to be “recalled to life” by the narrative that the novel itself relates (18).<sup>2</sup> And like Dickens's novel, from which this book takes its title, the story I relate is a story of things buried and, by a “feebly-burning candle,” brought to light. The parallels between Dickens's novel and this book, however, run deeper than the archaeological metaphor. *A Tale of Two Cities*, while ostensibly a historical novel of the French Revolution, points to a buried narrative of capitalism—one whose intellectual lineaments the sub-

sequent pages of this book more fully examine. Thus while the novel's opening chapter famously describes the similarities between France and England prior to the French Revolution, these historical conditions serve as a backdrop to a more significant story line that plots out the transition into a social and economic order grounded on the principles of liberal individualism, a model of citizenship that the novel tacitly conjoins with capitalist accumulation and with a set of values and practices that it relegates to a pre-modern, religious past.

These conjunctions appear in the novel's early chapters, particularly the chapter "Night Shadows" with which my introduction begins. I want to spend the first few pages of this introduction unpacking the epigraphs from "Night Shadows" in order to lay bare, at least provisionally, how Dickens's novel invites us to rethink our habituated understandings of capitalism. The narrator's melancholic tone in "Night Shadows" expresses ambivalence toward the contemporary ethos of individualism; the anomic isolation he experiences in the modern city is a by-product of the very "alienated inheritance" that liberalism grants to all its citizens—individuality. It is this individualism, moreover, that prevents the narrator from seeing the "buried treasure" of individual character within each person.<sup>3</sup> The passage that soon follows the narrator's first-person account of his isolation expands on the motif of burial that resonates throughout the novel, explicitly relating the "buried treasure" of individuality to capitalist accumulation. In this scene, Dickens transforms the mail carriage in which Jarvis Lorry, the dutiful agent of Tellson's Bank, sleeps, into Tellson's Bank, and then portrays Lorry examining the underground "stores and secrets" of the bank. The buried treasure and secret of individuality parallels the buried treasures and secrets of Tellson's Bank. The novel further links privacy, individualism, and capitalist accumulation, as Catherine Gallagher has argued, by allying novelistic omniscience and those who trade in dead bodies, like Jerry Cruncher, with capitalist motives since both sell buried privacies and violate the very private sphere that Dickens portrays the French Revolution as desecrating ("Duplicity" 140–42).

Critics of this chapter have variously commented on how its apparent critique of bourgeois individualism belies its denunciation of the French Revolution for sacrificing the very individuality and private sphere that the modern liberal state guarantees to king and messenger alike.<sup>4</sup> But rather than interpreting Dickens's response to bourgeois individualism as contradictory, I would argue that what Dickens critiques through his depiction of the French Revolution is a failure to link capitalism, individualism, and the private sphere *appro-*

*priately*. Appropriately linking these elements, the novel suggests, requires that we separate out the “economic” from the “religious” by designating the “religious” as a set of values, practices, and motives that dominated an antique past. This synchronic process of separation, however, is strategically presented in diachronic terms: modern British capitalism has advanced from a past dominated by antiquated religious values (as in revolutionary France), but the ghosts of capitalism’s past threaten to haunt capitalist economic and social arrangements. Dickens’s novel repeatedly invokes the trope of a spectral past, lodging that past within a progressive narrative of modernization that obfuscates the actual plot of the novel, which describes France and England inhabiting contemporaneous historical moments.<sup>5</sup> Thus the opening paragraphs of *A Tale of Two Cities* quickly shift from parallel descriptions of France and England to the potential similarities between England’s present and past, comparing the modern “spirits of this very year last past” to a late, eighteenth-century England attentive to the “messages” of “spirits” and “the Cock-lane ghost” (Dickens 7). The narrator immediately undermines such continuity between past and present, however, by contrasting these “dubious emanations” to the actual messages received of revolution in America (Menke 108). England may be more “spiritual” than its French counterpart, but, the narrator retrospectively assures us, modern England has learned to distinguish the real from the spectral in a way that France has not (Dickens *Tale of Two Cities* 8).

The latter analysis of the spectral in *A Tale of Two Cities* recalls Derrida’s theorization of spectrality in Marx, but differs in a crucial way. Derrida describes the “spectrality effect” as what undoes the opposition between past and present, ghostly and actual (*Specters of Marx* 40)—a dissolution of boundaries in which Marx detected the troubling persistence of primitive fetishism and religious idolatry that ghost capitalist formulations of value and exchange. Such spectral emanations, for Marx, could only be extirpated through the “counter-magic” of critique (47). Yet as my reading of Dickens’s novel in this introduction demonstrates, this very notion of a “spectral” past that threatens to come back and must be delimited is itself a recurring trope of modernity that finds purchase precisely because it so deftly conceals synchronic processes of segregation and differentiation within a diachronic narrative. The rhetorical maneuver of separating a religious past dominated by spirits and ghosts from the contemporary liberal and capitalist present deploys the rhetoric of spectrality in order to obscure a synchronic process whereby the “religious” and “economic” are separated out even as they are reinscribed productively within capitalist

schemes of value. The French Revolution thus marks a contradictory historical moment in which the transition into a liberal, secular age simultaneously distinguishes the religious values of sacrifice, ritual, and the sacred/profane from capitalist economics even as it rearticulates them within a capitalist framework through models of privacy and individualism. Gallagher's reading of *A Tale of Two Cities* in this regard is particularly relevant. The novel's depictions of public execution, she writes, "remind us of the historical links between public executions and those other ritual inversions of public and private: human sacrifice and carnival" ("Duplicity" 127).<sup>6</sup> These scenes of ritual violence, she claims, create wholeness and an experience of totality that the modern private sphere replaces (128–31, 136, 142).<sup>7</sup> The failure of the French revolutionaries, I contend, arises not from their violation of privacy and individualism, but from their inability to incorporate sacrificial ritual and notions of the sacred/profane into private expressions of individualism and capitalist exchange. If these processes have remained hidden from our view, it is partially due to the novel's reliance on the rhetoric of spectrality, which depicts France as the locus of a primitive religious past that persists, but only as ghostly echo, in England's present.

As a narrative of such haunting, *A Tale of Two Cities* offers its readers a tale of two capitalisms. In its allegorical treatment of plot and character, it reveals how two interwoven strands within political economic theory had to be segregated only then to be successfully reintegrated, a process of segregation and reintegration that entails an excursion to a foreign locale that Dickens portrays as engaged in practices and values that are "savage" in comparison with its English counterpart.<sup>8</sup> I will offer a fuller reading of how the novel accomplishes this later on in this introduction, but I want first to clarify what I mean by the phrase "two capitalisms." This book argues that the discourse of political economy during the nineteenth century is, like the very logic of the sacred and profane, doubled. This doubling, what I refer to throughout this book as *the double narrative of capitalism*, yields a narrative of capitalism with which we are both familiar and unfamiliar. The first and dominant narrative is the one that political economy has more openly told about itself and whose reigning shibboleths we readily recognize—a narrative in which unfettered, laissez-faire competition and self-interested individualism enable liberal, progressive societies continually to advance and amass economic prowess. This dominant narrative of capitalism, however, obscures a second, submerged narrative within political economy that was gradually disinherited over the course of the nineteenth century. In this second narrative, notions of the sacred/profane, sacrifice, ritual, and

magic—what I refer to broadly in this book as *modes of sacralization*—articulate a broader ethical investment in ideals of communality, reciprocity, and just distribution that is continuously endangered by political economy’s own models of self-interest. These modes of sacralization surface most forcefully in political economic thought at moments of crisis to mediate the economic inequalities, ethical anxieties, and fractured social relations that the dominant narrative of self-interested individualism instantiates.

My use of the term “narrative” to describe two sets of intellectual patterns that run through political economy is vital to comprehending how notions of self-interest, communality, or the sacred and profane do not simply designate discrete values or motives, but were embedded within, or disembedded from, specific narratives of human history. At the most minimal level, we can understand narrative as “[a]n account of a series of events, facts,” or ideas that shapes some connection between the aforementioned elements (OED). While my use of narrative assumes the minimal definition given above and does not commit itself to those dimensions present in literary genres such as character or dialogue, there are aspects of narratological theory that are relevant to my formulation, particularly the sequential and temporalized dimensions associated with a narrative’s organization of plot. Following Aristotle’s understanding of plot as the arrangement of incidents, Paul Ricoeur has argued that “plot construes significant wholes out of scattered events” (“Narrative Time” 178), and this construction of wholes is what makes a narrative “followable” (*Time and Narrative* 155). The coherence such narratives achieve, even as they appear to be the product of a causal chain, is constructed retroactively and can only be understood as forming a whole from their “end point” (66).

Ricoeur’s model of narrativity applies to both fictional and historical narratives, whether that be histories of ideas or events. With respect to the narrative dimensions of historical method, Hayden White argues that holistic coherence is always shaped by what the historian, qua narrator, chooses to include or exclude within a diachronic framework that imposes order in an effort to grant meaning to human experience (1–9). This model of history as narrative in form, he claims, was already articulated in Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (White 11–14). Yet it is also Hegel’s *Lectures* that supply the particular Enlightenment narrative of progressive, linear development from primitive to advanced societies that was foundational to the sociological disciplines under question in my study. For it is this grand narrative of historical development that legitimates and renders easily recognizable the ordered and sequentially

plotted story that political economic theory tells about its own emergence (e.g., that primitive barter is the beginning, pastoral and hunter-gatherer societies the middle, and capitalism the “end point” from which all other preceding events take their meaning). Read through the lens of narratology, we could recast the dominant narrative of capitalist economics as “story,” that is, as giving to us a purely chronological sequence of events and intellectual developments that is in no way recursive. In this kind of narrative, the structuralist definitions of “story” versus “discourse” overlap since the sequencing of elements is not only *what* the narrative presents, but also *how* it shapes the narrative.<sup>9</sup>

Although readers may easily recognize the dominant story of capitalist economic thought as *story*, such may not be the case for the values and practices I have grouped as modes of sacralization and the social vision they entail. It would be a mistake, however, to think that the “two capitalisms” I reference in my title denote two discrete, coeval, and self-sustaining narratives within political economy both of which are recognizable as narratives in the same way. The second narrative, unlike the dominant narrative that political economy has popularized, requires a careful process of reconstruction. This retrospective reconstruction is necessary in order to demonstrate how modes of sacralization continued to play a significant role within capitalism’s grand narrative of economic progress even as they were denarrativized from its chronological “story.” A reconstruction of what was denarrativized, however, can only take place at our later historical position since the categories of “ritual” or “sacred” did not possess the analytical visibility at the beginning of the nineteenth century that they did in the late nineteenth century and thereafter. This removed historical position is also necessary because how modes of sacralization participated in a narrative can be better understood, as narratologists like Peter Brooks would have it, when we read with “anticipation” of the end (23). This end has a different status in intellectual history than fictional narratives since the delimited horizon from which intellectual histories reconstruct the past does not furnish a clear “end point,” but remains indeterminately situated in a present that is still unfolding. More importantly, unlike the analysis of a discrete literary text, piecing together the second narrative requires that we widen the parameters of inquiry to include political economy’s relationship to other disciplines such as anthropology, where the elements that were denarrativized within political economy were recuperated and rearticulated within yet another sequentially plotted Enlightenment narrative of human history. Anthropology’s narrative of human history must then be read back into

nineteenth-century political economic discourse in order to reconstruct the second narrative I speak of and reveal the very doubleness that I have termed the double narrative of capitalism.

Given the complex, cross-disciplinary processes my argument examines, my use of “double” in describing the double narrative of capitalism comprises multiple valences. First, I use “double” to describe two patterns of thought that oppose *homo economicus* to *homo communis*—two patterns that may exist in either synthetic or dissonant relation. Second, I use the term to demonstrate that these two patterns cannot be understood apart from the doubled logic of the sacred and profane, whose interdependence the discourses of political economy, anthropology, and literature each laid bare and yet also delimited. And last, I use the term to describe how the two forms of doubleness described above can only be fully comprehended when the particular narrative of Enlightenment progress in political economy is paired with its double, i.e., anthropology, where the values represented by *homo economicus* and *homo communis* are incoherently positioned in a diachronic narrative on the origins of primitive religion and rise of scientific rationalism. While equally invested in models of linear progress, anthropology’s narrative of human history was less insistent than political economy on relentless advance since it also explored how vestiges of primitive practices and beliefs persist in modernity—what E. B. Tylor called “survivals.” The “followable” narrative that anthropology supplies of human history (replete with its incoherences and recursiveness) must be read both with and against the grain of the “followable” narrative supplied by political economy in order to reconstruct the double narrative of capitalism.

This process of reconstruction would be incomplete, however, if it did not also take into account the “followable” narratives of human sociality within nineteenth-century literature. I thus consider nineteenth-century literature as a third term that mediates the doubled relation between political economy and anthropology. For it is nineteenth-century literature that synthesizes the two narratives of capitalism, making visible how residual aspects of Britain’s purported pre-modernity remain intertwined with capitalist values. Although fiction served as an imaginative laboratory for synthesizing the two narratives of capitalism, it also lodged this synthesis within an anti-capitalist rhetoric that distanced it, on the one hand, from its possible proximity to primitive religion and, on the other hand, from its resemblance to capitalist economics.

If our received accounts of capitalism have failed to identify and describe the relationship between these two narratives within capitalism, it is largely due



to the labors of separation to which I alluded in my discussion of *A Tale of Two Cities*. These labors, which categorized, defined, and then segregated the domain of the religious from the economic unfolded in the interdependent discourses of nineteenth-century political economy, anthropology, and literature, which constituted and occluded the double narrative of capitalism. This book thus provides an intellectual history, albeit necessarily limited, of how the discourses of political economy, anthropology, and literature during the nineteenth century participated in separating out these two narratives of capitalism by presenting modes of sacralization as antithetical to capitalism and modernity even as they theorize (anthropology) or stage (literature) their continual interpenetration. What I reveal is how the very separation of the economic from the religious required that the emerging discipline of anthropology codify certain values, practices, behaviors, motives, or customs as what constitutes the sacred and profane, ritual, sacrifice, or magic. These analytical concepts were not only essential for forming the object of anthropological inquiry and for articulating a narrative of cultural evolution, but also for categorizing, defining, and then segregating these values and practices from capitalist economic behavior in the modern public sphere. Such efforts concealed, I contend, the important role these values and practices played in theories of economic value and exchange and, more importantly, in articulating political economy's normative ethical ideals. While literary texts do not theorize magic or the sacred, they unwittingly participated in segregating the two narratives of capitalism through the very shape that their critiques of capitalism often took. Nineteenth-century writers tended to critique capitalist materialism either by presenting romanticized portrayals of a pre-modern, pre-capitalist Britain still inhabited by the sacred or by constructing alternate social models whose reincorporation of the sacred into economic and social life stood in contrast to capitalist ideology. This particular mode of critique not only contributed to the disciplinary separation of literature from economics, as Mary Poovey has argued (*Genres* 285–352), it also further masked how the expansion of capital relies on the mutual implication of economic and religious categories.

Yet as I show throughout this book, the segregation of the economic and religious remained unevenly articulated and in fact points to an irrepressible continuum between the values and actions in the public, economic sphere and those of the private, religious sphere. Just as the intellectual genealogy of political economy, anthropology, and literature display intertwined trajectories, the realm that came to be defined as the economic and the realm that came to be

defined as the religious could not be pried apart. Much like the binary of the sacred and profane, which insists on its segregation and yet continuously displays the reversibility of such boundaries, the concepts of economic value or exchange do not denote categories that are radically distinct from notions of the sacred or ritual, but disclose an ineluctable proximity. One of my tasks in this book is thus to demonstrate how the constellation of values, motives, and practices that came to be categorized as “the sacred” or “ritual” had to be dis-embedded from political economic theories of value and exchange in order then to be re-embedded in an alternate narrative of human history that unfolded in the interrelated sociological field of anthropology, where notions of ritual or the sacred became visible for the first time as describing a specific attitude toward the world and exemplified a non-capitalist, non-rational, pre-modern orientation.

To pay attention to the ways in which these emerging sociological disciplines constituted their objects of inquiry provides an important shift in the way we have thus far conceived the relationship between sociological and literary discourses during the nineteenth century. Christopher Herbert’s *Culture and Anomie* and Catherine Gallagher’s *The Body Economic*, along with other critics,<sup>10</sup> have recently brought attention to the interrelations between political economy, anthropology, and literature by situating them within the reticulated discourses of “culture.” While I, like these critics, consider political economy, anthropology, and literature as interrelated discourses whose shared intellectual preoccupations were progressively parceled out into distinct domains of disciplinary inquiry as anthropology and political economy sought to legitimize themselves as social sciences, I offer a differing line of emphasis. If the culture concept has enabled literary critics to demonstrate the contiguities between sociological and literary discourses during the nineteenth century, this very focus on how culture unifies elements into, as Tylor once wrote, a “complex whole” (*Primitive Culture* 1:1), also conditions our blindness to the efforts these discourses expended to constitute and separate the object of political economic investigation (economy) from the object of anthropological investigation (religion). It also conceals how nineteenth-century literature implicitly buttressed this separation through its critiques of a capitalist society in which, as Carlyle put it, “Cash-payment” is “the sole nexus” and ethical or religious values hold no sway (38).

My larger goal in this book, however, is not simply to expose these disciplinary labors, but what these labors have kept from our view. One of the ambi-

tions of this book is to contest the narrow conception of capitalist economics as primarily concerned with the self-interested maximization of wealth and pleasure by demonstrating how the disciplinary labors of segregation I have been describing contributed to our limited image of *homo economicus* by training us to think of such social and ethical ideals as reciprocity or communality as the antithesis of capitalism and modern social organization. My hope is that such a revisionary account of political economic theory at its roots can help us rethink the ethical investments of capitalism even in our present day, to rethink (as I suggest in the coda) the legacy of the double narrative of capitalism in relation to narratives of globalization and secularization. Given the recent global economic crisis, it no longer seems possible to argue with unalloyed confidence, as Milton Friedman once did, that political freedom goes hand in hand with unfettered economic freedom, that government need simply be an “umpire” who blows the whistle and enforces “the ‘rules of the game’” when necessary (15). This misplaced faith in the self-regulating powers of the free market has sent even Chicago School economists like Richard Posner back to their libraries, revitalizing Keynesian macroeconomics and policymaking to address the intrinsic frailty of the banking system and uncertainty in business cycles.<sup>11</sup> Close thy Friedman, says Posner, open thy Keynes. This book suggests that if we are to respond effectively to the call posed by the recent economic crisis, we need to go much further back than Keynes. A critique of free-market ideology, and the ethical and political obligations such ideology elides, is incomplete if we do not take into account how the discourses of political economy, anthropology, and literature codified religious, economic, and aesthetic values and practices as belonging to distinct domains and, in so doing, concealed the ethical investments that undergird political economic theory.

### *Modes of Sacralization*

To emphasize how certain values and practices came to be identified with the religious or economic across the disciplines of political economy, anthropology, and literature is not to offer yet another Weberian-inflected account of political economy’s debt to a Christian religious paradigm, whether that be its latent deism, providentialism, or evangelical ideals.<sup>12</sup> Far from it. Instead, I argue that it is no accident that the discourses of political economy and anthropology simultaneously developed as fields at the very moment that they set out to constitute

their objects of inquiry as the radically distinct, if not opposed, realms of the economic and the religious.<sup>13</sup> Nor is it an accident that our very assumption that the economic and religious constitute two distinct ways of knowing and being in the world emerged on the basis of a fundamental and artificial opposition that anthropological writings of the period posited and sought to naturalize: the opposition of the sacred and profane.

Focusing on the separation of the sacred and profane in relation to the discourses of nineteenth-century political economy and anthropology offers a new line of inquiry to already extant scholarship on their shared intellectual origins. Historians of anthropology such as George Stocking have documented the overlapping genealogies that underlie political economy and anthropology, from the debt to teleological, Enlightenment narratives of progress to the methodological assumptions taken from Comtian positivism. The continuities between political economy and anthropology are particularly evident, as critics have noted,<sup>14</sup> in the way early political economy often frames the rise of capitalist society within narratives of progress from “savage” to “civilized” societies—narratives of progressive enlightenment and civilization that later became a staple dimension to anthropological accounts of human history. The movement of ethnographic narratives from political economic to anthropological discourse curiously coincides with what Christopher Herbert describes as an enigmatic “lapse” in anthropological writings in the first half of the nineteenth century, when political economic inquiry expanded, and the resurgence of anthropology in the second half of the century when political economy began to wane in stature (*Culture and Anomie* 74). Herbert claims that this enigmatic disappearance and resurgence of anthropology can be understood not simply as the usurpation of economic themes by emergent sociological fields, such as anthropology, but also as the cross-disciplinary trajectory of the culture concept. Herbert reads the concept of culture as a symbolic system of interrelated values that constrains the threat of illimitable desire; this symbolic system manifests itself across the discourses of anthropology and political economy, whether that be the “complex whole” of culture or the economy as an integrated, holistic system (29–59). The curious lapse in anthropological writings in the first half of the nineteenth century is thus evidence of the way in which the culture concept, earlier articulated in the eighteenth century by philosophers of *Bildung* such as Herder, then becomes crystallized in nineteenth-century political economy, only then to reappear as the central organizing concept within anthropology during the second half of the century (74–75). But while anthro-

pologists like Tylor claim to examine the “complex whole” of culture, their primary endeavor when working under this umbrella term was to categorize and define a specific set of behaviors, practices, beliefs, and values as transhistorical, transnational phenomena that constitute the essence of “religion” *tout court*,<sup>15</sup> that is, as phenomena oriented toward the sacred as a realm set apart from the profane realm that comprised the everyday, the public, and economic life. The enigmatic lapse in political economy’s prestige mid-century and concomitant rise of anthropology, the transposition of Enlightenment narratives of stadial progress from political economy to anthropology, can thus be understood as coincident with an intellectual historical moment in which the discourses of political economy and anthropology came to oppose the religious and economic, the sacred and profane. Our limited understanding of what constitutes an economic agent or economic behavior, our blindness to the ethical and sociological ideals that undergird the dominant narrative of capitalism, is indebted to this opposition.

Thus when I use the phrase *modes of sacralization* in this book I mean two things. First, I mean a set of categories that nineteenth-century anthropologists construct (if not invent) in order to describe “primitive” values, modes of knowing, and practices antithetical to a secularized, Western modernity. Second, I use the phrase to describe how these very values and practices already operated within political economy despite efforts at segregation. My point throughout this book is that while categories such as “ritual” or “magic” police the distinctions between primitive and modern, non-utilitarian and utilitarian behavior, they in fact participate in a continuum of values and practices that unfold in the capitalist, public sphere. These values and practices, moreover, aim to stabilize a social and economic order unsteadied by the very shift into modernity that anthropologists and political economists typically applaud.

One of the delicate tasks this book must perform is to read such concepts as the “sacred” or “ritual” back into economic theory as a way, first, to deconstruct the opposition of religious and economic values and practices and, second, to make visible an underlying preoccupation in political economy with ideals of communality, consensus, reciprocity, and just distribution; in performing these two tasks, I use the very categories that anthropologists constructed without reifying these categories as though the binary of the sacred and profane actually accounted for objectively distinct facets of human experience.<sup>16</sup> For someone like Mircea Eliade, the notion that the sacred represents a “wholly different order” of transcendent experience antithetical to our everyday, “natural ‘profane’

world” seems a self-evident proposition (11). Throughout this book, however, I consider such concepts as the product of an intellectual process that has its prehistory in the nineteenth century.

Talal Asad remarks, for example, that while the OED defines the early modern usage of “sacred” as referring to “individual things, persons, and occasions that were set apart and entitled to veneration,” the act of veneration and that of setting apart are not always identical (*Formations* 31). It was nineteenth-century anthropologists who introduced the universal opposition of sacred and profane as the essence of religion (31–32).<sup>17</sup> Unlike notions of taboo, where the sacred and profane stand interrelated, nineteenth-century anthropologists conceived the sacred as a transcendental power opposed to the mundane realm of the profane (36). While I, like Asad, pay attention to the constructedness of the sacred/profane binary and situate such concepts against the backdrop of modernity and secularization narratives, my aim in this book is not to theorize the secular.<sup>18</sup> Rather, I demonstrate how in segregating the profane from the sacred, economic from religious, nineteenth-century literary, economic, and anthropological writers rendered imperceptible their theoretical convergence.

This theoretical convergence has been obscured not only by specific discourses in the nineteenth century, but also by broader narratives of modernity and secularization. Habermas has defined modernity as a particular consciousness that understands itself in opposition to the traditions and history of the past (“Modernity” 39). The break from traditional values introduces a self-consciousness and reflexivity in which the order of the world, as Zygmunt Bauman writes, is “*reflected upon*” rather than perceived as a given (5, emphasis original). We have come to understand modernity not only as a break from tradition, but also as those rapid economic, technological, and administrative changes that gave rise to a capitalist, industrial society, separated the institutionalized public sphere from the deinstitutionalized private sphere, and abstracted social relations from the temporal and spatial synchronicity of intimate face-to-face relations.<sup>19</sup> Frequently linked with these narratives of modernity are narratives of secularization in which, as Weber famously claimed, progressive rationalization results in the “disenchantment” (*Entzauberung*) of a world no longer saturated, as in the case of pre-modern, tradition-bound societies, with the sacred (“Science” 155).<sup>20</sup> The force of Weber’s thesis persists. Charles Taylor’s recent work, *A Secular Age*, for all its quibbles with secularization’s “subtraction stories” (22), maintains the broader outlines of Weber’s narrative of modernity and religious disenchantment.<sup>21</sup>

The various values and practices I have grouped under the rubric of modes of sacralization simultaneously rely upon and undermine these typical narratives of modernity and secularization. What we see in the nineteenth century is a paradoxical process in which economic, anthropological, and literary writers address a climate of increasing economic and moral relativism associated with modernity's break from tradition and the absence of face-to-face relations by invoking the very pre-modern values that the modern, secular nation-state had seemingly abandoned.<sup>22</sup> I am thus particularly interested in how modes of sacralization exhibit a proto-functionalist preoccupation with social cohesion and consensus, a Durkheimian anxiety regarding the sanctity of the social body precisely because, as Bauman states, the order of the world for moderns has become a problem (6).<sup>23</sup> My interpretive focus on incipient functionalist elements has influenced the historical range of anthropological scholarship I treat in this book. I primarily focus on the central figures of nineteenth-century anthropology such as E. B. Tylor, James Frazer, John Ferguson McLennan, Henry Sumner Maine, and William Robertson Smith, tracing their arguments into the early functionalism of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. By destabilizing the opposition of the sacred and profane and reading such concepts as "ritual" back into concepts of exchange, we see how nineteenth-century economists, anthropologists, and literary thinkers alike identified social cohesion and consensus with "the sacred" even before Durkheim.

### *Scenes of Forgetting*

It was not only the opposition of the religious and economic, sacred and profane, that contributed to segregating the double narrative of capitalism, but also the self-constitution of political economy, anthropology, and literature as discrete discursive fields. These discourses, despite their varied methodological, analytical, and ideological investments, each reinforced the dominant narrative of self-interested economic man and thus tacitly suppressed the ethical investments that run through political economy. Regenia Gagnier has shown, for example, how the so-called marginal revolution of the 1870s inaugurated by William Stanley Jevons, Léon Walras, and Karl Menger consolidated the narrowing of political economy into a distinct discipline (*Insatiability* 19–60). According to typical intellectual histories of economic ideas, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "classical" political economists such as David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill erred in defining the exchange value (price) of goods and services as deter-

mined *objectively* by the various elements of the cost of production, such as land, labor, wages, capital, etc., even as they acknowledged that prices were also *subjectively* influenced by consumer demand and supply.<sup>24</sup> Although the importance of subjective factors such as consumer preference, choice, and the laws of supply and demand had already been intimated by early British political economists such as Samuel Bailey, Richard Whately, Nassau Senior, and T. R. Malthus (Dobb 97, 99, 109), the decisive shift toward subjective theories of value occurred with the marginal revolution, which marked the beginning of “neoclassical” economics.

Unlike classical economists who had given particular attention to the macroeconomic processes of production and distribution, the neoclassical school of economics founded by Jevons, Walras, and Menger approached the problem of distribution through a microeconomic analysis of individual consumption patterns: prices express the supply and demand for scarce goods and services, and these prices simultaneously determine the formation and distribution of incomes (Schumpeter 567; Hollander *Smith* 5). The neoclassical approach to economics signaled a broader reconceptualization and professionalization of the discipline as a science that demanded an advanced knowledge of mathematics to determine a commodity’s utility function, that is, the degree to which the demand for scarce goods or services correlated with a consumer’s preferences and desires.<sup>25</sup> No more, as Alfred Marshall once quipped, could a Harriet Martineau or a Jane Marcet popularize a discipline whose concepts and methods were illegible to the untrained eye.<sup>26</sup>

The mathematization of the discipline further rendered political economy a subject of expertise and uncoupled it from its intellectual genealogy in the moral sciences.<sup>27</sup> Nineteenth-century political economists like Jevons deliberately distanced political economy from its sociological origins, privileging its narrative of self-interested competition and applying the model of physics to theories of economic exchange and behavior.<sup>28</sup> As Jevons states in *The Theory of Political Economy* (1871), unless political economy redefines itself as a mathematical science and follows the principles of deductive logic rather than the inductive methods of the social sciences, political economy will be “a congeries of miscellaneous disconnected facts, or else it must fall in as one branch of Mr. Spencer’s Sociology” (xvi). Jevons’s position would become symptomatic of a tension in British political economy as it tried to balance the mathematical approach of continental economists and the sociological approach inherited from Adam Smith.

Yet it was not just the progressive mathematization of political economy



that foregrounded the dominant narrative of capitalism, but also the progressive attempt over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to constitute “economy” as a distinct *system*. I put economy in scare quotes without the definite article in order to underscore, following Timothy Mitchell, the *longue durée* in which our contemporary notion of “the economy” as “a free-standing object” (inclusive of the definite article) emerged (“Rethinking Economy” 1116). This notion of the economy as a system achieved its greatest coherence in the twentieth century, but has its prehistory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thinking of the economy as a system, moreover, was integral to the dominant narrative of political economy as narrative. Mary Poovey has shown in her analysis of Adam Smith how the trope of the economy as system provided a satisfying *narrative* of complete wholeness through its depiction of the economy as an interconnected system. Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as Hume and Smith drew on the methods of conjectural history, whereby conjecture supplied abstract fictions such as a human mind motivated by self-interest in order to seal the gap between what could be observed and what could be presented as part of the “narrative” or “system” that political economy supplies about human nature and the origin of society (Poovey *History* 226–32). Through the concept of system, a set of miscellaneous facts and behavioral patterns then became visible in the abstract as the economic and the narrative of the economy as a system fueled by self-interested individualism attained coherence. The fiction of the economy as system thus produced what it purported to describe (236–38). Smith writes in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, for example, that “[i]t gives us a pleasure to see the phaenomena which we reckoned the most unaccountable all deduced from some principle (commonly a well-known one) and all united in one chain, far superior to what we feel from the unconnected method where everything is accounted for by itself without any reference to the others” (146).<sup>29</sup> In political economy, self-interest provides the unifying principle that produces a holistic system and has suasive force precisely because it supplies a narrative, irrespective of how fictive this narrative may be.

Political economy’s coherent narrative of a system fueled by the self-interested drives of *homo economicus* was, moreover, bolstered by the narratives that anthropological and humanist/aesthetic discourses fashion in their representations of society. The humanist and aesthetic disciplines augmented the perception of capitalism as narrowly rooted in self-interest and unconcerned with extra-utilitarian values through their critiques of capitalist materi-

alism and the presentation of their own disciplines as the potential repository for non-utilitarian values, whether aesthetic or ethical, and thus distinct from political economic discourse. John Guillory forcefully argues that the opposition of aesthetic and economic discourse covers up the joint disciplinary genealogy of political economy and aesthetics in eighteenth-century moral philosophy. The eighteenth-century problematic of relating private interest to public good, the economic to the cultural, production to consumption, uncovered an inescapable incommensurability that could only be addressed, he claims, by separating wholesale the field of aesthetics, culture, and consumption from the realm of commodity production and exchange (312)—a separation that introduced “the mutual forgetting [that] constitutes aesthetics and political economy as antithetical discourses” (317).

My argument, however, uncovers another scene of forgetting—one in which economic and literary writers alike mediate the conflict between public good and private interests, use values and exchange values, by invoking the various modes of sacralization I previously mentioned. Hence, while social critics like John Ruskin or novelists like Charles Dickens were ideologically opposed to various facets of capitalism and turn to notions of sacrifice, the sacred/profane, or ritual in order to imagine a community grounded in disinterestedness, reciprocity, and communality and critique capitalism’s ethos of self-interested individualism, systems of credit, and commodity culture, they in fact engage in a similar set of discursive strategies latent in political economy. This commonality in strategy has been difficult to detect, in part, because for many nineteenth-century critics of capitalism the strategy itself embodied the range of values that capitalism disregarded and thus was allied to an alternate form of social organization. Yet it has also been difficult to detect because the genealogical interrelations between political economic and aesthetic discourses have been examined thus far without an equally sustained attention to the role played by anthropological inquiry in their disciplinary trajectories. Thus, if we have failed to recognize the shared strategy among both theorists and critics of capitalism, it is because the very modes of sacralization that I have described as integral to the double narrative of capitalism were disarticulated from political economic discourse and rearticulated within anthropology’s own distinct narrative (also fictional and conjectural) about the origins of society and human nature.

The satisfying narrative of coherence about the economy as a system finds its correlative in anthropology through the holistic system of culture. Like Hume, anthropologists from John Lubbock to Tylor bridged gaps in the his-

torical records in order to provide accounts on the unrecorded origins of society through conjecture and fiction. This reliance on conjecture and fiction was, as John Zammito argues, essential to the eighteenth-century beginnings of anthropological inquiry into the nature of man. In the late eighteenth century, anthropology as the “science of man” crystallized through disparate fields of inquiry such as medicine, psychology, conjectural history, and the “*literary anthropology*” epitomized in such genres as the novel, essay, and travelogue (222, emphasis original). While Zammito traces such contiguities by focusing on the German philosophical and aesthetic roots of anthropology (160), Robert Crawford makes the genealogical continuities between literature and anthropology more plain within the British context by charting the influence of Walter Scott on Scottish anthropologists such as McLennan, Robertson Smith, and, particularly, Frazer, whose work *The Golden Bough* bears generic traces of the *Waverly* novels (e.g., travelogue, epic, romance) (Crawford 164–65). Such eclecticism was disciplined in the nineteenth century by the comparative method, which organized the miscellaneous congeries of customs, beliefs, and practices extracted from a hodgepodge of materials into a coherent narrative of human nature and progressive civilization in which a specific set of values, practices, beliefs, motives, and customs was identified as belonging to categories called magic, ritual, sacred, sacrifice, or totemism—categories that were then, to quote Smith, “united in one chain” through the concept of culture.

These narratives of holistic coherence, from the image of a self-regulated economy to the concept of culture, point to a *formal* feature shared between sociological and literary discourses: they both rely on the formal criterion of organic unity that has so long been a staple of aesthetics. In the sociological and literary fields I examine, such fictions of coherence are not simply aesthetically appealing; they also provide consoling fictions of social cohesion. We can understand this consolation in terms of Fredric Jameson’s argument that literary form both reflects contradictions in the social world and supplies an “imaginary resolution” to these contradictions (*Marxism and Form* 383). Or to put it another way, we can treat each of the three fields under question in my study as posing, to some extent, a mythic relation to the social. Drawing on Lacan’s account of myth, Elsie B. Michie has recently argued that nineteenth-century novels, in particular, are “mythic” in the sense that myth functions for Lacan as an “objectified representation of an epos or as a chronicle expressing in an imaginary way the fundamental relationships characteristic of a certain mode of being human at a specific period” (qtd. in Michie *Vulgar* 6). I would extend

Michie's observation on novels to include other genres of nineteenth-century literature (e.g. short story or essay). While the aesthetic criterion of organic unity applies to a variety of genres and aesthetic media, it is in narrative representations of social life and the "mythic," or imaginary, relationship that they construe to the social world that we see the aesthetic criterion of organic unity yoked most forcefully to problems of social cohesion. In this context, both the sociological and literary fields I consider in this book exhibit a structural-functionalist anxiety about social cohesion that manifests itself formally in fictions of coherence. It is thus perhaps no accident that Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, a work devoted to examining how novelistic narrative in particular functions as a "socially symbolic act" (17 and *passim*), draws on Durkheim's sociology of religion. As this book suggests, the intersection of narrative and a proto-functionalist preoccupation with social cohesion is a partial legacy of the nineteenth century and further testifies to nineteenth-century literature's sociological vision.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to these shared formal features, anthropological and literary discourse also tacitly contributed to concealing the ethical norms that undergird political economy's fictions of coherence. Anthropology's eclecticism, proximity to "literary anthropology," and eighteenth-century roots in aesthetics and literature, as well as the "mutually entwined" emergence of anthropology and literature with "modern economics" (Crawford 20), made the discourses of anthropology and literature uniquely compatible bedfellows in segregating the double narrative of capitalism. Victorian anthropological investigations into primitive society rerouted an assemblage of practices and values codified as sacrifice, the sacred/profane, magic, ritual, fetishism, and totemism to the colonial margins even as they cast a backward glance to the metropolitan center, where these values continued to shape British economic life as "survivals" that ghost (as in Dickens) modernity and that scientific rationalism must expunge. If anthropology rerouted such values and practices to the periphery, humanist and aesthetic disciplines reintroduced them at the metropolitan center, where, whatever uncomfortable proximity they bore to primitive society was overshadowed by their antagonism to capitalist values. The circuit that these values and practices travel from periphery to center thus resulted in the formation of oppositional cultures, whether "primitive culture" or the culture of aesthetic humanism, that nevertheless participated within the broader continuum of "culture" that Gallagher and Herbert theorize. These oppositional cultures, moreover, buttress a narrative of modernity in which the opposition of the sa-

cred and the profane is not the result of a synchronic segregation of the economic from the religious, but what either haunts modern British society or what, regrettably, it has left behind.

Aiding the construction of anthropology and literature's oppositional cultures, I contend, is the inverse yet interdependent relationship between the two discourses. James Buzard has argued that many nineteenth-century novels function as "metropolitan autoethnography" that produce representations of "genuine" British culture in opposition to the "*disconnected*" and materialistic "anticulture" at home (7, 20–21, 29, emphasis original). Following Edward Said's claims in *Culture and Imperialism* that the nineteenth-century British novel is shaped by its exclusion of empire, Buzard reads the novel as a defensive response to the potential dilution of British culture that attends imperial expansion (43). Mid-Victorian novels by writers such as Dickens and Eliot anticipate ethnographic fieldwork by presenting narrators and characters in ways similar to ethnographers and indigenous informants. Buzard claims that "the nineteenth-century novel anticipates modern field-working ethnography *in reverse*, by construing the narrator's (and many characters') desired position vis-à-vis the fictional world it depicts as that of an *insider's outsideness*" in order to represent British culture for a British audience (12, emphasis original). What I am suggesting is a slight variation of this process, where the movement from inside to outside articulates an ideal representation of British culture as harmonious, organic, and spiritual, not only in opposition to a domestic "anticulture," but also to the utopian or anti-utopian aspects of those primitive cultures that occupy the imperial periphery. Hence, accompanying the inversion of the participant-observer, fictional and non-fictional prose writers also invert ethnographic representations of primitive culture, wherein pre-capitalist relations, organic wholeness, and the social embeddedness of the sacred become integral to idealized representations of British culture. It is due in part to this ethnographic function of fictional and non-fictional prose—their status as "*literary anthropology*"—that this book privileges the novel, short story, and prose writers like Ruskin. I use Zammito's term "*literary anthropology*" not only to designate the genealogical interrelations between anthropological and literary discourses but, like Regenia Gagnier, also to specify a critical reading practice that considers imaginative literature as concerned (like anthropology) with questions of human nature and forms of sociality (Gagnier "Literary" 375). In the next two sections I offer an example of how literature and anthropology stage the movement of values from periphery to center I have described as central to

the double narrative of capitalism. I first consider Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, where this movement unfolds through the shift from France to England, and then turn to anthropological theories of "archaic" gift economies.

### *The Example of Dickens*

*A Tale of Two Cities* begins by comparing France and England in the year 1775, just a year before Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations*. While I am not suggesting that the novel deliberately alludes to Smith's publication, its plot and allegorical treatment of characters replicate the very shift in economic thought that the *Wealth of Nations* promulgates, that is, a shift from mercantilist policy to an economy in which wealth resides in the productive capacities of labor rather than the accumulation of gold and silver. Although it focuses on paper money rather than bullion, Dickens's novel voices a similar critique of mercantilism in its opening chapter by faulting France for its circulation of paper money.<sup>31</sup> France "rolled with exceeding smoothness down hill, making paper money and spending it" (Dickens *Tale of Two Cities* 8).<sup>32</sup> In contrast to the circulation and accumulation of money, characters like Darnay and Carton exemplify the principle of productive labor. Their acts of self-sacrificing labor, moreover, rearticulate the sacred in a manner that effectively mediates the relation between individual desire and public good without collapsing them, as do the French revolutionaries, into the absolutism of the state. Hence while the French Revolution marked a historical shift toward liberal, democratic forms of government, in Dickens's novel the revolution is hampered by its recidivism to savagery. The blood spilt on "the altar of the dawning Republic" marks the resurgence of a savage, sacrificial violence (248). "One of the frenzied aspirations of the populace was, for imitations of the questionable public virtues of antiquity, and for sacrifices and self-immolations on the people's altar" (318–19). The modern liberal state, in Dickens's account, consecrates its foundation not by breaking from the traditions of antiquity, but by imitating its rituals. Rather than suggest that citizens of a liberal, capitalist state abandon sacrificial practices, the novel holds such imitations up for critique in order to exhort its readers to privatize and individualize their performance.

The novel provides its most compelling example of privatized, individuated sacrifice at its conclusion. Sydney Carton's act of self-sacrifice remains distinct from the revolution's public rituals of sacrificial violence not through its mode

of performance, which is of course public, but through its Christian scheme of resurrection (Hutter “Novelist” 19–20). Much like the passage from “Night Shadows,” critical responses to Carton’s redemptive act of sacrifice uncover another paradoxical treatment of bourgeois individualism. J. M. Rignall argues that Carton, on the one hand, stands as a victim of bourgeois social forces and emblemizes the alienated individualism that “Night Shadows” laments. Yet, on the other hand, “[t]he puritan ethic of disciplined personal endeavor demands renunciation such as Carton has been neurotically making all along, and its final act is the renunciation of life itself” (Rignall 584). Rignall claims this makes the altruism of his act questionable since it redeems Carton’s useless life by affirming the very values that initially alienated him. Cates Baldrige similarly contends that Dickens displaces his ultimate sympathy for the principles of bourgeois individualism through his characterization of Carton and Lorry. Carton, he claims, can only salvage the principle of liberal individualism “by temporarily violating one of its fundamental tenets” through his sacrifice and annihilation of self (Baldrige 647).

But Carton’s sacrifice proves necessary and productive precisely because it results in the reproduction of the bourgeois individualism he seemingly sacrifices. Carton, in this regard, allegorizes a pattern in nineteenth-century theories of value that I discuss in Part I of this book: Carton’s sacrifice participates in a circular, gift-sacrifice economy in which life is sacrificed only to be reproduced. This act of sacrifice, moreover, does not oppose self-interest to communal interests, but “reconfigure[s] them as one” (Schramm 172). Carton himself dreams of how his sacrifice will result in his perpetual self-reproduction in the final passages of the novel, wherein he imagines Lucie Manette’s son named after him and an entire generation hearing his story. Chris Vanden Bossche argues that Carton’s egotistical dream of endless reproduction erases Darnay’s presence and undermines the altruism of his self-sacrifice (211). But Carton’s fantasy only appears at odds with his act of sacrifice if we read capitalism as opposing the values of self-sacrifice and self-interest. However, if we read Carton allegorically as a representation of self-interested individualism, an individualism that reproduces wealth through self-sacrificing acts of labor, the next generation of Cartons will be a more effective embodiment of capitalist tenets.

The doubling of Carton and Darnay strengthens such a reading; the absence of Darnay from the family that Carton imagines in the final lines of the novel does not reference a moment of erasure but their conflation into one identity.<sup>33</sup> Just as Carton’s self-sacrifice reaffirms values central to bourgeois

capitalism and individualism, Darnay leaves behind a life of aristocratic privilege for London, where “[h]e had expected labour, and he found it, and did it, and made the best of it” (Dickens *Tale of Two Cities* 124). In learning the “gospel of work,” Darnay’s labor stands distinguished from both Carton’s life of dissipation and the alienated, mechanical labor of Doctor Manette’s shoemaking. In the moment of his death and fusion with his double, Carton finally performs a labor that makes him useful, and the rebirth he imagines “in that England which I shall see no more” is the one Darnay experiences when he leaves behind the value systems of the *ancien régime* and embraces the puritan work ethic of England, where he is “always actively employed” (360, 232).<sup>34</sup> At the moment where Darnay’s and Carton’s identities fuse, so do their allegorical functions: Carton becomes Evrémonte, the everyman of bourgeois capitalism. The final scene of the novel consolidates these values by translating public rituals of violent sacrifice that consecrate the “altar” of the state, to a private, interior ritual of sacrifice in which Carton consecrates the self and is forever “held sacred in the other’s soul” (361).<sup>35</sup> The temporal synchronicity of Carton’s sacrifice with Lucie and Darnay’s escape in the novel’s plot also marks a pivotal moment of diachronic transition from the French populace’s ritualistic practice of public sacrifice into the modern, interiorized expression of ascetic labor that Weber would later critique.<sup>36</sup>

If Carton’s final act of sacrifice instances the transition from public to private rituals of sacrifice and integrates the tenets of self-interested individualism with self-sacrificing labor essential to capitalist economic practice, it effects this integration through narrative. When Carton fantasizes about his resurrection through a patrilineal lineage founded through Lucie, he imagines his resurrection in the form of “story” (361). The “story” of his life that Carton imagines his future son telling is, like the novel itself, the story of the double narrative of capitalism—the separation of its dual strands and successful reintegration. Novelistic narrative, Dickens suggests, synthesizes seemingly contrary schemes of value inherent to the double narrative of capitalism. Dickens hints at the role novelistic “story” plays in this process early in the novel when Lorry and Lucie first meet, and he relates to her the discovery of her father.

“Miss Manette, I am a man of business. I have a business charge to acquit myself of. In your reception of it, don’t heed me any more than if I was a speaking machine—truly, I am not much else. I will, with your leave, relate to you, miss, the story of one of our customers.”



“Story!”

He seemed willfully to mistake the word she had repeated, when he added, in a hurry, “Yes, customers; in the banking business we usually call our connexion our customers. . . .” (25)

Like Dickens’s portrait of Wemmick, Lorry represents the complete separation of private virtue and sentiment from public self-interest and business (Hutter “Nation” 45). This complete divorce surfaces in his purposeful substitution of “customers” for “story” and his insistence throughout his conversation with Lucie that there is “no friendship” and “nothing like sentiment” in what he relates to her of her father’s past (Dickens *Tale of Two Cities* 26). Yet it is precisely “story,” the sentimental story of characters who are all connected through Lucie, that the novel relates and that eventually reconciles the separation of values that Lorry practices—a story that Carton imagines being told and retold at the novel’s close. Lucie herself embodies this reconciliation since Dickens equates her with “the golden thread that bound all together” and through her he weaves his narrative (202).

Dickens’s characterization of Lucie illuminates another aspect crucial to segregating and reintegrating the dual narratives of capitalism—the British domestic space. Lucie’s role as the domestic angel, an ideological function I examine further in Part III of this book, provides the female correlative to Carton’s brand of self-sacrificing, bourgeois individualism. If Carton’s final acts of self-sacrifice encode the public rituals of sacrifice in private expressions of individual labor, Lucie performs a similar translation through her private acts of self-sacrificing domesticity, the “magic secret” that then creates a “united home” (204). Dickens deliberately contrasts Lucie’s acts of domestic sacrifice to the scenes of sacrificial violence in France whose “echoes, from a distance, . . . rumbled menacingly” (205). Both Carton and Lucie perform a crucial operation within the double narrative of capitalism, rearticulating savage violence and rites of consecration as acts of private agency that furnish British capitalism with its staple ideologies, all the while rendering their debt to these antique values into mere “echoes.”

In staging the movement of these antique values from periphery to center, Lucie also stages the transition from a past, failed economy in France to a new, wealthier economy in Britain based on the values that she and Darnay/Carlton epitomize. This movement of values coincides with the movement of wealth. Dickens’s “sentimental equation of Lucie Manette with a ‘golden thread’” not

only identifies her with narrative (Rignall 582), but also with gold itself—the monetary wealth that Tellson’s Bank conserves for its customers. As “the ward of Tellson’s House,” she is yet another piece of customer property that Lorry supervises (Dickens *Tale of Two Cities* 26). In the dialogue that unfolds between Lorry and Lucie as he relates the “business” of her father’s reappearance, Lorry remarks, “You speak collectedly, and you—*are* collected” (27). The monetary implication of Lorry’s use of “collected” is difficult to miss. The relocation (and collection) of the Manette family in England, in this regard, parallels the trip Lorry later takes to France on behalf of his clients in hopes of collecting and securing their property and investments from confiscation.

This movement of wealth from France to England catalyzes a scene of disinterment as the ghosts of defeated royalists haunt the stores where their money once lay. “Spirits are supposed to haunt the places where their bodies most resorted, and Monseigneur without a guinea haunted the spot where his guineas used to be” (226). Dickens’s novel here returns to the rhetoric of spectrality to portray how Lucie and Sydney productively call up the sacred, rearticulating the antique values of sacrifice, the sacred, and ritual in order to turn England into a place of wealth, even as it configures such values as the ghosts of capitalism’s past. If money “busies itself with ghosts” (45–46), as Derrida writes, it does so through a process of “conjunction” that seeks both “to exorcise” and “disavow” the spirit that threatens to “[come] back” (*Specters of Marx* 41, 48). Dickens’s plot in *A Tale of Two Cities* strategically deploys the progressive temporality that undergirds Derrida’s analysis in order to present the sacred as what inhabits a past anterior to capitalism that threatens to return and must be disavowed, all the while describing a synchronic historical moment (the year 1775) in which Britain successfully accumulates capital by synthesizing the economic and religious values it purports to segregate. By distancing England from those French values and practices that characterize “the wildest savages” and yet reinscribing them within an ethos of bourgeois individualism (Dickens *Tale of Two Cities* 251), *A Tale of Two Cities* performs the work of segregation, displacement, and reintegration central to the double narrative of capitalism.

### ***Archaic Economies***

In contrast to Dickens’s novel, Victorian anthropologists examined the practices and values of “the wildest savages” not in revolutionary France but the

colonial periphery. It has become a truism to regard these excursions to the colonial periphery as a veiled examination of metropolitan anxieties and values—the anthropological counterpart to Orientalist discourse.<sup>37</sup> Adam Kuper remarks, for example, that nineteenth-century anthropologists (e.g. Tylor, Maine, McLennan, and Durkheim) “constructed mirror images of their own society” and then “projected these back into the distant past, creating anti-Utopias (or, in the case of some romantics, Utopias)” (“Rise” 109). While Kuper’s comment distinguishes Victorian constructions of primeval society from the concerns of contemporary anthropologists, Victorian anthropologists were themselves aware that they were primarily interested in the relationship between the past and contemporary British society. Tylor admits as much in *Primitive Culture* (1871) when responding to criticism that ethnography focuses on antiquarian relics rather than the “partizan diatribes on the questions of the day” (1:143). Tylor goes on to claim that the ethnographer’s analysis of the past in fact yields greater truths for the contemporary moment by showing how “antiquity and savagery bear upon our modern life,” “how direct and close the connexion may be between modern culture and the condition of the rudest savage” (1:144). Tylor’s aim in unveiling these connections is, ostensibly, to rid Britain of its close ties to savagery.

Tylor’s comments point to a recurring incoherence that subsequent chapters in this book will chart more carefully. Far from providing a linear, progressive narrative of modernization in which British thought and social practice successfully weed out the vestiges of savagery, nineteenth-century anthropological theorizations of the sacred/profane, taboo, totemism, ritual, and magic in fact expose a temporality that is at once recursive and progressive. This temporal incoherence, however much displaced through an analysis of primeval society, replicates tensions and overlaps within the double narrative of capitalism. Hence, rituals of gift sacrifice are deemed primitive only then to appear central to modern notions of labor, value, and economic reproduction; ritual occupies a position wholly distinct from utilitarian models of rational action only then to reemerge within a continuum of symbolic actions that includes economic exchange; magic functions as the profane other of religion and the sacred only then to unmask itself as a disruptive, extra-institutional form of capitalist self-interest.

The incoherence I identify within anthropological writings and, by extension, the double narrative of capitalism, points to an incoherence within narratives of modernity more generally. Bruno Latour argues that “[m]odern tempo-

rality arises from a super-position of the difference between past and future” in which “[t]he present is outlined by a series of radical breaks, revolutions . . . that prevent us from ever going backward” (71–72). The imposition of such linearity is part and parcel of modernity’s attempt to segregate past from present, archaic from advanced, nature from culture—a linearity that suppresses a “polytemporal” framework in which time moves forward and backward (74). What we find in Victorian anthropology then is both the presence of a “polytemporal” framework and its continuous suppression. Victorian anthropology explores the transactions between Victorian culture and the sacred in its many guises, identifying the fluid boundaries between primitive and modern forms of thinking within contemporary Victorian culture even as it reified the distinctions between the primitive and modern subject, religious and secular, that have been central to the narrative of modernity. In these writings we not only find a codification of such categories as gift sacrifice or magic, which provides this book with an analytical tool to elucidate how notions of the sacred operate within literature and political economy, but we also find a contradictory engagement with the continuities between modern, capitalist Britain and primitive societies that mirrors political economy’s contrapuntal relation to the sacred.

As an example of how the contradictions and segregations within anthropology in fact rehearse tensions within the double narrative of capitalism, I want to turn to a debate with which many literary and cultural critics outside the field of anthropology are familiar: gift theory. Since Marcel Mauss’s publication of *Essai sur le don* (1925), scholars from various disciplines have debated the commonalities and divisions between archaic gift economies and modern capitalist exchange. For Mauss, the gift economy that characterizes Melanesian exchange practices represents but a medium through which Melanesians establish social obligations and norms. The gift embodies not just one type of communal bond, but all structures of reciprocity, exchange, and obligation. This tendency to totalize social phenomena expresses Mauss’s moral and political interest in gift economies as an alternative to British utilitarianism’s reduction of human agency to self-interested drives. Mauss and Hubert’s analysis of sacrificial ritual, in which they interpret the logic of gift sacrifice as the offering of something sacred to the gods so that the gods would be compelled to reciprocate, structures the analysis of reciprocal gift exchange. The gift is an expression of social bonds in which the receiver of the gift reciprocates the act of gift-giving by rendering a return gift that is both obligatory and, paradoxically, freely given. Mauss’s analysis of exchange practices centers on the thesis that

exchange in archaic economies appears “free and disinterested,” but is actually “constrained and self-interested” (*Gift* 3). Though the return gift presents itself as “voluntary,” it is in fact “reciprocated obligatorily” (3).

Mauss’s paradoxical assertion that the return gift is free and obligatory has created a schism in gift theory.<sup>38</sup> Intent on exposing Mauss’s mystification of exchange, especially the rivalries and contests of prestige inspired by agonistic exchange practices such as potlatch, theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Derrida focus on the self-interested motives concealed by the disinterested and reciprocal exchange of gifts. Both theorists unveil the bad faith in gift-giving, arguing that agents derive self-satisfaction from their seemingly altruistic behavior—what Derrida terms “auto-recognition” (“Time” 137). Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital resonates with similar grievances: collectively organized *misrecognition* underlies all gift exchanges and transfigures “interested relations” into “the sincere fiction of a disinterested exchange” (*Outline* 171). Interested actions are retrospectively understood as generosity but actually establish our elevated position within the social hierarchy. Both Derrida and Bourdieu, seizing on the problem of obligation in Mauss’s theorizations of the gift, conclude that so long as exchange binds us to others and obliges us to give, it is not really giving. This impossibility of the purely disinterested gift becomes for Derrida “*the impossible*” itself (“Time” 124, emphasis original).<sup>39</sup> By contrast, Mary Douglas and others have argued that the notion of the “free gift” contradicts the purpose of exchange in Mauss because it disentangles individuals from a state of indebtedness rather than reinforcing social obligations (Douglas “Free” vii–xvi).<sup>40</sup> Gift theory inevitably arrives at a repeated impasse: either self-interested desires form the basic motive of all exchanges in both archaic and capitalist economies or, following Mauss’s statement in *The Gift*, gift exchange lies “outside the bounds of the so-called natural economy, that of utilitarianism” (72).<sup>41</sup>

Rather than reducing archaic economies to versions of utilitarian capitalism or opposing the two economies as irreconcilable, I am interested in how both divisive approaches to the gift disclose, and yet conceal, the competing categories that structure capitalism. The logic of the gift exposes the double narrative that runs through political economic theory, but transfers these competing dynamics into its examination of “archaic” economies. As I demonstrate in subsequent chapters of this book, however, *both* the model of disinterested exchange that sacralizes social relations and establishes greater solidarity through the principle of reciprocity *and* the model of exchange as self-interested

competition and rivalry that creates hierarchy and unequal accumulation of wealth coexist in political economic theory. Economic theories of value and exchange strive to balance self-sacrifice and self-interest in an interdependent system of reciprocal exchange. The ideal of balanced reciprocity—the equivalence that Mauss ascribes to simple gift exchange—underlies theories of exchange and such theoretical ideals within economic theory as equilibrium.<sup>42</sup> And just as potlatch’s rivalries and hierarchies complicate Mauss’s model of reciprocity, capitalist economics encounters an internal tension within its ideal of reciprocity and communality since the principles of competitive self-interest and self-sacrifice do not simply balance each other, but propel economic growth through states of inequality and disequilibrium. The apparent dissonance between reciprocal, equivalent gifts and potlatch’s rivalries found in Mauss can thus be traced to capitalist economics itself.

But the divisive approaches to gift theory miss something else essential to their debate. Their arguments participate in a systematic intellectual pattern that I trace at the origins of anthropological investigation during the nineteenth century—a pattern in which categories central to anthropological analysis (e.g., magic, ritual, sacrifice, the sacred) emerged in contradistinction to capitalist modes of exchange and systems of valuation and thus further obscured the ethical investments of political economic theory. In this regard, claims that archaic economies represent ideals of communality, reciprocity, and social equilibrium antithetical to self-interested capitalist behavior or claims that all structures of exchange replicate models of self-interest equally contribute, however unwittingly, to the disciplinary narrowing of political economy that began in the nineteenth century in which *homo economicus* emerges as a rational, self-interested agent strategically weighing costs and benefits. Recent literary critics drawing on gift theory to analyze nineteenth-century British literature and culture, such as Jill Rappoport,<sup>43</sup> have demonstrated the inadequacy of this masculine model of exchange for women’s exchange practices.<sup>44</sup> Rappoport argues that nineteenth-century women synthesized self-interested and altruistic motives through gift exchange in order to expand alliances and attain monetary gains in a manner that disrupts what Stefan Collini has referred to as “the central polarity between altruism and egoism” among Victorian intellectuals (Collini *Public Moralists* 72; Rappoport 6).<sup>45</sup> But rather than simply examine how gift economies intersected with or operated alongside market economies,<sup>46</sup> this book challenges the very segregation of gift and market logic as two distinct protocols by demonstrating that both systems of valuation are internal to po-

litical economic theory but came to be opposed through the broad-scale separation of the economic from the religious. It thus offers a conflicted image of *homo economicus* as an agent who is self-interested and concerned with mutual self-sacrifice, reliant on calculated reason as well as the malleable powers ascribed to “the sacred.”

### ***Economic Criticism: Neither New nor Old***

*A Tale of Two Capitalisms* contributes to the long-standing body of critical works examining the intersection of literature and economics. This criticism, as Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen observe, began with an earlier, post-structuralist approach that examines the homologies between money and the linguistic sign (e.g., Marc Shell, Jean-Joseph Goux, and Jean Baudrillard) and has gradually shifted toward the application of new historicist and interdisciplinary methods to examine economic paradigms (2–3). Even these latter approaches, however, tend to give post-structuralist readings of economics as a symbolic or signifying system.<sup>47</sup> Mary Poovey’s *Genres of the Credit Economy*, for example, masterfully documents the generic conventions and social processes by which nineteenth-century writers in economic, journalistic, and literary circles naturalized what Hume once referred to as money’s “fictitious value” (*Political Discourses* 63). The increasing circulation of paper money only exacerbated the uncertain gap between money and the ground of their value, between sign and referent—a slippage Poovey refers to as the “problematic of representation” (*Genres* 6 and *passim*). In the context of such readings, value’s instability is a species of the problem of representation and mirrors the operations of a semiotic system.

The examination of value, money, debt, and credit as a problem of representation has been fruitful on a number of critical fronts—it has enabled literary critics to uncover the generic and disciplinary contiguities that economics and literature share and has shaped our understanding of how political economy influenced the form and content of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel.<sup>48</sup> These approaches to the relationship between literary and economic discourses become more pertinent in Parts III and IV of this book, where I take up literary representations of economic concepts or problems, but they do not guide my analysis of economic texts *per se*. Hence, although I agree with Poovey that the relativity of economic value in the nineteenth century signaled a gen-

eral sense of alarm at the decay of long-accepted conventions, mutual trust, and systems of authentication (*Genres* 6), my analysis of how this anxiety surfaces in economic concepts does not diagnose it as a problem of representation or signification. Rather, my investigation of such concepts as value, exchange, or equilibrium remains subordinated to how political economists conceived the economy, rightly or wrongly, as a *system* governed by specific economic laws such as the production, distribution, and consumption of goods in society. If my discussion of economic value and exchange in these early political economic texts is anywhere caught up with the problem of representation, it is in those places where economists detect a dissonance between what determines value or governs exchange and equilibrium in the age of capital and their theoretical *representations* of how the economic system as a whole, ideally, ought to function. This is in some sense the reverse of the Humean is-ought controversy: the difficulty that economists face is not that they infer how the economic system ought to function from a series of factual premises, but that the series of factual premises regarding how the economic system *is* and how its laws operate on the ground contradict their normative vision of how it *ought* to be.<sup>49</sup> It is during these moments of dissonance in particular that the mediating function of modes of sacralization becomes most apparent and the double narrative of capitalism comes more fully into view.

In elucidating this dissonance within theories of value and exchange as it ranges from Adam Smith to Alfred Marshall, I, like other recent literary critics (e.g., Poovey, Gagnier, Gallagher, Bigelow, and Klaver), engage with economic ideas more rigorously on their own terms and yet offer an interdisciplinary approach whose emphasis on cultural, sociological, and ethical questions departs from traditional economic histories. From the end of the nineteenth century and thereafter, economic historians have typically assessed eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political economy through the lens of economic progress and the extent to which early political economists have either contributed to or hindered the development of “correct” economic principles and methodologies (Hollander *Smith* 6–7). Seen through the lens of intellectual progress, economic historians have regarded earlier economic theory, particularly classical theories of economic value, as muddled in their logic, overly metaphysical, or simply misidentifying the problem of value altogether.<sup>50</sup> According to these economic histories, it is only with the rise of neoclassical economics and Walras’s general theory of equilibrium that we finally arrive at true economic theory. In the chapters that follow I both rehearse and depart from the broad outlines of this



teleological narrative. Like these economic histories, I give special attention to the analytical problems of value/price, exchange, and equilibrium. And like them, I concentrate on the most representative figures of these trends: Adam Smith, David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, William Stanley Jevons, Léon Walras, and Alfred Marshall. But if I take up such predictable figures in economic history, I do so in order to underscore the way in which political economy's most canonical thinkers contributed to the double narrative of capitalism during both the classical and the neoclassical phases. In so doing, I, like Catherine Gallagher, question the rupture economists have traditionally posited between the two schools. Gallagher's reading of nineteenth-century political economy attenuates the perception of a stark divide between classical and neoclassical economists by demonstrating how two "plots," the Malthusian, "bioeconomic" plot and the Benthamite, "somaeconomic" plot, run through classical political economy and into marginalists like Jevons (*Body Economic* 3).<sup>51</sup> Although my approach to the economic shift from classical to neoclassical doctrine resembles that of Gallagher, I want to underscore here and elsewhere that what persists between the classical and neoclassical schools and mediates their attention to matters of economic welfare is a set of values and practices that were progressively codified as the sacred.

By delineating the relationship between modes of sacralization and political economic arguments on value, exchange, or distribution, the book engages at strategic moments in what Marx, and Adorno following his lead, would term an immanent critique insofar as it examines political economic arguments internally and on its own terms, identifying those moments of tension or contradiction that reveal something essential to political economic thought that has hitherto gone unrecognized (Adorno 208). That said, it nevertheless takes a different tack than critiques of capitalism as ideological mystifications. Such critiques tend, for example, to reveal how normative theoretical formulations function as ideologies that "[float] free of their material foundation and deny its existence" or only "[relate] to real material conditions by masking or dissembling them, displacing them into other terms, speciously resolving their conflicts and contradictions" (Eagleton 231, 232). From this point of view, the way in which modes of sacralization or theories of equilibrium function within political economy could be seen as serving an ideological role that enables capitalist economics to present a dubious relationship between theory and material reality, or in the oft-quoted formulation by Althusser, to present an "imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (44). It is pre-

cisely such an ideological analysis, however, that I want to delay (though not necessarily exclude) since an analysis of norms as ideology can impede the very aim of immanent critique, what Adorno describes in somewhat Kantian terms as “a heightened perception of the thing itself” (208). While my argument is sensitive to the contradictions between economic theory and practice that has been so central to theories of ideology, I want to avoid the assumption within immanent critique “that the mind has always been under a spell” (Adorno 208). My fundamental concern in this book is rather to make visible a fuller range of political economy’s ethical commitments, with particular emphasis on its models of commutative and distributive justice, in order to revise both capitalism’s self-conception and the prevailing conception of capitalism among the community of leftist-minded humanist critics to which I belong.

### ***Organization of the Book***

My account of the double narrative of capitalism in this book unfolds in four parts, each comprising two chapters. In order to demonstrate the way in which the discourses of political economy and anthropology separated the economic from the religious, I have chosen to treat anthropological and economic material in separate chapters in the first two parts of the book, reading the concepts of sacrifice, ritual, or the sacred and profane back into economic theories of value and exchange. I do this to bring into relief, first, how these anthropological categories became disembedded from the utilitarian realm of economic values and practices and, second, how our understanding of capitalist economics changes when we deconstruct the opposition of the sacred and the profane and re-embed these anthropological categories within economic discourse. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this book, my aim in these chapters is to match attentiveness to rhetorical strategies and language—so long a feature of literary criticism—with a conceptual rigor that attends to argumentative structure and form. My goal, however, is not to determine the credibility of truth-claims put forth by either political economy or anthropology. Nor do I aim, given the temporal sweep of the texts I examine and the distinct voices articulated therein, at presenting a historical and necessarily causal relation between the intellectual patterns I identify in the book and a specific set of events. In those instances where I do link an intellectual pattern to historical events, as in Part III of this book, for example, I do so in relation to the particular writers under discussion

and for a discrete pattern rather than for the book's argument as a whole. As a circumscribed intellectual history, this book concentrates on the *textual* construction and transmission of ideas.

I begin providing this intellectual history by turning, in the book's first chapter, to nineteenth-century anthropological accounts of sacrificial ritual. I pay particular attention to the resemblances that anthropologists like Tylor and Robertson Smith either underscored or resisted between rituals of gift sacrifice and the capitalist marketplace. My aim is to show how the double narrative of capitalism surfaces in competing interpretations of gift sacrifice as either utilitarian or communitarian in motive—competing interpretations that then culminate, with Durkheim, in a synthesis. In chapter 2, I examine the political economic writings of John Ruskin alongside eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political economists from Smith to Jevons in order to demonstrate that the very synthesis found in Durkheim already operated in political economic theories of value. I claim that both Ruskin's critique of political economy and political economic theories of value draw on a circular, gift-sacrifice economy in which labor's sacrifice consecrates the economic body, ensures its reproduction, and establishes just economic relations.

I continue discussing how the discourses of anthropology and political economy articulated the interdependent strands of the double narrative of capitalism in Part II. Chapter 3 considers nineteenth- and twentieth-century anthropological and sociological theories of ritual, from Tylor and Robertson Smith to Weber, Durkheim, and Clifford Geertz, alongside theories of utilitarianism, rational choice, and games. This chapter provides an account of how the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witness a theoretical expansion to the category of collective action in which ritual and economic exchange participate in a continuum of social practices and function as a reflexive information system that generates consensus—a consensus that is frequently linked to notions of the sacred. Chapter 4 builds on these insights, focusing particularly on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of economic exchange and equilibrium from Smith to Walras. I begin this chapter again with Ruskin, who openly articulates the continuities between ritual, exchange, reciprocity, and consensus that remain buried within political economy. Turning to political economy, I elaborate how economic equilibrium functions as an idealized representation of the consensus that results from collective, coordinated acts of reciprocal exchange in which economic agents balance self-interest and self-sacrifice. I concentrate on Ruskin's writings in relation to political economy in this and the second chapter precisely because of his traditional position as a vocal and char-

ismatic critic of capitalism. Ruskin, along with other social critics like Carlyle and Arnold, has long occupied a formidable status within the “culture versus society” tradition, a tradition whose Romantic ethos was “nostalgic, pastoral, anti-capitalist, and suspiciously preoccupied with the paternalistic dissemination of ‘culture’” (Connell 283). In reading Ruskin and political economists against the grain in the second and fourth chapters, I demonstrate that, however much unorthodox or quixotic, Ruskin’s anti-capitalist arguments nevertheless typify the double narrative of capitalism—a narrative in which values such as sacrifice, the sacred, and ritual are not opposed to self-interested rationalism, but integral to a larger moral vision.

While Parts I and II trace the double narrative of capitalism through anthropology, political economy, and Ruskin, chapters 5 and 6 of Part III turn their attention to the novel, representations of material culture, and theories of kinship. These chapters examine Charles Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* (1846–48), George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), and Anthony Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now* (1875) in relation to nineteenth-century anthropologies of totemism. I illuminate how novelistic representations of commodities referred to as “household gods” and anthropologies of totemism construct fictional marriage-plot narratives in which the patriarchal conscription of women and sacred things stabilize an imaginary set of relations between economic value, kinship, property, and capitalist expansion. Both the domestic novel and Victorian anthropology, I contend, respond to the increasing historical possibility of women’s agency in the market by positing a necessary relationship between the expansion of capital and patriarchal structures of property and exchange. While domestic novels stage this relationship through the symbolic importance of women and their household gods, anthropologists do so by inventing the kinship category of totemism. I situate the double narrative of capitalism in these chapters in relation to the doubled position occupied by women and sacred things, both of which represent a scheme of value distinct from market value in order, paradoxically, to further market ends.

Shifting attention away from the British domestic space, chapters 7 and 8 of Part IV gauge how the dual strands within the double narrative of capitalism come into conflict when set against the background of global economic imperialism, that is, how ideals of a global, deterritorialized economy remain at odds with strategic economic competition between nation-states. Chapter 7 examines this problem by considering anthropological theories of magic in relation to the economic theories of Alfred Marshall and Francis Ysidro Edgeworth, as well as Rudyard Kipling’s fiction. Anthropologists from Tylor to Mauss, I con-

tend, theorize magic as genealogically continuous with science/technology and contrast magic's rebellious expression of self-interest to institutionalized expressions of self-interest and the sacred. I then show how the continuities between magic, science, and self-interest coalesce in scientific notions of "force" or energy. I trace the concept of force into the technological analogies (e.g., steam engine) that Marshall and Edgeworth provide for the economy as the balance of competing, quasi-magical "forces" prone to disequilibrium and unequal competition. The remainder of the chapter discusses these patterns in Kipling's short-story collection *The Day's Work* (1898), where steamships function as technological analogies for the economy and centralized imperial administration and instantiate the intersection of magic, science/technology, and capitalism. Here notions of the sacred, sacrifice, and ritual do not correct asymmetric power relations or unequal distribution as they did in Parts I and II, but legitimate British economic and political power.

The final chapter of the book turns to Kipling's *Kim* (1901) and its allegorical representation of decentralized forms of imperial administration and global economic imperialism, particularly its portrayal of the Great Game. The continuities I established in the previous chapter between magic, technology, self-interest, and energy appear in the symbolic equivalence the novel establishes between the novel's eponymous hero, the magical energies of the electric telegraph, and the Great Game. Through Kim's role in the Great Game and his connection to technologies such as the telegraph, Kipling represents the Great Game as a reflexive information system in which, much like my analysis of ritual, British Secret Service agents establish consensus, solidarity, and consecrate their relations. The latter parallels between the Great Game and ritual as reflexive information systems, however, disclose persistent asymmetries in power insofar as the solidarity established by members of the Great Game facilitates economic and political exploitation of the Indian subcontinent. In this context, the novel's strategic rivalries crystallize an aporia within the double narrative of capitalism, where models of mutuality, self-sacrifice, and interdependence, rather than consecrating a just society and correcting inequalities, in fact extend them. The closing pages of *Kim*, like the coda that concludes this book, thus suggest that the halcyon era of global economic interdependence and yet exploitative relations between rival nation-states, the triumph of secular neoliberalism and yet rising religious expression, are not just the tensions and contradictions that characterize contemporary global capitalism, but may have their roots in the double narrative of capitalism.

# Part I

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## CHAPTER 1

# Economies of Sacrifice

The overt examination of sacrificial rituals, their structure and origins, unfolds most prominently in late nineteenth-century ethnographic narratives of cultural evolution. In writings that would become foundational to the field of anthropology as a social scientific discipline, “armchair” anthropologists of the Victorian period such as Tylor, Robertson Smith, and Frazer investigated sacrifice as a means to organize various aspects of social life, from kinship and agricultural reproduction to the intimate bonds between clan members and their gods. The subject of sacrifice held continued interest precisely because it was regarded as a universal phenomenon whose history reached into the archaic origins of society. Sacrifice—with its dramatic scenes of primal violence and awe before the sacred and ungovernable forces of nature—captured the imagination of Victorian anthropologists and would emerge analytically as the foundational act of religious and social life. Although anthropologists primarily investigated the practice of sacrificial ritual among primitive societies, they remained acutely aware that any claim regarding sacrifice’s historical universality meant that it informed British religious and social practices as well. The most obvious corollaries were, of course, in biblical models of sacrifice. The *do ut des* economy that underlies sacrifice, whereby something sacrificed as gift or offering entails a reward in return, represents a recurring paradigm in biblical thought—one that takes its most extreme form in Jesus’s crucifixion. Attention to the nature and function of sacrifice within a Christian context had already reached its efflorescence during the mid-century religious debates on the meaning and efficacy of Christ’s atonement.<sup>1</sup> Yet the proximity of sacrifice to Christian thought was not the only significant parallel. Of particular interest to



anthropologists was the economic rationale that motivated these acts, which resembled the self-interested model of exchange and competitive rivalries within the capitalist marketplace and thus potentially conflated religious with secular life. Susan Mizruchi notes, for example, that one of the many reasons that sacrifice became a sudden topic of research for nineteenth-century social scientists was because it “provided the preeminent mythology for an expanding industrial-capitalist society” by presenting continuities between sacrifice’s primitive barter economy and social stratification and capitalist structures of exchange and inequality (26).

Hence, even as early anthropological literature opposed the religious and secular, private and public, sacred and profane, as realms that had become increasingly segregated within the context of modern social life, they chart the convergence of these oppositions through the system of exchange that operates within sacrificial ritual. In so doing, their writings disclose a tale of the modern liberal subject that is both evolutionary and recursive: the atomized, self-interested agent of liberal capitalism is the product of modernity’s break from earlier, pre-modern forms of social organization, where communal rather than individual values dominate, and yet this self-interested agent bears an uncanny resemblance to those of primitive sacrificial rituals.<sup>2</sup> It is tempting to understand this incoherent portrayal of the modern subject as an example of the very persistence of the primitive past into modernity that Victorian anthropologists so often traced, but this would be to accept the incoherence on their terms without interrogating the developmental narrative that authorizes such a reading. The developmental narrative of human history that framed anthropological inquiry enabled anthropologists to embed tensions between self-interested rationalism and a communitarian ethos within competing diachronic narratives of sacrifice’s origin and function. These narratives, moreover, made less evident that such values do not simply persist into the present but existed within nineteenth-century British thought in fraught yet mutual relation—a mutual relatedness that was recast within theories of sacrifice as representing opposed values that developed at particular junctures within human history. We thus see in the debates on sacrifice the tangled trajectory of the double narrative of capitalism during the nineteenth century as the economic model of self-interested rationalism not only had to be distinguished from primitive sociality, but also from the utopian alternatives to capitalism that social critics like Ruskin would articulate.

Even as they labor to maintain such distinctions, the anthropologists I take

up in this chapter unwittingly expose how sacrifice operates within the double narrative of capitalism as a sacralizing activity that synthesizes utilitarian self-interest with social solidarity. This synthesis achieves its fullest articulation in the fin de siècle arguments of Durkheim, Mauss, and Hubert. My aim in this chapter is to locate some of the prehistory to the Durkheimian synthesis by examining the opposing arguments that key Victorian anthropologists formulated on the structural similarity of sacrifice to capitalist exchange. In the particular narrative that I provide, sacrifice exemplifies a self-referential, circular structure in which what is essential to the social and economic stability of the community is consecrated in sacrifice and in turn regenerated.<sup>3</sup> Sacrifice's circular economy not only facilitates economic regeneration, but also becomes a mode of sacralization in which a world no longer inhabited by the sacred and rendered uncertain by relative values is once again made sacred and stable. Sacrifice, I argue, is neither a primitive ritual of self-interested exchange nor a communal act that reinvigorates social bonds: it is the means by which these anthropologists imagine a modern capitalist agent engaged in self-interested exchange even as she consecrates the social and economic life to which she indissolubly belongs. Nineteenth-century anthropological interpretations of sacrifice thus rehearse and reconcile antinomies within the double narrative of capitalism by synthesizing sacrifice's utilitarian and communitarian motives through a circular, self-referential structure. Yet such a model of sacrifice makes visible a strategy that already operated within political economy (see chapter 2)—one deployed to address the very tensions between individual self-interest and communal welfare that anthropological debates stage at the archaic origins of society. Hence if, as Ilana Blumberg argues, the term “sacrifice” in the Victorian period “sat at the crux of modern ethical and economic orders being formulated in mutual relation” and exposed a schism between the ethical/religious and economic valences of sacrifice, the circular model of sacrifice provides the site where nineteenth-century anthropologists and political economists suture this schism (“Unnatural” 513).

### ***The Evolution of Sacrifice: Economic Man in E. B. Tylor and James Frazer***

In many respects, Tylor's evolutionary arguments on sacrifice set the terms for the debate on sacrifice's origin and development, at least until the functionalist

arguments of Hubert and Mauss emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Prior to this Durkheimian approach, however, it was Tylor's claims on the proximity of primitive sacrifice to Christian and capitalist thought and his evolutionary model that generated rifts in interpretations of sacrifice. In *Primitive Culture*, Tylor's analysis of sacrifice, and his methodology more generally, draws attention to the continuities between primitive and contemporary practices that some in his Victorian audience would resist.<sup>4</sup> Before *Primitive Culture*, Tylor's work was consumed with the traditional ethnological problem of the unity of the human species, or as Clifford Geertz phrases it, with how "[t]he great natural variation of cultural forms is . . . to be squared with the biological unity of the human species" (22). Following in the footsteps of such previous ethnologists as James Prichard, Tylor accepts the unity of the human race, its monogenesis, in contrast to polygenetic arguments that the human race consisted of multiple species of separate origin (Stocking *Victorian Anthropology* 62–69, 159). Hence, in earlier works such as *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (1865), Tylor employs the comparative method to establish connections between races based on the cross-cultural similarities he detects in their speech, writing, and technology and thus display the unity of the human race.

*Primitive Culture*, while still drawing on the comparative method, registers the impact of Darwin's evolutionary arguments and shifts focus to the origin and progress of culture as a "complex whole" (Stocking *Victorian Anthropology* 158–62). Tylor here seeks to classify culture along stages of evolutionary development based on "the condition of knowledge, religion, art, custom, and the like" (*Primitive Culture* 1:5). This evolutionary approach to the classification of culture carried with it a set of critical assumptions that informs Tylor's methodology and claims. The unity of the human race is now an assumed and enabling premise for Tylor's larger argument about the universal origin of religion and the survival of such practices in the present. Tylor's doctrine of "survivals" contends that many religious practices and beliefs that appear irrational in the present once had a utilitarian purpose and can be understood as survivals of primitive practices that have simply become a force of habit for the contemporary practitioner. The theory of survivals participates in his larger claim that all religions originate in primitive animism, the belief in the existence of souls and/or spiritual beings. Animistic thought emerges from the tendency to transfer the psychical attributes and motives of human beings onto inanimate objects and immaterial forces. Religious rites and ceremonies are the by-product

of what was initially a rational impulse to explain phenomena observed in nature and human life cycles. While such rites have their origin in animistic thinking, they “leave surviving remnants, more or less dwindled in form and changed in meaning” (1:445).

Tylor’s analysis of the survival of rites and practices alerts his Victorian audience to the specific instances in which the rationale of primitive practices continues to operate in British culture. Tylor’s discussion of sacrificial rituals, for example, culminates with his suggestion that the logic of sacrifice informs the controversy over ritualism within the Anglican Church and the dynamics of the English marketplace.<sup>5</sup> He proposes, at the end of his discussion of sacrificial rites, that the “sacrificial rites most fully and officially existing in modern Christendom” are “the presentation of ex-votos” and the Eucharistic meal, in which “an offering of food and drink is set out by a priest on an altar in a temple, and consumed by priest and worshippers” (2:370, 371). The suggestion that the Eucharist resembles a sacrificial rite undermined differences between Catholicism and Protestantism and left it open to comparison with the sacrificial rituals of irrational “savages.” This is the bold consequence of Tylor’s doctrine of survivals: Christianity and metaphysics participate in a genealogical continuity with primitive animism (Tylor *Primitive Culture* 1:449–50; Stocking *Victorian Anthropology* 195).<sup>6</sup>

These genealogical continuities expose the interconnections between religious and secular practices within British culture. Tylor’s evolutionary argument on the advance of civilization links stages of sacrificial ritual to their survival in capitalist exchange practices. The notion that sacrificial rituals presage the emergent capitalist rationale rests on his broader claim regarding the nature of animism. Tylor interprets all sacrificial practices through a sociological lens since the deities to whom such offerings are made, however attenuated over time, are modeled on the human soul. “If the main proposition of animistic natural religion be granted, that the idea of the human soul is the model of the idea of deity, then the analogy of men’s dealings with man ought, *inter alia*, to explain his motives in sacrifice” (Tylor *Primitive Culture* 2:356). While Tylor does not explicitly articulate the Durkheimian functionalist thesis regarding religion as essentially a representation and deification of society, he does approach religious activity as a self-referential mirror of social relations. By positing a parallel between the interactions of individuals in a community and that of a deity with his worshippers, Tylor can then approach changes in the practice of sacrificial rituals as indicative of shifts in human motives. Hence, the trans-

mutations that Tylor examines within each phase of sacrificial ritual indicate changes in “the intention with which the worshipper performs it” (2:340). This assumption guides his evolutionary model of sacrifice, wherein each progressive stage of sacrificial practice signals a heightened expression of self-interest, the highest stage of which marks the emergence of economic man in the capitalist marketplace.

In addition to the increased expression of self-interest, each progressive stage of sacrifice incorporates a circular economy in which the sacrifice of organic life ensures its return and the community’s social and economic vitality—a structure most clearly delineated by Tylor in the gift stage. Tylor’s evolutionary paradigm of sacrifice hypothesized that it progressed through three developmental stages: gift, homage, and what he deems the highest, abnegation. Throughout these three stages, sacrifice functions according to an anthropomorphic model in which gifts are offered to a deity “as if he were a man” and serve either to benefit the deity, to pay homage, or to expiate our sins by sacrificing something costly to ourselves (2:340). Much like prayer, these acts of sacrifice ultimately aim to secure a good harvest, prosperity, and security from danger, often by consecrating “gifts of food” (2:360). Given that the primary aim of sacrifice is economic sustainability and social security, Tylor interprets the gift stage as the origin of sacrifice since it entails the interchange of food between worshippers and deity. Tylor’s interpretation of sacrifice illustrates Catherine Gallagher’s claim that the Malthusian “bioeconomic” plot, which she defines as the “interconnections among populations, the food supply, modes of production and exchange, and their impact on life forms more generally,” surfaces in anthropological articulations of “life-giving sacrifice” (*Body Economic* 3, 157). In Tylor’s analysis of the gift stage, sacrifice circulates and reproduces organic life by making it the object of exchange between worshippers and deity—a process that relies on a close identification and shared materiality between deity and worshipper. By sacrificing life that is beneficial to the life of the gods, the worshippers believe that they will gain the life that is beneficial to them. This is why Tylor presents gift, rather than abnegation, as the origin of sacrifice. The organic life that is offered in the form of meats, grain, drinks, and other items to benefit the deity remains integral to the practical vitality of the community. In this way, the earliest form of sacrifice as gift functions in a circular, self-referential manner—the vitality of the community is secured through the organic life-forms sacrificed as gift.

This identification between what benefits the deity and the worshipper, Ty-

lor claims, undergoes a change in the homage and abnegation stages of sacrifice, where we see an increasing emphasis on the economizing motives of worshippers. In homage, sacrifice functions, not as a means to benefit the deity by giving something of practical value that the deity partakes in, but as a “ceremonial homage” given to please the deity and win favors (Tylor *Primitive Culture* 2:357). Tylor’s developmental narrative privileges the progressive dematerialization of the gods, a dematerialization that coincides with a more calculated expression of the worshipper’s self-interest in acts of sacrifice. Hence, in the abnegation phase, sacrificers completely disregard whether the offering benefits the deity and focus entirely on what benefits the worshipper. In sacrifice as abnegation, people propitiate the gods by consecrating something costly to themselves rather than precious to the god (e.g., human sacrifice). Tylor here looks forward to Frazer’s theorization of the scapegoat and René Girard’s elaboration of it as the way communities channel their desire for violence and maintain social order through the use of an innocent victim.<sup>7</sup> But Tylor interprets human behavior, whether with respect to a deity or each other, as imminently pragmatic and utilitarian; hence, the costly sacrifice of a life eventually gives way to an outright substitution in which worshippers offer what is less costly (e.g., the life of an animal instead of a human or victims in effigy). The historical transmutations that occur in ritual sacrifice render the material sacrifice that the gods once partook in more symbolic, finally replacing the costly sacrifice with “a smaller tribute or a cheaper substitute” (2:341).

The transition in abnegation into substitution presents parallels between sacrificial ritual and contemporary economic practices. Abnegation’s emphasis on maximizing personal self-interest while minimizing the cost to the sacrificer articulates, in nuce, the ethos of capitalism.

Our language displays it in a word, if we do but compare the sense of presentation and acceptance “sacrificium” had in a Roman temple, with the sense of mere giving up and loss which “sacrifice” conveys in an English market. Throughout the history of sacrifice, it has occurred to many nations that cost may be economized without impairing efficiency. The result is seen in ingenious devices to lighten the burden on the worshipper by substituting something less valuable than what he ought to offer, or pretends to. (2:361–62)

When sacrifice lapses into substitution during the abnegation phase, sacrificial rituals most fully turn into “an economic rite” insofar as sacrificers parsimoni-

ously offer less costly, yet efficient, substitutes for the costly thing they know should be given (2:362). In this manner the abnegation phase retains, in attenuated form, the circular economy in which life is sacrificed and returned that was more overt in the gift phase. First, the sacrificial offerings consecrated to the deity eventuate a return, although the gods do not need or benefit from the gift since they are fully dematerialized. Second, the sacrificers economize the life and valuables surrendered through a strategic manipulation of their self-interest while still optimizing the reward. Tylor's discussion of sacrifice as a species of universal rites and ceremonies thus not only demonstrates to his readers that sacrifice is a "Christian rite," but also that it "survives" in modified form in the market. His evolutionary analysis of sacrifice from its primitive to its modern form replaces sacrifice as a form of religious worship with "secularized exchange" (Mizruchi 66).

In Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890–1915) we essentially see an elaboration of Tylor's evolutionary model of sacrifice as gift and its economic rationale. Despite being mentored by Robertson Smith, who later critiqued the Tylorian model of sacrifice, Frazer's work reflects his debt to Tylor's scientific rationalism. He concurred with Tylor on a number of key issues, from the conception of primitive religion as the erroneous but rational explanation of phenomenal experience to the gift theory of sacrifice (Stocking *After Tylor* 135–36). Rather than charting the shift in sacrifice as a religious practice to one of secular exchange, however, Frazer's argument underscores the degree to which the barter economy of sacrifice not only represents the foundational principle of capitalist thought, but religion as well. A classicist by training, Frazer begins his analysis of this foundational principle of religion in *The Golden Bough* with a discussion of myths from classical antiquity on the Priesthood of Nemi and the worship of the fertility goddess, Diana. In his summary of the myths surrounding Diana, Frazer concentrates his analysis on the ritual killing of the priestly king who guards the sacred tree that embodies Diana at Nemi. Frazer aims in *The Golden Bough* to explain the pattern of ritualized murder at the heart of these myths, wherein the priest at Nemi is murdered by the person who breaks off "the golden bough" from the sacred tree and becomes his successor, only then to live in fear of meeting the same fate. To explain the mysterious motive behind the ritual killing of the priest, Frazer draws on the concept of the slain god, which he derived from Robertson Smith (Stocking *After Tylor* 139). The murder and replacement of the priests at Nemi, "whose lives were . . . bound up" with the tree that embodies Diana's fertility, represent the dying god who is resurrected,

a type of solar god whose death and rebirth symbolize the death and resurrection of the harvest from winter to spring (Frazer *Golden Bough* 1:41). The priestly king who is worshipped, sacrificed, and replaced serves as the archetype for sacrificial rites of fertility, past and present. Hence in keeping with Tylor's comparative method, Frazer's *The Golden Bough* promises to elucidate this archetype by classifying and then comparing its recurrent forms in cultures at varying stages of civilization. Frazer thus closes his discussion of the Preisthood at Nemi by casting *The Golden Bough* as "a voyage of discovery" (1:43), one that metonymically visits Mexico, Sweden, Australia, East Africa, France, England, Italy, and China as it repetitively catalogs similarly structured rites and beliefs throughout history.

The paradigm of the dying god who is resurrected recapitulates the circular, self-referential economy of sacrifice seen in Tylor, wherein life in its organic form is sacrificed in order to ensure its biological regeneration and thus stabilize communal life. This model of the dying god replicates Christ's crucifixion. Frazer's Christocentric worldview leads him to interpret all religious practices through a Christian lens and, much to the dismay of his Victorian audience, to see these rites as precursors to Christian practices.<sup>8</sup> Yet just as unpalatable as Frazer's assertion that Christianity's roots lie in the sacrificial rites of ancient fertility cults was his reading of these rites along utilitarian and economic lines. In the Egyptian rites of Osiris, for example, the corn-god is read as a Christ figure that ensures agricultural productivity.<sup>9</sup> "The corn-god produced the corn from himself: he gave his own body to feed the people: he died that they might live" (6:90). Frazer here delineates a circular economy of sacrifice in which corn is sacrificed, corn is resurrected and regenerated, and corn is consumed. *The Golden Bough* repeatedly explores how sacrificial rites promote economic regeneration: the dying god, symbolically rendered in the form of sacred grains, animals, or men, ensures a plentiful harvest through the god's sacrifice and resurrection.

If the ritual sacrifice of a god is a universal, ultimately economic, paradigm, so too is the principle of religion it embodies. Frazer defines religion as "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life" (1:222). It is belief in such powers that results in religious practices such as sacrifice, whereby sacrificial oblations are made to curry favor with the gods. Frazer interprets the rationale of barter economy and self-interested exchange, which Tylor demonstrates underlies sacrificial rituals, as the essential germ of religious belief and practice. A



religion conceived in this way approaches the deity as though he were a “conscious” being whose will and behavior “can be prevailed upon to vary . . . in the desired direction by a judicious appeal to his interests, his appetites, or his emotions” (1:224). The self-interest at work in religion, for Frazer, does more than just “survive” in the marketplace. The attempt to either encourage agricultural fertility or conserve the food supply through chastity among “savages” illustrates the very principles of abstinence and prudence that in advanced stages of civilization are necessary to convert the self-interested pursuit of wealth into the accumulation of capital. For Frazer, character is racialized and “consists mainly in the power of sacrificing the present to the future, of disregarding the immediate temptations of ephemeral pleasure for more distant and lasting sources of satisfaction” (2:119). Frazer here echoes the pervasive description of the savage among political economists like Mill and Jevons as one who, unlike the modern capitalist, is unable to abstain from present pleasures for the sake of future gains (Mill 1:103–4, Jevons *Theory* 35). The more pronounced the capacity for sacrifice and abstinence becomes, “the higher and stronger becomes the character; till the height of heroism is reached in men who renounce the pleasures of life and even life itself for the sake of keeping or winning for others, perhaps in distant ages, the blessings of freedom and truth” (Frazer *Golden Bough* 2:119). Frazer comes full circle, presenting the myth of the dying god as the ancient core of sacrificial ritual and yet also interpreting it as the ideal type of sacrifice that progressive, industrial-capitalized countries are moving toward.

### ***William Robertson Smith and the Fall into Modern Sacrifice***

If Tylor and Frazer underscore the continuity between sacrificial practice and capitalist thought, Robertson Smith’s theory of sacrifice articulates the opposing side of the debate. Both Tylor and Frazer were children of the Enlightenment and their arguments on religion combine the long-standing tradition of positivism as it stretches through Spencer, J. S. Mill, Bentham, and Comte to early British empiricists like Locke and Hume with evolutionary models of development. Robertson Smith, while equally exposed to this intellectual tradition, was less utilitarian and evolutionary in his thinking (*Stocking After Tylor* 79). He drew more heavily on his formative religious experience in the Scottish Free Church, his study of the Old and New Testament, and German biblical

scholarship (Jones *Secret* 60–69). Like Tylor and Frazer, Robertson Smith claims sacrifice is a universal practice. But in contradistinction to Tylor and Frazer, he avoids cross-cultural comparative methods and restricts his analysis to Semitic peoples. Moreover, his arguments on the genealogy of sacrifice privilege the emergence of sacrifice as a social practice (ritual) over its later form as a system of belief (myth).

These differences in philosophical and methodological orientations account, in part, for the divergences that emerge in Robertson Smith's interpretation of sacrifice and the alternative narrative of its development that he advances. Robertson Smith's writings are now primarily read by scholars through the lens of Durkheim. His *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1888–91), a series delivered while he was a professor of the Old Testament at Aberdeen University, delineate the very ideas on sacrificial ritual, totemism, and the sacred that Durkheim's sociological argument in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912) would sharpen. These ideas articulate a break from the Tylo-rian interpretation of sacrifice as originating in gift and the particularly economic interpretation that Tylor and Frazer give to its underlying motivations. Rather than presenting the self-interested motives of capitalism as the progressive unfolding of sacrifice's *do ut des* logic, Robertson Smith lodges the ancient developmental phases of sacrificial practice within a narrative of secularized modernity, which the institution of private property initiates. Much like Georges Bataille's opposition of the "general economy" of sacrifice as profitless loss to the "restricted" economy of capitalism that limits and converts it into something useful, the origins of sacrificial ritual in Robertson Smith reference a lost totality.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, on the one hand, Robertson Smith draws on modernity's theoretical segregation of religious practices from self-interested economic activity in order to cast ancient Semitic social formations as free from the economizing logic he associates with the rise of private property. Yet on the other hand, the later Semitic culture that emerges after the institution of private property does not indicate the segregation of the religious and economic but their corrupt interpenetration, an interpenetration evident in the gift and abnegation stages of sacrifice. This developmental narrative of sacrificial practice, as I will show, engrafts the sociological preoccupations of a liberal capitalist society onto the archaic past. Like many Victorians, Robertson Smith expresses apprehension for a socially unstable world in which value, whether economic or moral, has become relativized. The end stages of sacrifice reflect a fallen world; rather than

performing sacrificial rituals in relation to things that are intrinsically sacred, sacrifice responds to a world in which notions of the sacred have become relative, unstable, and subject to self-interested manipulation. Yet while Robertson Smith denounced this use of sacrifice, he identifies why Victorians like Ruskin and the political economists I treat in the next chapter invoke sacrifice in arguments on value and social instability. Sacrifice repairs the instability caused by relative values by transforming the common into the sacred and thus bridging the rift between the secular and the religious.

Robertson Smith's developmental narrative of sacrifice begins by demonstrating the inadequacy of Tylor's gift theory of sacrifice. In his 1886 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry on sacrifice, he remarks that, although "with a matter-of-fact business-like people like the Romans religion may become very much a sort of bargain struck with the gods" (133), the *do ut des* logic in which sacrifice functions according to a barter system cannot logically be its original form. This logical incoherence escapes Tylor because his developmental phases of sacrifice leave unexplained why sacrifice often entails the consumption of the thing sacrificed by worshippers. For Robertson Smith, the circular economy in which a life is sacrificed as offering and then consumed by deities and worshippers is not, as in Tylor, an act of exchange, but a meal of communion that reflects the unity between the deity and worshippers so that in sacrificing a life to the gods, the life of the worshipper is also sustained. This is why, as he states in the same entry on sacrifice, "the stated gifts by which the gods are honoured in private worship or public feasts are drawn from the stores on which human life is supported,—fruits, grain, wine, oil, the flesh of animals, and the like" (Robertson Smith "Sacrifice" 132). The worshipper's dependence on the deity for plentiful food is also why it would be incoherent to view the gift theory as the origin since the god would be offered food as nourishment, which the worshippers in turn depend on the deity to provide. Such a model of reciprocal exchange, he contends in the *Lectures*, could only emerge in later progressive societies in which the concept of property had separated the deity from things with which they were once identical (Robertson Smith 391–96). Both in the entry on sacrifice and in the *Lectures*, Robertson Smith interprets sacrifice as originating in a meal of communion between worshippers and their deity that consolidates the group's ethical and social bonds and sustains the vital life of the community by receiving from the deity the food necessary for survival.

Robertson Smith makes the sacrifice of life and its sustenance through a communion meal the basis for an alternative trajectory of sacrifice's develop-

ment. This alternative trajectory traces the origin of sacrifice to the practices of the primitive totemic cult, a stage that ancient Semitic peoples passed through as well. At this stage, sacrifice was a “converse between God and man,” a rite of kinship that simultaneously established bonds between clansmen and intimacy with their deity (216). In totemism, the animal that represents the totemic god is seen by the members of the totem group as their kin and thus shares the same flesh and blood. In this context, the sacrificial meal in which the totem animal was sacrificed and eaten by its devotees at a communal meal binds the members of the kinship group together by eating the sacred and forbidden animal representative of the totem god. The sacrificial meal represents a “social act,” one that “directly expressed . . . that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*” (269). Through participation in the ritual meal, each member of the community conveys to the other that “the only thing that is sacred is the common tribal life” and that membership consists of “reciprocal family duties to one another” (289, 30). The communal meal present in the totemic stage in ancient Semitic cultures thus signifies a circular, self-referential activity in which consumption of the sacred animal’s life renders the life of the totem group sacred as well.

Viewing this original model of life’s sacrifice and regeneration in a meal of communion through the lens of a disenchanting modernity, Robertson Smith portrays the development of sacrifice as a gift rendered by worshippers to a deity or in expiation of a sin (*piacular*) as later corruptions that emerge in an unstable society wherein even the relations between gods and worshippers are conceived as a “compact” (319–20). This reconfiguration results from the introduction of private property because, as he states, “property materialises everything that it touches” (396). The gift and *piacular* stages of sacrifice that Tylor and Frazer ascribe to a progressive society with a developed capitalist ethos emerge for Robertson Smith in a postlapsarian world wherein “the physical oneness of the deity and his community is impaired or attenuated” and “it is necessary to retie [the bond of kinship] by a solemn ceremony, in which the sacred life is again distributed to every member of the community” (319–20). The gods are not seen as bearing a benevolent disposition toward men but displeased and requiring appeasement through propitiation. And it is through such atoning acts of sacrifice that the community reestablishes “harmony with its alienated god” (320). The transition from sacrifice as a meal of communion to its gift and *piacular* forms echoes Maine’s famous dictum regarding the progress from archaic to modern societies as a transition “from status to contract”: instead of confirming their status within a kin group through a sacrificial meal

of communion in which kin eat the totemic animal that is intrinsically sacred and coextensive with gods and men of the same clan, the gift and piacular stages of sacrifice offer animals as efficient substitutes in order to seal a contractual, individualized relation between worshippers and their deity.

Yet in the process of narrating sacrifice's corruption, Robertson Smith uncovers how gift and piacular sacrifice symbolically repair alienated relations and reestablish contact between the sacred and the community in order to secure the social harmony that was once inherent to ancient society. He thus points to the way in which Victorians attempt to re-create social cohesion and stabilize value through the concept of sacrifice. This particular plot of lost harmony and its reestablishment through gift and piacular sacrifice intersects with another plotline in Robertson Smith's argument—the contingency of the sacred. Whereas sacrifice was once an action with respect to things intrinsically sacred, the emergence of private property and self-interested relations destabilizes the sacred and makes it contingent on ritual performance. In the gift or abnegation theory of sacrifice, the sacrificer renounces a portion of her private property over which she has absolute rights. Sacrifice in these stages is a transfer of property rights whose end result is to make the common thing sacred. "Before its presentation the victim was a common thing, and it was only by being selected for sacrifice that it became holy. . . . Consecration was interpreted to mean a gift of man's property to the god, and everything that was withdrawn by consecration from the free use of man was conceived to have changed its owner" (391). This reflects for Robertson Smith "a new view of holiness" in which, rather than referring to an "intrinsic supernatural quality," holiness connotes possession and use by the gods (391). But Robertson Smith's narrative of the shift away from ancient sacrificial ritual and notions of the holy actually reveals how both social harmony and the sacred are recovered through sacrificial ritual. In delineating the segregation of the religious and secular realms after the introduction of private property, he clarifies how the ritual performance of sacrifice bridges the secular and religious domains since it is through sacrifice that something becomes sacred. Hence, the gift and piacular stages of sacrifice rehabilitate fractured social relations by conferring sanctity on things through their consecration in sacrificial rituals—a strategy that we will see deployed in Ruskin and political economic arguments on value.

In order to provide a Victorian narrative of transition, one in which labile notions of the holy replace intrinsic ones, Robertson Smith must gloss over evidence in his own argument that the sacred was an unstable category even in

ancient Semitic society. Referencing Frazer's 1888 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry on "Taboo," Robertson Smith writes in his *Lectures* that savage and ancient Semitic religious society prior to the introduction of private property stressed the set of prohibitions that guide use of intrinsically holy things rather than conceiving the holy as the property of a god. Like the taboo, which Frazer defined as "a system of religious prohibitions" whose "ordinary sense is 'sacred'" ("Taboo" 15), the holy operates by contagion "so that every place and thing which has natural associations with the god is regarded . . . as charged with divine energy" (Robertson Smith *Lectures* 151). But Frazer's entry on taboo in fact underscores the inherent contingency of the sacred, which "might be general or particular, permanent or temporary" ("Taboo" 15). This notion of the sacred does not "imply any moral quality, but only, 'a connexion with the gods or a separation from ordinary purposes and exclusive appropriation to persons or things considered sacred'" (15). The movement of objects from the position of the profane to the sacred marks the moment of their removal from the everyday, public sphere of utilitarian values rather than referencing an object's intrinsic properties.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Frazer points to the reversibility of the sacred and the profane, discussing how both derive from taboo: "the opposition of the sacred and accursed, clean and unclean . . . did in fact arise by differentiation from the single root idea of taboo, which includes and reconciles them both and by reference to which alone their history and mutual relation are intelligible" ("Taboo" 16–17). In the *Lectures*, Robertson Smith also acknowledges that "the boundary between the two [uncleanness and holiness] is often vague" (153). But his narrative of sacrifice purposely introduces the social crisis that results from a contingent notion of the holy because it aligns with contemporary Victorian anxieties in which the contingency of the sacred, and values more generally, destabilize social relations.

### ***The Duality of Sacrifice in Marcel Mauss, Henri Hubert, and Émile Durkheim***

However much couched in a critique of modernity, Robertson Smith's interpretation of the gift and abnegation stages of sacrifice as signifying acts of consecration marks an important development in anthropologies of sacrificial ritual. In Tylor and Frazer, the sacred was primarily theorized as the mistaken, primitive belief that magical forces and spiritual beings are capable of inhabiting

spaces and things and thus should be approached with fear and set apart from common use. Frazer evinces this notion of the sacred in his definition of taboo. Yet even in Tylor and Frazer the notion that sacrifice is a sacralizing activity is implicit, insofar as they discuss how sacrificial rituals “consecrate” such items as hair or the first fruits of corn as gift offerings to the deity (Tylor *Primitive Culture* 2:364; Frazer *Golden Bough* 556–72). Sacrifice, in consecrating its object, sets it apart from common use and makes it sacred. The verb “consecrate” (Lat. *con-sacrare*, to make sacred) meant then, as it does now, “to set apart (a person or thing) as sacred to the Deity” (OED). This definition is interchangeable with “sacred,” which the OED defines as “[c]onsecrated to” or “[d]edicated, set apart, exclusively appropriated to some person or special purpose” (emphasis original). That sacrifice sanctifies is equally evident in the Latin roots of the word, a compound of *sacer* and *facere*, which means to make sacred (Bell *Ritual* 112). But Robertson Smith does more than just make the latent etymological connections between sacrifice and the sacred explicit. He paves the way for the functionalist reading of sacrifice provided by Hubert, Mauss, and Durkheim, in which the re-inscription of social life within religious categories facilitates social cohesion.

For Hubert and Mauss, Robertson Smith’s suggestion that the gift and abnegation stages of sacrifice consecrate their object and establish social harmony is not sacrifice’s corrupt end-stage, but its fundamental feature. Rather than provide a diachronic narrative of sacrifice in which they reveal either the gift or the totemic meal as sacrifice’s original form, Hubert and Mauss abandon the evolutionary framework of their nineteenth-century forbears and instead articulate a synchronic narrative in which the modalities of gift, expiation, and communion coexist. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (1898) was originally published as an essay in *L’Année sociologique*, which Durkheim founded and edited. Many of the central ideas in the essay are thus a product of the close collaboration between Mauss, Hubert, and Durkheim, and evidence the influence of Durkheim’s key premises and methods—from his theorization of the sacred to his sociological functionalism. Given this Durkheimian orientation, Hubert and Mauss begin their essay with the stated objective of unveiling the general system and social function of sacrifice. This social function, they contend, derives from the fundamental mechanism by which sacrifice operates: consecration. “It is indeed certain that sacrifice always implies consecration; in every sacrifice an object passes from the common into the religious” (Hubert and Mauss 9). Sacrifice entails an intricate and controlled series of acts, the entire purpose of which is to effect the transformation of the consecrated object(s) and person(s)

at the end of the rite, either by granting them sanctity or removing it. In identifying sacrifice with consecration, Hubert and Mauss characterize sacrifice as an act of exclusion in which the consecrated object or person is removed from the common, profane world. Sacrifice paradoxically demarcates the profane from the sacred, even as it serves to transform the one into the other. This was the latent fear that informed Robertson Smith's critique of modernity—the break from traditional, intrinsic values is not problematic because it leaves nothing sacred, but because in a world of relative values anything can become sacred.

Hubert and Mauss render the malleability of the sacred instrumental to sacrifice's function. Sacrifice is ultimately a symbolic activity that “occurs in the world of ideas” and whose goal is to regulate what is indispensable to the community's social life and stability by sacralizing it (102). As an act of consecration, sacrifice manipulates the vague boundary between the sacred and profane earlier identified by Robertson Smith and Frazer—what Durkheim refers to more generally as “the ambiguity of the sacred” (*Elementary* 306). The transformation process of sacrifice can proceed in either direction, that is, either as a process of sacralization (making something profane sacred) or as desacralization (something too sacred to touch or consume is made profane and thus usable) (Hubert and Mauss 57). But the fluidity and contagiousness of the sacred, according to Hubert and Mauss, also makes it potentially destructive and volatile because it is linked to “the very principle of the forces of life” (98). The actors in a sacrificial ritual enter a liminal space replete with the threatening powers of life and death and, through the prudent use of sacrificial substitutes, manipulate the regenerative life forces that the sacred represents without sacrificing anything themselves. In classic Durkheimian fashion, however, Hubert and Mauss conclude that the aim of such sacralizing activity is not simply to regenerate the biological life foundational to the agricultural economy, but also social life. Sacrifice functions as a self-referential, self-sacralizing activity that confers on individual and group alike “a protective sanctity” and “nourishes social forces” (102).

Hubert and Mauss's argument on sacrificial ritual synthesizes the utilitarian model of sacrifice, initially expostulated by liberal positivists like Tylor and Frazer, and the nostalgic narrative of lost communality seen in Robertson Smith. As Frazer himself complained, Hubert and Mauss's reference to “the Smith-Frazer system” combined Robertson Smith's reading of sacrifice as communion with his utilitarian model, despite his own sense that the two were irreconcilable (Jones “Durkheim” 613n). Both the control that sacrificial ritual establishes over



the forces of life and the sacralization that it effects rely on a circular economy of self-interested exchange in which gods and worshippers satisfy their wants. Hence, the contractual relation and prudential motives that Robertson Smith found so objectionable in Tylor's gift theory of sacrifice once again emerge as an indispensable element to Hubert and Mauss's theorization. "The two parties present exchange their services and each gets his due. For the gods too have need of the profane. If nothing were set aside from the harvest, the god of the corn would die" (Hubert and Mauss 100). The circular, *do ut des* model of sacrifice as an act of reciprocal, self-interested exchange is no longer contrary to communal values, but the means by which worshippers consolidate them.<sup>12</sup>

We see in the synthesis advanced by Hubert and Mauss a culmination of the continuities between sacrificial ritual and economic practice that Victorian anthropologists had detected. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim furthers the argument by Hubert and Mauss, conjoining sacrifice's communitarian and utilitarian functions.<sup>13</sup> Durkheim's analysis of the primitive totemic cult makes sacrifice's circular, utilitarian logic central to the sacralization and regeneration of economic and social life rather than what undermines it.

The purpose of the cult, then, is not only to bring profane subjects into communion with sacred beings, but also to sustain those sacred beings in life, to restore them and ensure their perpetual regeneration. . . . The rule *do ut des*, by which the principle of sacrifice has sometimes been defined, is not a late invention of utilitarian theorists; it simply makes explicit the mechanism of the sacrificial system itself and, more generally, of the whole positive cult. The circle Robertson Smith indicated is therefore quite real, but there is nothing about it that shames the rational mind. (Durkheim *Elementary* 256–57)

Durkheim interprets the circular economy of sacrifice and interdependence between gods and worshippers that Robertson Smith critiqued as entirely logical since sacrifice symbolically consecrates the organic life-forms that the community must continuously regenerate for consumption. The *do ut des* principle at work in sacrifice, moreover, predates and is genealogically continuous with utilitarian models of self-interested exchange. Durkheim's defense of sacrifice's circular structure is part of his larger argument that the sacred more generally "is nothing but society hypostasized and transfigured" and that, like sacrificial ritual, "social life moves in a circle" (257). If the gods are but a representation of society, then the worshippers are engaged in a symbolically self-referential act

in which they sacrifice, sacralize, and regenerate not just material objects, but social life itself. With this sociological explanation of sacrifice, the logical incoherence Robertson Smith noted in the gift model disappears.

Particularly striking in this reversion to a utilitarian model of sacrifice is that Durkheim, Hubert, and Mauss were otherwise critical of the liberal positivism Tylor and Frazer openly embrace. Ivan Strenski has recently argued that, in following the gift model of sacrifice, Hubert, Mauss, and Durkheim reinscribe the bourgeois liberal values regarding the sacredness of the individual and her ontological status as an agent of action (124).<sup>14</sup> Exchange is one of the pivotal ways in which individuals express their capacity for action, and it is also the way individuals enact sacrifice. Through exchange, “the sacredness of the individual is coordinated with the logic of sacrifice and gift” (124). While Strenski’s reading of Hubert, Mauss, and Durkheim demonstrates how sacrifice was rendered palatable to an audience sympathetic to liberal values, he does not clarify how these bourgeois values of self-interested exchange operate alongside those of communion. The synthesis found in these functionalist arguments, I argue, elucidates sacrifice’s dual function within the double narrative of capitalism: sacrifice’s circular structure is the means by which the capitalist agent engages in self-interested exchange *and* experiences communion with others in acts that sacralize and stabilize those relations.

The twin threads within Durkheim’s theory of sacrifice recapitulate larger patterns of thought within *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*—what Robert Alun Jones claims Durkheim would later term the “‘dynamogenic’ quality of religion” (its ability to generate action through collective representations and beliefs) and the “duality of human nature” (the oppositions between body and soul, flesh and spirit, sensible appetites and moral duties, sacred and profane, individual and collective) (Jones “Durkheim” 596–98). Jones claims that the dichotomous experience of the individual’s relation to society, a staple of Durkheimian sociology, merely translates the oppositions of the sacred and profane found in the dynamogenic experience of religion insofar as Durkheim associates progressive individuation with the profane and the collective with the sacred. Durkheim’s interpretation of sacrifice’s circular logic harmonizes these two patterns of thought: collective representations of the sacred reconcile the individual to society since acts of sacrifice are directed toward social life itself (617). Sacrifice in Durkheim’s religious sociology, as Steven Lukes points out, has simultaneously an individual and collective function: the ascetic aspects of sacrifice become integral to strengthening the experience of interiority and social soli-

ilarity (471–73).<sup>15</sup> Hence, if one of the central problems within liberal democratic societies is that the sacredness of the individual exists in perpetual tension with the need for social solidarity, Durkheim's analysis reveals how sacrifice's duality negotiates the rifts between the social and individual that political economic thought instantiates even as it furthers its aims of accumulation. As we will see in the next chapter, the Durkheimian synthesis does not uncover the hidden rationale of sacrifice within the primitive totemic cult, but within political economic theory. In Ruskin and the political economists that I now turn to, it is the economy that moves in a circle—sacrificing and sacralizing the life embodied in labor to reproduce wealth and stabilize fractious social relations.

## CHAPTER 2

# Circular Economies, Sacred Economies

## *The Sacrifice of Labor in John Ruskin and Nineteenth-Century Political Economy*

Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God . . .

—Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (197)

True labour, or spending of life, is either of the body, in fatigue or pain; of the temper or heart . . . , or of the intellect.

—John Ruskin, *Munera Pulveris* (17:184)<sup>1</sup>

In a letter written in Nuremberg on July 5, 1859, to Mrs. John Simon, the wife of his physician and a family friend, Ruskin criticizes the muddled use of the word “holy” among his contemporaries. While Ruskin acknowledges in the letter that “holy” is related to “the Latin *sanctus*, or set apart,” he claims that the word is better understood as “Life-giving” since it is life that is “holy.” The holiness of life explains why, he asserts, blood is often perceived as sacred: “The Blood is the life” (Ruskin 36:307–8). In the following decade, during the years in which Ruskin would write and publish such texts as *Unto This Last* (1860), *Munera Pulveris* (1868), and *Time and Tide* (1867), this understanding of life as “holy” becomes crucial to his critique of political economy and his articulation of the labor theory of value. Like Carlyle, Ruskin identifies labor with life’s sanctity. Hence, whether in the marketplace or elsewhere, labor, as the “spending of life,” should be honored with the respect that we give to holy things. While Ruskin forges these connections between labor, life, and the holy as a critique of political economy, his arguments elaborate principles already lodged within political economic theories of value in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ruskin’s

representation of an economy that “circulates Life” and roots economic value in both “vital power” and the sensory experience of pain and pleasure in labor synthesizes the “bioeconomic” and “somaeconomic” plots that, according to Catherine Gallagher, diverged in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political economy (*Body Economic* 35, 87). Not only do these two “plots” find purchase in both Ruskin and political economy, but so do notions of sacrifice and the sacred. Drawing on the model of gift sacrifice discussed in the previous chapter, I demonstrate here that Ruskin embeds within his theory of value a circular, sacrificial economy in which life is sacrificed and reproduced by those who labor in the economic sphere with an active understanding of life’s holiness and absolute value. By linking a sacrificial economy to labor and the holiness of life, Ruskin recasts the labor theory of value so that it serves simultaneously as the basis of just action and results in a “holy,” cohesive society.

Ruskin’s synthesis of economic and religious rhetoric harks back to the chivalric medieval values modernity seemingly replaced. This particular synthesis has contributed to his status as a heterodox figure, who trenchantly critiqued orthodox political economy. Despite this status, Ruskin’s writings nevertheless expose the commonalities between political economists and their cultural critics. His argument typifies the circular, sacrificial logic that underwrites economic theories of value. Marx satirically alludes to this logic in the *Grundrisse*. Adam Smith’s definition of a commodity’s “natural price” according to “the sacrifice made to obtain them” is, Marx claims, “reminiscent of the pre-industrial era, in which riches were to be obtained by sacrifices to the gods” (*Selected Writings* 369–70). Marx’s criticism relies on the stark opposition between pre-industrial and modern capitalist economies that anthropologists, as we saw in the previous chapter, struggle to maintain. In these anthropological accounts, sacrifice ensures social and economic stability through a circular structure in which what is essential to economic and social vitality is consecrated in sacrifice and in turn regenerated. The latter logic, while ascribed to primitive economies at the periphery, is central to revising our understanding of the labor theory of value and its endurance. The labor theory of value not only provides an invariable standard with which to measure shifts in the relative prices of goods, but also functions as a mode of sacralization in which labor’s sacrifice tacitly consecrates the economic life of society in a circular, self-referential act. Here we see that one of the very features of the labor theory of value that later economists would critique—its circularity—was in fact instrumental to its symbolic and ethical function (Blaug *Economic* 107–8; Schumpeter 188–89).

Hence, if as Christopher Herbert claims, the “activity of sacralizing symbolic transference is . . . the crucial dimension of the labor theory of value” (*Culture and Anomie* 93), the labor theory embeds this dimension within its circular, argumentative structure. Theories of value are not only theoretical investigations into price structure, just distribution, or economic welfare but, as with Ruskin, function equally as acts of self-representation in which economists explore ideal sets of social relations and threats to those relations.

The model of sacrifice I am invoking here is both indebted to and differs from arguments made by Weber and others on the relationship between capitalism and evangelical asceticism. While often the word “sacrifice” itself is used, economists also speak of sacrifice in terms of abstinence, self-denial, or restraint (Hilton 32). Sacrifice achieves a prominent role both in labor theories of value and in the exercise of parsimony and the willingness to sacrifice immediate wants in hopes of accumulating capital. Weber most famously critiqued this rationale of asceticism as the way evangelicals couched their acquisitiveness within a religious framework, equating the labor and self-denial required to accumulate capital with the expression of piety and ascetic virtue (*Protestant* 172).<sup>2</sup> Georg Simmel would clarify the relationship between sacrifice, labor, and the relativity of exchange value even further, stating that sacrifice, whether of labor or its products, “is not only the condition of specific values, but the condition of value as such” (*Philosophy of Money* 85).

The particular connection between sacrifice and the labor theory of value that I examine, however, is the presence and impact of a circular, gift-sacrifice logic. The double narrative of capitalism not only presents sacrifice in terms of prudence and saving—those typical bourgeois virtues by which the capitalist agent accumulates wealth and contributes to the economic growth of a capitalist society—but also as a moral lever by which economists address problems of overall economic welfare and distribution. Sacrifice has a dual role, being both the means by which the capitalist economy grows and accumulates the wealth that potentially contributes to divergences in income levels, profits, etc., and as a mode of sacralization whose function in theories of value is to redress the very inequalities that arise from the self-interested pursuit of wealth. Thus although Kathleen Blake has recently argued that utilitarians like Bentham critiqued ascetic ideals and emphasized pleasure in theories of value/utility (28, 42–43), they nevertheless retain an emphasis on sacrifice and suffering because these values participate in a moral vision of economic equality.

The dual role sacrifice plays in political economy recapitulates a pattern

examined in the previous chapter, where utilitarian and communitarian theories of sacrifice gave way to a synthesis in Durkheim. In Smith, Ricardo, Mill, and Jevons, value theory becomes the site where these two aspects of sacrifice (and the double narrative of capitalism in which they participate) come into conflict and must be reconciled. In an effort to achieve this reconciliation, these economists repeatedly appeal to a circular, gift-sacrifice logic in order to imagine an economy in which labor's sacrifice ensures the self-interested accumulation of wealth *and* regulates the just distribution of profits. Although these economists may not intentionally set out to sacralize society in their value theories, their arguments exhibit such logic when they encounter divergences between how the economy ideally should operate and actual patterns of distribution in a capitalist system.

### ***From Zoë to Bios: John Ruskin and the Sacrifice of Labor***

Ruskin's approach to the problem of value was to treat it first and foremost as a moral problem regarding the formation of a just and "holy" society rather than an analytical problem that addressed changes in relative prices or distribution.<sup>3</sup> This moral and sociological orientation toward the problem of value responds, in part, to the very crisis in relative values that had shadowed Robertson Smith's nostalgic narrative of sacrifice. In *Unto This Last* and the preface to *Munera Pulveris*, Ruskin mocks John Stuart Mill's claim that everyone possesses an understanding of wealth "sufficiently correct for common purposes" (17:18, 131). His concern is precisely that people have neither a correct definition of value and wealth, nor one that is shared. Such consensus proves indispensable since the definition of value, like that of riches and poverty, provides the basis for individual and "national conduct" and is thus instrumental to the formation of a just society in which life's sanctity is readily recognized by all (17:139). Hence, Ruskin's tactic in his political economic writings is analytically to separate the problem of intrinsic value from actions with respect to valuable things, only then to show that the formation of a just and "holy" society hinges on those who act with active knowledge of life's intrinsic value.

Ruskin begins addressing the problem of a just social body by articulating a theory of value grounded in the intrinsic value of life—a conception of life that is decidedly biological in orientation. Catherine Gallagher's argument about the "bioeconomic" plot that runs through Ruskin is but the most recent ap-

praisal of this feature in his economic thinking, what Jerome Sherburne has referred to as Ruskin's "'vital' economics" (124).<sup>4</sup> In *Unto This Last*, as well as *Munera Pulveris*, he defines value as that which supports life, and justifies the definition of value along these lines by appealing to the etymology of the word itself. "*Valor*, from *valere*, to be well or strong (*ὕγιαίνω*);—strong, *in* life (if a man), or valiant; strong, *for* life (if a thing), or valuable. To be 'valuable,' therefore, is to 'avail towards life'" (Ruskin 17:84, emphasis original). Whether or not something "avail[s] towards life" depends on both intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. Ruskin primarily conceives of intrinsic value along agricultural and physiological lines because the necessities of nourishment, air, and water are essential to the maintenance and reproduction of life.<sup>5</sup> Hence he states in *Munera Pulveris* that "[i]ntrinsic value is the absolute power of anything to support life. A sheaf of wheat of given quality and weight has in it a measurable power of sustaining the substance of the body. . . . Used or not, their own power is in them, and that particular power is in nothing else" (17:153). Life is of absolute value and stands apart from the contingencies and fluctuations of individual valuations since it is, quite literally, the *sine qua non* of material existence.

While the absolute value of life exists independent of the uses to which individuals may direct it, whether or not life as a power latent in goods such as wheat is activated and made an "effectual value" depends on individual usage. Ruskin equates effectual value with wealth and wealth with that which avails to life. And in contrast to Mill's claim that questions regarding the production, consumption, and distribution of wealth are distinct from questions of virtue (2:3), Ruskin demonstrates that the conversion of intrinsic, life-availing things into effectual value only occurs in the hands of a "*noble person*" (17:154, emphasis original). Though we may arrive in a world already replete with intrinsically valuable goods—goods that retain their life-availing qualities "independent of opinion, and of quantity" (17:85)—the wealth latent in these goods flourishes or depreciates according to the uses of their varied owners. As is clear in his distinction between wealth and illth, Ruskin theorizes value as intrinsic but wealth as contingent on moral character. "Wealth, therefore, is 'THE POSSESSION OF THE VALUABLE BY THE VALIANT'; and in considering it as a power existing in a nation, the two elements, the value of the thing, and the valour of its possessor, must be estimated together" (17:88–89). Those who recognize the intrinsic value of life possess the "valiant" character necessary to convert the life-availing into wealth, whereas those who do not create "illth" (17:88–89). Ruskin thus follows the desideratum of *Unto This Last*—"THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE"—



with a statement that links virtue with the reproduction of life: “The maximum of life can only be reached by the maximum of virtue” (17:105).<sup>6</sup> The argument is entirely circular, but its circularity is central to the basic assertion that life, and its continuous reproduction, forms the basis of value and wealth rather than the accumulation of money or exchangeable property.

Ruskin’s attention to the role individual choice and action play in converting the life-availing properties of goods into wealth has led critics like Linda Austin and James Sherburne to claim that Ruskin vacillates between absolute and relative value and anticipates the movement toward subjective theories of value and demand-side economics heralded by marginalists like Jevons and Menger in the late nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> While clearly Ruskin evinces sensitivity on matters related to consumer preference and demand, he never defines value *per se* as an abstract category nor considers it identical with consumer preference. Rather, Ruskin resists this protean conception of value by distinguishing value from fluctuating judgments and actions with respect to value. Life is of absolute value, but unless we recognize life as the standard of value and basis for our judgments and actions, we will lack the moral disposition necessary to produce wealth rather than illth. On the basis of such formulations, Ruskin then recasts terms central to political economy such as the concept of use value.<sup>8</sup> Whereas Mill defines use value as a good or service’s “capacity to satisfy a desire, or serve a purpose” (Mill 3:456; Ruskin 17:80), Ruskin redefines it as something that supports life and thus “serve[s] either to sustain and comfort the body, or exercise rightly the affections and form the intelligence” (17:150). Those things that are “useful” are “wholesome, healthful, helpful, or holy” and increase the longevity of our lives, while those that do not are “unwholesome, unhelpful, or unholy” (17:151).

Yet Ruskin’s redefinition of the useful as the life-availing and hence “holy” conceals a repeated slippage in his argument because he assumes that such concepts constitute moral categories. Thus while Ruskin asserts that the productivity and wealth of a nation do not reside in the amount of labor employed or commodities produced but in “how much life it produces” (17:104), he has to address the very problem that his reduction of value to a physiological basis introduces: even if life alone is of absolute value, one could argue that life belongs to a biological, not moral, category. This seems unproblematic in relation to his earlier example of wheat, but one must remember that he introduces the agricultural example as a stepping-stone within a broader argument whose ultimate goal is not simply to reproduce biological life, but a social body morally

oriented toward valuing human life as holy and insubstitutable. In the process, he repeatedly obscures the logical gap in his transition from an economy that reproduces life (zoë) to one that reproduces a just social body (bios) by assuming that there is a necessary causal relationship between life's intrinsic value and actions that lead to the production of a just social body when in fact value and action constitute two distinct theoretical problems. It is quite possible, for example, to hold his position that life is of absolute value and yet endorse a model of just action grounded in utilitarian consequentialism. Ruskin repeatedly papers over the difference between biological and ethical conceptions of life, between the categories of value and action, because he plots these elements within a causal chain that result in a just, "holy" society.

The logical aporia between a theory of intrinsic value and the formation of a just and "holy" society is particularly relevant for my argument since both the aporia and the strategy Ruskin eventually deploys to suture it replicate a pattern embedded within political economic arguments on value. This strategy unfolds in two stages: in the first stage, Ruskin turns to the concept of "justice" as a principle of action that promotes the formation of a just society; in the second stage, Ruskin compensates for shortcomings within his first strategy by turning to the circular, gift-sacrifice economy within the labor theory of value. In contrast to utilitarian "rules of action" that emphasize "expediency," Ruskin chooses the rather tautological term of "justice" as his rule of right action in order to demonstrate the necessary causal relationship between the intrinsic value of life, acting on the principles of justice, and the creation of a "holy" society (17:28). This causal relationship unfolds most clearly in Ruskin's discussion of wealth and poverty in *Unto This Last*. The confrontation between the rich and poor, he writes, can either be "gentle and just, or convulsive and destructive," "blackness of thunderstroke, or continual force of vital fire." Which of these two options occurs "depends on both rich and poor knowing that God is their light; . . . light, which is called . . . the 'sun of justice,' of which it is promised that it shall rise at last with 'healing' (health-giving or helping, making whole or setting at one) in its wings. For truly this healing is only possible by means of justice" (17:59–60). The latter passage first instructs his readers to recognize their shared divine origins, an understanding that directs their choices and judgments and whether or not life's intrinsic value ("vital fire") becomes effectual value in their hands.<sup>9</sup> The passage then introduces an association between the divine light in each person and "the sun of justice." The sun of justice, Ruskin explains in a footnote, would be more accurately understood as righteousness.

Righteousness stands differentiated from justice, as it is commonly employed, in that the former involves respect for and acting according to the absolute character of the moral law, whereas the latter denotes the contingencies according to which we vary our judgments, choices, and actions.<sup>10</sup> This is an important distinction since it sets the stage for the concatenation of a series of claims, all of which eventually cohere in the concept of the holy. Having established the relationship between life and just action, he then declares that only “the sun of justice,” “with its accompanying holiness or helpfulness” (17:60), makes help, healing, and the formation of a whole possible. To perceive the sacred character of persons is to know that life is “holy,” and only when this is recognized can one act according to the principle of absolute justice and choose the life-availing. This just action of choosing and activating the powers of the life-availing then results in a holy, healthful, and helpful society that is “whole.”

Ruskin’s conception of the holy as the life-availing, and its relation to the adjuncts of health, help, and the formation of a whole, synthesizes multiple meanings embedded in the etymological roots of holy. While holy, like sacred, refers to something “set apart” and “consecrated,” the etymological roots of holy (*halig*, *hailo-*, *hail-*) also convey the sense of something “inviolable, inviolable, that must be preserved *whole* or intact” and “health, good luck, well-being” (OED, emphasis original). Something set apart and consecrated as holy, insofar as it is also kept whole and inviolable, is then deemed healthy. While Ruskin’s use of holy capitalizes on these etymological connections, his emphasis on help or helpfulness adds a feature extrinsic to traditional connotations of the holy. Ruskin provides an early definition of the “holy” in *Modern Painters*, which, he claimed, expressed the sum of his political economy (17:75). The “holy” provides a quasi-religious conception for what consists primarily in a sociological description of organic unity. It denotes a state in which all parts participate in an interdependent whole, and it is through this interdependence that life becomes manifest. Just as the sanguinity of organic life-forms depends on the efficiency of interdependent parts, so Ruskin argues in “The Law of Help” from *Modern Painters* that an agonistic society undermines holiness, wholeness, helpfulness, and life.

If any part enters into a state in which it no more assists the rest, and has thus become “helpless,” we call it also “dead.” The power which causes the several portions of the plant to help each other, we call life. . . . Thus, the intensity of life is also intensity of helpfulness—completeness of depending of each part on all the rest. The ceasing of this help is what we call corruption. . . . When matter is

either consistent, or living, we call it pure, or clean; when inconsistent or corrupting (unhelpful), we call it impure, or unclean. The greatest uncleanness being that which is essentially most opposite to life. Life and consistency, then, both expressing one character (namely, helpfulness of a higher or lower order), the Maker of all creatures and things, “by whom all creatures live and all things consist,” is essentially and for ever the Helpful One, or in softer Saxon, the “Holy” One. The word has no other ultimate meaning: Helpful, harmless, undefiled: “living” or “Lord of life.” . . . A pure or holy state of anything, therefore, is that in which all its parts are helpful or consistent. . . . The highest and first law of the universe—and the other name of life is, therefore, “help.” The other name of death is “separation.” Government and co-operation are in all things and eternally the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death. (7:205–7)

We see here an example of how the functionalist problem of social cohesion, as I discussed in the introduction, becomes wedded to representations of organic unity—a representation that Ruskin derived from the Romantics (Sherburne 8–9). Ruskin takes the natural world as the model for the social world: each organic entity is composed of highly coordinated, complex elements that work to sustain the life of the organism. Thus “life” expresses the vital order of the system and “help” the interdependent unity that the parts form together. Ruskin’s opposition of the holy and unholy recasts the binaries of the sacred and profane in relation to problems of social justice such that a just society preserves the interdependence of parts expressive of life and the holy, helpful, and pure state, whereas an unjust one is unholy, unhelpful, and impure.<sup>11</sup> The depiction of an interdependent organic structure—the “pure or holy state of anything”—explicitly functions as an analogue for the social and economic order since Ruskin links it with proper government and cooperation. Capitalism, by atomizing individual relations, inflicts death and destroys the very life and social unity it should sustain. This view of the ends of economic life as the biological reproduction of life and the sociological reproduction of the communal body becomes the basis for Ruskin’s argument that since human life and the community it forms are what is “holy,” political economy should aim at supporting this holy structure.

However much Ruskin strives to display the necessary causal relationship between the intrinsic value of life and economic actions that reproduce a just social body, “justice” as a rule of action fails to articulate a cogent theory since

it presents the desired effect of action as the guiding principle and assumes agreement as to what is just or unjust to be self-evident when the absence of such consensus motivated Ruskin's argument in the first place. Justice, moreover, does not offer a shared economic principle by which each person would tacitly communicate and affirm through their economic acts that life is "holy" and the basis of value. Ruskin's adoption of the labor theory of value responds to this vexed problem of a shared theory of economic value that also bridges the gap between value and the production of a just and "holy" society. In formulating his version of the labor theory, Ruskin primarily draws on Smith and the latter's emphasis on the suffering and sacrifice involved in labor as the universal standard of value.<sup>12</sup> In the *Wealth of Nations*, Smith's labor theory of value begins with the supposition that labor consists of "hardship endured" and "the toil of our own body" that we either withstand or avoid by inflicting it on others (27, 26).<sup>13</sup> Labor is seen as what economists refer to as a disutility—the sacrifices, pain, or unpleasantness that individuals experience in any given activity (Blaug *Economic* 49). The painful physical and psychological sacrifice required in labor serves as the original source and measure of value.

Equal quantities of labour, at all times and places, may be said to be of equal value to the labourer. . . . The price which he pays must always be the same, whatever may be the quantity of goods which he receives in return for it. . . . Labour alone, therefore, never varying in its own value, is alone the ultimate and real standard by which the value of all commodities can at all times and places be estimated and compared. (Smith *Wealth* 28)

As a generalized theory of value, labor offers a universal and invariable measure because its sacrifice represents an identical value for all. These aspects of Smith's labor theory would reverberate among classical and neoclassical economists alike. Although Ricardo's labor theory drew less attention to the concept of labor as a disutility, he consistently asserts in the *Principles* (1817), as he would reassert at the end of his career in the unfinished essay "Absolute Value and Exchangeable Value" (1823), that the cause and measure of a commodity's value resides in "difficulty or facility of production" (1:273). The only criterion for a commodity's value, he asserts, is "the sacrifices of labour made to obtain it. Every thing is originally purchased by labour—nothing that has value can be produced without it" (4:397). Similarly, while Jevons rejected the labor theory of value, he like Smith defines labor as a disutility: it is "the painful exertion we

undergo to ward off pains of greater amount, or to procure pleasures which leave a balance in our favour” (*Theory* 167). Labor must be defined by its suffering or “the painfulness of the effort” because labor can only be measured negatively, that is, as quantities of pain (170).

Ruskin, along with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century economists from Smith to Jevons, presents the sacrifice and suffering that labor demands or the renunciation of our wants, as the *via negativa* through which value articulates its positive properties. There is one marked difference, however; Ruskin’s conception of labor as sacrifice presents itself in a positive light because it refers back to the intrinsic value of life, whereas Smith presents labor as toil to be avoided. The sacrifice, suffering, and literal loss or giving up of life that labor entails form the basis of its value and require each individual in the economic sphere to recognize, however implicitly, that life is the basis of value. Paradoxically, then, life’s intrinsic value appears on the economic landscape not as life, but as its renunciation and sacrifice. Thus, in *Munera Pulveris*, Ruskin claims that the true cost or price of something can only be known when one determines what constitutes labor.

I have already defined Labour to be the Contest of the life of man with an opposite. Literally, it is the quantity of “Lapse,” loss, or failure of human life, caused by any effort. It is usually confused with effort itself, or the application of power (opera); but there is much effort which is merely a mode of recreation, or of pleasure. The most beautiful actions of the human body, and the highest results of the human intelligence, are conditions, or achievements, of quiet unlaborious—nay, of recreative,—effort. But labour is the *suffering* in effort. It is the negative quantity, or quantity of de-feat, which has to be counted against every Feat. . . . In brief, it is “that quantity of our toil which we die in.” (Ruskin 17:182–83, emphasis original)

Distinguishing labor from opera, or the mere application of a skill, Ruskin presents a labor theory of value that has its basis in how much “life” is sacrificed by the individual.<sup>14</sup> He, like Smith, offers a cost theory of value—a theory of value that relies on labor as the dominant variable in a commodity’s cost of production (Schumpeter 590). The more we suffer and sacrifice, the greater the cost *for us*, and hence, the value. The advantage in defining the cost or price of something according to the invariable measure of labor is that the exchange value of a commodity now denotes its cost as an embodiment of life. In the realms of

both production and exchange, the labor theory of value provides a standard that engages with the central claim that life is of intrinsic value. If life is holy, then labor as the expenditure of bodily energies is also holy. Ruskin here combines the soma-economic and bio-economic narratives within political economy in order to draw moral attention to the painful expenditure of physiological and psychic energies that inhere in labor and its products. Labor, as an invariable standard of value, represents the fundamental basis of all value for us: human life. Since we sacrifice a portion of our lives in labor, labor's value is absolute and insubstitutable.

Through the life sacrificed in labor, the economy confirms life's sanctity and establishes a circular, *do ut des* economy in which labor's sacrifice results in life's reproduction and a just, "holy" society. Although Ruskin was aware of Tylor's work, particularly Tylor's *Researches*, his articulation of a gift-sacrifice logic derives more from his readings of the Bible than anthropologists.<sup>15</sup> The model of gift sacrifice Ruskin presents in the political economic writings draws on earlier articulations of gift sacrifice in *Modern Painters*, wherein Ruskin argues that the labor that once created great works of art propitiated the deity by making "self-denying efforts, in order to obtain some persuasion of the immediate presence or approval of the Divinity" (5:196). Whether through the temples and statues built to honor the gods, or simply in "acts of self-sacrifice done in the hope of their love, he brought whatever was best and skillfullest in him into their service, and lived in a perpetual subjection to their unseen power" (5:196). Delimiting the element of reward that underlies such acts of sacrificial propitiation, Ruskin contrasts self-sacrificing labor to the utilitarian attitude of his contemporaries who work "either to benefit mankind, or reach some selfish end, not . . . to please the gods" (5:198).

*Unto This Last* recasts the model of gift sacrifice sketched in *Modern Painters* onto the sociological context in which the sacrifice of labor is not directed toward the deity but, as in Durkheim's theorization of sacrificial ritual, the social body itself. Hence if, as Linda Austin suggests, Ruskin portrays the laborer as a martyr who embodies the model of sacrifice from the Bible (61), the sacrifices that the laborer endures in labor ensure the reproduction of life and a holy society. The reproduction of a holy society, however, depends on whether the labor sacrificed is just or unjust. The quality and ends of labor matter precisely because "true labour" leads toward life and is "a divine thing, to be honoured with the kind of honour given to the gods," while "false labour" leads to death (Ruskin 17:95). In separating good labor that leads to life from bad, "holy" labor

that cultivates the worker's self-respect from "unholy" labor that degrades her, he can present a version of self-sacrifice and self-denial in labor without it being equivalent to Smith's conception of labor as degrading toil. Ruskin here anticipates Marx's characterization of capitalist labor practices as essentially accumulating wealth and solidifying its social system on the bodies of the laboring men it sacrifices (Kemple 93–94). But he differentiates just labor that leads toward life from the alienated, external labor that Marx sees as "a labour of self-sacrifice and mortification" (*Selected Writings* 80).<sup>16</sup> Ruskin introduces the gendered model of motherhood as a positive example of the self-sacrificing labor that results in life's reproduction: the child (17:97). This sacred bond between mother and child parallels the bond between the laborer and her work—a bond commodity exchange does not recognize and therefore sunders. Ruskin's labor theory thus accomplishes multiple rhetorical goals at once: it offers an expression of life's intrinsic value in the context of an economic theory and practice that all can share; it provides a rule for critiquing those labor practices and patterns of consumption that do not support life and thus undermine national character; and it instantiates a circular, sacrificial economy that conjoins a theory of intrinsic value with the formation of a just and "holy" society.

### ***The Smithian Paradigm: Sacrifice, Sacred Labor, and the Just Economy***

While Ruskin's political economic writings functioned as a polemical critique of capitalist materialism and its desecration of the social and economic life he deemed "holy," his argument nevertheless exemplifies the circular, gift-sacrifice economy that underlies the labor theory of value. Political economists turn to a conception of labor as sacrifice in order to address three analytical problems within their schema of the economic system: the source of a commodity's intrinsic value, the measure of exchange value/price of commodities, and the growth and distribution of wealth in a competitive capitalist economy. But whereas Ruskin invoked labor's sacrifice to bridge the logical gap between a conception of life's intrinsic value and the formation of a just and "holy" society, political economic theories of value do so in order to conceal divergences between the idealized model of an economy rooted in the sacrifices of labor and actual distribution in a capitalist economy. Labor's sacrifice remains essential to theories of value because it is linked to a circular, self-referential structure that



consecrates and stabilizes an economy threatened by the unequal distribution of wealth. Although later economic historians would fault classical economists for confusing value theory with problems of welfare and distribution,<sup>17</sup> I want to emphasize that for these economists value was (as for Ruskin) a moral problem. Labor's sacrifice furnishes the analytical base for the source and measure of exchange value, as well as the ethical foundation that simultaneously links the circular reproduction of the economy and its sacralization to matters of just distribution and economic growth.

I begin my discussion of this pattern with the economist Ruskin read most closely, Adam Smith. Smith presents a convenient starting point since the critical approach that once dominated Smith's corpus itself exemplifies aspects of the double narrative of capitalism, pitting as it did Smith's economic thought in the *Wealth of Nations* against his moral philosophy in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*—what is typically referred to as the “Adam Smith Problem.” This once controversial problem generated a struggle to reconcile the moral emphasis on sympathy in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* with the apparent moral indifference and model of self-interest in the *Wealth of Nations*,<sup>18</sup> but it has since been dismissed altogether as “a pseudo-problem.”<sup>19</sup> Smith's prudent man in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, A. L. Macfie argues, becomes transmuted into the economic man of the *Wealth of Nations*, whose ability to sacrifice and be frugal advances his and the nation's wealth (*Individual* 73). Similarly, Athol Fitzgibbons contends that Smith's political economy incorporates the pursuit of wealth in the pursuit of virtue: the cultivation of a self-sacrificing, dispassionate attitude, which represents virtues inherent to the impartial spectator of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, appears in political economy as the prudent worker who labors disinterestedly with respect to present enjoyment (137–52).<sup>20</sup>

The apparent inconsistency reflects less a contradiction in Smith's thought during the years that separated the two works than a tendency among economic historians to read a later disciplinary divide into Smith's writings. As various critics have noted, Smith's political economy was part of the science of jurisprudence, and his writings on political economy precede the disciplinary disaggregation of the moral and humanistic sciences from the natural sciences.<sup>21</sup> This reappraisal of the “Adam Smith Problem” has coincided with a reassessment of Smith's methodological orientation. Deborah Redman argues that despite Smith's adoption of Newtonian analogies for the economy's function as a system, Smith would have been critical of the kind of mathematical, a priori reasoning and models of systematicity that have now become the norm (256).<sup>22</sup> The *Wealth of Nations* was methodologically “eclectic” (qtd. in

Redman 228), drawing on any method and field of study that might assist Smith's inquiry into the problem of wealth. For Redman and others, such methodological eclecticism renders the *Wealth of Nations* distinct from later efforts by Ricardo and Jevons, whose deductive and mathematical approach sought to strip political economy of its sociological, philosophical, and historical underpinnings.

While such reassessments have largely silenced the "Adam Smith Problem," it has not resulted in agreement on that other characteristic segregation that has occluded the double narrative of capitalism, namely, that of science from religion. Lisa Hill argues that economists read Smith's writings through the later secularization of the discipline, excising Smith's deism from his economic thought (22).<sup>23</sup> Scholarly attention to the latter typically centers on interpretations of the "invisible hand" as either serving a deistic or purely metaphorical function. Yet equally important to Smith's economic thought, I contend, are the numerous references to the sacred in the *Wealth of Nations*. These references illuminate a rationale that underlies Smith's adoption of a labor theory of value and reveal how labor's sacrifice furthers the self-interested accumulation of wealth even as it mediates just distribution. Thus while Peter Minowitz describes the *Wealth of Nations* as an "atheistic and anti-Christian work" (139), he admits that the subject of labor and capitalist accumulation leads Smith repeatedly to adopt the language of consecration and a religious eschatology in which individuals subsume present pleasure for a prospective destiny—language that he elsewhere avoids (149). Hence we see both in Smith's critique of apprenticeship laws that dictate an individual's rights over his labor and in his critique of the prodigal who wastes it a repeated invocation of the sanctity of labor.

The property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable. The patrimony of a poor man lies in the strength and dexterity of his hands; and to hinder him from employing this strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbour is a plain violation of this most sacred property. (Smith *Wealth of Nations* 109)

The prodigal perverts in this manner. By not confining his expense within his income, he encroaches upon his capital. Like him who perverts the revenues of some pious foundation to profane purposes, he pays the wages of idleness with those funds which the frugality of his forefathers had, as it were, consecrated to the maintenance of industry. (302)

Smith's use of such phrases as "sacred and inviolable" has its precedent, of course, in Locke's and Hume's writings on the institution of private property.<sup>24</sup> In both thinkers, the phrase arises in relation to social institutions and the supposed instability and injustice that would result if one did not maintain private property. It is the expenditure of one's labor, as Locke famously claims in the *Second Treatise* (1689), that justifies the appropriation of nature's gifts. This notion of natural rights clearly influences Smith's critique of prolonged apprenticeships as an encroachment on the free movement of labor in the market (Rothschild 101). But Smith's emphasis on labor's sanctity does not simply arise because property rights regulate distribution and constitute a natural liberty. Labor is sacred because it is also the source of the nation's wealth, and its perpetual sacrifice sacralizes and reproduces the foundation of the economy: labor. To interfere with the movement of labor for the benefit of the select few (apprenticeships) or to squander labor (the prodigal) creates inequalities and harms economic welfare, which rests on the productivity and circular reproduction of labor.

In unfolding this rationale of circular reproduction, I begin where Smith himself begins by turning to the first sentence of the *Wealth of Nations*. Smith writes: "The annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life which it annually consumes, and which consist always either in the immediate produce of that labour, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations" (Smith *Wealth of Nations* 1). Scholars have long read Smith's emphasis on labor as part of his critique of the mercantilists, who equated wealth with money rather than a nation's aggregate product. This relationship between labor and aggregate product is not unrelated to the role a sacrificial economy plays in Smith's value theory. We have already seen, in the discussion of Ruskin, how Smith's definition of labor as the source and measure of value rests on the physical and psychological sacrifice that labor universally requires. Given this definition, the opening sentence conceives of the economy as a circular process in which labor's sacrifice produces the "fund" that the nation consumes and further regenerates through repeated acts of labor. The sacrifice of labor, as in the anthropological model of gift sacrifice, represents a circular, self-referential act that effectively consecrates labor as essential to the community's viability. Hence when Smith claims that squandering labor is "profane," it is because the "pious foundation" to which the sacrifice of past labors is "consecrated" is the economic system itself. Such circularity allows us to reinterpret the centrality of labor to reveal its propitiatory

qualities: we sacrifice ourselves in our labor in order to have the gift of ourselves in return.

This gift-sacrifice economy, implicit in the opening sentence of the *Wealth of Nations*, underwrites Smith's labor theory of value. Smith's labor theory equates the source of value (labor) and the measure of value (labor) with the fund of a nation's wealth (labor). The labor theory of value enacts the circular reproduction of the economy in which labor is sacrificed, sacralized, and regenerated. Smith turns to a labor theory of value because its sacrifice is the basis for the economy's reproduction and because it furnishes an invariable standard by which to measure the changing price of commodities and to address economic welfare. If the labor theory were flawed, then the circular economy of sacrifice by which labor (and the economy more generally) is sacralized has no concrete relation to income, the changing standard of living, and how these latter issues are reflected in commodity prices.

We must situate the contradictions and inconsistencies that economic historians have noted in Smith's theories of value as a response to this latter problem (Blaug *Economic* 37–39; Schumpeter 188–89). Smith repeatedly returns to labor as his measure in order to link labor to both the circular, self-sacralizing reproduction of the economy and its distribution. Although at various points Smith considers gold and silver as an invariable standard, he ultimately rejects them since they, like other commodities, are subject to fluctuations in price and so cannot measure the value/price of other commodities. Labor, he argues, is the “real price” of commodities, whereas money is simply the “nominal price”; labor alone “is the only universal, as well as the only accurate measure of value of different commodities at all times, and at all places” (*Wealth of Nations* 32). More than any other measure, labor transcends historical and geographical boundaries and provides a means by which to assess individual well-being according to shifts in purchasing power and allows for interpersonal comparisons since the pains of labor are the same for all (Hollander *Smith* 127–29). Smith seeks a measure of exchange value that can penetrate beyond the abstract relations of prices and ascertain social relations of production as well as the standard of living.

Smith's labor theory ultimately cannot do this since he recognizes that the labor quantities expended in producing goods and the price paid for them on the market are not identical. Smith's awareness of this gap leads to the confusing shift, as Ricardo would later note, from a theory of value based on the amount of labor one can purchase through the exchange of commodities as the

“real measure” of a commodity’s value to a theory of value that claims value qua value materializes itself in a commodity as labor. “The value of any commodity, therefore, to the person who possesses it, and who means not to use it himself, but to exchange it for other commodities, is equal to the quantity of labour which it enables him to purchase or command. Labour, therefore, is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities” (Smith *Wealth of Nations* 26). As Ronald Meek states, Smith concludes that the ““real measure”” of value is not “*the quantity of labour embodied in the other goods* for which it would exchange,” but “*the quantity of labour* it would exchange for on the market” (*Studies* 64, emphasis original). Smith introduces a fork in his value theory: the labor *embodied* in a commodity determines the extent to which a given commodity can *command* the amount of labor it does in exchange, which is then the “real measure” of its value (62–64).

While labor may be the source of value, it is not the means by which to measure the rate at which commodities exchange in industrial capitalist society because price does not solely reflect the quantity of labor necessary to produce them, but includes other elements such as profits and rent. Relying on a stadial view of economic progress in which civilization advances from hunting to commercial society, Smith contends only in the “rude state of society,” where laborers own their labor and labor is the sole variable in the process of production, does the labor embodied in a commodity coincide with the labor that it commands in exchange (*Wealth of Nations* 41). This difference between the “rude state” and capitalist society results not only in Smith’s shift from a labor-embodied to a labor-commanded theory of value, but also what critics have seen as a third, adding-up theory of value. In this third iteration, wages, profit, and rent determine what Smith refers to as the “natural price” of goods, while the “market price” may be lower or higher than this depending on the effects of supply and demand (Schumpeter 188–89; Meek *Studies* 81).

Smith’s multiple theories of value dramatize the disjunction between an ethical sense that value denotes individual sacrifices in labor and awareness that price is not governed by labor alone in an economy driven by the self-interested accumulation of capital and fluctuating consumer demand. This disjunction is especially troubling because Smith saw changes in price as indicative of the general economic welfare of the nation. If commodities are composed of wages, profits, and rent, it follows that the annual national product, which is comprised of these commodities, also divides into wages, profits, and rent (Niehans 66; Schumpeter 558). These “three original sources of all revenue” are gen-

erated by the three main classes of society: laborers, capitalists, and landlords (Smith *Wealth of Nations* 46). By making price the sum of wages, profits, and rent, price reflects the division of the national product among the three classes and thus mirrors the economic social structure. Changes in the three components on commodity prices reveal changes in the total economic output and general state of opulence—opulence that Smith defines as the rising standard of living for the laboring classes who experience an increased purchasing power due to the relative cheapness of goods in a growing economy (Bowley 128; Dobb 50–54). His inability to link the labor theory to changes in prices deprives him of a measure of value that can accurately index changes in overall growth and income (Blaug *Economic* 51). But Smith's labor theory not only contradicts actual price movements, but also stands in tension with his notion of opulence. An opulent country may be one with an increased standard of living for the laboring classes, yet such opulence also enables the wealthy to avoid the pain of labor by imposing it on the laboring classes. Hence if Ruskin uses the labor theory to conceal the slippage between a theory of intrinsic value and the formation of a just society, Smith's invocation of labor conceals dissonances within the double narrative of capitalism. The model of an economy whose circular reproduction and equitable distribution are rooted in labor's sacrifice conflicts with that other economic model of self-interested accumulation and the power such wealth provides.

Smith obscures this tension by returning to a theory of value in which labor is once again the sole determinant of value and the basis of a circular, gift-sacrifice economy. Smith writes that “[t]he real price of every thing . . . is the toil and trouble of acquiring it. . . . What is bought with money or with goods is purchased by labour as much as what we acquire by the toil of our own body” (*Wealth of Nations* 26). Terry Peach argues that Smith's allusion to two distinct types of “toil,” that of “acquiring” and that of the “body,” overcomes the contradiction between labor commanded and labor embodied by conflating “the labor of acquiring through purchase *and* the labor of acquiring through production” (“Smith” 402, emphasis original)—a conflation that Smith had earlier identified with the “rude state” and that he then extends to capitalist society as well. The conflation Peach identifies clarifies how, after claiming that price is the composite of wages, profits, and rents, Smith can introduce a concept of price ultimately measured by labor quantities. Smith argues that “[t]he real value of all the different component parts of price . . . is measured by the quantity of labour which they can, each of them, purchase or command. Labour

measures the value not only of that part of price which resolves itself into labour, but of that which resolves itself into rent, and of that which resolves itself into profit” (*Wealth of Nations* 44). By conflating labor embodied and labor commanded, Smith reduces all three components to labor quantities so that labor as a commodity can measure all facets that make up price. While critics have faulted this argument for being “tautological,”<sup>25</sup> Smith’s reasoning is understandable if we see it as an attempt to salvage the model of circularity outlined in the first sentence of the *Wealth of Nations*: labor’s sacrifice is the measure of the price of commodities, the price of commodities is made up of units of labor, and these commodities as a whole make up the national product (labor). Labor’s sacrifice is once again the source of value, the basis of economic reproduction and expansion, the yardstick for measuring the economy’s growth and distribution, and the mode by which the economy as a whole is sacralized.

Smith’s adherence to a labor theory of value and the gift-sacrifice economy that underlies it, I have been arguing, indicates a preoccupation with economic justice and the need for a shared value structure in which the economic life of society is both the object of sacrifice and its reward. This issue of economic justice, as Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff claim, represents a central concern in the *Wealth of Nations*; specifically, how to harmonize sufficient provisions for the laboring poor with the unequal accumulation of capital and property in the hands of the wealthy (2). In the *Wealth of Nations*, the encouragement of agricultural production in a free-market system guided by Smith’s “invisible hand” satisfies the “subsistence of the labouring poor” and resolves the “antinomy between needs and rights” without recourse to charity or governmental interference (Hont and Ignatieff 24-25). While Hont and Ignatieff argue that this preserves the principle of self-interest as the primary motor of human action (11-12, 24), Smith surreptitiously introduces an ascetic standard of virtue by linking issues of distribution and economic growth with self-sacrificing labor. In this context, the sacrosanct character of labor sanctifies the economic system and, through its privileged position within his argument, stimulates the industry necessary to better the conditions of laborers, thus linking sacrifice, the sacred, value, and economic justice into one central principle that conciliates self-interest with virtue. Yet the irony is that by retaining labor in his theory of value and economic growth, Smith must gloss over class-based inequalities. On the one hand, labor is sacred because its sacrifice sustains the economy. Yet on the other hand, in order to link the sacrifice of labor to commodity prices, Smith must conceal the very gap between labor and price that his argument uncovers—

the gap Marx would make central to his arguments on the capitalist exploitation of labor-power.

### ***Ricardo and the Return of the Smithian Paradigm***

Recent reappraisals of Smith's corpus may have repositioned him in relation to the disciplinary disaggregation that emerged with Ricardo's deductive approach, but they have paradoxically invigorated another schism. While attention to Smith's moral orientation indicates how aspects of what I have termed the double narrative of capitalism operate in his work, this feature of Smith's corpus has been seen as exceptional and serves to demarcate the subsequent moment of disaggregation in other economists and the emergence of the two-cultures divide. Even among literary critics like Mary Poovey and Claudia Klaver, who are conscious of the artificiality of disciplinary divides and have sought to unveil the unevenness of their development, Smith is seen as markedly distinct from those who succeeded him. They have thus been less concerned with contesting the apparent segregation of morals from political economy in Ricardo or the neoclassical economics of Jevons and thus overlook the ways in which Smith's ideas recur in these later thinkers. For Klaver, Ricardo's "methodological and stylistic abstraction" initiates the professionalization of political economy as a science and is the primary means by which he excludes "moral, theological, political, and social concerns" (18)—a process Jevons would later consolidate through mathematical models of analysis. Hence, Klaver claims that in the discursive gap that emerges between the humanistic sciences and economics, the moral orientation that had once characterized Smith's writings is recuperated by cultural and literary critics like Ruskin, Carlyle, or Dickens. Klaver's attention to the two-cultures divide that "naturalized the disaggregation of human experience into two separate domains of knowledge, one scientific and amoral and the other aesthetic and moral" leads her to assess the work of those who professionalized the discipline through this divide, pointing to the way in which Jevons's authority "depends on the *erasure* of all such connections between the economic and these 'other' realms of human experience" (162, 184, emphasis original). Similarly, Poovey examines the generic differences between literary, financial, and monetary instruments in order to demonstrate how their respective functions and mediation of economic value depend on formal differences of argument, method, and style. Because of



the discipline's professionalization, "the definition of *value* was rapidly narrowed as political economy, which had once been the capacious study of human nature and jurisprudence, was increasingly restricted to the more focused science of a form of value that could be measured" (*Genres* 275–76, emphasis original).

I in no way contest the efforts by political economists such as Ricardo or Jevons to separate themselves from the moral and humanistic sciences in order to achieve the disciplinary status of "hard" sciences like physics; rather, I am suggesting that largely due to the generic differences that Poovey demonstrates emerge between literary and economic forms of writing, economics embeds its ethical dimensions within a mathematical and deductive argumentative style. In the remainder of this chapter I offer a reading of these dimensions by examining the theory of value in Ricardo, Mill, and Jevons, revealing the extent to which the circular, gift-sacrifice economy seen earlier in Smith resurfaces in these thinkers to address precisely those ethical concerns that economists presumably had shunted aside. The direct and repeated references to the sacred do not forcefully appear in Ricardo, Mill, and Jevons, as they did in Smith.<sup>26</sup> But if we understand sacrifice not only as an expression of evangelical asceticism that facilitates capitalist accumulation, but also as a mode of sacralization, we see that these subsequent economists also consistently identify value with the sacrifice of labor—an identification that structurally sacralizes social relations in their arguments and engages matters of distribution even as it encourages the self-interested pursuit of wealth.

Smith's concern with economic growth stems from the gradual shift during the eighteenth century from predominantly agricultural to manufacturing conditions—a shift that heralded the increasing division of labor and capitalist accumulation among industrialized societies. While Smith was aware of the class conflict that the division of labor caused and the antinomy of interests between capitalists and laborers (Dobb 54–55), his interest in distribution centered on how the economy as a self-regulating system allocated income among those individuals who sought to maximize their wealth rather than how the national product was divided among its three main classes. This issue of distributive welfare along class lines would, however, be the focus of Ricardo's political economy. Unlike Smith, Ricardo wrote the *Principles* after the Napoleonic wars, when scarcity and the protectionist Corn Laws had increased the price of corn and driven the laboring populace into a state of distress. Samuel Hollander writes that Ricardo's theoretical system "was *designed to prove* that agricultural

protection would have depressing secular effects on the economy,” specifically a decline in profits (*Ricardo* 647, emphasis original). The enrichment of the landlords at the expense of the manufacturing and laboring classes, who were the foundation of economic progress, was thus a pragmatic concern that shaped Ricardo’s investigation into an invariable standard that could judge changes in the relative prices of commodities and thereby assess the distribution of the national product among the three classes.

Ricardo’s overriding interest in the problem of distribution motivates his critique of Smith’s value theory. Although Ricardo accepts certain fundamental Smithian principles such as the distinction between natural and market price or the division of the national product among the three classes of landlords, capitalists, and laborers, he criticized Smith’s contradictory value theories, particularly the adding-up theory of value. By making value a composite of wages, profits, and rent, Ricardo argued that the measure of value would not be stable; rather, it would change with distribution and thus be incapable of effectively linking changes in relative prices to changes in distribution. As Piero Sraffa states, “the problem of value which interested Ricardo was how to find a measure of value which would be invariant to changes in the division of the product; for, if a rise or fall of wages by itself brought about a change in the magnitude of the social product, it would be hard to determine accurately the effect on profits” (“Introduction” xlviii).<sup>27</sup> If the aggregate national product size itself was shifting due to the measure of value being used, then the percentage of profits gleaned by each of the three classes from the national product would not be accurately identified. Ricardo adopts a strict, labor-embodied theory of value because it provides a stable measure of the national output that will be shared as profits among the three classes and is unaffected by changes in distribution and its impact on relative prices. As in Smith, the theory hinges on labor’s sacrifice as the source of a commodity’s “positive value” (qtd. in Hollander *Ricardo* 264), which not only regulates exchange value but also serves as the cornerstone to Ricardo’s theory of distribution and the vision of an economy in which labor is sacrificed and regenerated in a circular process.

This theory of distribution and model of circularity finds its earliest articulation in the groundbreaking *Essay on Profits* (1815), which presents a model of circular reproduction in the agricultural sector that is later recouped by the *Principles* and its articulation of the labor theory of value. Ricardo’s *Essay* examines the dynamics of production and consumption within the agricultural sector alone in order to determine the distribution of profits in the economy as a whole.

The unique position of the agricultural sector in the *Essay* arises from the fact that goods such as corn, wheat, and barley provide a basic necessity for laborers and form a subsistence wage-good within the economy. As Sraffa argues, Ricardo's economic system prior to the *Principles* develops a corn model in which corn (the inclusive term for all grains) is both what the economy consumes and what it produces: "in agriculture the same commodity, namely corn, forms both the capital . . . and the product; so that the determination of profit by the difference between total product and capital advanced . . . is done directly between quantities of corn without any question of valuation" (Sraffa "Introduction" xxxi).<sup>28</sup> The corn model explains the distribution of profits in the economy without developing a theory of value to assess the relative prices of numerous commodities: the only commodity is corn and this serves as a convenient simplification for the rest of the economy. More importantly, the corn model shows how the economy sustains itself through a process of circular reproduction. Corn is what the economy produces; corn is what the economy advances as capital to engage in production; and finally, corn is what is paid out as wages and what the economy consumes. As in Frazer's discussion of rituals that consecrate the corn god and ensure agricultural fertility and social stability through an economy of sacrifice, the circularity of the corn model describes a sacrificial logic in which corn is what is consecrated in sacrifice, consumed, and reproduced.

By using the corn model as a simplification for the economy as a whole, Ricardo could then argue that since the Corn Laws were depressing profits in the agricultural sector, they were detrimental to the entire economy. This claim hinges on Ricardo's law of diminishing returns and his repeated assertion that "it is the profits of the farmer which regulate the profits of all other trades" (6:104). According to the law of diminishing returns, as capital grows and population concomitantly advances, more produce must be supplied for the subsistence of the enlarging population by farming less fertile lands, which generates lesser profits since more capital and labor is required to return the same amount of produce as on the more fertile lands. The increasing costs of labor result in rising wages and corn prices, but these higher prices only benefit the landlords on more fertile tracts of land, who gain both an expensive product and an increased rent (1:83). Even if landlords recoup high rents, the overall effect of cultivating lands on the margin is to depress profits and diminish the rate of economic growth because "[t]he profits on all trading capital would also fall" (4:14).

Through the corn model and theory of diminishing returns, Ricardo casts anti-laissez-faire policies as interferences in the circular reproduction of the

economy and the minimum rate of profit such reproduction requires. Any tensions between the two narratives of capitalism arise not through the internal workings of the capitalist economic system but as disturbances generated by governmental interference. These disturbances to “natural” economic processes in the *Essay* already intimate a labor theory of value: the price of corn hinges on difficulty or “facility” of production (4:26). Hence, although it was Malthus’s objections to the thesis that corn determines the rate of profit in all sectors of the economy that initially lead Ricardo in the *Principles* to present labor as the measure of value in a multi-commodity system,<sup>29</sup> the labor theory in fact continues a trajectory already established in the *Essay*. Sraffa writes that in the *Principles* “[i]t was now labour, instead of corn, that appeared on both sides of the account—in modern terms, both as input and output: as a result, the rate of profits was no longer determined by the ratio of the corn produced to the corn used up in production, but, instead, by the ratio of the total labour of the country to the labour required to produce the necessaries for that labour” (Sraffa “Introduction” xxxii). The substitution that Sraffa identifies between corn and labor enables another revision. The circularity that characterized the corn model now embeds the labor theory of value: it is now labor that is consecrated in sacrifice and regenerated. This circular economy only strengthens the polemical argument against the Corn Laws. The increasing sacrifices of the laborer and the loss of profits to the capitalists due to increasing wages leads to Ricardo’s critique of the landlord class, who impede the reproduction and growth of the economy and take a greater relative share of the nation’s total labor but actually do not sacrifice any labor or capital themselves. Ricardo’s emphasis on labor’s sacrifice allows him to simultaneously critique anti-laissez-faire policy and patterns of distribution.

Since Ricardo adopts the labor theory of value to assess the relationship between relative prices and the distribution of profits among the varied classes, any threat to the stability of the labor theory undermines the extent to which it effectively mirrors altering economic relations. If Ruskin’s writings face the problematic gap between theories of value and the formation of a just society, Ricardo (like Smith) confronts the gap between the labor theory and its capacity to assess distribution through shifts in relative prices. Ricardo was troubled, for example, that varied proportions of fixed (e.g., durable machinery) and circulating capital (e.g., raw materials and operating expenses) alter value such that “commodities will *not* exchange in proportion to labour expenditures” (Peach *Interpreting Ricardo* 152, emphasis original).<sup>30</sup> More broadly, Ricardo

confronts the logical tension between a theory that claims labor quantities represent the source of a commodity's absolute value and his awareness that value expresses itself relationally in exchange (Schumpeter 591). An interdependent system of exchange values mutually impacting one another would signify an economic system in which value was unmoored from any stable referent. As Christopher Herbert remarks in relation to Adam Smith, value does not inhere in objects but in "*the institutionalized system of relations which enables exchange to occur*" (*Culture and Anomie* 95, emphasis original). But what worries Ricardo is not relativism, as Herbert implies, but its ethical consequences: the self-referential nature of the economic system, the extent to which it effectively represents and refers back to the degree of economic justice within the community, would be undermined if the labor theory were abandoned.<sup>31</sup>

These ethical stakes lead Ricardo to reassert labor as the source and measure of value and rescue the model of circularity first found in the *Essay* at the very moment that he considers alternative standards, such as gold, to compensate for the labor theory's inefficiencies.<sup>32</sup> Gold is that hypothetical commodity which presents an average ratio of fixed to circulating capital with respect to all other commodities and "at all times requires the same sacrifice of toil and labour to produce it" (Ricardo 1:275, 45). In order to determine whether changes in relative values were caused by changes in "real value," i.e., labor, one would simply compare all relative values against one another in relation to the standard (Meek *Studies* 111). But Ricardo's unstated assumption, Mark Blaug claims, is that gold is a good produced "under the same conditions" as corn (*Economic* 109), whose relative value is solely determined by labor quantities and unaffected by variations in the relative value of other goods or money wages (*Ricardian Economics* 18–19, 24). By identifying the invariable standard (gold) with corn, Ricardo links shifts in the relative prices of goods measured by the standard to the amount of labor sacrificed in the agricultural sector to produce corn. Ricardo thus surreptitiously reintroduces the corn model: gold is identified with corn and corn with labor sacrificed. The economy is once again represented as a circular process in which labor both measures the value of the national product and what the economy produces and consumes.

### ***Seesawing Theories of Value in Mill and Jevons***

In contrast to the typical critical assessment of Ricardian economics as a departure from Smith's eclectic methods and ethical preoccupations, Mill's *Principles*

of *Political Economy* (1848) has long been viewed as a continuation of the Smithian legacy. As Mill himself states in the “Preface,” he intended to incorporate Smith’s broad sociological framework, which treated political economy as “inseparably intertwined with many other branches of social philosophy” (2:xcii), with the modern economic findings and scientific method that had made much of the *Wealth of Nations* obsolete. Mill wanted to rehabilitate the maligned status of the “dismal science” by presenting political economy as concerned with both the production of wealth *and* its distribution.<sup>33</sup> Much like Marshall, who would strive to balance the classical and neoclassical approach, Mill synthesized the methods of Smith and Ricardo—a rapprochement between science and ethics that rendered the *Principles* the touchstone for British political economy until the publication of Marshall’s *Principles* in the 1890s.

This tendency to synthesize two divergent approaches characterizes his theory of value. Much like Ricardo’s critics, Samuel Bailey and Nassau Senior, Mill treats value as a concept that arises when commodities come into a relation of exchange and not an abstract investigation into absolute value (Blaug *Ricardian Economics* 223; Dobb 99); value, he argues, is a “relative term” and does not denote “an inherent and substantive quality of the thing itself, but . . . must always be understood relatively to some other thing” for which it is exchanged (Mill 3:479). Mill combines this relativized conception of value grounded in the law of supply and demand with a theory of value rooted in the sacrifices of labor. The difficulties or sacrifices necessary to acquire or produce something present the primary condition for a commodity’s exchange value since those things that “can be obtained without labour or sacrifice” will have no exchange value (3:456). For most goods other than scarcities, value correlates with cost of production, and things exchange at a ratio of their “Cost Value,” cost here understood as labor and the “past labour” accumulated through abstinence in the form of capital (3:497; 2:58).<sup>34</sup> Supply and demand “obey a superior force, which makes value gravitate towards Cost of Production”; the law of supply and demand is a stopgap, “antecedent law” whenever cost of production proves an insufficient explanation (3:476, 596).

Mill’s conflicted theory of value has led economic historians to regard the *Principles* as a point of transition between classical labor theories and the subjective theories of value based on demand and consumer preference (Schumpeter 529–30, 603–5). It was in part such vacillation that led Jevons to dismiss Mill as yet another admirer of the Ricardian school of economics that had “shunted the car of Economic science on to a wrong line” (*Theory* li). By contrast, Jevons claims his quantitative, relational approach to price as a function

of utility would free economics from “the thoroughly ambiguous and unscientific character of the term *value*” (76, emphasis original). Much has been made, both in histories of economic analysis and in recent literary criticism, of Jevons’s pivotal position vis-à-vis the rise of neoclassical economics,<sup>35</sup> whether that be his insistence on numerical models of analysis and subjective theory of value or the neoclassical shift from questions of production to the allocation of scarcities. With Jevons, it would seem, the narrowing of British political economy into a mathematical science is further consolidated and the disciplinary division of labors leaves “*Economics*” free from the religious and sociological rhetoric that burdened the classical school (xiv, emphasis original).<sup>36</sup>

Although Jevons’s methods and claims in the *Theory of Political Economy* (1871) departed from the Ricardian school, his theory of value evidences a similar, Millian indecision—an indecision that in both Mill and Jevons reproduces patterns we have seen in earlier value theory. In Smith and Ricardo, the circular, gift-sacrifice economy embedded within the labor theory of value enacts a self-referential structure in which labor’s sacrifice functions as a mode of sacralization that tacitly consecrates the economic system, ensures its reproduction, and redresses problems of distribution. This argument, however much it outstrips these economists’ intentions and methodological proclivities, offsets the inequalities that arise from the self-interested pursuit of wealth—an argumentative pattern I have linked to the double narrative of capitalism. Much like their predecessors, Mill and Jevons articulate a theory of value rooted in the sacrifices of labor that preserves the circular, self-referential aspect of value theory and its importance to matters of distribution. Yet if, like Smith and Ricardo, Mill and Jevons revert to labor’s sacrifice in order to relate value theory to problems of distribution, they do not similarly emphasize models of organic reproduction. Instead, they grapple with the very issue that had preoccupied Ruskin: individual and national character. Character is now the locus where sacrifice as a form of self-interested accumulation and mode of sacralization coalesces. The liberal ethos of self-sacrificing labor and abstinence subtends the sacralization of an economy that engenders wealth and justly distributes it.

We can reinterpret Mill’s vacillation between objective and subjective theories of value along these lines. Mill refuses to abandon a theory of value reliant on sacrifice because, first, individual sacrifice determines the just distribution of wealth and, second, the capacity to sacrifice cultivates the character of citizens who contribute to the wealth and progress of a nation. Sacrifice and abstinence, whether in labor or toward the accumulation of capital, represent “moral

attributes” that vary within “the human race” and indicate “the stage of its progress” (Mill 2:162).<sup>37</sup> But sacrifice not only cultivates the character of the liberal subject, it also supplies Mill with a principle for restructuring the distribution of wealth—a principle he applies to institutions such as private property and taxation. Thus while Mill accepts the “sacredness” of labor as foundational to liberal economics and politics, he is critical of its extension to land (2:230). Private property was simply an expedient that ended the Hobbesian state of violence and without which none could secure the fruits of her sacrifices or labors.<sup>38</sup> Insofar as property ensures “the right of producers to what they themselves have produced” through labor or abstinence (2:215), government should limit rights such as gift, bequest, inheritance, and landed property since they either grant possession to what was produced through other people’s labor rather than one’s own or, as in the case of land,<sup>39</sup> constitute a communal inheritance that none labored to produce (2:230).<sup>40</sup> Mill extends the principle of just recompense for equitable sacrifice to a graduated taxation system in which “all are thought to have done their part fairly when each has contributed according to his means, that is, has made an equal sacrifice for the common object” (3:808).

Much like Durkheim’s hypostasization of society, the “common object” toward which these sacrifices are directed consists of nothing other than the community itself. Mill’s emphasis on sacrifice here intersects with previous discussion of the gift-sacrifice economy’s self-referential structure. Something has value because of the labor sacrificed in producing it or the past sacrifice that was incurred to save present capital. It is on the basis of sacrifice and abstinence that people receive just remuneration and the principle by which unjust wealth accumulated without sacrifice may be curtailed. In cultivating this inward discipline and character of sacrifice, we establish the foundation of society—its health and progress—through accumulated acts of renunciation. The nation we win back as a product of our renunciations stands materially bettered and embodies the principles of an equitable society in which sacrifice has its just reward. The conception of labor as sacrifice simultaneously spurs the production of wealth, regulates its distribution, cultivates the nation’s character, and consecrates the social body.

The rationale that underpins Mill’s seesawing theory of value provides us with an alternative lens for reading Jevons and the apparent split between him and classical value theory. To render economics a quantitative science, Jevons adopts Bentham’s felicific calculus and makes all elements of economics expres-



sions of pain and pleasure (utility). When measuring the utility of any given commodity or activity, one need only consider what Jevons terms its “final degree of utility,” or marginal utility. The latter measures the pleasure gained from the last incremental addition of any good or activity, an equilibrium point at which any further addition would result in pain rather than pleasure. With respect to commodities, the final degree of utility resulting from consuming a good is relational and varies with the quantity in supply—the more scarce a commodity, the higher the final degree of utility. The relation between consumer satisfaction and existing supply, expressed quantitatively in terms of the final degree of utility, determines a commodity’s value.

Despite Jevons’s quantitative approach, however, he, like Mill, wavers and reasserts labor as “the determining circumstance” of value, quantitatively linking, as Harro Maas states, “the fruits of labour to its sacrifices” (Jevons *Theory* 165; Maas 205). This becomes particularly apparent in Jevons’s formula on the cause of value: “*Cost of production determines supply; Supply determines final degree of utility; Final degree of utility determines value*” (165, emphasis original). Jevons’s formula returns to a cost-of-production theory of value if, in the series of causal factors, cost of production determines final degree of utility. Sandra Peart argues that this apparent contradiction disappears if one recasts cost of production as negative utility (116). But Peart’s solution amounts to stating that negative utility, that is, the sacrifice and suffering of labor and the abstinence necessary to accumulate capital, determines value. As Margaret Schabas succinctly writes, “Jevons appears to have gone full circle” (*World* 47). This circularity reduces value to negative utility—the suffering and sacrifice of labor.

Jevons’s continued emphasis on sacrifice and abstinence reflects an underlying concern, as in Ruskin, with the role of human judgment in labor and consumption patterns. In this regard, a subjective theory of value only brings the sociological implications of individual value judgments to the fore. At what occupation people labor, as well as what wants they choose to satisfy as a result of their labors, reflect their values and, more importantly, the degree of wealth, progress, and values within a nation. To detect this degree of progress and wealth, one need only consult the very empirical data that had baffled classical economists: commodity prices. Insofar as utility measures consumer desires, “its oscillations are minutely registered in the price lists of the markets” (Jevons *Theory* 11–12). Price lists provide statistical information that economists utilize to assess both the effect of supply and demand on relative prices and how these changing prices reflect a nation’s shifting wants and state of progress. Only a

wealthy and progressive nation “exempted from all the lower privations” exhibits higher-order desires such as the “pleasure derived from the beauties of nature and art” (42–43). A nation that is comprised of rational agents who possess a strong self-sacrificing ethos and pursue higher-order desires achieves a state of progressive civilization that is mirrored in price movements.

The relationship between price and aggregate welfare presents a different iteration of the problem encountered in Smith and Ricardo. Jevons’s problem is not how to suture the gap between an ideal representation of the economy regulated by labor’s sacrifice and the actual movement of prices and distribution. Rather, prices reveal another problematic disjunction: they demonstrate that consumers are not governed by the right wants and pursue interests that neither benefit themselves nor the nation. Thus when Jevons claims that “it is the inevitable tendency of human nature to choose that course which appears to offer the greatest advantage at the moment” (59), not only does he articulate the law of self-interest but also the cause of error in human judgments. Precisely because “a future feeling is always less influential than a present one” (72), agents make poor economic choices with respect to the accumulation and investment of their earnings. In this regard, the self-interested, rational agent appears uncomfortably similar to Jevons’s “savage” who, “like the child, is wholly occupied with the pleasures and the troubles of the moment” (35).<sup>41</sup> Jevons maintains utility as an invariable standard, but confronts the problem of poor decision-making behavior (Peart 89, 91).

These inconsistencies in human judgment shape Jevons’s forays into social reform.<sup>42</sup> If, as Gagnier notes, the liberal subject is a rational agent who both experiences the multiplication of new wants and sacrifices present wishes in hopes of future remuneration (*Insatiability* 51), this subject must be taught to value her economic interests through government intervention (Peart 34–36, 163–65). Such intervention would cultivate a set of dispositions so that poor and rich alike do not, as Smith feared, squander through their prodigality the very consecrated foundation of the nation’s wealth and progress. Jevons’s later recommendations on behalf of the uneducated consumer, women and children in factory conditions, and education of the poor illustrate his belief that the inculcation of self-reliance and sacrifice as an inward discipline would contribute to aggregate social welfare and distribute wealth more evenly among the poorer classes.<sup>43</sup> Improving the social conditions of the poor alters both the set of choices available to them and their individual valuations of those choices; social liberty and justice cannot be theorized apart from individual and aggregate welfare.<sup>44</sup>

These broader concerns regarding aggregate welfare and distribution underpin Jevons's return to a theory of value grounded in labor's sacrifice and its sacralizing function. The increasing need to define political economy as a mathematical science, however, leads Jevons to reserve terms such as the "sacred" solely for that elusive category within science and philosophy: "absolute truth" (*Theory* 276). But while Jevons avoids references to the sacred and profane, he, like Smith, articulates a quasi-deist position in which "God is seen . . . in the wonderful order and simplicity of Nature" that science examines (*Papers* 155). Insofar as the economy is one such expression of order, it is an order that remains invested in notions of sacrifice as a means of addressing the relationship between value theory and economic welfare. The ethos of self-sacrifice supplies the ground of value, cultivates the character of agents, and consecrates an economy that both accumulates and fairly distributes its wealth. This ideal representation of the economy recapitulates the circular, gift-sacrifice economy and self-referential structure seen in earlier economists: it is only by sacrificing what we want in labor that we gain what we want—a just, economically bettered society ruled by an ethos of sacrifice.

## Part II

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## CHAPTER 3

# Rational Agents, Ritual Actions

The royal rituals of the Diamond and Golden Jubilees; utilitarian structures of discipline and surveillance; middle-class domestic rituals of family prayer;<sup>1</sup> those acts of exchange and speculation that turned England into a “nation of shareholders” (Robb 3)—all these came to signify distinct types of action during the nineteenth century. This chapter poses a deceptively simple question: how did this happen? To begin exploring how these distinctions arose, we must situate the nineteenth-century classification of action against the backdrop of our broader understandings of modernity. We can see an exemplary instance of the role modernity narratives play within theorizations of action in Ferdinand Tönnies’s seminal text of sociological theory, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887). Tönnies’s well-known differentiation between “community” and “society” did more than articulate a fundamental sociological concept; it described in concise, binary terms the narrative of modernity that structured the nineteenth-century sociological imagination. Tönnies’s tale of historical transition from preindustrial communities grounded in relations of mutual interdependence to the artificial society formed by self-interested individuals would influence sociologists such as Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel, as well as Marxist theorists like Lukács. The two types of society Tönnies references not only sanction a narrative of diachronic transition from communal relations to self-interested individualism, they also underwrite a dichotomous understanding of agency: whereas in preindustrial communities the “natural will” (*Wesenswille*) embodies an organic, collective, and spontaneous unfolding of action, the “arbitrary will” (*Kürwille*) that characterizes commercial society manifests itself in an individual’s instrumental actions, which calculatngly pursue a means toward a specified end.<sup>2</sup>

Yet as the preceding chapters make evident, this transition from community to society is complicated by the very nineteenth-century British social scientists on which Tönnies drew.<sup>3</sup> We have seen, for example, how the tensions between utilitarian and communitarian theories of sacrifice in anthropology gave way to a synthesis in Durkheimian functionalism, a synthesis that political economy had already deployed in theories of value to address distribution and growth in a progressive economy. In this chapter I contest another typical feature in accounts of modernity that is germane to the double narrative of capitalism. The broad outline of Tönnies's narrative of transition, whether conceived in nostalgic or triumphant terms, informs the binary logic within nineteenth-century theorizations of agency. In such theories, the synchronic segregation of rational, utilitarian acts such as exchange from symbolic acts such as ritual is frequently recast as the diachronic transition from traditional, ritual-based societies to modern societies ruled by self-interested individualism.<sup>4</sup> These distinctions between rational and ritual activity predate, of course, the nineteenth century; they have their roots in the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment's opposition between scientific rationalism and the irrational forces of religion, custom, and superstition. Although the separation of ritual from rational action precedes the nineteenth century, it is during this period that these two categories of action became subject to discipline-specific inquiries within the fields of political economy and anthropology.

The cross-disciplinary effort by political economy and anthropology to distinguish rational, utilitarian action from ritual action, I argue, represents a crucial aspect of how the double narrative of capitalism came to be segregated. In opposing the utilitarian motives that underpin actions in the economic sphere to those normative orientations that govern ritual,<sup>5</sup> the disciplines of political economy and anthropology participated in delimiting the ethical and sociological investments of political economic theory, which seemed to concern an ever-narrowing sphere of human motives and action. These cross-disciplinary efforts not only distinguished rational, self-interested actions from rituals, but also opposed both utilitarian rationalism and Western religious models of thought to the irrationalism of the primitive. In a society increasingly dominated by capitalist exchange and a deepening public-private split, ritual connoted a mode of action distinct from utilitarian rationalism and hearkened back to a pre-modern past—romanticized, on the one hand, for its intimate face-to-face relations and communal values, and yet, on the other hand, pejoratively linked to less advanced, more primitive social organizations. The work of segregation and displacement, so integral to promoting the dominant narra-

tive of capitalism, thus required a double exclusion that separated self-interested economic man both from the ethical and religious values increasingly circumscribed to the private sphere within Britain and from the primitive abroad.

But my central contention in this chapter is that even as progressive modernization and the public-private split in the nineteenth century segregated utilitarian from ritual activity, the actions and motives of the modern capitalist agent from the primitive, we also witness during this period a theorization of their structural similarity. These theorizations largely unfold within the very sociological disciplines that naturalized such distinctions: political economy and anthropology. At the very historical moment that ritual and economic behavior came to signify distinct models of action and value-orientations, they were also both theorized as actions that perform values and, through their performance, visibly objectify and communicate the shared body of knowledge, values, and norms on which agents act. The relationship between action and the shared body of knowledge that actors communicate illustrates what sociologists would now refer to as the reflexive relationship between agency and social structure: while it is through their actions that agents communicate and objectify shared knowledge, it is also by reflecting on such preexisting knowledge, values, norms, and social structures that they coordinate their individual actions into a collective whole and thus produce the shared body of knowledge and social structures on which they act.<sup>6</sup>

Such reflexivity, in the context of modern social theory, represents a basic feature of socialization.<sup>7</sup> In this chapter, however, I am interested less in the broader problem of socialization than in how political economy and anthropology, from the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, addressed the fundamental problem of reflexivity within theories of ritual and economic exchange even as they imposed a radical difference between how ritual and utilitarian acts generate a consensus of values and interdependent social formations. Structural-functionalist theories of consensus from Herbert Spencer to Talcott Parsons have, of course, been justly criticized for being inattentive to conflicting value systems, change, and ideological coercion.<sup>8</sup> Throughout this chapter, I understand the preoccupation with social consensus among various nineteenth-century thinkers as a response to the very crisis in stable and shared values, consequent to modernity, that thinkers like Ruskin feared. This is what Gerald Graff, commenting on Matthew Arnold's notion of culture, refers to as the "Common Culture Paradox": it is only when "a sense of unity, consensus, and shared purpose" is absent that consensus needs to be theorized (192).

I begin this chapter by tracing this very relationship between values, action,



and consensus within the nineteenth-century concept of culture. The abstraction of culture, I argue, expresses an underlying social consensus that patterns individual actions into collective wholes that, in turn, confirm the social body's cohesion. But even as the abstraction of culture articulated metropolitan anxieties regarding social consensus, it also introduced a theoretical symmetry between various types of actions and the consensus they produce that operated alongside, but in tension with, the evolutionary, hierarchical, and thus pluralistic notion of cultures—a symmetry that the distinction between ritual and utilitarian action suppresses. Through such vitiating oppositions as the sacred and profane, rational and irrational, modern and primitive, the disciplines of anthropology and political economy were able to depict the relationship between values, consensus, and the communitarian impulse associated with rituals as categorically different from the consensus and social integration resulting from utilitarian acts like competitive, capitalist exchange. These oppositions were, as I demonstrate in this chapter, unevenly articulated. Even as narratives of modernity and secularization configure ritual and exchange as radically separate types of action, they betray the theoretical proximity that lies between the consensus, communality, and reciprocal relations generated by activities oriented toward the sacred, such as ritual, and those toward the profane realm of everyday, economic life. Such theoretical proximity becomes particularly apparent when the notion of social consensus itself becomes identified, in thinkers ranging from Arnold to Durkheim, with the sacred.

Thus despite efforts to distinguish utilitarian behavior from ritual, I argue in this chapter that from the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, political economy and anthropology repeatedly (though not consistently) theorized ritual and economic exchange as rational acts that participate in a reflexive, information system that generates consensus. Early nineteenth-century theorists of culture and economics, as well as twentieth-century theorists of ritual, rational choice, and games, conceive agents of ritual and exchange as coordinating their actions by communicating to each other the tacit body of knowledge upon which they act and simultaneously produce through such collective acts. In elucidating this fundamental similarity, however, I am neither asserting that economic exchange *is* a ritual nor that it necessarily functions as a mode of sacralization. Instead, I examine how the malleability of the sacred, which Robertson Smith considered symptomatic of modernity, renders this an inescapable possibility—a possibility that theories of ritual and utilitarian actions in the nineteenth century both invite and foreclose. Hence, rather than classify

actions and risk further reifying these categories, I am interested in how the nineteenth century broadened the category of collective action to include ritual and economic exchange as part of a continuum of social practices even as it negotiated disciplinary-specific understandings of collective action. To expose the labors that went into such segregations is also to expose the range of values that political economic theory possibly disavows by ascribing them to the normative orientations of ritual activity.

### ***Culture and the Patterning of Actions***

Culture, Raymond Williams claims, is one of the “most complicated words in the English language” (87). For Williams, culture’s complicated connotations arise as much from its complex cross-cultural evolution as from its bracing methodological importance to literary and anthropological inquiry. These disciplinary specific understandings of culture originate, as is well known, with Arnold and Tylor. Arnold’s humanist approach defines culture as “the study and pursuit of perfection,” while Tylor’s anthropological deployment of the term focuses on a group’s way of life and defines culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits” (*Primitive Culture* 1:1). Despite the disciplinary distinctiveness that marks these two definitions, scholars have noted a genealogical continuity between the definition provided by Arnold and that later offered by Tylor (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 29; Manganaro 3). Christopher Herbert remarks that Arnold’s concept of “right reason” as “the nation in its collective and corporate character” in fact anticipates the anthropological notion of culture insofar as Tylor’s “complex whole” references a society’s collective values, beliefs, and norms (Arnold *Culture and Anarchy* 88; *Culture and Anomie* 55–56). Arnold, he claims, not only anticipates the culture thesis but, like Robertson Smith and Durkheim, identifies society with the sacred. Culture is nothing but the collective values and norms of society, and it is this “framework” of society that, Arnold writes, “is sacred” (*Culture and Anarchy* 181).

Such overlapping genealogies have led to fraught histories of the culture concept within literary and anthropological studies,<sup>9</sup> as well as critiques of its theoretical usefulness. While Stephen Greenblatt complains that Tylor’s definition of culture is too broad to be of any real use (225), Herbert critiques the culture concept for a kind of systemic circular reasoning. Culture, he argues, is

caught in a vicious cycle wherein it explains the social consensus that results in shared values, customs, practices, etc., by positing the concept of culture as an interrelated system of values: the phenomenon of shared values is thus explained by recourse to a concept whose underlying presupposition is that social formations symbolically express an interdependent matrix of values (*Culture and Anomie* 10–11). The circular, self-referential aspect of the culture concept that Herbert critiques, however, is integral to the conceptual work it performs: it addresses how the invisible actions of the many are coordinated and harmonized into the consensus, or “complex whole,” which the culture concept itself renders legible in social formations. These social formations, as David Graeber writes, express the coordination of intentional and unintentional “patterns of actions” that translate the invisible value systems as they emerge in action into “concrete, perceptible forms” (59, 45). Yet this dynamic relationship between collective action and collective values, expressed through the holistic concept of culture, makes possible a generalized and egalitarian understanding of collective action that was potentially problematic for the disciplines of nineteenth-century anthropology and political economy: the consensus in values achieved by rituals or norm-guided actions appears no different from utilitarian actions, the actions of the primitive no different in rationale and motive from the modern capitalist agent. In what follows I examine Mill and Tylor as paradigmatic, nineteenth-century examples of thinkers within each of the disciplines under question who expose this potential absence of difference and, in so doing, point to the vexed distinction between rational and irrational action that subsequent thinkers on ritual and utilitarian behavior struggle to maintain.

For Mill, the question of how individual actions are transformed into coherent, social wholes is of critical importance within sociological inquiry generally and also necessary for political economy to succeed as a predictive science, since it too ultimately assumes a theory of normative action that allows social consensus to take place. Mill’s engagement with this problem in *A System of Logic* (1843), particularly the chapter entitled “Ethology,” confronts the perennial conflict between subjective and objective approaches to agency<sup>10</sup>—an intractable problem that, as Catherine Gallagher and Amanda Anderson have shown, was part and parcel of Victorian debates on character formation, free will, and determinism.<sup>11</sup> The inherent difficulty in relating objective to subjective accounts of agency leads to a repeated sleight of hand in the *Logic*, where Mill explains the formation of individual character by recourse to the social collective and vice versa. Hence he states that while it is difficult to trace “the

laws of the formation of character” in the subjective experiences of the individual, they can be observed instead objectively “*en masse*” (Mill 8:866, emphasis original). But when Mill tries to account for the formation of the social body into a coherent whole, he claims that “the immediate causes of social facts are not open to direct observation” and surmises that the laws that give rise to a “state of society” are indistinct from “the laws of individual human nature” (8:908, 8:879).

Mill describes the holistic coherence achieved by these social states as the result of a “*consensus*” expressed in the customs, laws, knowledge, economic practices, and beliefs of a society. Mill understands “*consensus*,” quoting Comte, not simply as individuals agreeing with one another, but as a physiological concept wherein society, like the body, functions statically and dynamically through modes of “mutual interdependence” and “mutual co-ordination” (8:918, emphasis original). Whereas the field of “Social Statics” examines “the conditions of stability in the social union,” “Social Dynamics” identifies the laws of progress from one stage of consensus to the next—a division analogous to the difference between stable equilibrium and movement in mechanics (8:917–18). The sociologist’s task consists in plotting these progressive equilibrium states and relating them back to the individual “psychological and ethological laws on which they must really depend” (8:908). Mill’s inability to plot this relation effectively is but the nineteenth-century articulation of a theoretical ambiguity that persists in contemporary practice theories (e.g., Bourdieu’s *habitus*)—that “vanishing point” where the habits and knowledge of any agent can only be understood as the tacit and shared body of knowledge inherited from a group and reproduced by the individual agents within the group (Turner *Social* 1).

Though Mill never succeeds in identifying the laws governing individual and national character, he contends that the “universal *consensus* of social phenomena” can be approached successfully if we restrict analysis to discipline specific causes (8:900, emphasis original). Hence he maintains both in *A System of Logic* and in the *Principles of Political Economy* that the law governing individual and social phenomena within political economy is the “universal object of human desire,” wealth (Mill 2:3). Mill posits the self-interested desire for greater gain as the “law of human nature” that governs the economic system as a whole and enables the economist “to explain and predict this portion of the phenomena of society” (8:901). By abstracting away all other motives of action and modeling the self-interested, rational actor who pursues wealth and maximizes utility, political economy as a discipline can explain the “consensus” that

results in one particular sphere of social life without accounting for the impact of those shared, culturally and institutionally transmitted, normative values that orient agents. Mill's argument here assumes a false dichotomy between normative and utilitarian models of action that, Hans Joas remarks, still structures the disciplines of economics and sociology when in fact both disciplines assume a model of rationality and purposive behavior to explain actions ("Action Theory" 271). Mill himself intimates the tenuous difference between actions guided by rational self-interest and calculable utilities versus those guided by norms. While he carves out a special place for the laws that govern national character under the rubric of "Political Ethology," we saw in the previous chapter that self-interested rationalism and the willingness to sacrifice for the greater economic health of the community are both, in Mill's argument, questions of national character and shared cultural norms—norms supposedly absent in less advanced societies.

Mill's *Logic* and the positive philosophy of Comte had an enduring impact on anthropologists like Tylor, McLennan, and Lubbock. Nineteenth-century anthropologists not only inherited through Mill and Comte a positivist approach to cultural practices and human nature (Stocking *Victorian Anthropology* 37–41, 171–72), they also inherited the methodological problem regarding the relationship between individual and collective actions—the social "consensus" that so befuddled Mill. In Tylor, for example, the "complex whole" of culture results from "that remarkable tacit consensus or agreement which so far induces whole populations to unite in the use of the same language, to follow the same religion and customary law, to settle down to the same general level of art and knowledge" (Tylor *Primitive Culture* 1:9–10). Insofar as culture results from a "tacit consensus," it operates according to "the uniform action of uniform causes" and reveals the "laws of human thought and action," which the anthropologist must identify (1:1). In accounting for the causal relations and laws that result in culture's "tacit consensus," the anthropologist is attentive to the fact that "collective social action is the mere resultant of many individual actions" (1:12). Thus, anthropologists trace the complex interdependence between "individuals acting for their own ends with little thought of their effect on society at large," on the one hand, and "movements of national life as a whole, where the individuals co-operating in them are utterly beyond our observation," on the other (1:11–12). In so doing, the anthropologist makes two moments of invisibility legible: she makes the invisible motives and effects of individual actors visible and the invisible multitude into the visible cultural patterns of collective life.

In rendering such invisible patterns of social life visible, Tylor encounters the similar hurdle faced by Mill: it is impossible to account for a consensus achieved by the many, whether that consensus be the economic system or “the complex network of civilization,” unless there exists a continuous law that coordinates all these actions into the “complex whole” known as culture (1:16). Tylor’s resolution to this theoretical difficulty, much like Mill, is to assume a model of self-interested rationality as the means by which actions are coordinated into a cohesive whole.<sup>12</sup> As mentioned in chapter 1, Tylor embraced a Prichardian monogenesis, which interprets the independent invention of similar institutions, cultural practices, and linguistic affinities as evidence of the racial and “psychic unity” of mankind (Stocking *Victorian Anthropology* 24–25, 49–51). Tylor espouses the position of “psychic unity” in order to show that the laws of thought and action operate uniformly in all civilizations. As Stocking argues, man’s psychic unity presents a methodological necessity for evolutionary theorists of civilization like Lubbock, Tylor, and Andrew Lang, who could not explain the purpose of “primitive” social practices or their continued performance in modern society unless they assumed a shared rationality (154–56). This was especially true for Tylor, who could not have shown, for example, how gift sacrifice “survives” in the English market if his model of agency were not grounded in utilitarian rationalism.

Both Mill and Tylor investigate how the *invisible* actions of the multitude are mutually coordinated by rational agents to produce a social consensus that indexes a plurality of shared values, beliefs, norms, customs, etc., that take *visible* form in cultural and institutional arrangements. Yet at the very historical moment that anthropology and political economy articulated a joint theoretical preoccupation with how individual actions result in coherent wholes (whether of culture or the economic system), they also made a concerted effort to segregate, along disciplinary lines, certain kinds of individual and collective actions from others. While political economy concerned itself with the modern, rational, self-interested agent whose actions participate in the economic system, anthropology took as its object the primitive, whose irrational beliefs, practices, and customs are given a rational explication from the objective stance of the anthropologist. In this context, the primitive provides a foreign and distanced locus to examine the formation of social consensus, so difficult to observe clearly within the cultural field in which the theorist participates, and yet also provides a site for distinguishing the consensus achieved by rational actors within the capitalist market from pre-modern, irrational modes of behavior associated with ritual, magic, and the sacred. In segregating and displacing

such practices to the periphery, anthropologists extend the ethnographic narrative already present within political economic texts, which contrasts self-interested rationality and advanced division of labor within capitalism to its absence in the “early and rude state of society” (Smith *Wealth of Nations* 41). Yet, as the remainder of this chapter makes clear, such stark binaries are difficult to maintain, and the opposition between irrational and rational behavior—like that between primitives and moderns, sacred and profane—remains mobile and continuously overlaps. The methodological fiction of shared rationality that both Mill and Tylor assume in order to explain collective action and social consensus, even as they segregate the rationality of the modern agent from the primitive, continues to shape theories of ritual and economic behavior into the twentieth century and resurfaces in that iconic symbol of modern utilitarianism, the panopticon.

### ***Reason, Ritual, and Modernity***

Many of the associations that the term “ritual” now carries are the product of labors to which the nineteenth century gave birth; it was nineteenth-century anthropologists like Tylor and Robertson Smith who classified certain activities as “ritual,” “rite,” or “ceremony” (Bell *Ritual* 1–7). Ritual since then has typically been distinguished from rational actions in which there exists an intrinsic relationship between the means a particular action pursues and the empirical ends it seeks to achieve. The actions of a gardener who plants and waters seeds follow a rational, empirically grounded, and practical relationship between means and ends, whereas the relationship between means and ends in the fertility rites that Frazer documents are seen as symbolic. The distinction between rational acts that follow an empirical means-end schema as opposed to those symbolically mediated acts that do not is part and parcel of the distinction that Victorian anthropologists drew between magic, religion, and science during the nineteenth century (see chapter 7). Unlike science, the relationship between means and ends in both magical and religious rituals is deemed arbitrary and symbolic.

Such an understanding of ritual as non-rational, non-utilitarian action constitutes but one facet of a seemingly endless series of binaries: ritual addresses the sacred and references a domain demarcated from the profane, everyday realm of utilitarian activities; ritual promotes feelings of solidarity rather than competitiveness; ritual flourishes in primitive rather than modern societies.

Ritual consists in highly formal, collectively institutionalized, and prescriptive patterns of actions that are non-creative and rooted in tradition, whereas individual subjective agency is expressive, creative, and purposive.<sup>13</sup> These stereotypical binaries tend to go hand in hand: primitive, tradition-bound societies engage more frequently in ritual activities, and these societies tend to be less competitive, less individualistic, and experience a closer connection to the sacred than do their modern, capitalist counterparts. While such essentializing oppositions largely gave way to broader understandings of ritual during the second half of the twentieth century, they nevertheless persist. Ronald Grimes recently stated, for example, that “Western industrial societies spend less time and energy on rites than do people living in more traditional, small-scale societies and less than Asian, Middle Eastern, and African peoples” (111).

Grimes’s statement reflects the common assumption that the rise of modernity entailed a concomitant decline in ritual within Western culture. The negative connotations that ritual carries in Western culture originate with the Protestant Reformation and its opposition to Catholic rituals. Edward Muir claims that the early modern rejection of ritual coincided with its emergence as a distinct type of action during the sixteenth century, a type of action that was referred to derisively as “mere ritual” and thus contrasted to true religious worship (7). Peter Burke has linked the early modern “repudiation of ritual” not only to the Reformation but, more broadly, to those forces of secularization and modernization that led nineteenth-century thinkers to oppose reason to ritual and to posit a causal relation between the rise of the former and decline of the latter—a position Burke traces to Herbert Spencer and later to Max Weber (223-226). Twentieth-century anthropologists critical of such assumptions sought to demonstrate the persistence of ritual even in modern, capitalist societies. Yet such revisionary assessments have been susceptible to a prejudice of a different kind. According to Catherine Bell, the development of ritual studies from the nineteenth to the twentieth century is characterized by “an early modern ‘repudiation’ of ritual at home while finding it prevalent in so-called primitive societies, a subsequent ‘return’ to ritual that recognized it as an important social and cross-cultural phenomenon, followed by a tendency to ‘romanticize’ ritual by both practitioners and theorists as a key mechanism for personal and cultural transformation” (*Ritual* 254).

These historical and meta-critical accounts of ritual theory, however, have been less attentive to an incoherence that persists in the very theorists of modernity and secularization that they often cite as radically distinguishing ritual



from rational activity. This incoherence recapitulates the vexed position that rationality occupies in Mill and Tylor's theories of collective action, which explained the emergence of consensus in primitive and modern societies on the basis of shared rationality even as they sought to discriminate irrational primitives from modern rational agents. Mill's and Tylor's conflicted account of rationality reverberates in key nineteenth-century theorists of modernity and secularization, such as Spencer, Durkheim, and Weber. Even as these sociologists segregate the sacred from the profane, ritual activity from everyday, economic activity, they also disclose their potential overlap. These moments of overlap not only point to the uncertain boundary between rational and irrational actions, but also to the way in which theories of social consensus intersect with notions of the sacred and numinous abstractions.

Spencer's evolutionary narrative in which increased rationalism displaces ritual behavior is hardly peculiar to him but typical of the logical positivism that characterizes an entire generation of sociologists and anthropologists that emerged subsequent to Comte. Much like Durkheim's later opposition between mechanical and organic solidarity, Spencer proposed that societies gradually evolve from a primitive and "militant" organization, in which static rituals, superstition, and blind obedience to tradition dominate, to "industrial" societies, where sophisticated forms of economic and social organization lead to heightened freedom, rationality, creativity, and individualism (*Principles of Sociology* 2:568–642). Despite Spencer's trenchant rationalism, he compromises the stark opposition between militant and industrial societies, ritual and rationality. Such fissures become particularly noticeable in his discussion of the social coherence and interdependent action that emerges within the social body at various stages of civilization—a discussion that relies on that pervasive Spencerian analogy between the social body and organic bodies. In *The Principles of Sociology* (1876–96), Spencer argues that although the social body, unlike a living organism, is not internally unified but composed of discrete and independently functioning bodies, individuals in the social body "can and do maintain cooperation by another agency. Not in contact, they nevertheless affect one another through intervening spaces, both by emotional language and by the language, oral and written, of the intellect." While living bodies establish the interdependence of parts and consensus necessary to act in a unified manner by communicating through "molecular waves," societies do so "by the signs of feelings and thoughts" (Spencer 1:459–60).

According to Christopher Herbert, Spencer's allusion to the agency of lan-

guage that magically transmits information between individuals and thus generates the consensus necessary for social cohesion is indicative of the “invisible forces and frameworks” that constrain social relations, not only in modern societies, but in those “rude societies” that Spencer describes as “structureless” (*Culture and Anomie* 15; Spencer *Principles of Sociology* 2:322). Spencer’s argument illustrates a persistent crisis within the culture concept, which must posit a transcendental and “numinous” framework to explain the social body’s unity (Herbert 15–17). The interdependence and consensus achieved by collective action, whether in primitive or modern societies, relies on a broad understanding of “language.” I understand Spencer’s opaque reference to “emotional language,” in contradistinction to the verbal language of the “intellect,” as potentially denoting those symbolically mediated actions that communicate psychic states, which may include anything from gestures to rituals. These two types of language operate in primitive and modern societies on an ever-ascending scale of complex evolution and coherence—“so that the *consensus* . . . becomes closer as evolution advances” (Spencer *Principles of Sociology* 1:487, emphasis original). Not only does Spencer’s theory of “consensus” become susceptible to mystical thinking, as Herbert contends, but his broad notion of the language necessary to generate such consensus suggests how symbolic forms of communication may function alongside instrumental reasoning despite the forces of rationalization and modernization.

Spencer’s supposition that modernity gradually displaced religion and ritual was most famously articulated in Weber’s account of progressive rationalization and concomitant secularization. Particularly noteworthy in Weber’s account, for the purposes of this argument, is his contrapuntal articulation of religion and rationality. In *Economy and Society* (1921–22), Weber contrasts the “inner-worldly asceticism” of rational religions like Protestantism to the mysticism of, for example, Asian religions (2:541–55). In such mystical religions, ritual dominates and “leads directly away from rational activity” (2:531). Yet even as increasing rationalism marks religions like Protestantism, religious life in the West is simultaneously segregated from everyday, economic life and deemed irrational: “the goal of religious behavior is successively ‘irrationalized’ until finally otherworldly non-economic goals come to represent . . . religious behavior” (2:424). The parallel processes whereby religion becomes increasingly rational and breaks from “stereotyped magical or ritual norms” yet signifies irrational activity distinct from economic life proves necessary for the very “gradual revolution . . . in the daily order of human living, and particu-

larly in the realm of economics” to emerge (2:577). Weber’s paradoxical analysis of ritual, reason, and modernity exemplifies the analytical segregations that helped normalize the dominant narrative of capitalism. The rise of the self-interested, rational, economic agent requires that profane, economic activity be distinguished from the sacred and, equally, that the irrational rituals of primitive religions be distinguished from Western religion. Yet despite this rationalization thesis, Hans Joas claims that Weber remains ambivalent regarding the stark opposition between ritual and rational actions (*Creativity* 45). Weber writes that magical behavior, however much it may not follow an empirical means-end schema, is “relatively rational behavior . . . [and] must not be set apart from the range of everyday purposive conduct, particularly since even the ends of the religious and magical actions are predominantly economic” (*Economy and Society* 2:400).

Weber’s account of the difference, albeit conflicted, between ritual and utilitarian/economic actions had already formed a critical feature of Durkheim’s sociology of religion. Durkheim’s arguments on the sacred and profane, the decline of ritual in modernity, and theories of ritual praxis have exerted an inexorable influence on ritual studies. While Weber draws attention to the growing segregation of ritual from utilitarian activity as a result of progressive rationalization, Durkheim invokes this segregation to critique utilitarianism, which ignores the important role that symbolic actions like rituals play in the formation of normative values and social cohesion. Collective practices like primitive rituals facilitate experiences of solidarity and reaffirm shared values in a manner increasingly absent in modern capitalist society, which is dominated by atomic individualism and anomie. Durkheim’s approach to ritual would seem to represent that romanticizing strain in ritual studies that Bell references. But while Durkheim is less judgmental of ritual than Weber, his critique of liberal capitalist societies insists on the very antitheses between symbolic and instrumental acts, sacred and profane, individual and collective, that were integral to segregating the double narrative of capitalism. Unlike the everyday economic activity he deems profane, rituals are “rules of conduct that prescribe how man must conduct himself with sacred things” (*Elementary* 40). The stark contrast between the sacred and the profane, as Lukes comments, posits a vitiating opposition that Durkheim imposes since it is present neither in aboriginal thinking nor in Robertson Smith’s discussion of the holy—both of which underscore the interdependence of the sacred and profane, as well as their contingency (26–27). Durkheim advances

the erroneous proposition that all societies are structured by the binaries of the sacred and the profane in order to differentiate individualistic, utilitarian activities from the communal aspects of ritual. Reading the alienating effects of modernity into his understanding of the primitive totemic cult, he then posits the very binaries rife within modern European life in order to interpret ritual as the means by which societies overcome such divisions.

Yet Durkheim's opposition of the sacred and profane, as well as his definition of ritual, obscures his expansive understanding of religion, which does not reference a supernatural realm but the experience of a transcendent collectivity. Religion is "eminently social" and consists of "collective representations that express collective realities; rituals are ways of acting that are generated only within assembled groups and are meant to stimulate and sustain or recreate certain mental states in these groups" (*Elementary* 11). This experience of collectivity, as he makes clear in the essay "The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions," is the essence of the sacred and stands in opposition to the profane individualism of modern life. Collective representations that foster an experience of connectedness, he writes, "are respected, feared, and sought after as helping powers. Consequently, they are not placed on the same plane as the vulgar things that interest only our physical individualities, but are set apart from them . . . ; and it is this radical separation that constitutes the essence of their sacred character" (Durkheim *Essays* 336). The function of festivals, ceremonies, and rites is to revitalize this experience of collectivity "by translating [feelings] into signs, by symbolizing them externally" so that individuals "closed to each other, can feel that they are communicating and are in unison" and overcome the alienation caused by an exclusive focus on "the egoistic passions and daily personal preoccupations" (336). Durkheim conceives of ritual as symbolic, communicative action that affirms shared values through collective representations and thus facilitates an experience of communality, i.e., the sacred. Hence, on the one hand, his critique of modern, industrial societies assumes the very binaries that secrete the double narrative of capitalism, yet on the other hand, his inclusive understanding of ritual as communicative action that reinforces consensus presents ritual as part of a continuum of collective practices, religious and secular,<sup>14</sup> that articulate normative values to its participants. It is this symbolic approach to ritual and its relationship to collective representations and values that, for Talcott Parsons, represents Durkheim's chief advance since it enables the observer to detect in rituals those normative values that Parsons terms "common ultimate-value attitudes" (425)—common

values that manifest themselves not through any single act but, as in my previous discussion of the culture concept and theories of consensus, in their patterned relation to other acts within the social system.

Durkheim's identification of the sacred and ritual with consensus enables later thinkers like Habermas to theorize a genealogy between symbolic ritual and communicative action in the public sphere.<sup>15</sup> Hence, Habermas claims that the "socially integrative and expressive functions that were at first fulfilled by ritual practice pass over to communicative action; the authority of the holy is gradually replaced by the authority of an achieved consensus" (*Theory* 2:77). Habermas refers to this replacement as the "linguistification of the sacred," in which the "rapture and terror that emanates from the sacred, the *spellbinding* power of the holy, is sublimated into the *binding/bonding* force of criticizable validity claims and at the same time turned into an everyday occurrence" (2:77, emphasis original). Rational consensus replaces ritual praxis, and the everyday, profane realm of communicative actions absorbs the solidarity realized by religious symbolism. Habermas's argument is thus equally affected by the inclusive and exclusive definitions of ritual that I have traced through Weber and Durkheim: while he assumes an "evolutionary gap" between the forms of integration and consensus achieved by ritual versus rational, communicative action (2:60), his argument nevertheless points to the malleable position the sacred and profane, ritual and rational actions occupy once the sacred becomes linked to consensus, or as Arnold put it, culture.

### ***Ritual as Symbolic Action***

Durkheim's identification of the sacred with collective values and his notion of ritual as symbolic action that communicates and reaffirms these values have sanctioned, among subsequent anthropologists, broad-ranging interpretations of what constitutes ritual that dismantle the very distinctions between sacred and profane activity that his theory of religious life assumed. Mary Douglas, for example, draws on Durkheim's emphasis on symbolic representations to unravel the opposition between primitive and modern, rational and irrational, and interprets ritual as symbolic activity that functions as a "means of communication" (*Natural Symbols* 38). Similarly, Sally Moore and Barbara Myerhoff claim that Durkheim's connection between ritual and community provides the enabling premise for the analysis of secular ritual as a category of activities that

further communitas and communicates, if not religious beliefs, then common knowledge, sociocultural background, and ideological presuppositions (10–11). Once ritual is no longer seen as action directed toward the sacred and is regarded simply as formal, routinized behavior, even something instrumental as an office meeting can be considered ritualized behavior (14–15). This inclusive approach is part of a trend in ritual studies. Jack Goody contends that both in common usage and in sociological literature, ritual is conceived as any formal procedure, habit, custom, or practice that may or may not be connected to religious life; the segregation of ritual from secular activities is thus part of the erroneous universalization of “the sacred-profane dichotomy” (158, 160). Once all actions are seen as part of a continuum of functional and non-functional action, as Edmund Leach writes, “technique and ritual, profane and sacred, do not denote *types* of actions but *aspects* of almost any kind of action” (*Essential* 154, emphasis original).<sup>16</sup>

The interpretation of ritual as symbolic, communicative action that may or may not have to do with the sacred has been viewed as a twentieth-century development within contemporary ritual studies, which has concentrated heavily on ritual as meaning-laden activity.<sup>17</sup> Talal Asad argues in *Genealogies of Religion* that the extension of ritual to denote non-religious practices signifies a modern conception of ritual, which conceives of ritual as a series of symbolic acts—a signifying practice rather than one that accomplishes a concrete end (57). This twentieth-century definition, according to Asad, appears after a curious lacuna in definitions of ritual between the eighteenth- and twentieth-century editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Yet, as I will show, this lacuna does not indicate as sudden a shift in definition as Asad surmises; rather, the expansive understanding of ritual as a signifying practice that references shared values, intersubjective relations, and social equilibrium is coeval with the emergence of the culture concept as a symbolic system and precedes Durkheim.

The first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1771, defines *rite* as what “among divines, denotes the particular manner of celebrating divine service” and *ritual* as “a book directing the order and manner to be observed in celebrating religious ceremonies, and performing divine service in a particular church, diocese, order, or the like” (553). These definitions of rite and ritual, as Asad mentions, remain largely unchanged until the 1852 edition and then disappear entirely until 1910 (56). In the 1910 edition, “rite” is no longer given its own entry but absorbed into the discussion of ritual, where it is used

to classify specific rituals (e.g., public versus private rites, rites of adoration versus rites of interdiction). And while the eighteenth-century definition of ritual consisted of one sentence, the definition in the 1910 edition spans several pages and draws on the anthropological research of Tylor, Frazer, Lang, Robertson Smith, Hubert and Mauss, and W. H. R. Rivers, among others. In the general definition that precedes the various subheadings, the anthropologist R. R. Marett defines ritual as follows:

(from Lat., *ritus*, a custom, especially a religious rite or custom), a term of religion, which may be defined as the routine of worship. This is a “minimum definition”; “ritual” at least means so much, but may stand for more. Without some sort of ritual, there could be no organized method in religious worship. Indeed, viewed in this aspect, ritual is to religion what habit is to life, and its *rationale* is similar. . . . The nature of religion, as the sociologist understands it, is bound up with its congregational character. In order that inter-subjective relations should be maintained between fellow-worshippers, the use of one or another set of conventional symbols is absolutely required; for example, an intelligent vocabulary of meet expressions, or . . . sounds, sights, actions and so on, that have come by prescription to signify the common purpose of the religious society . . . In this sense, the term “ritual,” as meaning the prescribed ceremonial routine, is also extended to observances not strictly religious in character. But, whilst ritual at least represents routine, it tends, historically speaking, to have a far deeper significance for the religious consciousness. (370, emphasis original)

While recognizing ritual as historically having most significance for religious life, the 1910 entry posits an expansive definition of ritual that includes any routinized, habitual social practice whose primary purpose is to generate an experience of intersubjectivity through a shared set of conventions, knowledge, and language.<sup>18</sup> For Asad, this modern and semiotic understanding replaces the prior definition of ritual as a manual. Ritual as text shifts to ritual as behavior “*likened to a text*” (58, emphasis original). Asad’s discussion of these entries is part of a larger critique of the Christocentric worldview that underlies Western anthropological accounts of ritual, which assume the priority of belief over practice and thus interpret religious practices as symbolic representations of beliefs—an approach delineated in the 1910 entry.

The half-century that elapsed between the 1852 and 1910 editions witnessed the classification of ritual within anthropology as a category that des-

ignates specific human activities in opposition to others. Yet even as ritual emerged as a specific category within anthropological thought, the notion that ritual activity is inherently directed toward the sacred is not self-evident in nineteenth-century definitions of ritual. The story that neither the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entries nor Asad's critique tell is how the nineteenth century enabled a conception of ritual that was simultaneously expansive and narrow. Hence while Asad's critique points to the recurring definition of ritual among twentieth-century anthropologists as symbolic, communicative action, his claim that the expansion of ritual to include non-religious activities represents a modern development misses the way in which earlier definitions of ritual, such as that by Tylor and others, were inclusive and yet initiated culturally specific assumptions regarding the priority of belief over practice that Asad justly critiques. What we see in the decades elided by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is a dual process in which ritual signifies at once an expansive category of symbolic practice whose performance generates a shared body of knowledge, beliefs, conventions, and intersubjective relations, as well as a restricted category of non-rational, religious behavior from which modernity has advanced.

The suggestion that nineteenth-century anthropologists, for all their racist assumptions and hierarchical notions of civilization, had a more flexible definition of ritual than twentieth-century theorists would seem counterintuitive. Yet, as Jan Platvoet writes, nineteenth-century anthropologists like Tylor, Frazer, Robertson Smith, and Lang used rite, ceremony, and ritual interchangeably, and did not segregate religious actions from ceremonials or festivals, whereas many twentieth-century theorists of ritual regard ceremonies and festivals as typifying secular activities.<sup>19</sup> The inclusive use of these terms, Platvoet suggests, reflects the fact that they did not as yet inherently denote religious activity, which was why the adjective "religious" often precedes the term "ritual" or "rite" (180). Moreover, the understanding of ritual as symbolic action, far from being modern as Asad conjectures, is already present in the founding texts of anthropology. In *Primitive Culture*, Tylor defines religion as "beliefs and practices"—a dichotomous understanding of religion that led him to classify "rites and ceremonies" as those religious "practices" that express underlying "beliefs." Tylor devotes an entire chapter of *Primitive Culture* to "rites and ceremonies," which examines such practices as prayer, fasting, and lustration, but gives most lengthy attention to rituals of gift sacrifice (see chapter 1). In defining rites and ceremonies, Tylor begins by stating that



[r]eligious rites fall theoretically into two divisions, though they blend in practice. In part, they are expressive and symbolic performances, the dramatic utterance of religious thought, the gesture-language of theology. In part, they are means of intercourse with and influence on spiritual beings, and as such, their intention is as directly practical as any chemical or mechanical process, for doctrine and worship correlate as theory and practice. (Tylor *Primitive Culture* 2:328)

Separating belief from practice, Tylor views “religious rites” as a subclass of social practices in which (religious) beliefs and values are externalized and rendered legible to others through the performance of symbolic acts. And notwithstanding his portrayal of primitive religion as an erroneous philosophical explanation of causality in the natural world, Tylor’s definition of ritual suggests that the translation of belief into practice in religious life is part of a continuum of practices and, like other rational acts, pursues a specific means in order to effect a “practical” end.

Tylor’s definition of ritual as practices that express beliefs/values assumes a causal sequence that has been the subject of debate within ritual studies ever since. In the context of nineteenth-century anthropology, this debate was articulated by Tylor as the priority of myth (beliefs) over ritual (practice)—a causal sequence that Robertson Smith and Frazer reversed.<sup>20</sup> The conflicting positions taken by Tylor, Robertson Smith, and Frazer over the priority of myth and ritual, belief and practice, rearticulates the problematic relationship between collective values and collective action earlier discussed in relation to Mill and Tylor and contemporary practice theories; that is, do beliefs lead to actions that coordinate actors and express collective knowledge and values, or do actions create beliefs that actors then share to form social consensus? Catherine Bell argues that ritual theory has, from its inception in the nineteenth century, been marked by the very dichotomy Tylor introduced in his definition of rites and ceremonies—the opposition of thought and action (*Ritual Theory* 6). Whatever their theoretical orientation, ritual theorists repeatedly posit a thought-action split that they then claim ritual synthesizes by allowing its participants to become lost in a habitualized series of actions in which they do not think but *do* and yet by doing generate meaning-laden symbols illustrative of an underlying thought process (16). Clifford Geertz’s analysis of ritual is typical of this tendency. Defining the “dispositional” as the internal moods and motivation of actors and the “conceptual” as models of order, ritual activities are “cultural performances” that “represent . . . the point at which the dispositional

and conceptual aspects of religious life converge" (*Interpretation of Cultures* 113). For Geertz, as for Mill and Tylor, shared symbols, values, and conventions enable actors to act in concert and thus translate invisible, interior mental states into public, communal acts that make visible the shared body of knowledge on which they act.

Whatever priority given either to beliefs or to practices, whether rituals are defined inclusively or exclusively, the conception of ritual as a type of social practice whose performance symbolically expresses and communicates a consensus of values to its participants and engenders social equilibrium stretches from Tylor through Durkheim and into contemporary debates. With near consistency, and despite dissent on other theoretical fronts, twentieth-century theorists interpret ritual as a kind of information system that facilitates knowledge about the social order even as it produces that social order.<sup>21</sup> Hence, while Leach rejects the sacred-profane distinction, he follows Durkheim and others in viewing ritual as a symbolic system that conveys normative values. Rituals are part of a "total system of interpersonal communication within the group. They are symbolic actions, representations" (*Essential* 154). Ritual participates in an information system with an automatic feedback loop whereby "we 'say' things to ourselves" and transmit messages to each other about our communicative experiences (Leach *Culture and Communication* 43). Roy Rappaport similarly defines ritual as "*the performance of . . . invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances*" that communicate by doing (24, 107–8, emphasis original). The participants in ritual occupy various positions within a structure of relations and communicate "messages" that express both their individual state of mind and those that are already encoded within the ritual structure itself (52–54). In this manner, Rappaport's structuralist reading becomes functionalist—ritual functions as an information system whose networked relations facilitate communication and the experience of unity that such communication realizes (70–71).

Rappaport's argument is typical of the connection that anthropologists, from Robertson Smith onward, posit between ritual, social equilibrium, and communion. Although recent anthropologists have complicated the structural-functionalist assumption that ritual furthers social solidarity and consensus, the view of ritual as communicative, symbolic action that coordinates actors in collective acts that reaffirm the social order's values and internal equilibrium largely remains intact. Thus while Max Gluckman demonstrates how rituals of rebellion symbolically express the opposing tensions of conflict and cooperation within a society and thus offer ways to protest the distribution of power, he still interprets ritual as "exaggerating real conflicts of social rules and affirming

that there was unity despite these conflicts” (qtd. in Kuper *Anthropology and Anthropologists* 139). Similarly, Victor Turner claims that rituals symbolically disrupt the social order (structure) and initiate a phase of liminality and disorder (anti-structure)—what Turner refers to as *communitas*. Yet the liminality that characterizes the experience of *communitas* engenders an intense experience of communality and egalitarian relations that ultimately reinvigorates the social order (Turner *Ritual Process* 94–97, 131–32). Even Leach, who has been critical of the functionalist assumption that rituals aim at integrating normative values and establishing social equilibrium, views the assumption of social equilibrium as a necessary methodological fiction in order to hypothesize how society might work if these social forces were balanced, all the while aware of those conflicting personal interests and norms that alter and cause social systems to change (Kuper *Anthropology and Anthropologists* 149).

The interpretation of ritual as a symbolic practice that communicates values and perpetuates social equilibrium remains central even to those theorizations that have challenged the priority of belief over practice and the assumption that collective acts perform preexisting values. Stanley Tambiah’s performative approach conceives ritual as not just what expresses but also what creates mental states and social realities through its performance—a position he develops through an analysis of magical spells. Despite this revision of the relationship between thought and action, the performative efficacy of these ritualized acts rests on their capacity to communicate and through such communication establish “social integration and continuity” (138).<sup>22</sup> The capacity of rituals to generate new states of affairs and mental states through their performance is, according to David Kertzer, what makes them central to the creation and experience of political realities—realities that rely on ritual’s “symbolic behavior” to intensify the identification between individual and group (9). Whether rituals are seen as drawing upon an already extant body of knowledge, symbols, languages, and conventions or creating them, the end conclusion among many ritual theorists remains the same: they communicate and through communicating coordinate actors in collective acts that affirm the social order’s unity and cohesion.

### ***Information Systems: Utilitarian Economics and the Panopticon***

The emphasis on ritual’s communitarian ethos has led to a persistent segregation of ritual from those actions that display self-interested power dynamics. In

*Savage Mind*, for example, Lévi-Strauss writes that while all games assume rules and the playing of matches, “[r]itual, which is also ‘played,’ is on the other hand, like a favoured instance of a game . . . because it is the only one which results in a particular type of equilibrium between the two sides” (30). While competitive games assume a fundamental symmetry, they are ultimately “*disjunctive*” since they result in inequalities, asymmetries, and difference; ritual, by contrast, assumes asymmetrical relations between radically differentiated categories, but eventually “*conjoins*” them and brings about a union (*Savage Mind* 32, emphasis original). Ritual theorists in recent years have somewhat attenuated Lévi-Strauss’s separation of competitive from ritual activity by showing that ritual, rather than simply a vehicle for social cohesion, also strategically expresses power relations.<sup>23</sup> Yet these revisions to the structural-functionalist interpretation have not led to examination of the possible continuities between ritual and competitive capitalist economics.

In this final section I consider how nineteenth-century theories of the economy and utilitarian structures such as the panopticon expose such possible continuities even as their arguments strive to maintain the dominant narrative of capitalism. I demonstrate that both utilitarian and economic structures are concerned, like theories of ritual, with the coordination of actors in collective acts that make visible and thus communicate to agents common knowledge, conventions, norms, etc., that further the experience of collectivity. The performance of such collective acts relies on a model of agency rooted in rationality that blurs the boundary between rational and normative models of action. Much like rituals, the collective acts that unfold within utilitarian and economic structures draw upon a shared symbolic system to coordinate individual actors into a coherent “complex whole” even as they reflexively produce this shared body of knowledge through collective action. But if, as in theories of ritual, utilitarian and economic structures make visible and communicate the shared values upon which individuals already act, they do not presume the face-to-face relations often central to analyses of ritual. Insofar as utilitarian and economic acts participate in an information system that generates an experience of collectivity, they must overcome a double invisibility—not only are the motives, values, and knowledge of individual agents invisible to others, but coordination must take place without seeing all agents involved.

We can best understand how the economic system enacts and makes visible such coordination and common knowledge by returning to the particular resolution provided by Mill, where self-interested rationality becomes the means by which the motives of individual actors are made consistent with the laws that

govern collective social action within the economic realm. This resolution to the problem is hardly peculiar to Mill, but extends from Bentham and into contemporary rational choice theory. Self-interest becomes the fulcrum by which political economists pivot back and forth between explaining individual human behavior and the operation of economic laws that coordinate these individual acts into a coherent whole. Bentham writes, for example, that eudæmonia (well-being) represents “the *object* of every branch of *art*, and the *subject* of every branch of *science*” (*Jeremy* 1:82–83, emphasis original). By making well-being the “*Common Hall*, or *central place of meeting*” for all the sciences (83, emphasis original), Bentham’s argument on the unity of the disciplines crystallizes, in parallel form, the core theoretical problem within political economy. As the “common hall” of the disciplines, eudæmonia is also the common hall of human actions and the means by which individual actions come to have any semblance of unity and coherence. The principle of self-interest alone offers a solid foundation for political economy since its influence is the “most powerful, most constant, most uniform, most lasting, and most general among mankind” (3:433). Only on the basis of such a uniform motive can political economists explicate how individuals create, through their acts, a social body. If, as Bentham claims, a political body establishes itself through “the concurrence of many members in the same act,” and it is “the power of agreeing in the same intellectual act which constitutes the principle of unity in a body,” then the principle of self-interest establishes the coincidence of individual human motives that enables agents to act in concert (1:95–96). Since all acts can be interpreted as the pursuit of individual utilities, acts make visible an individual’s preferences and values in terms of pleasures and pains.<sup>24</sup>

The principle of self-interest, while denoting the general motive for human actions, also expresses human rationality. The reasons for an act, as well as our capacity to reason, derive themselves from the principle of utility. Insofar as “all men calculate” pleasures and pains according to the principle of utility and all our reasons for acting are derived from utility, the only rational behavior is that calculated on the basis of utility (3:434). Though distanced from the physiological emphasis Bentham gave to utilitarianism, such tautological reasoning forms a fundamental aspect of contemporary rational choice theory. As a theory of human behavior, rational choice theory conceptualizes the rationality of human desires as determined by whether or not they consistently result in choices that maximize utilities (Elster 1–3, 15). Desires that cannot be fulfilled, are ill-adjusted to available options, or clearly damage our interests constitute

irrational behavior. The pitfalls of such a restricted view of choice and preference are well documented elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> What is relevant for the present discussion is how twentieth-century rational choice theory brings into relief a central issue in Bentham's and Mill's view of self-interest: self-interest presents the common principle by which economic agents are able to coordinate their actions as a social body because it offers both a theory of value and a theory of action at once. As Gary Becker states, summarizing the central assumption of rational choice theory, "the economic approach [to human behavior] assumes the existence of markets that with varying degrees of efficiency coordinate the actions of different participants—individuals, firms, even nations—so that their behavior becomes mutually consistent" (5). Becker's economic approach to human behavior depicts an agent who makes rationally calculated decisions and allocates resources so as to optimize utilities. This assumption of a universal motive for all human actions and choices enables him to postulate the existence of a market where their discrete, potentially competing, interests are coordinated and made "mutually consistent." The market, as Michel Callon claims, is thus both produced by and produces "the performance of calculative agencies": agents use the calculative tools and information that the economy (and economic theory) provide to predict and coordinate their behavior with others (27).

The identification of rationality with the motive of self-interest lends predictability to agency and helps explain how individuals coordinate their actions even if they do not encounter one another. David Lewis's analysis of "coordination problems" in game theory illuminates this relationship between rationality, shared knowledge, and collective action. Game theories assess rational actors who try to resolve "problems of interdependent decisions" by relying on the assumed rationality of other actors (Lewis 13). Coordination occurs when agents make decisions that depend on "concordant expectation[s]" that others will decide to behave in a way that conforms to conventions that are shared and constitute part of their common knowledge (26). Lewis claims that such expectations do not rely on face-to-face contact and that, even if "we are windowless monads," we can transpose ourselves into the other's position and "replicate" their reasoning in order to predict their behavior (32, 27–28). Common knowledge requires that actors know the convention, expect others will conform to it, and expect that others will expect that they conform to the preferred convention (58). These various orders of shared knowledge enable them to act in concert.

Lewis's discussion of coordination problems, like Callon's theory of perfor-

mation, further reveals how competitive systems such as the economy are engaged with the problem of reflexivity central to theories of social practice such as ritual. Recently, economist and game theorist Michael Chwe has explored the potential parallels between activities deemed rituals and game theoretic models of self-interested, rational behavior. Ritual, he argues, provides a compelling example of how people form common knowledge for the purposes of social coordination and integration (Chwe 26). The formalization and publicity of rituals and ceremonies offer a predictable set of practices by which to convey meaningful messages to its participating members and communicates this information to spectators as well. The generation of common knowledge, Chwe states, implicitly relies on a “shared symbolic system” that enables individuals to receive information and agree on its signification (7). The common knowledge generated by rituals facilitates individuals in acting as a social body and, through its publicity, constructs an imagined community in which they are aware of others participating in the same act as well (Chwe 8).

Although Chwe demonstrates that ritual can be interpreted as a coordination problem and attempts to overcome the divide between economics and culture, he does not fully explore the implications of his own analysis—that rituals and competitive economic transactions could be seen as similar in structure. To draw out these implications, we need only turn to the nineteenth-century example that Chwe himself investigates as an instance of coordination, common knowledge, and collectivity where face-to-face interaction and egalitarian relations are absent: Bentham’s panopticon. Although the panopticon was constructed to segregate individuals from each other, Chwe argues that the location of a chapel above the inspector’s lodge at the center of the panopticon transforms it into a “ritual structure” that generates common knowledge and the collective experience of devotion: prisoners are aware of the inspector’s gaze and those in the galleries and, most importantly, that others share their experience of seeing and being seen by the minister (70). While Chwe’s analysis of how the panopticon generates common knowledge privileges religious worship,<sup>26</sup> Frances Ferguson argues that utilitarian structures like the panopticon generate shared information by the particular relationship they establish between actions and values. Like the relationship between invisible values and collective acts in the concept of culture, utilitarian structures allow “people to feel that they can *see* actions” (Ferguson xv, emphasis original); through a system of continuous evaluation and report, they “objectify actions” and give them a “perceptible value” within a coordinated, relational system of values (xv–xvii

1–4, 20–21, 24, 35). In this manner, “utilitarian social structures” produce “objective” and “shared” information about individual acts (4).

Synthesizing the approaches taken by Chwe and Ferguson, I interpret the panopticon not only as an information system that objectifies and communicates shared knowledge that enables an experience of communality, but also as a model of the economic system.<sup>27</sup> Bentham, as Kathleen Blake justly reminds us, viewed the panopticon as a model of the capitalist system that represented proper economic functioning by maximizing pleasure and profits while minimizing pain and loss for inspectors and prisoners alike (6). In addition to mirroring a factory system in which the division of labor had been perfected and the prisoner’s work ethic lay under constant supervision, the panopticon literally operates as a monopoly in which the contractor “like any other monopolist” has complete control over the labor of the prisoners, dictates how much reward they receive for their labor, and restricts their labor’s movement within the market (Bentham *Panopticon* 68). But while Bentham describes the structure as a mini-monopoly, the contractors do not do as they like. They are also under the constant pressure of visibility, which regularizes their behavior as much as it does that of the prisoners and the inspector. The liberty granted to the contractor within the monopolistic structure of the panopticon makes him less prone to begrudge his visibility and more willing to “publish these accounts,” both fiscal and administrative (40). Like the capitalist market that relies on transparency as a way to regulate such monopolistic practices as price gouging, the panopticon’s success resides in becoming thoroughly visible. As critics such as Blake and Lauren Goodlad have demonstrated, the Foucauldian interpretation of the panopticon underestimates the importance of openness, visibility, and constant public oversight within utilitarian economics, social reform, and the panopticon (Blake 6, 53; Goodlad *Victorian* 8–10).<sup>28</sup> The pressure of visibility would be matched, at least in theory, by efficient flows of information. Bentham had experimented with tin or copper “conversation-tubes” that would transmit instructions from the center of the lodge to subordinates and prisoners (*Panopticon* 189–93)—another architectural feature that can be interpreted as addressing, with respect to the market, the asymmetric flows of information that often lead to opportunistic actions, exploitation of the labor force, and other irregularities (Guidi 417, 420).<sup>29</sup>

The panopticon embodies the paradoxical elements of the modern capitalist economy in which atomized, individual agents are seemingly invisible to each other and yet, through the systematic flow of information, make visible to



each other their participation in a collective enterprise by repeatedly objectifying their acts into the very information they then share and on which they act. This shared information, moreover, conveys an experience of collectivity that emerges even though agents are motivated by self-interest and asymmetric power relations persist. The panopticon thus reveals how both utilitarian social structures and rituals are theorized as information systems that facilitate an experience of collectivity; yet as a model of utilitarian economics, it also points to intellectual patterns within theories of capitalism, which, contrary to Lévi-Strauss, promote disjunctive, asymmetric relations even as it strives to harmonize and conjoin them. The very features I have isolated in the panopticon, as we will see in the next chapter, characterize economic theories of exchange and equilibrium, where equilibrium furnishes a visible representation of the communality achieved by agents as they harmonize and coordinate their actions into the “complex whole,” not of Tylorian culture, but of the economy.

## CHAPTER 4

# The Visible Hand

### *Models of Communalities and Economic Information Systems*

[Every individual] generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. . . . 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.

—Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (399)

Adam Smith's concept of an "invisible hand" that unconsciously leads individuals "to promote the public interest" even as they pursue self-interested ends represents one of the most popularized and enduring images of capitalist economic forces. Smith's enigmatic description of the invisible hand continues to influence contemporary economic discourse. Central problems in modern economics such as the concept of equilibrium are but mathematical proofs of an economic process for which Smith provides the simple metaphor.<sup>1</sup> The imaginative force of the invisible hand is, however, paradoxical. While the vast matrix of relations in modern industrial society disaggregates labor and exchange into the discrete acts of the imperceptible many, the metaphor of the invisible hand allows us suddenly to see all these actions participating within a cohesive whole even though we can never see the actions themselves.<sup>2</sup> The invisible hand not only makes the invisible visible but, in so doing, provides an image of economic exchange as an interconnected, harmonized network of relations that overcomes the atomized relations of capitalist society.<sup>3</sup> What is seen is a representation of communalities, a communalities that results from people uncon-

sciously coordinating their acts and about which they only become aware through the abstract fiction of the invisible hand.

Smith's invisible hand presents a special instance of the broader problem I discussed in the previous chapter regarding the generation of collective actions and values, as well as their visibility to the agents who produce them. In that chapter I demonstrated that contrary to the typical narrative of modernity and secularization, ritual and exchange from the nineteenth to the twentieth century participate in a continuum of collective social practices that coordinate actors in a reflexive, information system in order to generate social consensus—a consensus that is then frequently linked to notions of the sacred. In this chapter I examine the latter overlap between ritual and exchange, the sacred and models of consensus, in relation to theories of economic equilibrium. Specifically, I consider economic equilibrium as an idealized representation of the consensus that results from the collective coordination of self-interested economic agents. In this idealized model, economic phenomena such as equilibrium prices and uniform profit rates act as “channel[s] of information” and thus participate in a symbolic, information system that visibly index the collective acts of exchange that produce such numerical data (Ingrao and Israel 5).<sup>4</sup> Coordination and consensus in the market, however, does not rely solely on the shared presupposition of self-interested rationality as Smith indicates. While the principle of self-interest provides a theoretical response to the question of how the market coordinates actions, it does not adequately address the social conflict such egoistic behavior produces. In this chapter I argue that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of economic equilibrium conceive exchange as an interdependent, coordinated network of actions rooted in the reciprocal balancing of self-interest *and* self-sacrifice such that the market not only balances the forces of demand and supply, but also establishes equality in exchange. Hence, although Smith's invisible hand assumes the very identity of interests among agents in the capitalist market it purports to represent, it is precisely the absence of such an identity that theories of equilibrium redress.

At stake in equilibrium theory then is another aspect of the double narrative of capitalism. As an abstract theoretical ideal rather than a reality the market realizes, equilibrium functions as a normative *ought* as to how the economy under a regime of perfect competition should function. Insofar as equilibrium constitutes an ideal toward which the economy moves, it is ultimately an ethical ideal that responds to the inequities that the capitalist system instantiates by positing a hypothetical state in which the economy realizes commutative and/or distributive justice. I thus understand the formal abstraction at work in equi-

librium theory as both related to and yet distinct from what Mary Poovey has referred to as “modern abstraction.” For Poovey, modern abstraction relies on mathematical procedures in order to “produce some phenomena as normative—ostensibly because they are more numerous, because they represent an average, or because they constitute an ideal towards which all other phenomena move” (*Making* 9). Poovey claims that the formation of such abstract norms was necessary to homogenize and reify the cohesive image of the social body as composed of autonomous, self-regulating individuals and was instrumental to capitalist systems of power, which evaluated individuals through abstract categories of value, labor-power, production, etc. (31). Audrey Jaffe’s interpretation of abstractions such as the stock market graph follows Poovey’s lead in considering the role of mathematical and statistical data as essential to representing the affective experience of the “average man,” whose emotions and identities such representations mediated and structured (*Affective* 2–3).<sup>5</sup> While I take it as a given that political economy homogenized individuals as a methodological shortcut in order to theorize the economic system as a cohesive whole, I interpret representations of the economy at equilibrium as a response to the problematic inequities and power relations that, for Poovey, modern abstraction conceals insofar as the cohesive image of the economy at equilibrium functions as an idealized representation of communality and just economic relations.

But if equilibrium theory presents us with another facet of the double narrative of capitalism, it, like other critical concepts within political economic theory, also looks both ways—toward an advanced, secularized modernity and toward pre-modern notions of sacrifice, the sacred, and ritual. I have shown that, insofar as ritual and exchange participate in a continuum of collective practices that coordinate actors in a reflexive information system, they may be equally linked either to the sacred or to the profane, to the communitarian ethos that generates social equilibrium or to the self-interested and disequilibrating effects of political and social hierarchies. Given this double emphasis, I interpret exchange in this chapter as a collective practice that ideally intertwines the conflicting forces of self-interest and self-sacrifice in order to generate *economic*, rather than *social*, equilibrium. Attention to this double emphasis exposes the similarities between theories of economic equilibrium and sociological models of consensus, particularly how quasi-functionalist representations of the economy and exchange intersect with notions of ritual and gift sacrifice as a mode of sacralization. We thus see culminating in this chapter how the patterns I previously traced regarding the synthesis of utilitarian and communitarian theories of sacrifice, as well as the theoretical proximity be-

tween ritual and utilitarian activity, coalesce in political economic theories of exchange and equilibrium.

The account that I provide of political economic theory in this chapter not only draws it closer to those communities deemed primitive, but also to those literary and cultural critics within the metropole who have been traditionally seen as its opponents. I had previously traced this confluence through Ruskin, and it is to Ruskin that I here return. Ruskin openly advances the continuities between ritual and exchange that remain submerged within political economy. Ruskin conceives of labor and exchange as a “rite” of self-sacrifice that coordinates manifold actors on the basis of absolute reciprocity in exchange and, in so doing, makes publicly visible the shared values on which they act—that the “life” sacrificed in labor is sacred. We thus see once again how Ruskin’s political economy reproduces, even as it critiques, the very model of a just economy lodged within political economic theory. The ethic of communality, interdependence, and reciprocity, typically associated with pre-modern, pre-capitalist societies, in fact constitutes central features of the modern, progressive capitalist system. In what follows, I begin with Ruskin before turning to how nineteenth-century ethnographies of primitive communality and reciprocity undergird political economic theories of progress, exchange, and equilibrium.

### *Rites of Reciprocity in Ruskin*

When the crew of a wrecked ship escape in an open boat, and the boat is crowded, the provisions scanty, and the prospect of making land distant, laws are instantly established and enforced which no one thinks of disobeying. An entire equality of claim to the provisions is acknowledged without dispute; and an equal liability to necessary labour. No man who can row is allowed to refuse his oar; . . . any child, or woman, or aged person, who was helpless, and exposed to great danger and suffering by their weakness, would receive more than ordinary care and indulgence, not unaccompanied with unanimous self-sacrifice on the part of the labouring crew. . . . There is no point of difference in the difficulties to be met, nor in the rights reciprocally to be exercised. (17:372)

In his 1867 publication, *Time and Tide*, John Ruskin collected and published twenty-five letters addressed to the cork-cutter Thomas Dixon of Sunderland in which he outlined his views on the demand for parliamentary reform by labor-

ers in England. Typical of Ruskin's distrust of political agitation as a solution to social inequities, *Time and Tide* discredits the demand for greater parliamentary influence as a means to improve the laborer's welfare and instead calls on laborers to unite as a separate body by reaching a consensus on their values and goals. Transforming their economic conditions would not occur, Ruskin claimed, through government intervention, but through the decision made by laborers to govern themselves according to the shared principles of honesty and cooperation in labor and exchange (17:316–18). Ruskin distinguishes the efforts by laborers to establish cooperative firms with greater profit sharing from his notion of “co-operation” wherein economic agents “form one society” on the basis of publicly established prices and uniform laws for all (17:317). If, as Adam Smith contends, commerce should be “among nations, as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship” rather than “the most fertile source of discord and animosity” (*Wealth of Nations* 435), Ruskin insists that there has to be transparency, regularity, and honesty in trade for a truly cooperative economic system to emerge.<sup>6</sup> Hence, instead of emphasizing the “tacit consensus” that results in the social body's cohesion, as did Mill and Tylor, Ruskin argues that the reformation of the marketplace requires that consensus among workers and merchants not be tacit but explicitly upheld so that the cooperative nature of the “complex whole” that society forms is less likely to be violated by competitive practices.

The example of the rowers on the open boat, quoted above, illustrates the core tenets of Ruskin's political economy, which he hopes nineteenth-century workers will espouse. Rather than self-interest, Ruskin presents self-sacrifice and reciprocity as an alternative organizing principle for collective action, values, and choices. Like the boat's crew, economic agents should act collectively and “with unanimous self-sacrifice” in labor (Ruskin 17:372). Because all rowers on the boat act on the basis of self-sacrificing reciprocity, and accept this shared principle “without dispute,” they are able to act in unison (17:372). I demonstrated in the previous chapter how both ritual and economic exchange can be understood as what game theorists now refer to as “coordination problems,” where the reflexive relationship between agency and common knowledge coordinates collective action. Ruskin's example of rowers in a boat, in this regard, replicates one of the earliest articulations of coordination problems—Hume's discussion of each rower in a boat trying to row at the same rhythm as others (*Treatise* 542).<sup>7</sup> In the case of Hume's rowers, David Lewis argues that rowers row at a certain rhythm by a tacit convention evidenced in the very act of rhyth-

mic rowing (63). Continued and successful rowing in this rhythm serves as shared, visible evidence and confirms to each rower that each expects the other to continue rowing at that rhythm (63). Once this common knowledge is established, they can continue to row in unison.

While there is no evidence that Ruskin read Hume's discussion of rowers, the example of the open boat presents a striking parallel. Ruskin envisions rowers who possess common knowledge insofar as all know, and know the others know, that they will act according to the principle of self-sacrifice. But while Ruskin presents the open boat as an analogy for the market, he appreciates its limitations. He concedes "that while labour at oar or sail is necessarily united, and can attain no independent good, or personal profit, the labour properly undertaken by the several members of a political community is . . . independent; and obtains for them independent advantage" (Ruskin 17:374-75). Moreover, Ruskin's example of the rowers exposes a shortcoming in game theory's understanding of the relationship between common knowledge and social coordination. Chwe's analysis of ritual as a coordination problem, for example, takes the "shared symbolic system" on which coordination and common knowledge rely as a given and does not analyze its development or transformation according to various historical and cultural contingencies.<sup>8</sup> But as Ruskin was painfully aware, values and symbolic systems are subject to contestation and flux since they are historically produced phenomena. In the absence of such shared values and symbolic systems, the causal relationship between what Ruskin terms the "invisible government," comprised of numerous agents "regulating the inner will," and the "visible government" of economic and political institutions that these wills generate, appears all the more uncertain (17:244). Ruskin here confronts what Anthony Giddens has described as the increasing reflexivity that characterizes modernity: precisely because agents can no longer rely on static conventions and traditions, they must continuously reflect and supply the grounds of their action on their own (*Consequences of Modernity* 38). The visible social and economic institutions through which we operate no longer confirm that the values and motives that invisibly prompt actors are shared.

Ruskin's response to the destabilizing effects of modernity, like Arnold's response to anarchy, is to theorize the economy that ought to exist based on principles and values we ought to share. We have already seen how the gift-sacrifice economy embedded within the labor theory of value enabled Ruskin to conceal the gap between the intrinsic value of "life" and the formation of a just and "holy" society. This vision of a just economy grounded on the intrinsic value of

life encounters another hurdle. In order for agents to coordinate their actions on the basis of reciprocal self-sacrifice in the abstract realm of the economy, as in the open boat, agents must give concrete, visible expression to their values through the public performance of their actions and communicate to others what they hold as “common knowledge”—that “life” is of intrinsic value and the basis of their reciprocal relations to one another. In *Munera Pulveris*, Ruskin laments that operatives in modern manufacturing conditions all “perform’ their rite, *for pay*” rather than out of a sense of self-sacrificing duty and reciprocity (17:269, emphasis original). Ruskin conceives of labor, and by extension exchange, as a public “rite” of self-sacrifice that we “perform” and whose public performance visibly indexes the values on which agents act through architectural edifices and just prices. Such concrete expressions of collective actions and values participate in a reflexive information system, where agents see mirrored in architecture and commodity prices a society at once hierarchical and grounded on principles of self-sacrifice, reciprocity, mutual interdependence, and obligation. Ruskin thus synthesizes the Tylorian model of sacrifice as gift with Robertson Smith’s theory of sacrifice as a rite of communion in order to present labor and exchange as a sacrificial “rite” in which individuals experience communality and affirm the sacrosanct nature of the social body (its “life”) by coordinating their actions in a system of reciprocal self-sacrifice.

Ruskin provides an early account of his thoughts on sacrifice in the chapter “The Lamp of Sacrifice” from *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849). The spirit of sacrifice, he argues

offers for such work precious things, simply because they are precious; not as being necessary to the building, but as an offering, surrendering, and sacrifice of what is to ourselves desirable. . . . Of this feeling, then, there are two distinct forms: the first, the wish to exercise self-denial for the sake of self-discipline merely . . . there being no direct call or purpose to be answered by so doing; and the second, the desire to honour or please some one else by the costliness of the sacrifice. The practice is, in the first case, either private or public; but most frequently, and perhaps most properly, private; while, in the latter case, the act is commonly, and with greatest advantage, public. (8:30–31)

Ruskin appeals to a gift-sacrifice economy, but distinguishes the “private” and interior experience of sacrifice as renunciation from the “public” nature of gift sacrifice. He emphasizes throughout the chapter both the non-utilitarian func-



tion of art and architecture and the necessity that the sacrifice, in order to be a sacrifice worthy of an offering to God, be excessive, costly, and elaborate. At this juncture, the architectural edifice enters into a gift-sacrifice economy: the costliness of the thing offered as gift emphasizes what it costs *for us*. This gift-sacrifice economy is intimately tied to the public and private forms of sacrifice that the passage mentions. The interior experience of self-denial takes visible and public expression in the architectural monuments offered as gift. The architectural edifice then stands as a concrete index of what otherwise would be intangible: the life sacrificed in labor. “All else for which the builders sacrificed, has passed away. . . . But of them, and their life and their toil upon the earth, one reward, one evidence, is left to us in those gray heaps of deep-wrought stone” (8:53). The spirit of sacrifice thus moves from private renunciation to the public rite of labor’s sacrifice, a movement chronicled in the costly architectural edifices. As the product of collective labor, architecture mediates intersubjective relations and reaffirms communal values—the “heaps of deep-wrought stone” function as an emblem of the sacrifices of labor that brought it into existence.

For Ruskin’s Victorian audience, particularly given the rise of ritualism in the Anglican Church, the comparison of labor to sacrificial rituals carries with it an unwelcome association with Catholic religious practices. Ruskin addresses this anxiety through his interpretation of Christian sacrifice as an improvement of the sacrifices in the Old Testament. As George Landow argues, Ruskin offers a typological reading of ritual sacrifice in the Old Testament, in which the carnal sacrifices of the Old Testament merely prefigure the one true sacrifice of Christ and foreshadow the scheme of redemption (339–41). Though in the past God received and was worshipped through a “typical and material service or offering,” all that is asked now is a sacrifice “of the heart” (Ruskin 8:33). Ruskin here transitions from a religious community that emphasized the public performance of sacrificial rituals to a community that prizes an internal experience of sacrifice as the expression of spiritual devotion. But Ruskin’s entire purpose in presenting this argument is to convince his audience that labor and its products can now stand as a public and private expression of a sacrificial rite consistent with its religious heritage. Hence he states that “if in the manner of performing any rite at any time, circumstances can be traced which we are either told or may legitimately conclude, *pleased* God at that time, those same circumstances will please Him at all times” (8:33, emphasis original). By distancing labor from the bloodier aspects of ancient sacrificial rituals, Ruskin can claim that labor is both the private experience of an internal renunciation and a public rite in

which we make an offering to God. He exhorts his readers to see that the Bible requires sacrifice (Landow 340), and the costliness of labor offers the special rite of sacrifice for the modern age. Labor and the monuments in which we memorialize our sacrifices are manifestations of “the covenant” made with God and the “external sign of its continuance,” an external sign that demands we sacrifice and offer as “tithes” our time, skill, toil, and treasure (Ruskin 8:36).

Ruskin’s notion of labor as a sacrificial rite that synthesizes the private experience of self-denial with its public expression in visible, concrete forms becomes crucial to his later social criticism on architecture and political economy, where social relations rather than a deity become the object of sacrifice. As P. D. Anthony argues, Ruskin’s architectural criticism represents “an essential step in the transition from aesthetic to social criticism” precisely because it reflects public values and requires social organization and the proper allocation of resources (19). Ruskin’s critique in *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53), for example, rests on his understanding of architecture as a visible, public sign of the nation’s dominant values. In opposition to the mass-produced objects of the factory system and its labor conditions, Ruskin idealizes gothic architecture because it presents a perfect analogy for the dynamic nature of the social body in which each sacrifices with and for others such that the singularity of each is both recognized and memorialized in the living architectural monument.<sup>9</sup> Though physically static, gothic architecture paradoxically commemorates the dynamic nature of social labor. In its “active rigidity,” it has vital force and movement—“a stiffness analogous to that of the bones of a limb, or fibres of a tree; an elastic tension and communication of force from part to part, and also a studious expression of this throughout every visible line of the building” (Ruskin 10:239, 240, emphasis original). In short, gothic architecture expresses the organic, interdependent, and dynamic nature of “life,” which indicates the “pure or holy state of anything” (7:207). As a living monument to the organic interdependence and cooperation that is the basis and potential of all life, the structure of gothic architecture remains marked by its unfinished, or imperfect, nature. It is “fretwork still, and it can neither rest in, nor from its labour” (10:214). Playing on the word “still,” Ruskin emphasizes the way in which architecture serves as a mirror for social relations insofar as its permanence establishes continuity through time and yet expresses its “life” as a dynamic and open structure.

This vital, interdependent model of social relations becomes the matrix in which Ruskin embeds labor as a rite of reciprocal sacrifice. Like Robertson Smith’s description of sacrifice as a “social act” that establishes communion and

mutual bonds, the public rite of labor functions as a mode of sacralization that engenders communion through a system of reciprocal sacrifices. The social model of gothic architecture allows for the experience of recognition through reciprocity. “And therefore, in all ages and all countries, reverence has been paid and sacrifice made by men to each other, . . . for all these gifts of the heart ennobled the men who gave, not less than the men who received them, and nature prompted, and God rewarded the sacrifice” (10:195). Unlike the model of sacrifice in “The Lamp of Sacrifice,” Ruskin here makes other men the object of “reverence” and sacrifice. Rather than valuing perfection and machine-like reproduction of goods, gothic architecture recognizes the singularity of each worker. In its concrete edifices, it expresses more than just the character of northern races; it is a visible “index . . . of religious principle” (10:188). And the principle that gothic architecture indexes is the sanctity of life and the “determined sacrifice” of those men who worked together on the architectural edifice (10:196).

Implicit in Ruskin’s model of reciprocity is the hierarchical paternalism that pervades his thought—where “nature” prompts us to pay reverence and sacrifice to those who are by right in a position of power above us. While clearly the paternalistic hierarchy Ruskin endorses is structured by the material and historical conditions that distributed wealth unevenly among the classes, Ruskin considers the unequal distribution of moral and political authority as an entirely distinct social process from the unequal distribution of wealth. Ruskin thus introduces a minimum, hourly wage determined by shifting subsistence levels for all employments, irrespective of the type or quality of labor. According to the “law of justice,” the payment of “just or due wages” should be based on an equitable exchange of labor-time (17:65–66). If the laborer sacrifices “a quarter of an hour of his life . . . [t]hen at some future time I am bound in equity to give a quarter of an hour” (17:66).<sup>10</sup> Hence even if the “master” represents a paternal figure to his workers, the master receives the same hourly wage as the worker. As such, the fixed wage is the nominal expression of a more fundamental equality. A true political economy, he claims in *Unto This Last*, depends on the “balances of justice,” and “justice consists in absolute exchange” (17:28, 65). Justice is the equilibrium created by a system of parallel and reciprocal sacrifices.

A national economy based on labor and exchange as a rite of reciprocal sacrifice achieves “balances of justice” that appear in objective and public economic phenomena such as the fixed, subsistence wage and price.<sup>11</sup> While in the aesthetic criticism architectural edifices stood as a visible monument to national values and the principles upon which citizens act, the abstraction of the

marketplace signals values through the equilibrium, or balance, the economy establishes. At equilibrium, the supply of goods equals its demand so that the production cost of goods is neither more nor less than its money price on the market. Ruskin translates mutual self-sacrifice through labor and exchange into a price structure in which goods exchange at their cost values, that is, for labor sacrificed. The problem, however, is that the very hierarchies that Ruskin elsewhere naturalizes and differentiates from income distribution potentially contribute to differing consumptive patterns that then cause deviations between cost and price—a deviation resulting from gaps between demand and supply.

The worth of gold, of land, of houses, and of food, and of all other things, depends at any moment on the existing quantities and relative demands for all and each; and a change in the worth of, or demand for, any one, involves an instantaneously correspondent change in the worth of, and demand for, all the rest;—a change as inevitable and as accurately balanced . . . as the change in volume of the outflowing river from some vast lake, caused by change in the volume of the inflowing streams. . . . Thus, then, the real working power or worth of the currency is founded on the entire sum of the relative estimates formed by the population of its possessions; a change in this estimate in any direction (and therefore every change in the national character), instantly alters the value of money, in its second great function of commanding labour. (17:189)

Cost expresses how much “life” is spent in labor, but price expresses demand for a commodity in relation to all other commodities that a person may choose to purchase over others. The matrix of prices reflects the relative costs of all goods and the choices of all individuals. It is not just my willingness to pay at a given price, but the coordinated choices of all others in the holistic system of the market—choices objectively and visibly represented in the price structure at which goods sell. The price structure of the economy expressed in money terms acts as a calibrated system that registers every alteration in demand as it reverberates through the economy. But money itself, in the above passage, far from being a neutral medium that expresses the value of goods, is also a commodity subject to fluctuations in demand and supply.<sup>12</sup> In describing these fluctuations and their impact on price, Ruskin invokes a common metaphor for equilibrium in exchange: the balanced influx and outflux of water.<sup>13</sup> As Jerome Sherburne points out, the interplay between economic forces in Ruskin resembles the “circular flow of goods” in French Physiocrats like François Quesnay, who describe economic processes through organic metaphors like water (129).

More importantly, the equilibrium established through reciprocal exchange at labor costs and expressed in the money price of goods also expresses a nation's values. Since Ruskin understands wealth as dependent on character and the capacity to transform intrinsic value (life) into effectual value (wealth), each alteration in the self-adjusting set of prices also registers collective values and character. Thus, a price structure in which goods exchange at their labor costs represents the values of a community built on just exchange, reciprocity, and mutual sacrifice—an equilibrium undisturbed by fluctuating demands or base desires. Alternatively, a price structure driven by surplus values denotes profiteering, self-interest, and money as a means to express power over others rather than a public pledge of mutual obligation.<sup>14</sup>

Since the divergence between cost and price arises from the influence of demand, Ruskin conceives of a hypothetical marketplace wherein goods sell at their labor costs and demand is constant. Rather than address the factor of demand and its possible relationship to social inequalities, he simplifies the economic model by discounting it. Instead, he offers a rudimentary example of two workers who require what the other produces for daily subsistence. One worker produces a unit of bread in one hour while the other produces a unit of fuel in three hours. Exchange occurs at labor quantities: three units of bread trading for one unit of fuel. Ruskin concludes that “if the demand is constant, the relative prices of things are as their costs, or as the quantities of labour involved in production” (17:188). Where labor costs and prices are equivalent, exchange results in a balanced transaction in which each acquires the necessities for survival at a price that denotes labor sacrificed.<sup>15</sup> The relative price structure in this market mirrors a society in which exchange occurs at the reciprocal of labor costs, that is, sacrifice for sacrifice—an economy whose equilibrium effects “balances of justice.” Ruskin's distinction between the “holy” and “helpful” state of society in which all parts are integrated into a vital, interdependent whole here expresses the social and economic equilibrium of a just, cooperative society and stands contrasted to the “unholy,” “unhelpful,” and disequilibrating forces of competitive capitalism.

### *Primitive Communalism and Modern Progress*

Ruskin's fear that an economy ruled by egoistic self-interest would undermine the fellow feeling necessary for society to function as a whole was a fear that

economists shared. Political economists and utilitarian thinkers from Bentham to Marshall were concerned with the traditional Hobbesian dilemma, that is, how to prevent a society comprised of egoistic individuals from devolving into a state of constant conflict. Self-interest may motivate agents and coordinate their actions into a cohesive whole, but it is also the seed of social disintegration. Hence Bentham writes that “[t]he greatest enemies of public peace are the selfish and dissocial passions. . . . Society is held together only by the sacrifices that men can be induced to make of the gratifications they demand: to obtain these sacrifices is the great difficulty, the great task of government” (3:431). The model of self-interested rationalism is thus accompanied by an equally necessary economic model of a cooperative, interdependent society wherein agents marry self-interest with other-regarding virtues of self-sacrifice and reciprocity.<sup>16</sup>

As I demonstrate in this section, however, these two patterns within capitalist economics have been obfuscated by the competing narratives of progressive modernization that nineteenth-century political economy and anthropology each relate. Ronald Meek states that nineteenth-century anthropologists assimilated “the four stages theory” within political economy, wherein social organization is understood in terms of “modes of subsistence” and societies advance from hunting, pastoral, and agricultural societies to commercial societies, into their own arguments on social organization (*Social* 6, 224)—so much so that Marshall’s *Principles* attributes such narratives to anthropology rather than political economy.<sup>17</sup> But if anthropologists adopted the ethnographic narrative within political economy, they also reversed its assumptions. Nineteenth-century anthropologists recast the ethos of self-sacrifice, reciprocity, and interdependence, which political economists ascribe to modern capitalist society, as characteristic of ancient/primitive social organization. By segregating and displacing these values into the archaic past, anthropological models of primitive (versus modern) economic arrangements have made indiscernible how this very ethos undergirds political economy’s narrative of progress and, as we will see, its theories of equilibrium.

The assumption that primitive, “gift” economies are models of cooperation and disinterest has, as I mentioned in the introduction, been a subject of debate and critique in twentieth-century anthropology for some years. But before Marcel Mauss or Pierre Bourdieu debated the competing motives of self-interest and disinterest in the dynamics of gift and potlatch, nineteenth-century anthropologists like Henry Maine had already codified the transition from primitive to modern economic arrangements as the movement from models of

reciprocity and communality to one of atomized, agonistic relations.<sup>18</sup> Maine critiques the ahistoricism of political economists and utilitarians like Bentham for presenting self-interest as the universal motive of action when anthropological studies had shown that this conception of the individual developed over time.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, Maine presents blood kinship and communal ownership as characteristic of ancient society, where the sanctity and social cohesion of the family and kinship group was paramount.<sup>20</sup> In *Ancient Law* (1861), Maine contends that ancient society “was not what it is assumed to be at present, a collection of *individuals*. In fact, and in the view of the men who composed it, it was *an aggregation of families*. The contrast may be most forcibly expressed by saying that the *unit* of an ancient society was the Family, of a modern society the individual” (134, emphasis original). Instead of abstract rights and contracts, ancient society relies on the fiction of a common ancestral father, who establishes the family’s patriarchal organization and rules over the household as law-giver (the theory of *patria potestas*). Such communities as the Indian village and German *mark* exemplify the rule of communal ownership and reciprocity; for them, property remains indivisible because the community as a whole is indivisible (*Village-Communities* 117; *Ancient Law* 242–43). Like Robertson Smith, Maine links the shift from a society based on kinship to one composed of individuals with the appearance of legal contracts and private property. While ancient society emphasizes the status of members within the corporate life of the patriarchal family, modern society replaces the family with the individual and, in so doing, “replaces by degrees those forms of reciprocity in rights and duties which have their origin in the Family” with contract (Maine *Ancient Law* 172). Thus the shift “*from Status to Contract*” substitutes a kinship based on blood bonds with individual freedom of contract, reciprocity and communality with private ownership (174, emphasis original).

Yet Maine’s narrative of modernity also suggests that the primacy given to social cohesion and communality in ancient society persists, in modified form, in capitalist societies. Maine points to such possible continuity in his discussion of the “fiction of adoption,” whereby Romans extend the rule of *patria potestas* so as to assimilate foreigners into the kinship group and thus mitigate the constant “risk of being overthrown by a very slight disturbance of equilibrium” (31, 52). Not only were new members assimilated into the ancient family, but these members met regularly “for the purpose of acknowledging and consecrating their association by common sacrifices” (139). Maine views the efforts to maintain the social cohesion and “equilibrium” of the social body through the adap-

tation of legal codes as genealogically continuous with utilitarian economic and social reform. The primacy placed on communal welfare found in the Roman natural law tradition is “the ancient counterpart to Benthamism” (84). Maine provides an example of such inheritance in *Village-Communities in the East and West* (1871), where he contends that the antipathy Britons express toward the principle of self-interest stems from earlier prejudices rooted in competition against those within one’s kinship group. Violence in ancient societies occurred between rather than within communities, and there existed a neutral region between tribes where competitive barter took place. Maine asserts that the universalized principle of competition is a modern phenomenon and “seems to be the universal belligerency of the ancient world which has penetrated into the interior of the ancient groups of blood-relatives. It is the regulated private war of ancient society gradually broken up into indistinguishable atoms” (Maine *Village-Communities* 228). The negative response to Benthamite hedonism and competitive economic practices is further indication that Victorians, like ancient society, are ultimately concerned with preserving social equilibrium. Legal genealogies attest to the inheritance of modern practices and indicate that “[c]ivilization is nothing more than a name for the old order of the Aryan world, dissolved and perpetually re-constituting itself” (230).

But if the ethos of reciprocity, communal sacrifice, and internal equilibrium reconstitutes itself in modern society, Maine does not elaborate how. Part of this account, I contend, is latent within Maine’s theory of social organization. The shift from “status to contract” coincides in Maine with shifts in social organization: ancient society gives way to its aggregation in the gens, the aggregation of gens into the tribe, and finally, the aggregation of tribes into the modern commonwealth (*Ancient Law* 136). If we understand modern society as made up of individuals and not families, these developmental phases actually present a double movement of disaggregation and reaggregation. Modern society transmutes the internal cohesion of various independent families in ancient society to the organization of discrete individuals into one community, corporate in its character.

Among political economists, this model of modern capitalist society, implicit in Maine, becomes linked to an ethnographic narrative in which capitalism promotes heightened levels of reciprocity, sacrifice, and interdependence and generates economic, rather than social, equilibrium. Mill, for example, links the accumulation of wealth and advancing modes of subsistence to increasing levels of interdependence and sacrifice. In the “Preliminary Remarks”



to the *Principles*, Mill claims that unlike the “savage state,” in progressive societies the demands of an increasing population cause scarcities and unequal distribution of goods that can only be offset by more labor and sacrifice (2:11–12). Both in the *System of Logic* and the *Principles*, Mill connects progressive civilization with cooperation and the ability to restrain those selfish impulses that “disunite mankind” (8:926). “What is lost in the separate efficiency of each, is far more than made up by the greater capacity of united action. In proportion as they put off the qualities of the savage, they become amenable to discipline. . . . The peculiar characteristic, in short, of civilized beings, is the capacity of co-operation” (3:708). Advanced capitalist societies are more interdependent, whereas, in the “savage state,” individuals can survive in isolation. Unlike the savage, who has few wants and lacks the capacity for self-restraint, the English are successful because of their capacity for productiveness and self-denial (2:103–4). Mill’s views are later echoed by Alfred Marshall, who claims that in those societies where “a tribal sense of duty in strengthening the tribe” is strongest, “self-sacrifice . . . gets to be deliberately adopted as a basis of action: tribal affection . . . gradually grows into a noble patriotism; and religious ideals are raised and purified” (*Principles* 243). Those races win the Darwinian struggle for survival wherein “the individual is most willing to sacrifice himself for the benefit of those around him” (243).

Political economists assimilate into this narrative of progressive interdependence and self-sacrifice the scientific and sociological concept of equilibrium as the theoretical state toward which advanced capitalist economies tend. As Bruna Ingraio and Giorgio Israel argue, seventeenth-century French Physiocrats like François Quesnay and Anne Turgot synthesize the mechanical analogies of balance in Newtonian physics with the natural laws that govern the balance of harmonious and disharmonious forces in society that Enlightenment social theorists like Montesquieu address (38–42). Mill provides a classic example of the way in which sociological concerns for consensus and social cohesion coalesce with a model of the market as an abstract space in which individuals interact so as to produce the equilibrium of economic forces. In the previous chapter we saw how Mill’s theory of social “consensus” posited static and dynamic states of society: the static state of consensus depicts the social body as comprised of interdependent parts that mutually affect and react upon one another, whereas the dynamic analysis investigates the laws that influence a society’s progress from one static state to the next. Similarly, Mill divides political economy into static and dynamic analyses: static economic laws like

value, exchange, price, or production establish equilibrium, while the dynamic analysis of societies illustrates their progress as a result of willful sacrifice and mutuality. If economic progress rests on the ability to sacrifice personal interest and act cooperatively, the progressive movement from one equilibrium state to the next illustrates increasing states of reciprocity, interdependence, and self-sacrifice.

The inverted modernization narratives that appear in political economic versus anthropological texts is nowhere more apparent than in the work of Durkheim, whose portrait of industrialized capitalist society in *The Division of Labor in Society* exemplifies values that, later in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, become transposed to the primitive totemic cult. Thus within Durkheim's oeuvre we see, in nuce, the cross-disciplinary operations that were central to segregating the double narrative of capitalism and displacing ideals of self-sacrificing reciprocity or equilibrium onto histories of primitive culture and development. In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim contrasts the "organic solidarity" of the division of labor, and the greater degrees of interdependence it precipitates, to the "mechanical solidarity" that characterizes the primitive horde. Whereas mechanical solidarity relies on the principle of resemblance and promotes homogeneity so that individual and society "[beat] as one" (Durkheim *Division* 105–6), the division of labor more closely binds individuals to each other in a set of mutual obligations and reciprocal duties precisely because the self-preservation of the individual is inextricably knit to the self-preservation of the group, requiring each to make "mutual sacrifices" (173). In the linked functions of the division of labor, each retains her individuality while still acting in concert with the whole. The division of labor, moreover, leads to a social and economic equilibrium—a "spontaneous consensus of its parts" that results in an "equilibrium of wants" within the economy as it balances demand with the "effort expended" in production, making price identical to the "social value" of the object produced (297, 317).

The contractual society that emerges alongside the division of labor increasingly insists, Durkheim argues, on "exact reciprocity" and judges deviations from equilibrium in exchange to be unfair and the result of "some external force" (320, 318). Many abnormalities simply arise because in the modern market "[t]he producer can no longer keep the whole market within his purview, not even mentally," and this blinkered view leads to anomic states such as bankruptcies and panics (305). But such abnormalities, he contends, could be ameliorated if agents could feel themselves related to the whole. Contact among

individuals who occupy contiguous functions within the division of labor, for example, makes the experience of solidarity continuous so that they are not only connected by the functions they perform, but “the whole may become conscious of itself” as a unity (297). We thus see how the very themes of interdependence, sacrifice, coordinated action, and equilibrium, which here epitomize industrial capitalism, later exemplify the pre-capitalist values of the primitive totemic cult, where the group totem is the visible representation of a social unity that the group consecrates in rites of sacrifice (Durkheim *Elementary* 257–58, 268).

The contradictory portraits of primitive and capitalist social organization in Durkheim are symptomatic of the disciplinary role that political economy and anthropology each played in concealing the double narrative of capitalism, wherein political economy theorized a capitalist economy ruled by self-interested individualism even as it incorporated into its theory of labor, exchange, and equilibrium the very ethical and quasi-religious values that were progressively attributed to pre-capitalist societies. I have been arguing that these contradictory efforts emerge not only to maintain the narrative of modernity and secularization on which hierarchical notions of culture and civilization depend but, more importantly, to indemnify capitalist economics against the normative, ethical assumptions its theories nevertheless insist upon. Bringing these assumptions to light, however, requires that we consider the degree to which literary and anthropological disciplines have participated in sustaining, whether explicitly or implicitly, the very polarizing oppositions capitalism itself imposes. We see in thinkers like Durkheim and Ruskin how a romanticized model of pre-capitalist economics has been instrumental to critiques of capitalism and, by the same token, in deeming notions of reciprocity, mutuality, and disinterest to be non-capitalist orientations. Yet these non-capitalist orientations may not be as extrinsic to the tradition of capitalist thought as we have generally assumed. Throughout this book I have insisted instead on a critique of political economy that highlights the ethical investments that undergird its core theoretical concepts. Equilibrium theory is an example of just such an investment. In theories of equilibrium, prices and profit rates participate in an ideal representation of just economic relations in which agents balance self-interest with self-sacrifice through exchange and, in so doing, balance the economy’s competing forces. As in theories of ritual, exchange coordinates countless (and here faceless) agents in a reflexive information system that generates a consensus that takes its ideal form in the economy at equilibrium. Agents then

see, in the idealized abstraction of the economy at equilibrium, the end result of their collective, coordinated acts—an abstraction that offers a consoling social vision and mediates an experience of communality by conveying to all the complex, interdependent (and ultimately just) social organization of which they are but a part.

### ***Classical Theories of Equilibrium: Circular Reproduction and the Just Price***

Mill's and Marshall's ethnographic portrait of advanced civilization as one in which self-sacrifice and cooperation predominate had already been articulated by Smith, whose *Wealth of Nations* famously begins with a description of the division of labor as the hallmark of capitalist society's interdependent structure. Smith distinguishes capitalist division of labor from the "rude state of society," in which "[e]very man endeavors to supply by his own industry his own occasional wants as they occur" (*Wealth of Nations* 241). The "rude state of society" functions independent of capital or the division of labor and characterizes a state of civilization in which individuals successfully survive in a state of isolation. By contrast, capitalist exchange promotes increasing levels of interdependence since each relies on others to procure basic necessities. Smith's discussion of the day laborer's woolen coat is a perfect example of how the most common necessities within capitalist society are the result of innumerable operations: a shepherd gathers the wool, others sort, weave, spin and dye it, while still more produce the tools and machinery. After reflecting on these processes, Smith claims, "we shall be sensible that, without the assistance and co-operation of many thousands" none would possess the most basic necessities (11). Smith's ethnographic portrait of early civilization reverses the assumptions seen in Maine—the theory of an economy composed of autonomous, self-regulating agents is not counter but essential to the formation of a mutually dependent economic (and social) body.

But Smith's ethnographic narrative in which increasing interdependence and efficiency replaces primitive isolation and autonomy is at odds with his labor theory of value. Smith vacillates, as we saw earlier, between a labor-embodied theory of value and one in which price is the sum of profits, rent, and wages. This Smithian indecision reverberates in the theory of equilibrium. Although Smith contends that "the proportion between the quantities of labour

necessary for acquiring different objects seems to be the only circumstance which can afford any rule for exchanging them for one another” in the “rude state of society” (41), the rule of reciprocal exchange according to labor quantities persists in his theory of the equilibrium price within a capitalist system. In Smith’s discussion of price, a commodity’s “natural price” represents its total production cost in terms of wages, profits, and rent. The actual selling price is the “market price,” which may be either above or below the natural price. Whether or not goods sell at their natural price depends on the balance between the supply and demand for those goods on the market.

The natural price, therefore, is, as it were, the central price, to which the prices of all commodities are continually gravitating. . . . whatever may be the obstacles which hinder them from settling in this centre of repose and continuance, they are constantly tending towards it. The whole quantity of industry annually employed in order to bring any commodity to market naturally suits itself in this manner to the effectual demand. It naturally aims at bringing always that precise quantity thither which may be sufficient to supply, and no more than supply, the demand. (51)

Equilibrium functions as an economic ideal that the economy is always “tending towards.” At equilibrium, the convergence of demand and supply results in goods selling at their natural prices and restores the ideal of reciprocity that marked exchange in the “rude state.” This reciprocity denotes sacrifice as well, since the “real price” of anything is “the toil and trouble of acquiring it” (26). The “rude state” thus occupies a double position within Smith’s economic theory since it is both the state capitalist society has advanced from and the state we are tending toward: an equilibrium state wherein exchange value reflects the sacrifices of labor and capital made to produce a good.<sup>21</sup>

Smith’s theory of equilibrium not only posits the hypothetical convergence of natural and market price, but this convergence also coincides with competition’s equalization of profit rates so that each sector of the economy receives “*the ordinary profits of stock*” necessary to reproduce the economy in the next production cycle (Walsh 13; Walsh and Gram 75–76, emphasis original). While determination of the “ordinary profits of stock” is subject to shifts in demand, such changes are temporary and prices, profit rates, and demand eventually fall back to their averages. Smith’s contention that the market at equilibrium creates the profits necessary for the circular reproduction of the economy is indebted,

as was Ruskin's, to the Physiocratic doctrine of the "circular flow of goods." Vivian Walsh and Harvey Gram argue that since classical economists like Smith and Ricardo were concerned with economic growth, their model of equilibrium placed more emphasis on the reproduction of the economy through the generation of physical surpluses, whereas neoclassical models of equilibrium subsequent to Jevons and Walras theorized equilibrium as the allocation of scarce resources so as to maximize individual satisfaction (63, 76). Walsh and Gram trace the classical model of equilibrium as circular reproduction to Quesnay's *Tableau Economique* (28). Quesnay's table describes the economy of a nation whose gross national product is divided as advances to its three classes: productive (farmers), proprietor (landlords), and the artisan or sterile class (laborers).<sup>22</sup> Within this agricultural model, each class is dependent on the other for subsistence and whatever revenue one class reaps is immediately reinvested or consumed so there is neither accumulation nor expansion of the economy. Quesnay's table depicts the interdependence of the three classes and the circular pattern that characterizes classical theories of equilibrium in which the produce of the economy is immediately consumed and a uniform surplus reproduces the economy at the same scale as in previous periods of production (Blaug *Economic* 25; Walsh and Gram 29–32).

Smith's theory of equilibrium synthesizes the Physiocratic doctrine of "circular flow" with the circular, gift-sacrifice economy implicit within the labor theory of value in order to imagine an ideal economy at equilibrium in which price denotes labor sacrificed and uniform profits ensure the reproduction of the economy. The economy at equilibrium not only models the circular reproduction of the economy in which labor is sacrificed, sacralized, and regenerated, but it ostensibly sutures the gap that had earlier concerned Smith in his discussions of value, wherein the price structure of commodities within a capitalist economy did not coincide with labor quantities sacrificed. At equilibrium, market prices coincide with natural prices so that exchange occurs at the reciprocal of labor sacrificed and the profit rates are just enough to reproduce the economy and no more. The matrix of equilibrium prices, in which buyers and sellers establish reciprocity such that goods sold at their natural/market prices represent an exact proportion between individual gain and sacrifice, doubles as a measure of just economic relations that the capitalist economic system is "tending towards,"<sup>23</sup> provided that necessary economic and institutional policies police the conditions of perfect competition. Much like the day laborer's coat, objective indicators such as price and profit rates participate in an infor-

mation system that is both the product of the complex network of exchange and the means by which agents become aware of the interdependent economic network in which they participate.

I want to pause here to consider Smith's representation of exchange and equilibrium in relation to previous arguments I have made in this book, particularly my discussion of gift sacrifice as a mode of sacralization and the potential continuities between ritual and exchange. The circular model of the economy in which labor's sacrifice consecrates and regenerates the economic system is, through the theory of exchange at equilibrium, now linked to an ideal price structure in which exchange occurs at the reciprocal of labor quantities sacrificed. It is here, I would argue, that exchange's role within a reflexive, information system intersects with sacrifice's function as a mode of sacralization. I had previously shown how theorizations of ritual and utilitarian actions are curiously doubled—at once segregating profane, everyday actions in the public sphere such as exchange from ritual and yet disclosing potential slippages between these two categories. When viewed together, Smith's theories of value and exchange at equilibrium posit a model of economic agency in which agents consecrate the economy through the sacrifice of labor and communicate to each other in their coordinated acts of exchange the values of an economy grounded equally in self-sacrifice and self-interest—values evidenced in the price structure. Hence, although Smith's metaphor of the invisible hand emphasizes how the pursuit of individual advantage under conditions of perfect liberty results in a state of equilibrium where all parties equally gain and the annual produce of a nation equals its annual consumption (*Wealth of Nations* 430, 439), he in fact offers a vision of communality and social coordination akin to Ruskin: individuals consecrate the economic system as they propel it toward an equilibrium state anchored simultaneously in self-interest and self-sacrifice.

For the most part, Ricardo replicates the argumentative patterns examined in Smith. Ricardo agrees with Smith that in the long run the economy reaches an equilibrium in which the market price of goods does not diverge from its natural price (labor quantities) and profit rates are uniform throughout the economy. But unlike Smith, Ricardo's law of marginal productivity provides a theory of uniform profit rates and distribution by analyzing the effects of rent on the profit structure and distribution of shares throughout the economy. We have already seen how Ricardo's *Principles* revised the circular economy of the "corn model" found in the *Essay on Profits* by substituting labor as what the economy both produces and consumes. Ricardo demonstrated that the circular reproduction

of the economy and the rate of profit in the economy as a whole hinged on the labor sacrificed in the agricultural sector. This claim becomes central to his theory of equilibrium. Thus Ricardo claims in the *Principles*, as he did in the *Essay on Profits*, that “[t]here are few commodities which are not more or less affected in their price by the rise of raw produce, because some raw material from the land enters into the composition of most commodities” (1:117). If agricultural goods are determined by the quantity of labor sacrificed and the value of these goods governs the relative prices of all other goods, when all other goods adjust their price and profit rates to harmonize with that of the agricultural sector, the entire economy adjusts to the sacrifices of labor in agriculture.<sup>24</sup> As a result, exchange at equilibrium occurs at the reciprocal of labor-embodied quantities and a uniform profit rate occurs. Labor’s sacrifice not only continues to consecrate the economy and ensure its reproduction, but Ricardo’s theory of marginal productivity also eliminates possible divergences between labor quantities and objective indicators of the economy’s distribution, such as profit rates and prices, whereas Smith at times introduced inconsistencies.<sup>25</sup> He firmly establishes an identity between the sanctity of the economy and the numerical data that represents it. The self-referential, self-sacralizing aspect of sacrificial rituals, which anthropologists identify with the sacrificial rites of “primitive” society, surfaces in political economists like Smith and Ricardo as the “rite” of reciprocal exchange, wherein the equilibrium of the market refers back to the sanctity and balanced forces of exchange within the economic system.

But Ricardo’s entire point is to show that, due to the Corn Laws, the constant readjustment at equilibrium to the profit rate in agriculture would continuously depress the economy until it arrived at a stationary equilibrium where no accumulation occurred since there were no profits to be had. At equilibrium, the principle of competition should allocate capital in the perfect amount in each industry so that the market never has a “glut,” demand equals supply, market price equals natural price, and profit rates are equal (1:89).<sup>26</sup> Yet, Ricardo avers, “[t]he present time appears to be one of the exceptions to the justness of this remark” (1:90). If a uniform profit rate and the equilibrium price are objective indicators of a just and healthy economy, the historical conditions Ricardo confronted did not evidence such a social ideal: prices, wages, and profit rates instead serve as visible indicators of the concentration of wealth in the hands of landlords and impoverishment of capitalists and laborers who are the engine of a growing economy. By contrast, the economy under free competition would still be governed by the profit rate and labor sacrificed in the agri-



cultural sector, but since excessive labor would not be expended in farming poorer lands, the profit rate in the agricultural sector (and those sectors that adjusted to it) would not be continuously lowered. The social and economic effects of the free market would also be felt internationally. Ricardo's theory of equilibrium posits a global imaginary in which the competitive free market "binds together by one common tie of interest and intercourse, the universal society of nations throughout the civilized world" so that reciprocity and economic growth occur at a global scale (1:134).

The expectation of growth in the economy, despite a theory of equilibrium that insists on circular reproduction without surpluses, points to a logical dissonance that Marx would critique. Marx claims that Quesnay's model of the economy as the "circular movement" of inputs and outputs, what he terms "simple reproduction," is a fiction insofar as an equilibrium state where there is no accumulation of capital would be a stationary equilibrium that did not expand and thus contradicts the *modus operandi* of a capitalist economy, which must accumulate surpluses in order to reproduce the economy at an ever enlarging scale.<sup>27</sup> For Marx, classical economists like Smith do not account for the origin of capital and labor and describe capitalist accumulation *as though* it were simple reproduction. They fail to recognize that the process of reproduction on an extended scale is not synchronic since it always relies on resources from past periods of production that have already been distributed along class lines and over which the laborer has no control, although it is her labor that constitutes the economy's viability and growth (Marx *Collected Works* 36:361, 375, 384). The extension of the economy depends on the accumulation of labor as surplus value. In "extended reproduction," the economy not only replenishes the means of production and necessities for subsistence, but actually produces more of both than is necessary so that they can be reconverted into capital. In this manner, Marx states, "The circle in which simple reproduction moves, alters its form, and, to use Sismondi's expression, changes into a spiral" (35:580).<sup>28</sup> In Ricardo's free-market economy, therefore, the economy does not simply reproduce itself but, as in Mill's discussion of the progressive movement from one state of "consensus" to the next, continuously reestablishes a uniform profit rate as it expands and advances up the spiral of progress—expansion and progress rely on profit rates that, periodically at least, are distributed *unevenly*. As in the labor theory of value, the model of circularity and sacrifice implicit in classical equilibrium theory supplies an idealized model of exchange and just distribution to address the very inequalities it then, paradoxically, obscures.

### ***Communitality through Exchange: Neoclassical Equilibrium in Jevons***

In contrast to circular models of the economy at equilibrium in classical political economy, neoclassical economists like Jevons and Walras concentrate on the balance between supply and demand as consumers pursue scarce goods in the satisfaction of their subjective wants. Additionally, Jevons and Walras distance their models of equilibrium from real market conditions in order to develop an analytical framework for the laws of exchange with greater scientific validity. While classical economists synthesized a static and dynamic view of the economy by explaining both how the economy achieves equilibrium at a fixed moment in time and how the relative prices of goods continuously shift, Jevons excludes the element of time from the equations of value and exchange in order to simplify analytical problems and bring the discipline closer to physics: “The Theory of Economy thus treated presents a close analogy to the science of Statical Mechanics, and the Laws of Exchange are found to resemble the Laws of Equilibrium of a lever as determined by the principle of virtual velocities” (*Theory* vii).

Though Jevons and Walras mathematized the discipline and insisted on the difference between identifying positive, economic laws and normative prescriptions as to policy, each economist’s abstract representation of the economy bears within it an implicit ethical orientation. Thus while Jevons analogizes the mind’s pursuit of pleasure to a train following a railway line, he claims that it is ultimately the soul’s “sympathetic feelings to other souls” such as “unselfishness, disinterestedness or benevolence” that “actually form the pleasures & pains, and constitute the iron line, on which our railway train has been running” (*Papers* 133). Jevons theorizes a model of agency in which the mind’s selfish desire for pleasure is ultimately grounded in the soul’s sympathetic relation to the pleasures and pains of others. His sensitivity to other-regarding pleasures and intersubjective relations translates, within the context of exchange at equilibrium, into a depiction of the economy wherein the balance between self-interest and self-sacrifice that each trader achieves is integral to that achieved by others and the economic system as a whole. This model of a just economy not only retains elements of the self-referential, self-sacralizing nature of value theory, as seen in chapter 2, but also registers Jevons’s Unitarian beliefs—the imprint of a deity that manifests itself in the scientific order of the natural world and “an all-pervading tendency towards the good” (qtd. in *Papers* 52). Indis-

pensible to this idealized vision of the economy is, I argue, an even more explicit representation of exchange within the market as a reflexive, information system. The trader's intersubjective relation to others and experience of communality, however, is not experienced through direct contact but mediated by the economic data that results from participation in exchange.

The market's ability to function as a reflexive information system in Jevons hinges, as it did in Ruskin, on conditions of complete transparency and shared standards in trade. As Sandra Peart argues, Jevons conceives of a theoretically perfect marketplace in which such empirical problems as imperfect information or irrational motives are eliminated and emphasis is placed on individuals sharing information (98–100). Traders form a market not through spatial proximity, but through public communicative systems such as “fairs, meetings, published price lists, the post office” that establish between the two or more persons that constitute exchange systems both the “intentions of exchanging” and “the ratio of exchange” (Jevons *Theory* 85). Such shared information, moreover, is identical with the market: “It is only so far as this community of knowledge extends that the market extends” (86). By sharing information, traders establish honest and fair economic practices. The “law of indifference,” for example, disallows traders from selling the same commodity at different prices (90–91). If sellers could manipulate prices in the marketplace by selling the same good for varied prices, it would violate the uniform playing field and the equilibrium conditions of exchange. Hence, traders in the market must explicitly form a “complete *consensus*” on market prices by possessing “perfect knowledge of the conditions of supply and demand, and the consequent ratio of exchange” (87, emphasis original). The market, as a “community of knowledge,” expresses the ethical principles all traders uphold. This community replaces the physical community to which traders belong, but in which they do not encounter each other.

Transparency and perfect knowledge only fulfill some of the conditions for trade at equilibrium; traders must also anticipate the behavior of others. This is especially relevant in cases of bargaining where traders decide how much to offer for a good on the basis of non-economic knowledge. In such situations, Jevons contends, one must possess “the power of reading another man's thoughts” by ascertaining “[t]he disposition and force of character of the parties” (124). This problem is simplified by Jevons's assumption that all agents are motivated by self-interested rationalism. He, like Bentham and contemporary rational choice theorists, assumes that the universal principle of self-interest provides the “common knowledge” that then enables economic agents to coor-

dinate their behavior into harmonized networks of exchange. But even though Jevons claims everyone acts from self-interest, he also paradoxically asserts that we cannot know other minds. “Each person,” he states, “is to other persons a portion of the outward world. . . . Thus motives in the mind of A may give rise to phenomena which may be represented by motives in the mind of B; but between A and B there is a gulf. Hence the weighing of motives must always be confined to the bosom of the individual” (14). What seems like a contradiction actually reveals a central preoccupation in Jevons’s model of exchange: coordinated acts of exchange reconcile the very “gulf” his economics presupposes and is objectively represented in the prices at which traders buy and sell.

Though one cannot measure pain and pleasure directly or assess another’s motives, one can correlate price to subjective mental states. “A unit of pleasure or of pain is difficult even to conceive; but it is the amount of these feelings which is continually prompting us to buying and selling, borrowing and lending . . . . The will is our pendulum, and its oscillations are minutely registered in the price lists of the markets” (Jevons *Theory* 11–12). Jevons interprets economic exchange as analogous to mechanical physics, viewing the deliberative process that precedes trade as a pendulum coming to rest between pains and pleasures.<sup>29</sup> The conclusion to this mental calibration process is then visibly represented in the price. Jaffe has recently discussed how prices in Jevons, like other market phenomena in the Victorian period such as the stock market graph, both objectified ineffable interiorities and interpellated these interiorities by giving them an abstract representation—a process that Jaffe, borrowing a phrase from Franco Moretti, calls “distant reading” (*Affective* 7). While I do not dissent from Jaffe’s reading, I argue here, as I have elsewhere,<sup>30</sup> that the relationship between price and subjectivity in Jevons serves primarily as a medium of communication since it indicates what people will sacrifice to satisfy what want and, as a result, generates common knowledge through exchange. Though each person’s mental state cannot be compared, the reciprocal act of exchange mediates the gulf between traders so that each individual balances sacrifices and pleasures and, in so doing, balances the system as a whole.

Not only does price objectively manifest mental processes and overcome the “gulf” between individuals, but price also represents a reciprocal act of exchange rooted in sacrifice. Jevons assumes that traders possess fixed amounts of goods that they continue to exchange at incremental amounts until their sacrifices equal the pleasure gained from exchange. According to Jevons’s law of exchange, “*The ratio of exchange of any two commodities will be the reciprocal of*

*the ratio of the final degrees of utility of the quantities of commodity available for consumption after the exchange is completed*" (*Theory* 95, emphasis original). As was established in the second chapter, final degree of utility ultimately measures value in terms of sacrifice and abstinence. We can thus reinterpret the law of exchange as individuals exchanging goods at ratios that are the reciprocal of their sacrifices and abstinence. But since interpersonal comparisons cannot be made, the equality of utilities after exchange is not between individuals but for the same individual. "The general result of exchange is thus to produce a certain equality of utility between different commodities, as regards the same individual. . . . Every person whose wish for a certain thing exceeds his wish for other things, acquires what he wants provided he can make a sufficient sacrifice in other respects" (141). Each trader stands in a reciprocal relation to others at equilibrium having established equality between sacrifices and gains, a reciprocal relation signaled in the equilibrium price. This equilibrium price further depends on the equilibrium price of other goods since individuals distribute their incomes to equalize the final degrees of utility for everything they consume, thus linking prices into a vast interdependent matrix.<sup>31</sup> The "complex whole" of prices at equilibrium stands as an analogue for the reciprocal exchanges through which individuals equalize their pleasures and sacrifices and offers a consoling representation of communality, interdependence, and just exchange where otherwise a "gulf" between minds and agonistic relations persists. Far from narrowing political economy and estranging it from its origins in the moral sciences, Jevons gives his ethical concerns a mathematical form.

### ***Economic Justice: Léon Walras and the Dawn of Modern Economics***

I close this chapter with a brief consideration of the relationship between economic justice and the mathematization of political economy by turning to a non-British economist, Léon Walras. I close with Walras not only because he participated in the marginal revolution and corresponded with Jevons, but also because many economic historians credit him with first formulating the mathematical model of general equilibrium and inaugurating modern economics with a rigor that eluded his British counterpart. Walras, as Schumepeter writes, tackled the mathematical proof for "*how things hang together*" (242, emphasis original). Yet, as I will show, Walras's mathematical proof of how the economy "hangs together" addresses the functionalist preoccupation with social consen-

sus through a representation of the economy as a highly interdependent system in which the coordinated acts of agents under optimal conditions generate commutative and distributive justice. For this reason, Walras's critics have often debated whether his model of the economy carried normative inclinations and represented the ideal social order that *ought* to exist even as he trenchantly pursued a purely scientific theory of general equilibrium.<sup>32</sup> William Jaffé claims that while Walras's *Elements of Pure Economics* (1874, 1877, 1889, 1900, 1926) "appears, on the surface, as a completely *wert-frei*" view of the economic system, it is nevertheless underwritten by "implicit moral convictions" ("Normative" 371). I have tried to demonstrate throughout this chapter that Jaffé's claim is no less true of Walras than of those economists his ideas replaced. I thus end with Walras in order to suggest the long shadow such normative assumptions possibly cast in a discipline that has often heralded its modern nascence under the aegis of Walrasian economics, even if it has divested itself of the quasi-religious and ethnographic assumptions that structured nineteenth-century British political economy.

Like Jevons, Walras defines value according to the pleasure derived from the last incremental addition of a good: what Jevons terms "final degree of utility," he terms *rareté*. Maximum satisfaction occurs when the equilibrium price of goods is equal to the ratios of *raretés* (Walras 145). Whenever there is a shift in *raretés*, this shift will be registered in the prices of all goods, and equilibrium will have to reestablish itself. Unlike Jevons, however, Walras was more successful in presenting a mathematical theory of how the economy simultaneously determines the stationary equilibrium price for all goods in terms of the invariable standard such that demand equals supply and the cost of production equals the selling price. Walras's innovation was to present production and exchange as a set of simultaneous equations where the number of equations corresponded to the number of variables in the economic system, what is now referred to as general equilibrium.<sup>33</sup> In this manner, the equations represent the interdependence of variables that determine equilibrium prices for all goods in a static model of the economy (Daal and Jolink 30).<sup>34</sup> Walras famously asserts that the economy tries to solve these equations and determine a unique equilibrium price for all goods through the "process of groping" or, "par tâtonnement" (170). The Paris stock market serves as Walras's real-world model for the automatic adjustment of prices, where traders under conditions of perfect competition call out prices until the equilibrium price for all goods is achieved and demand equals supply (Walras 84–85; Daal and Jolink 8–9, 110).

Walras explicitly states, however, that the theory of general equilibrium de-

scribes a social ideal the economy tends toward if and only if two conditions operate: perfect competition and land reform. Walras saw his theory of general equilibrium under conditions of perfect competition as addressing issues of commutative and distributive justice by eliminating monopoly incomes (Walsh and Gram 154). As Jaffé states, Walras's static theory of general equilibrium is an "ideal fiction of 'commutative justice'" under conditions of perfect competition, a "terrestrial utopia" in which the economy achieves social justice (Jaffé *William* 349, 346). He interprets the uniform, equilibrium price to be "a condition of social justice" and relies on the perfect market to perform the moral functions of eliminating unjust profits and establishing balances of justice (qtd. in Jaffé *William* 328). In order for perfect competition to occur, the state would have to intervene by becoming, as Mill suggested decades earlier, "the universal landlord" (2:227). Through a program of land nationalization, the government taxes individuals for land rent and eliminates income taxes (Jolink 118). If land monopolies are eliminated, each individual has equal opportunity and all function as capitalists in an ideal, "rational society" where the economic framework supports perfect competition (Cirillo 301). Social laws create distributive justice, while reciprocal exchange eliminates unjust profits and results in commutative justice. At the beginning of the *Elements*, Walras distinguishes his scientific analysis of economic phenomena, what he terms "pure economics," from human sciences that deal with the relationship between persons, which requires the consideration of the ends and aims of many individuals in a society wherein "these ends and aims have to be mutually *co-ordinated*" (62–63, emphasis original). But Walras's "pure" theory in effect represents this mutual coordination in the abstract realm of economic exchange, an abstraction that is made realistic when synthesized with Walras's social project and governmental changes.

In the course of this and previous chapters I have demonstrated that the segregation of economic theory from its normative implications, for which economic historians have lauded Walras, had its own distinct trajectory within nineteenth-century British political economy. This trajectory has broad consequences for our understanding of political economy and its relationship to disciplines that now seem far from its kin. Among British political economists, methodological distinctions between scientific and sociological inquiry owe as much to the division of labors within economics as to the long-standing and cross-disciplinary efforts by literary and anthropological thinkers, who embedded a set of normative values either within an alternative, counter-capitalist narrative or within representations of pre-capitalist, pre-modern societies lo-

cated in a medieval/primitive past. In the remaining chapters of this book, I focus particularly on the relationship between nineteenth-century fiction and anthropological and economic ideas in order to demonstrate how literary representations of domesticity and global imperialism tacitly abetted the progressive denarrativization of values from political economy that we might classify as ethical or religious and, in so doing, sustained the dominant narrative of capitalism. We see in these chapters that the critical position literature often occupies with respect to capitalism has had the paradoxical effect of further occluding the ethical investments within political economic theory and in deepening the very binaries between public and private, profane and sacred, primitive and modern on which political economy depends. The dominant narrative of capitalism needs its others, and these others were not just supplied by anthropological studies of the primitive abroad, but also the humanist critiques written by British literary and cultural critics at home.





## Part III

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## CHAPTER 5

# The Making of Household Gods

### *Value, Totems, and Kinship in the Nineteenth-Century Domestic Novel and Victorian Anthropology*

Very commonplace, even ugly, that furniture of our early home might look if it were put up to auction; an improved taste in upholstery scorns it; and is not the striving after something better and better in our surroundings, the grand characteristic that distinguishes man from the brute—or, to satisfy a scrupulous accuracy of definition, that distinguishes the British man from the foreign brute? But heaven knows where that striving might lead us, if our affections had not a trick of twining round those old inferior things—if the loves and sanctities of our life had no deep immovable roots in memory.

—George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*

Where would Britons be, the wry narrator of Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) asks, if the "loves and sanctities" attached to old things did not counterbalance the drive for self-betterment that distinguishes the Briton from "the foreign brute?"<sup>1</sup> If we read the tragic events that befall the Tullivers as a reply to this question, the affectionate attachment to "old inferior things" is not what offsets the pursuit of capital, but what renders the family susceptible to the forces of capitalist circulation, bankruptcy, and auction. But while Eliot's novel initially seems to contrast the propulsive movement of capital to the retrogressive and fetishistic attachment to things practiced by "foreign brutes" and old-fashioned Englishmen like the Tullivers, it in fact demonstrates how commodity culture itself is situated at a crossroads between the modern commodity and the primitive fetish. Marx's analysis of the magical value that commodities attain on the market where they are "endowed with life" makes this point of intersection evi-

dent (*Selected Writings* 436). The commodity bears within itself a doubled relation—it is a product of the modernizing, abstracting forces of capitalism and yet roots itself in our imagination through the material, sensuous, religious, and primitive associations from which it has been seemingly emancipated.<sup>2</sup>

Marx's infamous account of commodity fetishism has led many critics to question precisely what kind of "life" he grants to inanimate objects. Bill Brown argues, for example, that Marx's discussion of the commodity opens a space for an alternate fetishism that distinguishes "the contradictory doubleness of commodities . . . , their materiality and immateriality both," from the fetishization of commodities, which reduces this doubleness to a singular, dehistoricized value (*Sense of Things* 28). Brown's analysis has led recent critics of "thing theory" to question the historical and conceptual limitations of commodity fetishism, which has so dominated our understanding of the aesthetic and ideological function of objects within literary works.<sup>3</sup> Elaine Freedgood claims that Victorian "thing culture," which she states both "preceded" and "survives" commodity culture, encapsulates an array of relations that exceed commodity fetishism and demonstrates the historical richness that things carried for Victorians (8). Similarly, John Plotz's reevaluation of things in Victorian novels draws attention to the "double life of property," which makes it "seem ineffable and fungible simultaneously" (12, 15). At stake in such reevaluations is not the inherent material properties of any given object; rather, as Brown states, the moment objects step forward as things and defy neat oppositions between fungible commodity and sentimental possession "names less an object than a particular subject-object relation" ("Thing Theory" 4).

These arguments regarding the commodity's doubleness implicitly critique the stark binaries that, I have argued, were crucial to secreting the double narrative of capitalism. As I mentioned in the introduction, while notions of sacrifice, the sacred, or virtue coexisted with other models of value within political economy, they gradually became disembedded from political economy and were re-embedded in either anthropology's alternate narrative of human history or in the narratives furnished by humanist and aesthetic disciplines, where these values often designate the orientations of pre-modern, pre-capitalist societies. In either case, these values were deemed distinct from, if not critical of, the market values of capitalism. The current reevaluation of things is a welcome corrective to these polarizing distinctions since its analysis of the commodity's doubleness demonstrates how market and non-market values operated alongside one another. This reevaluation, however, needs to be taken even further.

Precisely because critics like Freedgood and Plotz seek to historicize “a particular subject-object relation,” they situate the commodity’s doubleness within a diachronic narrative in which such doubleness is conceived either as what antedates and endures alongside commodity culture, or as a historically conditioned response to an emergent global capitalism that enshrines even fungible commodities as “repositories of nonfiscal value” (Plotz xiv), that is, as either historically antecedent to, or reacting against, the forces of modernization.

Yet as I argued in the introduction, such diachronic narratives of modernization can sometimes cloak synchronic processes of segregation that introduce the neat oppositions that thing theory otherwise contests. Thus, for example, Marx’s argument on commodity fetishism is predicated on a Hegelian narrative of progress that opposes “the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world” to a rational critique of real economic conditions (*Selected Writings* 436). This opposition of the religious and economic then enables Marx to present the commodity form as one haunted by the “ghost” (*Spuk*) of a primitive fetishism that mystifies capitalist economic arrangements.<sup>4</sup> The transcendent aspect of the commodity is analogous to the erroneous, causal reasoning of primitives, whose rationale must be extirpated in order to reveal the material economic conditions that the commodity form instantiates. In this way, Marx’s analysis of commodity fetishism recapitulates a broader pattern I have traced in this book, where the rhetoric of a spectral, primitive past conceals the synchronic segregation of the “religious” and “economic,” as well as their reinscription within capitalist schemes of value. In a similar way, temporalized claims that read the doubleness of commodities as what emerges anterior to, or persists as supplement alongside, commodity culture risks segregating the commodity’s doubleness from the abstracting forces of capital. I thus understand the doubleness of commodities to designate neither the spectral resurgence of a pre-modern fetishism nor an alternate fetishism that enlivens what is excessive in objects beyond their reduction to exchange values. Rather, I see the doubleness of commodities as yet another instance in which capitalist economic thought instantiates, even as it transgresses, polarizing binaries such as the sacred and profane, intrinsic value and exchange value, inalienable and alienable possessions.<sup>5</sup> To say this is not to cite more evidence of capitalism’s aggressive capacity to appropriate even the doubleness of commodities toward its ends, but rather to see capitalism as what introduces such doubleness as an organizing schema that it strategically manipulates.

By reading the commodity’s doubleness in this way I am arguing that the

commodity offers yet another site where we can trace how the double narrative of capitalism came to be segregated and reintegrated. As I demonstrate in this part of the book on Victorian fictional and anthropological representations of things, the subject-object relation that disembeds objects from capitalist commodity culture and enables them to step forward as “things” that reference an array of social, historical, and symbolic relations is also the strategy by which Victorians segregate market values from non-market values, sacred from profane, private from public, only to reintegrate these opposing schemes of value and render objects serviceable toward capitalist ends. In this and the subsequent chapter I offer examples of just such a strategy by examining the complicated role women and sacred things play within the marriage plots of three nineteenth-century domestic novels—Charles Dickens’s *Dombey and Son*, George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*, and Anthony Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now*—situating these novels in relation to nineteenth-century anthropological discussions of totemism and kinship. I argue that these novels and anthropologies of totemism present the patriarchal conscription of women and sacred things as inalienable embodiments of intrinsic value, and thus distinct from market value, as the ideological precondition for their symbolic role in capitalist expansion. Specifically, I claim that fictional representations of “household gods” and anthropological discussions of totemism deploy women and sacred things in their respective marriage plots in order to stabilize an imaginary set of relations between value, property, and kinship that substantiates a teleological narrative on the rise of private property, patriarchy, and capitalist exchange.

The imaginary set of relations that these domestic novels and anthropologies of totemism posit between women and sacred things reflects the degree to which both nineteenth-century novels and anthropology construct, as Elsie B. Michie claims, an “imaginary anthropology” that thinks through the historical and economic pressures on marriage and kinship “by providing a symbolic form in which those pressures can be both encoded and denied” (“Rich” 425).<sup>6</sup> I thus consider both the domestic novel and anthropologies of totemism as part of a continuum of nineteenth-century discursive engagements with the effects of capitalism on women’s rights. The liberal ethos of self-interest, laissez-faire, and negative liberties that historically made possible women’s economic and political equality also weakened the ideological basis by which women could be regarded as property that could not enter the market.<sup>7</sup> The relationship I sketch between women and sacred things, whether in the novel or anthropology, is a response to the historical probability of women’s economic agency. In both the domestic novels I discuss in this chapter and Victorian anthropologies of to-

temism, the domestic woman's entry into the marketplace renders her another variable within the circuit of commodity exchange and jeopardizes the economic and sexual reproduction of the family and economy—economic operations that hinge on the patriarchal conscription of women and the sacred totems or household gods attached to her. In order to avoid this consequence, both discourses make women the foundation of the economy and family and present their egress from the patriarchal organization of the family as preempting its dissolution, a dissolution that they narrate through the itinerant paths taken by women and sacred things.

The relationship that I have sketched between women, sacred things, and the “imaginary anthropology” that both the domestic novel and anthropology construct is integral to understanding how these two discourses contributed to segregating and reintegrating the two narratives of capitalism. Anthropological discussions of totemism participated in segregating the double narrative of capitalism by exploring the interconnections between women, sacred things, kinship, and economic/sexual reproduction within the context of primitive marriage systems and thus distanced their arguments both from the modern commodity's doubleness and from domestic arrangements in capitalist Britain. By contrast, we can best understand the suitability of the domestic novel for segregating and reintegrating the two narratives of capitalism if, as I discussed in the introduction, we read it as “metropolitan autoethnography” that represents “moral and cultural togetherness” in contrast to both the “nightmarish double” of commercialized “anticulture” at home and the primitive abroad (Buzard 7, 30). The domestic novel reroutes values lodged within political economy, such as sacrifice or the sacred, not only by distancing them from primitive societies, but also by attaching those values to women and the private sphere in opposition to the public, profane, and secular sphere of capitalist liquidities. Yet as the relationship between women and sacred things in the novels by Dickens, Eliot, and Trollope reveals, this process of separation is but the prelude to a productive synthesis: while the intrinsic value ascribed to women and sacred things represents a scheme of value distinct from self-interested capitalism, women and their household gods/totems supply the site where market and non-market values, sacred and profane, are synthesized in order to ensure capitalist expansion.

Integral to this double process and the novel's implication in capitalist ideology, as critics have long noted, is the structure of the public and private and the way the novel both instantiates these boundaries and transgresses them.<sup>8</sup> Most recently, Michael McKeon has argued that modern privacy results from a “dia-



lectual recapitulation” whereby the private is separated out from the public only to rearticulate itself as public and private at once (*Secret* 323).<sup>9</sup> “The realm of privacy in modern life is not (only) an alternative to the public but (also) its internalization. . . . the project of the domestic novel . . . is . . . both to reveal and to conceal its public referent” (716). The middle-class woman plays a crucial role in revealing and concealing how the domestic realm is constituted by capitalist economics.<sup>10</sup> It is her self-sacrificing, virtuous nature that does not permit, as Ruskin famously states in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), the “outer world” of fluid values and self-interested competition “to cross the threshold” by transforming the home into “a sacred place . . . watched over by Household Gods” (18:122).

Yet as the novels by Dickens, Eliot, and Trollope demonstrate, the outer world does continuously penetrate the home. The presence of household gods is the product of a silent sacralization process by which the middle-class domestic woman’s self-sacrifice functions as a mode of sacralization that manipulates the doubleness of commodities in order to resignify them as emblems of the sacred and intrinsic value. If household gods function as totems that ensure the reproduction of the patriarchal family and capitalist expansion, it is because the middle-class domestic woman’s sacralization of commodities as household gods separates one scheme of value out from another in order, ultimately, to reintegrate them. In her hands, the household god is neither simply an ancient, pre-Christian form of fetishism nor the clichéd expression of British consumerism and commodity culture, but where these two overlapping value systems are reinscribed within the rhetoric of domesticity. Hence, the domestic novel’s “ideological regrouping of intrinsic value” in the domestic sphere and in love is not the means by which it separates sacred things from commodities, public from private, primitive from modern, but what conceals their interpenetration (Thompson 21).<sup>11</sup> The domestic novel is, like the political economic discourse it critiques, also doubled—both invoking the pre-modern values of sacrifice, the sacred, and intrinsic value as distinct from modern capitalist self-interest and yet displaying how these values operate in tandem toward capitalist ends.<sup>12</sup>

### ***The Loss of Household Gods and the Fall of Dombey and Son***

At the heart of Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* is a woman who is both the central problem that the narrative seeks to manage and its solution to that problem. Florence’s position as heiress to Dombey and Son enables her entry into the

marketplace as an independently wealthy woman who disrupts the patriarchal transmission of property and money. *Dombey and Son* diverts attention from Florence's position as heiress by providing a lesson on the economic importance of the domestic woman, who grounds intrinsic value and is essential to the reproduction of the patriarchal family and economy. Dombey's domestic and financial failures, the novel would have us believe, stem from his initial devaluation of Florence and overvaluation of Paul. Hence, at the novel's close, Dombey learns that the foundation of the family and firm is not a son but "a Daughter after all."<sup>13</sup> Dickens thus presents Florence's intrinsic value and inalienability as the resolution to the very problem of alienability and unstable values that her position as heiress encodes. Yet this lesson regarding Florence's value conceals the novel's central anxiety, what Robert Clark refers to as "the arbitrary taboo on women's participation in the economic order" (73). If the novel accords insubstitutable value to the domestic woman as the keystone of the family and economy, it does so to dramatize the threat posed to patriarchal structures of kinship, property, and capitalist expansion if all women were to enter the marketplace and become, in a sense, heiresses.

To raise the specter of the heiress is to raise the problem of women's alienability and what this problem conceals—that women could not just be objects of exchange but also agents of exchange. Critics of *Dombey and Son* have largely approached this issue through the homology that the novel constructs between the domestic and economic realms.<sup>14</sup> For earlier feminist critics, like Nina Auerbach and Helene Moglen, Dickens exposes the "schism between masculinity and femininity" in order to critique patriarchal society and supplant it with an essentialized femininity represented in Florence (Auerbach 128; Moglen 159–60, 175). In Jeff Nunokawa's influential reading of the novel, Dickens emphasizes Florence's inalienable value and femininity in order to oppose the "zone of possession," in which women like Florence are held as man's "inalienable treasure," from the "zone of circulation," where women travel the circuits of capital like money or commodities (11, 12). While Nunokawa demonstrates how the inalienability of women in Victorian novels responds to the anxiety that all property is alienable in the age of capital, his reading is in many ways typical of criticism on *Dombey and Son*. Dickens is either seen as critiquing heterosexual romance as an exploitative transaction in which women are exchanged between men or as prescribing Dombey's lesson on the economic value of women as the lesson that all middle-class men should learn lest the ills of the marketplace spoil the home.<sup>15</sup>

Yet it is precisely this critical attention to how the forces of commodification require the separation of the domestic and economic that has led critics to overlook the secondary plot that the novel constructs around Florence's relationship to sacred things and its centrality to conveying her inalienability—an inalienability that does not counter the forces of commodification, but tactfully manages them. If one of the historical problems that informs the novel is the impact of capitalism on women's economic and political equality, the novel responds to this possibility through the relationship Dickens choreographs between Florence and sacred things.<sup>16</sup> As the embodiment of intrinsic value and the sacred in the novel, Florence stands distinguished from the fluid values of the marketplace and resignifies commodities as markers of intrinsic value by sacralizing them as inalienable "household gods." Florence's sacralization of commodities as household gods not only stabilizes value, but also symbolizes the family's economic and sexual reproduction that only possession of Florence and her household gods can stimulate.

This transformation of commodities into proverbial household gods, Deborah Cohen argues, indicates a prevalent strategy among middle-class Victorians, who drew on evangelical incarnationism in order to invest commodities with spiritual and moral attributes and thus justify their consumerism (xi, 12–13). In *Dombey and Son*, however, these acts of transformation (or their absence) respond less to anxieties about consumerism than women's alienability. Dickens's use of "household gods" is here strategically related to the Victorian cult of domesticity epitomized in Ruskin's use of the phrase in *Sesame and Lilies*.<sup>17</sup> Dickens's novels are replete with such associations and constituted an aspect of his popularity. Reviewers of Dickens's work praised him for his depictions of domestic life, his "deep reverence for the household sanctities, his enthusiastic worship of the household gods" (qtd. in Collins 244). The association between household gods, domesticity, and women's sacred influence was echoed even by sociologists like Auguste Comte, who instructed women to practice a form of domestic worship that results in "the adoration . . . of our personal patrons, our guardian angels or household gods" (100–101). *Dombey and Son* draws on such associations to demonstrate the intrinsic value of women and to establish two contrastive models of the family in which the domestic and economic are interwoven—two contrastive families that correspond to two differing models of value and object relations.<sup>18</sup> Whereas *Dombey's* devaluation of Florence and possessive individualism ushers in the contaminating forces of commodification that lead to the loss of his family, firm, and house-

hold gods, Florence's sacred influence stabilizes value and resignifies commodities as household gods.<sup>19</sup> We see in these two contrastive models of family how Dickens's novel reconfigures the permeable boundaries between the sacred and profane, private and public, intrinsic value and exchange value. By aligning Dombey's family structure with the profanizing effects of the marketplace, Dickens can present Florence as the domestic woman who manages these permeable boundaries by successfully separating and reintegrating two schemes of valuation central to the double narrative of capitalism. In what follows I address how the novel delineates the binaries of intrinsic value versus exchange value, sacred versus profane, private versus public, before turning to how the contrastive models of family either fail or succeed to manage such oppositions.

Characters in *Dombey and Son* repeatedly grapple with the intangibility of speculative investment and the increasing abstraction of exchange value in an era shifting from traditional forms of wealth, such as landed property, to one guided by speculative capital, credit, and free trade.<sup>20</sup> In a comment that exemplifies the novel's attitude toward the mysteries of the stock exchange and credit culture, Sol Gills, the old-fashioned proprietor of the *Wooden Midshipman*, says of his bond: "It's here and there, and—and, in short, it's as good as nowhere" (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 184).<sup>21</sup> Such direct references to the modern financial system, however, are rare in a novel that primarily turns to the sea as a recurring motif for both the liquidities of capitalist speculation and its predication on imperialist trade. The "dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world" acquires varied symbolic meanings in the novel precisely because of its protean nature, never exclusively symbolizing death, the plenitude of sexual desire, or love, but exemplifying, in its various shifts of meaning, the problem of intrinsic value (60).

Dickens chronicles the movement from stable to less stable forms of value, from land to the seas of imperial trade, in the walk Walter Gay takes after learning of his uncle's debts to Captain Cuttle's lodgings.

Captain Cuttle lived on the brink of a little canal near the India Docks, where there was a swivel bridge which opened now and then to let some wandering monster of a ship come roaming up the street like a stranded leviathan. The gradual change from land to water, on the approach to Captain Cuttle's lodgings, was curious. It began with the erection of flag-staffs . . . then came slop-sellers' shops. . . . These were succeeded by anchor and chain-cable forges. . . . Then came rows of houses. . . . Then, ditches. . . . Then, unaccountable patches

of dirty water, hardly to be descried, for the ships that covered them. Then, the air was perfumed with chips; and all other trades were swallowed up in mast, oar, and block-making, and boatbuilding. Then, the ground grew marshy and unsettled. Then, there was nothing to be smelt but rum and sugar. (178–79)

Dickens organizes the shops, houses, commodities, and landscape into a series that unfolds contiguously in space and sequentially in time in order to manage the dizzying effects of free trade, which have swallowed up non-mercantile trades in the area. More significantly, Dickens's narrative technique allows him to convey the threat of imperial trade and speculative finance, as the ground beneath Walter's feet literally grows "marshy and unsettled" at the periphery, where one smells nothing but the rum and sugar imported from the colonies. Dickens conveys his anxieties about the shift from an economic system rooted in land to less durable forms of wealth by connecting value's instability to money's origin in imperial trade and its ability to absorb everything that enters its purview like a "wandering monster."

The troubling connections between unstable value, imperial trade, and money become clear in the famous passage in which Paul asks his father "Papa! what's money?" (152). Paul's question about money is syntactically homologous to the one he later poses to his sister, "Floy . . . where's India . . . ?" (171), a homology that points to the direct relationship the novel positions between the opacity of money and empire. If, as Dombey tells Paul, "[m]oney . . . can do anything" and is "a very potent spirit" (152, 153), the effects of its fetishized powers remain unclear. Thus, just as Paul expressed dissatisfaction with Dombey's equation of money with precious metals, Paul's second question demands more than factual knowledge of India's location. He wants "to understand what it was the waves were always saying; and would . . . look towards that invisible region, far away" (171). What the waves are saying, Dickens suggests, is that the sea that enables trade and connects nations to one another can also be a conduit for death and contamination when individuals fail to properly manage money's fetishized powers.

The symbolic connections that the novel advances between money, fluid values, and the contaminating effects of trade stem from its tendency to link, as Jeff Nunokawa and Claudia Klaver state, the taint of commodification with the Orient (Nunokawa 42, 73; Klaver 105–7). Dickens figures Dombey, in particular, as an agent of contamination through Dombey's involvement with the seas that enable imperial trade. Dombey's office furniture, for example, appears

“from the world without, as if they were assembled at the bottom of the sea” or “the cavern of some ocean monster” (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 237). Not only do all items in Dombey’s office become metonymically associated with the sea and trade, but Dickens furthers the association between Dombey and empire by describing the deference his employees exhibit as befitting someone entitled “Caliph Haroun Alraschid” or “Sultan” (238). Despite such associations between Dombey, the Orient, and trade, the novel ultimately suggests that it is not money or capital’s connection to the Orient that contaminates. Rather, it is specific domestic arrangements that determine whether money’s fetishized powers contaminate the English home. After questioning whether Dombey’s desire to exert “his proprietorship” over Edith represents “an unnatural characteristic” (736, 737), the narrative abruptly shifts to a polemic on the unnatural forces of pollution that “spread contagion” in British homes and the globe (738). “Then should we see how the same poisoned fountains that flow into our hospitals and lazar-houses, inundate the jails, and make the convict-ships swim deep, and roll across the seas, and over-run vast continents with crime” (738). Dickens implies that contamination not only enters Britain from the colonies, but that Dombey’s possessive hoarding of Fanny, Edith, and Paul constitutes an “unnatural” organization of the family that contaminates the British domestic space and travels the circuits of imperial finance.

Whether money and commodities are the source of contamination or sacred influence does not reside in the essential qualities of these objects, but on the affective and familial bonds forged by those who use them. The ambiguous status of money in Dickens’s novel reflects, as Christopher Herbert argues, its position as a tabooed object. Drawing on Frazer’s discussion of “Taboo,” Herbert claims that Frazer directs Victorians to the contradictory attitude evangelicals expressed toward money as an object invested with divine powers and yet a filthy contaminant (“Filthy Lucre” 186–95). As we saw in chapter 1’s discussion of taboo and the holy in Frazer and Robertson Smith, Frazer highlights the contingency of the sacred and the double process that renders objects like money either sacred or profane.<sup>22</sup> The instability of the sacred clarifies how *Dombey and Son* can conceive of both money and commodities as either sacred or profane depending on specific domestic relations.<sup>23</sup> Rather than conceiving the economic as a threat to the putative domestic haven, *Dombey and Son* presents the negative or positive effects of any interpenetration of the domestic and economic as conditioned by specific familial arrangements. Without the domestic woman at its center, Dombey’s model of the family fails to manage the

doubleness of money and commodities. Rather than transform money and commodities into markers of intrinsic value and distance them from their imperial associations, Dombey's synthesis of marriage and market results in the loss of household gods. Dombey's bankruptcy, the death of little Paul and Fanny, as well as his failed marriage to Edith, participate in a causal chain that the novel traces to Dombey's alienated relationship with his daughter Florence. Dombey could have avoided the ruin of his business and family if, as Florence's governess Susan Nipper surmises, "he knew her value right" (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 704). His failure to appreciate Florence's value as "the spirit of his home" (587), rather than the interpenetration of the domestic and economic per se, precipitates the loss of the family's household gods.

Dombey combines marriage as a system of alliance that emphasizes family lineage and social status with marriage as a sexual contract that facilitates capitalist expansion. These two forms of marriage appear interfused in the opening scenes of the novel where Fanny has just given birth to Paul. Dombey perceives his marriage with Fanny as "a matrimonial alliance" that confers honor on her through the privilege of "giving birth to a new partner in such a House" (50), but in the very next sentence the marriage assumes the form of a sexual contract. "Mrs. Dombey had entered on that social contract of matrimony: almost necessarily part of a genteel and wealthy station" (51). As with his second wife, Edith, Dombey's alliance with Fanny combines his distinction of wealth with Fanny's distinction of blood to attain social status plus wealth. Drawing on Foucault, Robert Clark remarks that Dombey needs both to reproduce the social structure through the "deployment of alliance" and expand the economic base through the "deployment of sexuality." In privileging alliance over sexuality, he claims that Dombey fails to conserve the family as well as extend the economic base of the firm (78).<sup>24</sup> Yet as Dickens makes clear in the alternative family and economy he structures around Florence, Dombey's error lies not in conjoining alliance with sexuality but in identifying the reproduction of the family and firm with Paul rather than Florence.

Dickens contrasts the dysfunctional and economically unsuccessful family that emerges under the patriarchal rule of Dombey with Florence's ability to make the affections and self-sacrificing duty serve sound economic growth. Instead of reforming accursed things such as money and commodities into the sacred, Dombey's possessive individualism allows money's accursed powers to reify personal relations. On the impending death of Fanny, for example, Dombey begins to regard her as "something gone from among his plate and

furniture, and other household possessions” (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 54). Just as earlier Dombey’s marriage mingled alliance and heterosexual exchange, here Fanny assumes a position parallel to commodities. Similarly, Edith’s position as symbolic capital quickly transforms into the language of sexual contract. As Edith herself acknowledges to her mother, “You know he has bought me. . . . He has considered of his bargain. . . . There is no slave in a market . . . so shown and offered and examined and paraded . . . , as I have been, for ten shameful years” (472–73). *Dombey and Son* links capital with promiscuity and exhibitionism, contrasting the traffic of women that Edith and Alice epitomize with Florence’s inalienability (Nunokawa 13, 56–57). In highlighting Florence’s inalienability, Dickens makes possession of her the precondition for capitalist expansion and sexual reproduction. Dombey’s rejection of Florence as “base coin that couldn’t be invested—a bad Boy—nothing more” reveals his ignorance of the domestic ideology that underwrites the expansion of capital: it is Florence not Paul who guarantees the company and family’s reproduction (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 51).

In failing to organize the reproduction and expansion of family and firm around Florence, Dombey initiates the contaminating effects of capital and money that result in the loss of the family’s household gods. *Dombey and Son* stages this loss by intertwining Dombey’s marriage to Edith and the pre-nuptial renovations to the Dombey house. Prior to these renovations, Florence’s spirit animates the objects around her and grants “to every lifeless thing a touch of present human interest and wonder” (394).<sup>25</sup> Once the renovations to the house begin, “the enchanted house was no more, and the working world had broken into it” (500). While Dickens seemingly posits a causal link between the entry of the working world and the loss of Florence’s “enchanted house,” it is less the intrusion of the market into the domestic than the self-interested values represented in Dombey’s marriage to Edith that leaves the newly renovated home bereft of its household gods. Shortly before their marriage, Dombey takes pride in “this proud and stately woman doing the honours of his house” (509). Dickens quickly ironizes Dombey’s pride in marrying a woman of status by drawing a parallel between his materialism and the exploits of empire. Dombey perceives no dissonance between thoughts of his fortunes and the gloomy dining room, replete with its “Turkey carpet; and two exhausted negroes holding up two withered branches of candelabra on the sideboard” (509). Dickens is less interested in critiquing the exploitation of colonial labor than in linking Dombey’s status-conscious marriage to Edith with the continuities the novel



has already established between empire and money as potential contaminants. Dombey's decision to marry a "stately woman" and his general mismanagement of the family result in a new, "stately" house that contains expensive furniture but no household gods. "The saying is, that home is home, be it never so homely. If it hold good in the opposite contingency, and home is home be it never so stately, what an altar to the Household Gods is raised up here!" (580). Dickens's satiric use of "stately" encodes Dombey's valorization of money and status over affections. In viewing Edith and Florence as either exchangeable or worthless possessions, Dombey subjects his home to money's potent powers to transmogrify, transforming what could have been a sacred space into its accursed counterpart.

The narrative reiterates the causal link between the loss of household gods and the destructive effects of capital and empire on the home through the secularization of household possessions in Brogley's used-furniture shop and Dombey's auctioned furnishings.<sup>26</sup> Brogley's shop displays furniture "in combinations the most completely foreign to its purpose. . . . [a] set of window curtains with no windows belonging to them, . . . while a homeless hearthrug severed from its natural companion the fireside, braved the shrewd east wind" (176–77). Brogley's shop presents the destination of beloved possessions when bankruptcy befalls families and forces the sale of one's household gods. The separation of hearthrug from the hearth allegorizes the alienation of individuals from their natural roles in the home.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the narrative orientalizes these alienating effects through its allusion to the "shrewd east wind." When bankruptcy subjects Dombey's house to the liquidities of economic transactions, Dickens again figures the desecration of the home through an orientalized outsider, a "Mosaic Arabian" (925), who appraises and auctions Dombey's estate until "[t]here is not a secret place in the whole house" (928). The sea of fluid values and imperial trade floods the home, turning everything into a commodity to be appraised and sold.

### ***Inventing the Totem: Women, Sacred Things, and the Reproduction of Nature***

Thus far I have demonstrated how *Dombey and Son* encourages us to read the interpenetration of the public and private as the contamination of the home by the forces of commodification even as it reveals how the loss of Dombey's

household gods and bankruptcy has nothing to do with the inherently contaminating nature of tabooed objects like money or commodities, but hinges instead on the specific familial arrangements that underwrite their entry into the home. Inattention to this dynamic relationship between things, women, and family structure perpetuates a common misrecognition in our readings of novels like *Dombey and Son*, where things are narrowly read as exemplifying the forces of commodity fetishism. Yet our current reevaluation of fetishism as a sufficient critical category for understanding what Freedgood has referred to as the “more extravagant form of object relations” that survived in the Victorian period in fact revisits a problem that Victorians themselves faced (8). In a landmark essay that would fuel decades of obsessive research into the significance of totems and totemism, John Ferguson McLennan published “The Worship of Plants and Animals” (1869–70) in *The Fortnightly Review*, a two-part essay that critiqued his contemporaries for a fundamental misrecognition that regarded the worship of all sacred objects in primitive culture as fetishism. In opposition to this tendency, McLennan introduced a new category, totemism. Totemism yoked three separate sociological phenomena into a unitary and universal stage of religious and social organization: the division of communities into clans, the clan’s worship of a plant or animal from which it descends and after which it is named, and the kinship rules of exogamy and matriarchy. Victorian anthropologists like McLennan, I argue, *invent* this new category in order to posit a symbolic relationship between women, sacred totems, and sexual and economic reproduction. This new category, as we will see in my further discussion of *Dombey and Son* and the novels by Eliot and Trollope, names and theorizes a set of relations that had already been employed in novels published before and contemporaneous with anthropologies of totemism.

In defining totemism as a universal stage of religious belief and social organization, Victorian anthropologists such as McLennan, Frazer, and Robertson Smith drew upon eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel accounts. Pierre-Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix and John Long remarked how the plants and animals, or totems, after which Native American tribes were named, embodied the tribe’s sacred ancestor, while Sir George Grey noted that among Western Australians family names and totems were passed on by the mother and prohibited marriage between those with the same name (*Jones Secret* 13–15). It was not until McLennan’s essay, however, that these features were synthesized into a definition of totemism as a system of social organization related to, but distinct from, fetishism.

Fetichism thus resembles Totemism; which, indeed, is Fetichism *plus* certain peculiarities. These peculiarities are, (1) the appropriation of a special Fetich to the tribe, (2) its hereditary transmission through mothers, and (3) its connection with the *jus connubii*. Our own belief is that the accompaniments of Fetichism have not been well observed, and that it will yet be found that in many cases the Fetich *is* the Totem. (McLennan "Worship" 422–23, emphasis original)

McLennan's essay reiterates previous accounts of the totem as "some vegetable or animal" that the tribe worships as a divine ancestor (409). But unlike previous findings, McLennan distinguishes totemism from fetishism because the former inextricably links the communal worship of a sacred object with the kinship rules of matrilineage and exogamy (408–13). McLennan's point here is that the totem is indeed a fetish since it too embodies a divinized spirit, but when the worship of a fetish carries the additional functions and characteristics listed, that fetish now functions as a totem. Frazer would largely reiterate McLennan's definition of the totem, alluding to the connection between totemism and the social rules of matrilineage and exogamy, as well as the difference between a fetish and a totem. "As distinguished from a fetich, a totem is never an isolated individual, but always a class of objects, generally a species of animals or of plants, more rarely a class of inanimate natural objects, very rarely a class of artificial objects" (Frazer *Totemism and Exogamy* 4). Frazer's claim that the totem belongs to a "class of objects" indicates a level of abstraction that is not theorized as present in fetishism. Peter Melville Logan writes that because the fetish is a union of "object with spirit, signifier with signified," it is "antithetical to representation"; the fetish's singularity and irreducible materiality "disappears when the object is understood instead as merely one instance of a general class of objects" (10, 37). This is the reverse of the totem, which cannot be understood in its singularity, but only as a class of objects that simultaneously signifies a type of religious worship and principle of social organization.

Additionally, unlike artificial or inanimate objects that serve as fetishes, Frazer insists on the totem's organic materiality because it is essential to the totem's social function and origin. If the totem regulates the laws of marriage and descent, it does so in part through its *natural* connection to fertility and reproduction: "it appears probable that the tendency of totemism to preserve certain species of plants and animals must have largely influenced the organic life of the countries where it has prevailed" (Frazer *Totemism and Exogamy* 87). This thesis, underdeveloped in *Totemism* (1887), is one that *The Golden Bough*

(1890) repeatedly explores. Whether considering the myth of Demeter and Persephone or agricultural rites of English peasants, Frazer consistently sought to explicate how both primitives and moderns combined utilitarian logic and magical thinking in their efforts to control fertility, the food supply, and the process of birth, death, and regeneration through worship of the totem (*Golden Bough* 7:207–36).<sup>28</sup> The various taboos that bar members of the tribe from consuming, killing, or even touching their sacred totems serve ultimately as a practical measure designed to conserve and reproduce nature (Frazer *Totemism and Exogamy* 9). As Catherine Gallagher argues, McLennan’s organization of sexuality and Frazer’s analysis of agricultural rites of sacrifice incorporate Malthusian links between sexuality and the food supply (*Body Economic* 169). Control over fertility and sexual reproduction is identified with the economic reproduction of natural resources.

Perceiving totemism to constitute a religious and social system that regulates marriage laws, kinship, and an ample food supply, McLennan and Frazer deem the unnatural, artificial object to be an untenable catalyst for the reproduction of nature, whether agricultural or sexual. The classification of the totem as an object whose materiality symbolically regulates the family and economy reveals the contradictory response Victorian anthropologists had to the totem’s thingness. If, as Bill Brown states, things defy classification and surpass their materiality or functionality by signifying “what is excessive in objects” (“Thing Theory” 5), the discourse on totemism points to an additional operation in which the very supplementary values that instantiated the totem’s thingness became essential to reclassifying it as a discrete category of objects whose symbolical function is to stimulate sexual and economic reproduction—a function that paradoxically hinges on its materiality. The totem serves this symbolic function, moreover, only insofar as it ultimately refers back to women, who transmit the totem from generation to generation and whose bodies are the basis of sexual and economic reproduction.

### ***Florence and the Regeneration of Household Gods***

Almost twenty years before McLennan would theorize such connections in relation to primitive matrilineage, Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* would plot a similar relationship between women, sacred things, and kinship through the family and economy Florence engenders. In contrast to the patriarchal rule of Dombey,

Dickens constructs an alternative family and economy around Florence, whose relationship to money and things symbolically separates sacred from profane, intrinsic value from exchange value, public from private, but in fact models their ideal interpenetration. Florence's sacralization of money and commodities as household gods exploits the very contagion and unstable values that threatens the domestic space by distancing them from their association with empire and capitalist exchange. If, as Frazer suggests, the tabooed object becomes sacred either by coming into relation with a god or by removing it from its everyday usages, Dickens sacralizes money and commodities by bringing them into relation with Florence. Hence, although David Ellison claims that "Dickens questions the capacity of angels to hold the house together in a space where new forms of sexual and technological shock reverberate" (108), Dickens in fact depicts Florence's sanctifying presence as the very resolution to the destabilizing effects of modernity and capital on the domestic interior. Moreover, as in McLennan's analysis of totemism, Florence's connection to the sacred and processes of reproduction regenerates the Dombey family and economy—a regeneration the novel symbolizes through her sacralization of commodities into household gods.

In *Dombey and Son*, these processes of sacralization and the constitution of a new family primarily unfold within the space of Sol Gills's nautical instrument shop the Wooden Midshipman, which names both Sol's shop and the wooden sculpture that sits outside the shop.<sup>29</sup> Unlike Dombey's counting house, the Wooden Midshipman harmoniously integrates domestic and business spaces, placing the parlor with its fireside behind the shop and the bedroom upstairs.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the spatial proximity of work and home, Dickens locates Sol's shop in the vicinity of Dombey's firm, the Royal Exchange, the Bank of England, and the East India Company, firmly situating Sol's shop within the watery realms of trade and economic expansion. In the Wooden Midshipman, the economy and family are reconciled and become productive once love and Florence embody intrinsic value. Cuttle, Sol, and Walter recognize Florence's real value, equating her not with "base coin" but with her heart's "undivided treasure" (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 902). Florence becomes, as Julian Moynahan remarks, an "object of worship" among those in the Wooden Midshipman (128); her haloed position facilitates the movement of money and commodities from their accursed position of instability and filth to the medium by which a new economy based on disinterest is sacralized. When Florence runs away from home to Sol's shop, Captain Cuttle raises an altar in Sol's bedroom where

Florence can rest, providing the very household gods that Dombey's renovated house lacked.

It was very clean already; and the Captain . . . converted the bed into a couch, by covering it all over with a clean white drapery. By a similar contrivance, the Captain converted the little dressing-table into a species of altar, on which he set forth two silver teaspoons, a flower-pot, a telescope, his celebrated watch, a pocket-comb, and a song-book, as a small collection of rarities, that made a choice appearance. (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 764)

In this act of bricolage, objects that are anything but rarities aid in the construction of a sacred altar by being brought into relation with Florence and the moral values associated with her. Cuttle's act disrupts the everyday functionality that objects such as watches and combs perform and allows them to step forward as things that reference a "secondary functionality" through the affective values they symbolize.<sup>31</sup> Through the secondary functionality they acquire, the things in Cuttle's altar resemble those doubled objects "whose status as both commodities and inalienable possessions marked them out not as spoiled hybrids, but as ideal sites of sentiment" (Plotz 10). In contrast to Marx's commodity fetishism, where the ascription of transcendent values to money and commodities conceals the social relations of production, the affective values that transform Cuttle's watch and other items into "a species of altar" evidences the contingency of an object's value and the sacred itself. Cuttle's altar epitomizes what Igor Kopytoff refers to as a process of "singularization," whereby acts of resignification dehomogenize a commodity's exchange value and make it a sign of the sacred (73). Dickens thus exploits the mutability of the sacred at the very moment that he reconstructs it as absolute value. He capitalizes on the itinerancy of movables, presenting them as the subtle matter through which both he and his characters imaginatively restructure their relationship with others. In so doing, Dickens both critiques the fungibility of capital and commodity fetishism, even as he draws on such fetishism to saturate the economy with the value-laden, emotional relation on which he wants to ground both family and trade.

*Dombey and Son* is populated with objects that occupy an ambiguous boundary between the everyday and the sacred, capitalist and pre-capitalist value systems. Positioning objects at this ambiguous boundary, as Dickens's representation of the Wooden Midshipman makes evident, requires that ob-

jects simultaneously reference values distinct from primitive idol worship and capitalist commodification. Dickens accomplishes this by making clear that the Wooden Midshipman represents archaic values that are no longer extant in modern society. Hence, we learn that the little wooden figurine wears “obsolete naval uniforms” and that Sol Gills is the “[s]ole master and proprietor of one of these effigies” (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 88). Moreover, as in the illustration by Phiz that later appears in the novel, “The Little Midshipman on the Look-Out” (334), the figure “[takes] observations of the hackney carriages” and trade that surrounds him but, like Sol Gill’s shop, does not participate in capitalist trade (88). These subtle acts of distance are necessary precisely because the narrative describes the figure as a totem that potentially furthers sexual and economic reproduction within a capitalist social order.

The wooden Midshipman at the Instrument-maker’s door, like the hard-hearted little Midshipman he was, remained supremely indifferent to Walter’s going away. . . . Such a Midshipman he seemed to be, at least, in the then position of domestic affairs. Walter eyed him kindly many a time in passing in and out; and poor old Sol, when Walter was not there, would come and lean against the doorpost, resting his weary wig as near the shoe-buckles of the guardian genius of his trade and shop as he could. But no fierce idol with a mouth from ear to ear, and a murderous visage made of parrot’s feathers, was ever more indifferent to the appeals of its savage votaries, than was the Midshipman to these marks of attachment. (330)

The ironic description of the Midshipman as “indifferent” and “hard-hearted” anthropomorphizes the object even as it distinguishes an object’s inherent properties from the fetishized powers individuals ascribe to it. Dickens tacitly suggests that all fetishized objects are, from the perspective of the inanimate thing, indifferent; the question is what symbolic matrix the object participates in for its users. In this regard, Dickens’s description of the wooden Midshipman as an “idol” and “guardian genius” contrasts the Midshipman’s indifference to the emotional associations that characters ascribe to him, emphasizing not its innate nature but the degree to which the figure mediates social relations and how characters construe their relations with others. Dickens’s use of the terms “idol” and “guardian genius” proves especially important for our discussion of household gods given McLennan’s claim that members of a tribe regard their totem as a “‘friend’ or ‘protector,’ and is thus much like the ‘genius’ of the early

Italian” (“Worship” 414). The Roman concept of the Lares, or household gods, refers to the protective deities of the household and family, as well as the domestic shrine before which families performed their rites of worship. Related to the Lares, the “genius” is a guardian spirit that expresses the spiritual double of persons. But it is not a single person’s genius that families worship but the household genius of the *paterfamilias* depicted in the shrine of the Lares (Hornblower and Spawforth 630). More importantly, the genius represents a fertility spirit associated with the reproduction of the paternal line—an association made clear through the Latin root *gignere* (to beget) (Rives 212). When it is viewed as a type of Lares and genius, the description of the Midshipman as an object through which characters come to terms with “the then position of domestic affairs” takes on even greater significance. As a metonym for both Sol’s business and the extended, non-biological family that assembles around Florence in Sol’s shop, the wooden Midshipman is configured as a sacred object that symbolically catalyzes both sexual and economic reproduction.<sup>32</sup>

Reading the wooden Midshipman as a Lar, we can understand the physical space of Sol’s shop and the kinship of its members tied by affection rather than blood as Dickens’s attempt to imagine a new and healthy family structure that effectively joins sexual and economic reproduction by demonstrating that, like the Midshipman, money and ordinary possessions can be reconstituted into something sacred through people’s affective responses and, particularly, women like Florence. Dickens’s portrayal of the Midshipman as a genius/totem, and yet his insistence that Florence is the medium through whom objects attain their sacrosanct character, uncovers a tension in representations of the totem. In contrast to the totems found in the “primitive” communities that McLennan examines, Dickens’s portrayal of the relationship between Florence and sacred things does not focus on a specific object that a community regards as intrinsically sacred, but on any object that comes into relation with her and the values, domestic and economic, that she symbolizes. By making Florence central to the nexus of familial and economic relations established within Sol’s shop, the novel’s plot and tropology metonymically link her to the wooden Midshipman, which stands not only in metonymic relation to Sol’s business but also functions as its verbal and physical synecdoche. By establishing such linkages, the novel implies that it is only once relationships are organized around Florence that the sexual and economic reproduction symbolized by the Midshipman can be fully realized. Yet, much as in *Hard Times*,<sup>33</sup> what begins as a metonymic relation gives way to a metaphoric substitution in which Florence is revealed to



be the sacred, totemic object that ensures the expansion of the family and economy. Hence, Dickens presents the Midshipman as a totemic object only then to expose how woman, rather than any particular object, is what ultimately guarantees reproduction. In so doing, he makes explicit the symbolic relationship between women and totems that was submerged in McLennan: it is not the totem that clans cannot lose possession of, but woman; it is not the totem that guarantees sexual/economic reproduction, but woman.

Possession of woman and her sacred influence, Dickens suggests, is also how money and imperial goods can be divested of their contaminating effects and directed toward economically productive ends. If the novel effectively joins the “money world” with the separate “water world” through empire and catalyzes “capitalist expansion” by transforming foreign goods into “metropolitan wealth” (Perera 62), the novel can only endorse such a merger after money has been reconstituted as something sacred.<sup>34</sup> When, for example, Florence gifts her money purse to Walter before he sails to Barbados, she rinses the money of its negative connotations by predicating it on a gift economy and asking Walter to “take it with my love” (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 339). By connecting Florence with this transformative power, Dickens makes the gold Florin coin that her name Florence obliquely references a medium of sacred influence rather than contamination. As in the altar Cuttle builds, money takes on a sacred character once it comes into association with Florence. In this manner, Florence becomes a portable possession that sacralizes whatever comes into contact with her. When Florence and Walter leave for China after their wedding, Walter refers to Florence as his “sacred charge” (884). Dickens’s use of “charge” underscores Florence’s dual position as an object of Walter’s care and her capacity to revitalize things by merely entering her sphere of influence. In her capacity as sacred charge, Florence both feminizes the ship and ensures its prosperity: “Upon the deck, image to the roughest man on board of something that is graceful, beautiful, and harmless—something that it is good and pleasant to have there, and that should make the voyage prosperous—is Florence” (907). Florence’s presence on the boat effects both economic and sexual reproduction since she gives birth to another Paul at sea and Walter’s journey to China proves financially lucrative. Remarking on this transformation, Mr. Toots states, “Thus . . . from his daughter, after all, another *Dombey and Son* will ascend” (974).

Unlike the first *Dombey and Son*, the moral values Florence symbolizes supply the basis for a new economy and family—one ruled by the logic of the gift, self-sacrifice, and duty. Florence’s nurse Susan Nipper summarizes the ethic of

this new economy when she refuses wages and asserts that she “wouldn’t sell [her] love and duty” (882). Similarly, Dombey receives an anonymous “annual sum” from Carker’s brother and sister as “an act of reparation” for the bankruptcy Carker caused (971). Once the economy exemplifies the values of duty, affection, and mutuality, business improves as well. The Wooden Midshipman, which has never sold anything, begins to turn a profit and is thus rewarded for its non-participation in exchange (Jaffe *Vanishing Points* 101). This new family and economy, moreover, transgresses the boundaries of race, class, and blood-ties by including such characters as Captain Cuttle, Mr. Toots, the “mulattor” and “slave” Susan Nipper, all of whom are brought into connection with each other through their love for Florence. In contrast to the contagious sea and Dombey’s possessive individualism, Florence embodies the “good spirit” that shows people the destruction emanating from within their homes and that they are “creatures of one common origin, owing one duty to the Father of one family . . . !” (Dickens *Dombey and Son* 738–39). Dickens’s alternative economic model in which relations of mutual obligation sacralize a new economy and family transforms the sea of contagion and fluid values into the intrinsic value of love, integrating individuals of various classes and races within a utopian community. The sea no longer speaks of death or pollution, but “of Florence and their ceaseless murmuring to her of the love, eternal and illimitable” (976).

Walter and Florence’s imperial travels, and the new economy and family that emerge from them, stage operations central to the double narrative of capitalism. The novel accomplishes this by synthesizing two imperial adventure tales. Sol tells Walter that the last bottle of Madeira wine, “which has been to the East Indies and back,” was just one of many such casks of wine on a sunken boat (95). Sol weaves a riveting tale in which storms rocked the ship and sailors tried “to stave the casks, got drunk and died drunk, singing, ‘Rule Britannia’” (95). Sol’s promise to reserve the last bottle of Madeira for Walter’s return from Barbados and his later marriage to Florence implicitly links the narrative about Madeira with another adventure tale in the same chapter about Dick Whittington, the famous mayor of London and merchant who becomes wealthy by risking his only possession, a cat, on a journey to Barbary and returns to marry his master’s daughter (Perera 72). As Suvendrini Perera argues, the return of Florence and Walter from their trip to China “[brings] in, like Whittington’s cat, the foundation of future prosperity and [reconciles] the old adventurousness of imperial trade with the stability of the mid-Victorian family” (72).

Their journey to and from the colonies metonymically references Florence’s symbolic role in segregating and reintegrating the two narratives of capitalism.

While the novel initially separates the profanizing effects of commodification from Florence's embodiment of the sacred and self-sacrificing duty, Florence synthesizes these seemingly opposed value systems. This synthesis replicates, at the level of plot, the broader pattern of segregation, displacement, and reintegration that I have argued is central to understanding the disciplinary genealogy of the double narrative of capitalism. Walter and Florence's economically productive journey to the colonies symbolizes how a variety of values that were deemed pre-modern were disinherited from political economic thought and pushed to the colonial periphery only to be reintroduced within the metropolitan center through, in this instance, the domestic woman, whose particular synthesis of market and non-market values recapitulates a pattern already lodged within political economic thought. This recapitulation appears extrinsic to political economy, however, because it functions as a critique of the dominant narrative of capitalism and its materialist ethos. Thus Florence's ideological function as the domestic woman not only conceals the predication of capitalist expansion on imperial trade, but also the dependence of capitalist values on those value systems that it deems pre-modern. Because of her, "the golden wine" that had "been long excluded from the light of day" can come out into the open where it sacralizes both the new family based on mutual obligations and "lost ships, freighted with gold" (*Dombey and Son* 970, 974). In a quasi-totemic rite, Dombey, Sol, and Captain Cuttle open the last bottle of Madeira and toast the new family they have formed.<sup>35</sup> Florence may inaugurate a new economy that converts imperial trade into sacred gold, but it is an economy that must conceal its origins, never letting its readers know where Florence's money purse comes from or how Sol Gill's shop turns a profit.

The novel's ending suggests that securing value and capitalist expansion not only requires a family anchored in Florence but, replicating a pattern that we will later see in McLennan, a partial return to a patriarchal, endogamous family that ascribes sacred powers and intrinsic value to women even as it divests them of money and property. While the extended, non-biological family that Florence assembles may feign a matriarchal lineage, Dickens actually re-creates the endogamous, patriarchal family that Dombey had destroyed around Florence, who then resacralizes the household gods and reproduces the family. Dickens accomplishes this by having Florence enter into a biologically exogamous marriage with Walter that he then figuratively transforms into a set of endogamous relations. After Paul's death, Florence tells Walter: "you'll be a brother to me, Walter, now that he is gone" (337). The narrative further emphasizes Walter's role as a surrogate Paul by placing him on a boat called the Son

and Heir.<sup>36</sup> When Walter returns after his shipwreck, he and Florence have become adults and his position as Paul's substitute leads to sexual tensions that cause Florence to "weep at this estrangement of her brother" (802). Even after their marriage, Walter and Florence's relationship continues to resemble a filial bond between brother and sister (Waters 55).

While Dickens had earlier critiqued Dombey's "domestic system" as a series of interchangeable positions (*Dombey and Son* 74), he ironically draws on the very logic of substitution and equivalence inherent to capitalist exchange to construct the novel's tropology and imagine a new Dombey family that combines economic and biological reproduction with non-capitalist motives.<sup>37</sup> Through the substitution of Walter as the surrogate brother for Paul, Florence's marriage to Walter appears, as Leila Silvana May remarks, to be "a curious mixture of endogamy and exogamy" (62). Florence and Dombey and Son thus become reincorporated into the patriarchal line of Dombey, giving birth not only to another Dombey and Son but another Florence and Paul.<sup>38</sup> Dombey no longer displaces his incestuous desire for Florence, his "blooming" daughter (*Dombey and Son* 501), onto rivals such as Edith, but channels it into his granddaughter Florence and "hoards her in his heart" (975). Dombey hoards the very thing that he had earlier failed to see was essential to the reproduction of capital and the patriarchal family: woman. Women like Florence, rather than Paul, represent capital to be hoarded. Florence regenerates the family and its household gods and, rather than disinherit the male line, will transmit it to the new Paul. As Dombey tells his grandson, the older Paul "was weak, and you are very strong" (975). Walter as the surrogate Paul will hand it down to the newer and healthier Paul to whom Florence has given birth. Florence's ability to transform commodities and capital like the bottle of Madeira into household gods, her position as something sacred and untouched by the forces of capital, and yet her function as capital to be hoarded, display the contradictions and uneasy alliances totems and their attendant taboos seek to regulate.

### ***Women, Totems, and Kinship in McLennan's Primitive Marriage***

The terms I have used to describe the indeterminate kinship structure that emerges in *Dombey and Son's* curious marriage-plot ending were, of course, invented by McLennan. McLennan adopts the terms "endogamy" and "exogamy" to identify "the rule which declares the union of persons of the same

blood to be incest” (*Primitive Marriage* 22). Endogamy refers to those “marriages between members of the same family-group or tribe” (22) while the rule of exogamy “*prohibited marriage within the tribe*” (23, emphasis original). In relation to *Dombey and Son*, Dickens presents the marriage of Florence and Walter as exogamous and yet, through the doubling of Paul and Walter, also as an endogamous (potentially “incestuous”) marriage that retains wealth and property within the Dombey family-group and reasserts its transmission along the male line. But if the terms “endogamy” and “exogamy” enable us to identify the kinship systems that Dickens’s novel synthesizes, the relationship *Dombey and Son* plots between Florence, sacred things, and value in order to retain possession of women, property, and the economic and sexual reproduction women symbolize, provides the unwritten rationale of McLennan’s evolutionary theory of patriarchy and kinship in *Primitive Marriage* (1865).<sup>39</sup>

Unlike the theory of patriarchy previously advanced by Henry Maine, *Primitive Marriage* proposed that patriarchy was the modern end point of kinship systems rather than its archaic origin; more importantly, McLennan added primitive matrilineage as an evolutionary stage that necessarily precedes the concomitant development of private property and patriarchy. Scholars have typically interpreted McLennan’s insertion of matrilineage and his arguments on the rise of patriarchy and private property as an attempt to reassert patriarchal dominance at a time when feminist agitation and increasing capitalism had destabilized Victorian conceptions of marriage, sexuality, and inheritance.<sup>40</sup> Most recently, Kathy Alexis Psomiades has argued that McLennan normalizes a model of heterosexual marriage in which women are appropriated as the partner of one man by “[positing] an inherent connection between patriarchy and private property that parallels the privatization of property in women with the privatization of property in general” (“Heterosexual” 107). What Dickens’s novel makes visible, however, is why this process of privatization requires the preceding stage of matrilineage and the particular relationship it establishes between women, totems, and exogamy. In the transition from matrilineage to patriarchy, the male who appropriates the woman and her totem also gains control over the reproduction of the family and economy; the female body that “naturally” produces and reproduces is identified with the organic totems that symbolize the community’s economic sustainability and growth. To maintain possession of women and their totems, McLennan posits a kinship system in which, much like *Dombey and Son*, the model of exogamous, heterosexual exchange he seeks to render normative incorporates endogamous kinship relations.

McLennan presents matrilineage as an intermediary stage that lies between

an original stage of primitive promiscuity, in which notions of paternity or maternity, marriage, and property are completely lacking, and the modern stage of kinship in which patriarchy and private property emerge as mutually constitutive forms of social organization. In the original state of primitive promiscuity, a shortage of women resulting from the practice of female infanticide leads to the institution of exogamy and incest prohibition—groups capture women belonging to different totemic groups, and this practice initiates a transition from a stage of primitive endogamy to matrilineal exogamy. Since “[t]hese groups would hold their women, like their other goods, in common,” McLennan conjectures that paternity would be uncertain and, as a result, the earliest form of kinship based on blood-bonds would have to be through females, “blood-ties through females being obvious and indisputable” (*Primitive Marriage* 69, 64). Such a system of matrilineage and group ownership would gradually be superseded by a system of kinship in which “the mother is appropriated to a particular man as his wife, or to men of one blood as wife” and “a practice of sons succeeding, as heirs direct, to the estates of fathers” (65, 98). The appropriation of women, children, and property to one man, as well as the transmission of the totem through men rather than women, reintroduces the homogeneity associated with the original primitive endogamous tribes and “arrest[s] the progress of heterogeneity” and instability associated with matriarchy since women from other totemic groups would simply be absorbed into the totemic group of the male (99). In the final stage of patriarchal endogamy, groups establish a balance between men and women from foreign tribes so that men can both marry exogamously and yet maintain the endogamous transmission of property and descent in the group.

McLennan’s shifting and overlapping use of endogamy and exogamy, where endogamy and exogamy can designate marriage both between and within tribes, points to a more pervasive instability in what constitutes a blood-relation, incest, and family during the nineteenth century at the very moment he sought to fix their definitions.<sup>41</sup> The shifting use of endogamy and exogamy, however, becomes understandable if we see the categories of endogamy and exogamy, as Elsie Michie states, “as economic rather than blood categories” that address the movement and concentration of money/property (*Vulgar* 11). This economic approach to the categories of endogamy and exogamy is one that McLennan himself underscores since, as Mary Jean Corbett has shown, he differentiates endogamy from exogamy largely through which kinship system follows the protocols of exchange (23–24). Exogamous marriages in which one tribe “acquires” a woman from another tribe could only occur, according to

McLennan, when marriage is “a subject of bargain, a matter of sale and purchase” and could not occur in endogamous tribes knitted together by “common interests and possessions” (*Primitive Marriage* 23, 22). The concluding stage of patriarchal endogamy synthesizes primitive endogamy and matrilineal exogamy in order to establish a kinship system in which women (and their totems) are possessed as inalienable property even as they are exchanged in marriage, thus securing the reproduction and expansion of the economy symbolized in women’s relationship to the totem.

McLennan’s synthesis of endogamy and exogamy delimits the possibilities of female sexual agency and property rights that matrilineage encodes and, which he feared, would resurface in Britain. Robertson Smith explicitly articulates such fears in *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (1885) when he states that female ownership of property in early Arabia likely represents “a relic of such a distribution of property as goes with female kinship” (95) and that in such kinship systems “a want of fixity in the marriage tie” results in “a state of things in which divorce is so frequent” (62). Similar concerns underpin McLennan’s statement on the heiress. “[T]he earliest violations of the rule of exogamy would appear to have been called for in the case of female heiresses” since the heiress’s exogamous marriage would transmit her property into another tribe or gens (*Primitive Marriage* 113). The propertied Victorian woman, like the heiress, signals a trace of matriarchal exogamy that destabilizes the patriarchal conjugal family unless endogamy constrains the transmission of women and property along the male line.<sup>42</sup> Thus, contrary to Robertson Smith’s claim that the triumph of patrilineal kinship was preceded by a “double system of kinship” in which patrilineal kinship and matrilineal kinship uncertainly coexisted, this “double system” becomes McLennan’s resolution to the propertied woman (*Kinship* 161). Much like Lévi-Strauss’s later analysis of the “essential value” women carry in marriage as an act of reciprocal exchange, McLennan reveals how imperative it is that groups do not lose control of this “essential value” because it represents the one possession that naturally stimulates exchange, reproduction, and social organization (*Elementary* 43).<sup>43</sup>

McLennan’s “double system of kinship” suggests that we need to revise our normative assumptions about marriage as heterosexual exchange in the nineteenth century. Recently, critics like Elsie Michie, Kathy Alexis Psomiades, Sharon Marcus, and Mary Jean Corbett have turned to Victorian anthropology as a way to challenge the model of exogamous, heterosexual exchange famously developed in Gayle Rubin’s “The Traffic in Women,” which has so long shaped our understanding of the relationship between marriage, property/money, and

kinship in the nineteenth-century novel.<sup>44</sup> Both Michie and Corbett have shown, for example, how Victorians labored to render exogamous, heterosexual exchange normative by marginalizing endogamy as a system of marriage where women marry within the family, although endogamous unions (e.g., cousin-marriage) were prevalent. Yet the synthesis found in McLennan suggests that we need to revise, not only the model of heterosexual exchange, but also our tendency to pit this model against endogamous marriages. Hence, while Michie claims that McLennan's example of the heiress constitutes "a break in the otherwise general social movement toward free exchange" since "she must marry endogamously and remain in the social group to which she belonged to preserve her property for the group" ("Rich" 426–27),<sup>45</sup> the heiress in fact necessitates both operations. In this manner, McLennan's argument unsettles the conception of endogamy as a system that Corbett claims "short-circuits exchange" by keeping the woman in the family rather than exchanging her for someone else (22). For McLennan, the injunction to marry within one's group operates alongside the injunction to exchange women. Through a synthesis of matrilineal exogamy and patriarchal endogamy, McLennan preserves the economic value of women's sexuality and fertility, but inscribes this value within the patriarchal, endogamous family where both women and their totems can be controlled by men and individuated property rights.

The relationship that both *Dombey and Son* and anthropologies of totemism posit between women and sacred things in their respective narratives of marriage, property, and kinship demonstrates the necessity of reading these two discourses together. Both the domestic novel and Victorian anthropology reveal how Victorians used things as a symbolically resonant medium to invent a necessary set of relations between value, women, the sacred, kinship, and property precisely because, historically, the logic of capitalism had rendered such interconnections arbitrary. Hence, in contrast to Freedgood's analysis of the realist novel as a "metonymic archive" in which things furnish a direct historical referent to a submerged social history (84), household gods and totems function as historical referents only insofar as they participate in a fictional narrative that novelists and anthropologists invent in response to very real economic and historical stresses on marriage and property.

I want to introduce here, however, an important caveat. While critics like Michie have argued for reading the nineteenth-century domestic novel and anthropology together based on their shared preoccupations, understanding the "imaginary anthropology" they construct also requires that we turn a critical eye to what they do not share. If the nineteenth-century domestic novel and anthro-



pologies of kinship both “constitute an attempt to think through the relations between marriage and capital” (Psomiades “Heterosexual” 94), the generic differences between the two forms of writing allow each to illuminate an aspect of such relations latent in the other. The domestic novel, as Mary Poovey and James Thompson have demonstrated, both mediated the increasing dematerialization of value within a new credit economy and provided a model of non-economic value that distinguished itself from market value, a pattern exemplified in *Dombey and Son* through Florence.<sup>46</sup> By linking the instability of value to the movement of women, sacred things, and property, *Dombey and Son* supplies the rationale—missing from Victorian anthropology—as to why totemism entails a *necessary* conjunction of such disparate elements as the sacred, women, things, kinship, and property despite evidence to the contrary. But whereas Dickens’s domestic novel openly relates value’s dematerialization to the changing economic, gender, and kinship relations within the Victorian family, the synthesis of endogamy and exogamy in McLennan illuminates how, as Ruth Perry has argued, shifts in economic systems coincide with shifts in kinship systems.<sup>47</sup> Both Dickens and Victorian anthropologists invest women with an intrinsic value that is necessary to the capitalist economic and social order and conceive their emancipation from the strictures of patriarchy as catalyzing that order’s degeneration—a degeneration they symbolize through women’s relationship with things. Yet it is only by examining the nineteenth-century domestic novel and anthropologies of totemism together, attentive to what they do and do not share, that we recognize the specific relationship they both orchestrate between women and sacred things, as well as its underlying logic.

I have stressed in this chapter the way in which Victorian anthropologies of totemism and Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* construct, and attempt to render normative, a fictional marriage-plot narrative that hinges on the patriarchal possession of women and sacred things. As we turn in the next chapter to the novels by Eliot and Trollope, however, we see how this fictional marriage plot appears increasingly untenable precisely because the legal and economic equality that haunts Dickens’s novel and Victorian anthropology had become an irrepressible reality. Hence while reading nineteenth-century anthropology alongside the novel makes visible a particular Victorian strategy that otherwise had escaped our notice, in the next chapter I argue that reading these two discourses together yields an additional benefit: it clarifies why this particular strategy in both the domestic novel and Victorian anthropology disappeared as the century progressed.

## CHAPTER 6

# Household Gods Revisited in George Eliot and Anthony Trollope

I began the previous chapter by discussing how, contrary to the claims by Eliot's narrator in *The Mill on the Floss*, the retrogressive attachment to things that bear national or personal memories is not antithetical to the propulsive movement of capital and modernization, but integral to their operation. The commodity, I claimed, carries within itself a doubled relation—on the one hand connoting a distinctly capitalist scheme of value and yet, on the other hand, referencing the transcendent values associated with sacred fetishes. Focusing on Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, I demonstrated how Dickens's novel manipulates the doubleness of commodities in order to construct a particular marriage plot regarding the Victorian family. *Dombey and Son*'s contrastive models of family, and the object-relations established therein, distinguish the adoptive family that forms around Florence from the contaminating forces of imperial trade, commodity fetishism, and speculative finance that destroy the House of Dombey. In her role as the domestic woman that reconstitutes the Dombey family and firm, Florence performs a role crucial to the double narrative of capitalism—at once segregating intrinsic value from exchange value, private from public, sacred from profane, disinterest from self-interest, even as she re-integrates them to further capitalist ends. In this regard, the financial success of Walter's journey to China not only represents, I had argued, the ideological and economic importance of Florence and her household gods, but also mirrors dynamics integral to the double narrative of capitalism, whereby seemingly pre-modern values that operate within political economy are distanced to the imperial periphery only to be rerouted to the metropolitan center where they

are inscribed within the alternative economic models that literary texts like *Dombey and Son* furnish as critiques of capitalism. Florence's role as the domestic woman contributes to yet another pattern. In both Dickens's novel and Victorian anthropology, representations of women and sacred things, whether referred to as "household gods" or totems, participate in a fictional marriage plot wherein the patriarchal conscription of women and her things stabilize relations between economic value, property, kinship, and capitalist expansion.

In this chapter I return to Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, arguing that Eliot's novel and Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* both do and do not reproduce these Dickensian maneuvers for a number of reasons. While both Eliot's and Trollope's novels depict the problematic transition from a land-based economy to one dominated by capitalist speculation and credit, they cannot fully replicate the Dickensian plot in which the self-sacrificing domestic woman anchors intrinsic value and the sacred in the private sphere by effectively sacralizing commodities into household gods. In contrast to *Dombey and Son*, the novels by Eliot and Trollope more forcefully register the increasing historical pressures of feminist agitation that Dickens's novel and Victorian anthropology seek to repress; these novels depict heroines who refuse to inhabit the role Florence so effortlessly embodies or present that role itself as an atavistic response to the pressures of modernity. Thus Eliot's and Trollope's novels replicate the fictionalized narrative of marriage, kinship, and things examined in the previous chapter only to make legible its failure and historical impossibility, an impossibility that tinges their narratives with a nostalgic belatedness. But my aim in this chapter is not only to account for how and why these two novels fail to replicate the patterns seen in Dickens, but also to suggest that the historical conditions that underwrite this failure clarify why the anthropological category of totemism itself became obsolete at the turn of the century once the legal conditions regulating women's rights with respect to marriage, private property, and capitalist exchange were permanently altered.

### **The Mill on the Floss**

In *The Mill on the Floss*, the failure of the Dickensian plotline largely stems from Maggie's inability (or refusal) to embrace the role of the domestic woman, who sacralizes commodities into household gods and regenerates the family and economy. Yet Maggie's ambition, her passionate and impulsive "nature," yields

another consequence in the novel, insofar as her barely sublimated desire for independence frequently resembles the very characteristics and behavior of “savage,” non-European races whose values she ideally should reroute. Hence, if anthropological theories of kinship encode a fear of women’s rights to divorce and property by comparing them to the agency exerted by women in primitive matrilineage, Eliot’s novel characterizes Maggie as the primitive/modern woman who disrupts the teleological narrative of private property and patriarchy. Written in the wake of the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act, yet set in the 1820s and 1830s, Eliot’s novel suggests that the successful transition from an agricultural to capitalist economy is predicated on a domestic ideology in which the conjugal family, with the self-sacrificing woman at its center, successfully separates and synthesizes the two narratives of capitalism. Yet it is precisely such a transition and synthesis that Maggie’s status as a primitive/modern woman cannot facilitate. As a result, the novel casts the loss of the family’s household gods—first in the hands of Bessie Tulliver and then Maggie—as a loss that consigns the entire family to economic and sexual extinction.

If things, and even women like Maggie, occupy a liminal position between the pre-modern past and modernity, so too does the town of St. Ogg and the river Floss that runs through it. Joshua Esty remarks that Eliot dramatizes the transition between pre-modern to capitalist St. Ogg in the novel’s opening description of the Floss (“Nationhood” 102), wherein “black ships—laden with the fresh-scented fir-planks, with rounded sacks of oil-bearing seed, or with the dark glitter of coal” interrupt the Wordsworthian description of nature and the embrace of the Floss’s waves (Eliot 7). Eliot’s nostalgic portrait of St. Ogg and the Floss is double-voiced throughout, consecrating the stable world of the past through the narrator’s retrospective gaze, yet continuously reminding the reader that, as Mrs. Deane laments, “this is a changing world” (181). Like the forces of capitalism it symbolizes, the Floss looks both ways—toward the past it memorializes and the new technologies of steam power that will displace the Tullivers.

As an emblem of Heraclitean flux, the water imagery that runs through the novel (as in Dickens) also symbolizes the fluidity of exchange value in a capitalist system in contrast to an agricultural economy and class structure that emphasized land’s intrinsic value and fixity. A successful transition into a changing world dominated by fluctuating values, Eliot suggests, requires an understanding of, and comfort with, the watery world of fungible capital. Rather than adapt to the “changing world,” Eliot makes clear that Tulliver does not understand the new economy that Pivart’s irrigations and the introduction of steam

power represent. As Tulliver himself remarks, “water’s a very particular thing—you can’t pick it up with a pitchfork” (137). His dictum that “water was water” evinces his ignorance and discomfort with the dematerialization of value and capital (140). The abstractions required for capitalist speculation are beyond his reach and, as his mounting legal debts, failed investments in corn, and bankruptcy prove, lead to accounting errors (Blake 115). Tulliver conceives of money in its materiality, as the medium of simple exchange, but not as the means to increase capital.

By contrast, Bob Jakin becomes a model of capitalist enterprise through his prosperity as a packman and his exportation of Laceham linens. This ability to manipulate the relativity of values in a capitalist economy corresponds to what U.C. Knoepflmacher describes as Bob Jakin’s amphibian-like adaptability to both land and water (210). Such flexibility also demonstrates his comfort with two models of value: self-interested capitalist accumulation and the disinterested logic of the gift. The latter ethos manifests itself in his continued deference toward Tom and Maggie despite their financial ruin. Yet what is particularly striking in Bob’s Burkean moments of “chivalry” is the facility with which tokens of disinterest readily enter into capitalist values systems and are mutually constituted by them. Bob offers the ten sovereigns that he receives for putting out a fire to Maggie during their financial distress and then later uses them as capital. The disinterested act of putting out the fire yields a reward/gift of capital that Bob Jakin can either direct toward self-interested ends or re-present as gift. For Jakin, these two schemes of value do not seem irreconcilable.

The example of Bob Jakin suggests that Tulliver’s financial failures do not stem simply from his ignorance of capital’s immateriality, but his inability to synthesize, as does Jakin, two models of value in pursuit of capitalist accumulation. Instead, Tulliver sees the logic of gift and disinterest as antithetical to self-interested capitalism. This is nowhere more apparent than in his dealings with his sister Gritty. In contrast to Mrs. Glegg, whom he satirically claims does not “give” anything but only lends at 5% interest, Tulliver loans his money without attending to either its interest rate or the payment of its capital. After he loans £300 to his sister Gritty and her husband, Tulliver allows the interest to accumulate and never collects on the principal. Tulliver later visits the Mosses, intent on collecting payment for the loan, but vacillates on his decision. Tulliver remains caught between two economic systems: on the one hand, he gives his money as a loan and retains a promissory note, but on the other hand, he sees his money as a gift to his sister that should never be collected. Kathleen Blake

argues that Tulliver's decision not to collect on his loan, as well as his decision to have Tom burn the promissory note, expresses his struggle to differentiate capitalist economies from gift exchange, which she deems "decidedly pre-capitalist, indeed archaic" (116–17, 113). But Tulliver's error is not, as Blake would have it, misrecognizing gift for capitalist exchange or vice versa, but rather that he feels torn between these two systems and the false binaries they presuppose.

Yet if Tulliver fails to synthesize two models of value in his dealings with Wakem, Rivart and others, his wife Bessy implicitly does. To see Bessy as a model of any kind of economizing logic would seem to fly in the face of the novel's characterizations. Of the Dodson sisters, Mrs. Glegg represents the woman most adept at capitalist investment and financial reasoning. Her decision to loan out the money her father had bequeathed her in order to accrue more capital supplies the sounder model of capitalist accumulation. But like Tulliver, Mrs. Glegg also assumes that disinterested, affective relations and capitalist accumulation are mutually exclusive. For all her ideas of "clanship" and "kin," when bankruptcy befalls her sister, Mrs. Glegg subsumes her notions of kinship to financial relations. In contrast to her sister, Bessy is far from an image of financial perspicuity. Eliot portrays her as a simpleton, a woman chosen for marriage by Tulliver precisely because she was "a bit weak" and unlikely to challenge his authority by the "fireside" (17). Yet it is precisely this status, I would argue, that conceals Bessy's symbolic function in the family as the person who commutes between market and non-market values, profane and sacred, in order to manipulate the commodity's doubleness and rearticulate it as household god, replete with emotional and familial value. Her translation of commodities into household gods plays an important role in the symbolic economy of the Tulliver household that is only apparent once they lose them in bankruptcy.

Through Tulliver's bankruptcy, Eliot's novel reveals how the very legal system that gives husbands absolute possession over the wife's property actually carries inherent risks to patriarchy given the symbolic importance of household gods. Tulliver's bankruptcy and the bill of sale that he secretly gave on the furniture as collateral for his debts inaugurate a widening process of dispersal in which he loses his land and mill and Mrs. Tulliver loses her linen, china, and furniture—her household gods—to auction. Just as the bankruptcy disrupts the intimate identification of the land and mill with Mr. Tulliver's sense of self and family genealogy once the property belongs to Wakem, so too Bessy experiences the loss of her things as a loss of personal and familial history. In the

chapter entitled “Mrs. Tulliver’s Teraphim or Household Gods,” Eliot both satirizes and nostalgically laments Bessy’s loss.

Mrs. Tulliver was seated there with all her laid-up treasures. . . . and the poor woman was shaking her head and weeping, with a bitter tension of the mouth, over the mark, “Elizabeth Dodson,” on the corner of some table-cloths she held in her lap. . . . “To think o’ these cloths as I spun myself . . . and Job Haxey wove ’em, and brought the piece home on his back, as I remember standing at the door and seeing him come, before I ever thought o’ marrying your father! And the pattern as I chose myself—and bleached so beautiful, and I marked ’em so as nobody ever saw such marking—they must cut the cloth to get it out, for it’s a particular stitch. And they’re all to be sold—and go into strange people’s houses, and perhaps be cut with the knives, and wore out before I’m dead.” (177–78)

The narrator’s ambivalent reaction to Bessy’s attachment to things encodes Eliot’s own interest in the practice of fetishism, which she both regarded as antithetical to modern rationalism and yet recognized as the repository of cultural and personal memory.<sup>1</sup> Through her readings of Tylor and Lubbock, Eliot had familiarized herself with the emerging anthropological discourse on primitive culture and its practice of fetishism in an effort to integrate knowledge of “savage customs and ideas” into her own ethnographic portrait of English provincial life (qtd. in P. Logan 68).<sup>2</sup> Her portrayal of Bessy’s relationship to her “household gods” registers her conflicted fascination with fetishism. Eliot’s appellation of Bessy’s things as “teraphim” or “household gods” renders them objects of reverence or divination and thus casts Bessy’s materialism as an object of both critique and valorization. While Eliot presents Bessy’s grief comically by claiming that “she was not a woman who could shed abundant tears, except in moments when the prospect of losing her furniture became unusually vivid” (181), she avoids a facile admonition of female consumerism by demonstrating the way in which Bessy’s labor and consumer choices become the means by which she encodes things with aspects of her personal and family identity. Not only had she spun the fabric for her linens, but she had stitched her name into the items. Bessy’s acts of labor, her pattern choices, and “the mark, ‘Elizabeth Dodson,’ on the corner of some table cloths” (177) are all acts of self-inscription devised to transform alienable and portable properties such as china and cloths into the inalienable appendages of her vital personality. These acts of inscrip-

tion express the possibility that commodities can become, as Arjun Appadurai phrases it, “*ex-commodities*” through a process of “enclaving” that relocates things into a zone where they are not subject to resale (*Social* 16, 26, emphasis original). Like Captain Cuttle’s “altar,” Bessy’s commodities are dehomogenized into sacred objects and instantiate a particular subject-object relation that references the history of the owner and family.<sup>3</sup>

Eliot’s depiction of the value accorded to “household gods” demonstrates that land, in contrast to William Blackstone’s famous distinction between movables and immovables, is not the only sacred and inalienable possession that confers identity and historical continuity.<sup>4</sup> Bessy’s household gods exemplify Annette Weiner’s argument that sacred, movable property associated with the subjective identity and history of the owner and community are “inalienable” and cannot enter the circuit of exchange because their loss would mean the appropriation of one’s social position, identity, and ancestral genealogy (6–8, 33). As her sister Pullet states, “it’s very bad—to think o’ the family initials going about everywhere” (Eliot 186). Not only are selves reproduced through the insignia of names on household items, but the inalienable possessions of land and goods become identified with the family’s lineage. Yet there is an important difference between Weiner’s strict opposition between alienable and inalienable possessions and Bessy’s relation to her household gods: Bessy’s things are alienable commodities that she bought and, through her labors of inscription, reconfigured as inalienables. The labile position of Bessy’s things as commodities/inalienables renders them continuously susceptible to reentry into the marketplace and underscores the ambiguous double position of tabooed objects like money or commodities, in which the mutual relation of the sacred and accursed makes them difficult to control. Such volatility proves especially problematic because Bessy’s household gods not only function symbolically as repositories for personal/family identity, but also potentially as totems that regulate the family’s economic, sexual, and kinship structure.

Eliot explores the risks posed by such doubled objects against the backdrop of the public-private split. Much like *Dombey and Son*, Eliot’s novel complicates, even as it deploys, the binaries of separate spheres and its attendant associations. The bankruptcy and subsequent loss of household gods do not arise from a failure to segregate sacred from profane, public from private, but from a failure to manage their successful interpenetration. Tulliver’s bankruptcy seemingly ushers in the profane, contaminating forces of commodification that transgress the sanctity of the home by making it subject to the fluid values of



the marketplace. When Tom and Maggie return home after hearing of their father's bankruptcy, for example, Maggie enters the house and is "startled by a strong smell of tobacco. The parlour door was ajar—that was where the smell came from" (176). Eliot makes the violation inherent in "[having] the bailiff in the house" more vivid by placing it in the intimate space of the parlor (176). We can understand Tom's repulsion at seeing the bailiff in the house as representative of both the taint of "sinking into the condition of poor working people" and the fact that the commercial world, specifically the taint of bankruptcy, has entered the home (177).<sup>5</sup> Eliot more subtly symbolizes the entrance of the profane, commercial world into the home through the tobacco smoke that startles Maggie before she even sees the bailiff. Throughout the novel, tobacco becomes associated either with debased poverty or the business world, in addition to its status historically as a colonial import.<sup>6</sup> When Tulliver rides to Basset to see his sister, for example, the "centre of dissipation" is a pub with "a cold scent of tobacco" (68, 69). More significantly, Tom's efforts "towards getting on in the world" at Guest & Co. begin "in a room smelling strongly of bad tobacco" (214). Given the negative connotations that tobacco carries in the novel, we can reinterpret Kezia's determination to clean "the parlour, where that 'pipe-smoking pig' the bailiff had sat" as her effort to rid the home of the taint of bankruptcy and the scent of the commercial world (207).

In these examples of taint, the novel seems to reproduce a clear public/private, sacred/profane split in which profane commercialism desecrates the home. But the choice of the parlor renders a more complicated picture. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue that the increasing emphasis on the sanctity of the home as a refuge from the public sphere led middle-class families to associate family intimacy with a home's open fires and hearth while the Victorian parlor designated the space reserved for social interaction (377, 380). The parlor, according to Thad Logan, represents the intersection of domestic and commercial values since it was both a feminine space wherein the family sought privacy and the room in which a museum-like collection of commodities was set on display (*Victorian Parlour* 7, 23). The parlor occupies an uneasy position in relation to the public/private split since it was both "an inner sanctum" that tradesmen never entered and yet supplies the scene of "decorative display" (27). The home is not only the ideological locus of intrinsic value and the zone for "enclaving," it is also the site of self-conscious hoarding. The parlor, in short, is the public place in the private sphere and epitomizes the paradoxical movement of separation and conflation that McKeon claims characterizes the modern public/private split.

The parlor's conflation of public and private mirrors the position of women and household gods, whose function as hoarded capital in the home ultimately furthers the expansion of capital in the public sphere. As the site of productive hoarding, the parlor's redolence with the smell of tobacco does not designate the profanization of the home by capitalism, but the failure to control women and direct the doubleness of their totems toward economically productive ends. This is what Tulliver, had he successfully been able to transition into capitalism, would have done. Rather than subtly manage the interpenetration of public and private, sacred and profane, Tulliver's bankruptcy alienates Bessy's household gods, subjecting those totems associated with economic and sexual reproduction to infinite circulation. Given their symbolic connotations of fertility, the circulation of Bessy's household gods in the market is compared to a state of sexual fallenness that sullies the objects themselves, as well as the woman and house metonymically associated with them. Bessy views the sale of those goods marked with her initials as potentially shameful: "and to think of its being scratched, and set before the travellers and folks, and my letters on it—see here, E.D.—and everybody to see 'em" (Eliot 186). John Kucich claims that the circulation of Bessy's name appears scandalous since it entails the public exposure of an identity that Bessy encodes with private associations ("George Eliot" 328). For the Dodsons, objects obtain a "totemic value" so that their entry into the public domain appears "dangerous, polluted" (328). The auction thus fulfills Mrs. Pullet's earlier warning that things "with [her] maiden mark on, might go all over the country" (Eliot 84). The fact that Bessy's initials stand for her maiden name is significant. Bessy's things display not their status as objects but her desire, fertility, and sexuality. The auction defiles her sexuality by openly circulating the commodified body of her desires through numerous hands.

While acts of singularization enable individuals to secure the sacred, the sale of Bessy's household gods point to the risks of converting commodities into inalienables since their double position renders them susceptible to loss. This susceptibility, as various critics have noted, constitutes an essential aspect of commodity culture, which repeatedly subjects an individual's desire for objects to the pendulum of possession and dispossession.<sup>7</sup> Just as Dickens's novel exposed the uncomfortable parallels between the marriage market and prostitution through the secret kinship between Edith and Alice, the over-identification between Bessy and her household gods expresses the anxiety that when her things enter the velocity of exchange, so does she. It is ironic, then, that after Maggie runs off with Stephen that she thinks she can redeem her actions by returning to St. Ogg, to "[h]ome . . .—the sanctuary where sacred relics

lay—where she would be rescued from more falling” (420). The “sacred relics” that once inhabited the sanctuary of the Tulliver house—the “sum of dear familiar objects” that to both Maggie and Tom represented “home”—had already been exposed to the very fallenness from which Maggie seeks refuge once bankruptcy auctions her mother’s things (341).

The taint and loss of sacred relics marks the Tullivers’ larger failure to synthesize two models of value and, consequently, to manage the successful interpenetration of the economic and sexual realms requisite for their transition into a capitalist economy. Lacking the domestic resolution found in Dickens, the Tullivers’ things are not reanimated by feminine influence, but rather suffer a process of deanimation that parallels the disintegration of both matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance. When Tulliver has a stroke, for example, the “loud bang” made by the oak chest that “had belonged to his father and his father’s father” awakens him (193). “All long-known objects,” the narrator relates, “have sounds which are a sort of recognized voice to us—a voice that will thrill and awaken, when it has been used to touch deep-lying fibres” (193–94). Eliot again demonstrates the way in which individual objects embody the vitality of a person or families and how contact with such beloved possessions reanimates individuals as well. In Herbert Spencer’s analysis of idol and fetish worship, for example, objects that represent persons, such as effigies or miniatures, seem to embody the spirit of that individual. Possession and worship of such objects allow individuals to feel that they are connected to that person because “[t]he vivid representation so strongly arouses the thought of a living person” and “the vitality of the person imitated” (Spencer *Principles of Sociology* 1:311–12). The oak chest’s sound animates Tulliver with the vital connection to his forefathers. Unlike the undercurrent of criticism that accompanied Bessy’s attachment to things, the narrator here describes Tulliver’s reanimation as an act of recollection that rescues individual and national values consigned to loss. Nevertheless, the “complete restoration” of his senses and his “revival” is short-lived and Tulliver relapses into a state of incoherence (Eliot 196). Whereas Tulliver experiences a brief reanimation through the memory of the past only to fall back into a deanimated stupor, Mrs. Tulliver becomes irrevocably deanimated by the loss of her things. “Poor Mrs Tulliver, it seemed, would never recover her old self—her placid household activity: how could she? The objects among which her mind had moved complacently were all gone” (241). Alienated from their possessions, the Tullivers become ghostly, and their material losses disinherit their children from their property and the roles that would allow them to reproduce the family economically and sexually.

In *Dombey and Son*, the collapse of Dombey's family and firm initiates a second phase in the novel's plot through Florence's sacralization of household gods and reanimation of Dombey's firm and home. Dickens's strategies pose particular problems for *The Mill on the Floss*, however, given Eliot's feminist critique of gender norms and her resistance to the very model of feminine self-sacrifice that Dickens renders the medium of sacred influence. Maggie's relationship to notions of self-sacrifice and the sacred, in this regard, disrupt rather than stabilize capitalist values—a disruption that the novel implicitly links to her threatening position as both primitive and modern woman. Eliot alludes to Maggie's proximity to primitivism and non-European races early in the novel through Mrs. Tulliver's statement that Maggie's "brown skin . . . makes her look like a mulatter" (12).<sup>8</sup> Susan Meyer argues that the frequent description of Maggie as a "gypsy" with dark skin, particularly given Eliot's understanding of Gypsies as a race originating from Africa, reflects Maggie's "alien" status (134). But as the chapter title, "Maggie Tries to Run Away From Her Shadow," indicates, the epithet of "mulatter" and "gypsy" not only expresses Maggie's marginal position in relation to both her family and English culture, it also announces an incurable doubleness that she seeks to elude—what Deborah Epstein Nord refers to as her "gender heterodoxy" (99).<sup>9</sup> Maggie's flight "from all the blighting obloquy that had pursued her in civilized life" and the refuge she seeks among the Gypsies after pushing Lucy into the muddy pond assumes an implicit homology between her racial alterity and her rejection of the domestic femininity that Lucy represents (Eliot 94).<sup>10</sup> Rather than embody the "refined feeling" of chastity and fidelity that Robertson Smith claims emerges within the patriarchal conjugal family (*Kinship* 141), Maggie flees from "civilized life" to give full expression to her "half wild" nature among the Gypsies (Eliot 91).

That Maggie's individualism and modernity could also signify her degeneration into savageness is, as Mary Jean Corbett suggests, typical of the racialized discourse on the mulatto and the contradictory positions Victorians took on the risks and advantages of interbreeding and intercrossing. Corbett argues that Darwin's research had shown how intercrossing between races increases diversity and advancement, whereas interbreeding within a race in order to propagate selective traits is "faulty and limited" and may lead to sterility and degeneration (120). Such evidence would suggest that marrying outside of one's biological family, class, and race would be beneficial. Yet Victorians resisted this conclusion—a resistance nowhere more apparent than in their reactions to the mulatto as a racial hybrid that may lead either to "degeneration or development" (130). Maggie can thus be seen as embodying the competing aspects of

the “mulatter,” which historically was associated with both the sterility of the failed hybrid and the individualism, heightened moral sensibility, and progress that characterizes those nations that look beyond local ties and cultivate diversity (129, 131–33).

If Maggie’s status as “mulatter” marks her as both degenerate primitive and modern individualist, this status forecloses her capacity to function as the domestic angel who translates the commodity’s doubleness into household god. Rather than capitalize on the ambiguous positioning of things between sacred fetish and profane commodity, Maggie’s relationship to her doll assumes a more literal equivalence between things and the spirits of persons they represent. Such complete identification proves evident when Aunt Glegg becomes the object of her ire. “The last nail had been driven in with a fiercer stroke than usual, for the Fetish on that occasion represented aunt Glegg” (Eliot 25). Interrupting her act of fury, Maggie “reflected that if she drove many nails in, she would not be so well able to fancy that the head was hurt when she knocked it against the wall, nor to comfort it, and make believe to poultice it, when her fury was abated” (25). Peter Melville Logan reads this moment of reflection as the dual position that Maggie occupies as fetishist and critic, thus contrasting the “well-educated narrator’s voice with the domestic primitivism of the underdeveloped Tulliver family” (77). In both this scene and the one with Mrs. Tulliver’s household gods, he argues, the narrator’s voice epitomizes an objective stance that holds such fetishistic practice at a critical distance. While Logan reads both scenes as representative of Eliot’s critique of fetishism, John Plotz regards Maggie’s relationship to her fetish as more “flexible” and metaphorical than Mrs. Tulliver’s “primitive attachment to her property” and her tendency to see things as “extension[s] of herself” (8). But Eliot neither holds these two scenes up to rational critique nor privileges one over the other. What Eliot demonstrates throughout her novel is how Mrs. Tulliver’s “primitive attachment to her property” stands continuous with liberal principles of private property, autonomy, and possessive individualism. Her household gods occupy a liminal position between sacred/profane, primitive/modern, commodity/inalienable possession, a liminality that is necessary if they are symbolically to participate in separating and conflating two models of value within the double narrative of capitalism. Maggie’s relationship to her fetish refuses to manipulate such boundaries. Rather than an act of distance, the moment where she “reflected” is itself a replication of what nineteenth-century anthropologists considered magical thinking—the notion that if she drove nails into it, the fetish could not later

embody other physical or emotional states. Maggie's identification of spirit and thing expresses a resistance to shuttle between and then synthesize two models of value.

Just as significant as Maggie's replication of magical thinking is the relationship Eliot's narrative posits between these seemingly primitive habits and her tempestuous nature. Maggie eventually gives up expressing uninhibited anger toward the fetish because of Tom's moralizing denunciations and the power of his patriarchal influence over her sense of self. After he blames her for killing his rabbits, Maggie "never thought of beating or grinding her Fetish" (Eliot 32). Maggie learns to sublimate her desire and redirect her passions into psychological acts of self-mortification.<sup>11</sup> Yet even these acts of self-mortification become unruly acts of excess and fervent individualism that subvert rather than extend patriarchal authority. As John Kucich observes, Maggie's acts of renunciation "[enlarge] selfhood in isolation from the inconclusive, fragmentary world of others" (*Repression* 117–18). The narrator confirms Maggie's deepening of the self through renunciation when she remarks that "[f]rom what you know of her, you will not be surprised that she threw some exaggeration and willfulness, some pride and impetuosity, even into her self-renunciation" (Eliot 255–56). Maggie's excess in renunciation yet again expresses her "savage" nature. Like the fictionalized savage so often encountered in political economic arguments, Maggie's nature is "like a savage appetite" (289). And like the economist's savage, Maggie's failure lies not in having such appetites, but in not disciplining her "illimitable wants" toward economic ends through productive self-sacrifice (286).<sup>12</sup> Nancy Armstrong argues that the numerous references to Maggie's savageness reflect a strategy in Victorian fiction whereby novelists resolve a contradiction within middle-class masculinity and individualism (*How Novels Think* 80). Nineteenth-century models of individualism, she contends, addressed the contradiction between male competition in the public sphere and their role as domestic caretakers in the private sphere by a twofold strategy: British masculine aggression distinguished itself from the primitive savageness it resembled by redirecting aggressive tendencies toward socially acceptable ends and by ascribing the most objectionable aspects of such aggression to aberrant women (80–81). Victorian heroines like Maggie "provide a means of simultaneously establishing and disavowing the competition, aggression, and domination that were well on their way to becoming necessary and natural properties of male individuals alone" (81).

But if, as Armstrong contends, the female body becomes the metonymic

repository for displaced masculine aggression, this displacement does not simply contain masculine aggression but exposes an additional threat. Female savageness declares the increasing historical possibility that women could enter into the marketplace with the same aggressive, competitive spirit as men and thus, rather than being models of a domestic femininity that differentiated modern masculinity from savage aggression, further betray their similarity to it. For this reason, McLennan and Robertson Smith object to women's legal and economic equality in the public sphere by equating such advancing individualism with degenerationism and the return of the unruly stage of matrilineage.<sup>13</sup> In relation to *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie's aggressive individualism can only achieve expression in her refusal to aggrandize the patriarchal social order that delimits her participation in the public sphere: not only does she refuse to function (like Lucy) as the ideological fulcrum for male competitiveness, but she also repudiates the prudential sacrifice advocated by capitalism. Maggie prefers to read Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* and its impassioned advocacy for renunciation over Robert Dodsley's *The Economy of Human Life*, which outlines the economic principles of sacrifice, abstinence, prudence, and saving that the Gleggs promulgate (Blake 124–25). The fact that Bob Jakin gifts her Dodsley's book seems particularly significant if we read him as a model of economic agency that marries primitive/gift models of value with modern, capitalist accumulation. In her choice of Thomas à Kempis, Maggie tacitly rejects the domestic model of femininity in which notions of sacrifice and the sacred are no longer pre-modern values antithetical to capitalism but necessary to their productive interplay. In so doing, Maggie's twofold position as primitive/modern woman also seals the fate of the Tulliver family and its household gods. Thus while Maggie can row home during the flood, longing for the very sanctuary of home in which "sacred relics" once lay, she herself cannot be an agent that transforms the home or commodities into something sacred since she has rejected the domestic ideology that underwrites such transformation.<sup>14</sup>

Whereas Maggie fails to perform the domestic role assigned to women, Tom quickly adapts to the demands of capitalist enterprise through manly self-reliance and abstinence. Nevertheless, Tom is unable to combine economic success with marriage and family. As he tells his uncle Deane, aside from work "[t]here's nothing else I care about much" (Eliot 350). Eliot shows that Tom's strategy of combining the propulsive movement of capitalism with the retrogressive recuperation of the Tulliver past may restore the family mill, but the price for this restoration is reproductive sterility. Joshua Esty convincingly ar-

gues that the absence of a marriage plot for Maggie and Tom further indicates their position within a historical breach; the Tullivers must not only transition from being yeoman farmers to capitalists but, at the same time, must also shift from the extended family kinship system that the clanship of the Dodsons represents to a nuclear family. Esty further suggests that the narrator's ethnographic description of St. Ogg as an endogamous village imperiled by modernization shows the impossibility of the cousin marriage between Tom and Lucy, which would reproduce the endogamous structure of the family and continue its sexual and economic reproduction. Neither this endogamous marriage nor the exogamous marriage of Stephen and Maggie, the novel suggests, can occur. The extended family disaggregates and the Tullivers are left isolated from the kinship system they relied upon, forced into the model of a middle-class nuclear family without having the appropriate tools to succeed within its divisions.<sup>15</sup> Instead of an ending in which endogamous patrilineal inheritance stands alongside an exogamous marriage, Maggie and Tom's attachment to the mill and the past leads to a destructive type of endogamous union in which they drown in a seemingly incestuous embrace.<sup>16</sup> In their failure to combine exogamous and endogamous relations, Tom and Maggie also fail to become economically and sexually reproductive and succumb to a "fatal fellowship" that the household gods, as totems, might have regulated (458).<sup>17</sup> If the restoration of household gods relies on both the presence of a self-sacrificing female in the home and the peculiar "double system of kinship" that integrates endogamous patrilineal inheritance with an exogamous marriage, Eliot's novel pronounces the loss of household gods to be irremediable.

The narrator's retrospective glance and inclusive omniscience, which open and conclude the novel, invite readers to experience the generational loss of the Tullivers as their loss as well. If for "eyes that have dwelt on the past, there is no thorough repair" (459), the eyes referenced belong to all readers who have dwelt in the world that the narrator has conjured and then dismantled. In this way, Eliot's attention to the unpredictable interplay between individual decision-making powers and transpersonal historical forces demands that the reader, in sympathizing with the ravages beyond repair, grapple with the various contingencies that then assume the guise of the natural and inexorable fatalism symbolized in the *Floss* (and history's) onward momentum.<sup>18</sup> Eliot's retrospective narrative thus introduces a tension in the experience of loss since the reader must compare what appears like the ineluctable forces of nature with the alternative account of events that the reader, historically situated well after the



events in the novel, can construct based on the very prospect of legal equality that Bessy and Maggie had not yet witnessed.

### The Way We Live Now

Instead of deploying a retrospective narration that forces readers to consider tensions between the novel's plot and its historically contingent elements, Trollope's novel examines similar tensions through the presentist immediacy of its narration. For Trollope, this was a crucial feature of his realist strategy, despite the often self-conscious intrusiveness of the narrator. As Trollope writes in *An Autobiography* (1883), responding to Nathaniel Hawthorne's praise regarding his style, "I have always desired to 'hew out some lump of the earth,' and to make men and women walk upon it just as they do walk here among us" (123). Trollope's choice to write about, as Henry James put it, "the life that lay nearest to him," directly impacted his realism (qtd. in Smalley 529). George Levine claims that Trollope's realism portrays "things as they are" and, in so doing, reveals the "unsystematic disorder of the inherited conventions" that characterizes modernity and his novels as well (*Realistic Imagination* 202). In *The Way We Live Now*, this particular aspect of Trollope's realism results in a narrative that, even as it pursues Dickens's plot and tropology, impresses upon its readers how historically untenable these resolutions have become in light of such legal changes as the 1870 Married Woman's Property Act. Hence, whereas Eliot dismantles the Dickensian plot through its focus on Maggie's modernity, Trollope's novel demonstrates that it is made up of conventions, both social and novelistic, that are now passé in an era of cosmopolitan modernity, global exchange, and speculative credit. This is not to suggest that there is no nostalgia for a pre-modern social order or anxiety over modernity; there is. As Amanda Anderson argues, Trollope privileges the ethos of gentlemanly character associated with the landed gentry and the domestic novel's courtship plot yet exposes their limitations by subjecting these values and conventions to critique ("Trollope's Modernity" 517). In this context, Trollope's paradoxical self-description in *An Autobiography* as "an advanced Conservative-Liberal" surfaces in the conflicting models of value that *The Way We Live Now* supports (245). What I want to underscore in *The Way We Live Now's* conservative-liberal tendencies is how the novel pursues many of the similar anxieties and resolutions found in *Dombey and Son* and yet is shadowed by an increasing skepticism as to the vi-

ability of these tactics and the novelistic conventions on which they rely. Trollopian satire repeatedly retraces various aspects of the Dickensian plot only to hold it up before the reader's eye with suspicion and cast doubt on the novel's capacity to separate and then synthesize the dual narratives of capitalism.

Trollope's narrator plunges us into the immediacy of its realism with the novel's opening line: "Let the reader be introduced to Lady Carbury . . . as she sits at her writing-table in her own room in her own house in Welbeck Street."<sup>19</sup> The opening scene not only positions the reader in the room with Lady Carbury as she writes to the editor Nicholas Broune about the publication of her new book, *Criminal Queens*, but also announces to the reader a key problem in the way Britons live now: their preference for reputed over real value in an era dominated by the false foundations of the credit culture. Lady Carbury's desire for good reviews of her book and her diatribe against those who achieve a greater literary reputation through a "system of puffing" rather than true accomplishment appears ironic in the novel since it is precisely this type of puffing that Lady Carbury hopes to gain by writing to Broune and other influential editors (Trollope 14).<sup>20</sup> Like Lady Carbury, Trollope's characterization of Augustus Melmotte epitomizes this split between reputation and real value. While no one is certain where Melmotte got his money from, whether he really is married to "that Jewish-looking woman," and whether Marie was really their daughter, "Of the certainty of the money in daily use there could be no doubt" (33). Such extensive expenditure, the narrator remarks, earns Melmotte credit in the city where his "name was worth any money—though his character was perhaps worth but little" (33). Trollope portrays the worth of Melmotte's name, despite his ill-reputed character, and his reputation for wealth, despite any concrete foundation, as parallel phenomena and indicative of the pervasive credit culture. In this regard, Melmotte represents the latent logic of speculation and credit: in order to achieve credit and reputation with the London public, Melmotte has to have the appearance of wealth that only his "expenditure without limit" can accomplish (178). The trappings of wealth procured through credit lead people into a false confidence in Melmotte's wealth, which in fact is "built upon the sands" (74).

This connection between belief, credit, and the false foundations of wealth appears most forcefully in the novel's treatment of the South Central Pacific and Mexican Railway, a project initiated by Melmotte and the company of Fisker, Montague, and Montague, whose goal "was not to make a railway to Vera Cruz, but to float a company" (68). Trollope's portrayal of the railway firm exemplifies

the general problem regarding speculation: money gained through speculation relies on the belief that investors have in the venture itself and in the reputation of the firm.<sup>21</sup> When Paul asks Fisker where the money for the railway will come from, for example, Fisker responds by saying, “Money to come from, sir? Where do you suppose the money comes from in all these undertakings? If we can float the shares, the money’ll come in quick enough” (69). Trollope reiterates the typical bias against the latter form of speculation as a form of gambling by comparing the circulation of Melmotte’s railway shares in London’s financial district with the idle young aristocrats at the Beargarden club who float IOUs for their gambling debts without exchanging “ready money” (25). The implicit parallel between the world of stock-exchange and the club surfaces in the name, Beargarden. Robert Tracy claims that “in commercial slang *bear* means stock that exists purely for speculation (the phrase “sell a bear,” means to sell something one does not possess), and a garden is a place where one is betrayed and defrauded” (165). Much like Eliot and Dickens, Trollope contrasts the speculative economy “built upon the sands” of belief to the fixity of land, which stands for the “ultimate ‘real’” in Trollope’s novel (*Brantlinger Fictions of State* 171). The exploitative practices and fraud that occur in the era of stocks and speculation would never have taken place when “properties were properties” (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 674). These negative connotations persist in Trollope’s novel despite David Itzkowitz’s claim that, historically speaking, increasing regulation from the 1860s to 1880s cleansed speculation of its connection with gambling, domesticating it into another reputable form of investment like land (123–29).

The portrayal of speculation as gambling, when historically it had become a more regulated and acceptable practice, is but one of numerous moments in the novel where there appears to be a lack of fit between an entrenched credit culture and the values the novel seems to endorse. This dissonance becomes particularly apparent in Trollope’s portrayal of Melmotte as both a sign of a faulty credit system and yet one who believes that real wealth lies in land. It remains Melmotte’s goal throughout the novel to use his reputation and influence to marry his daughter Marie, believed to be an “heiress,” to a titled gentleman who owns property. As he tells Felix, Nidderdale possesses property that “neither he nor his father can destroy” (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 289). Despite Melmotte’s recognition of land’s security, the novel bars him from ever attaining the mark of legitimacy that ownership of land confers and, in so doing, denies him the status of a gentleman. But if, as Fisker’s bald response to Paul makes evident, money no longer comes from land but floating shares, why

would Melmotte express attachment to such an older model of value? What I want to suggest is that Trollope inserts Melmotte's desire for the legitimacy of land and "real property" into his narrative not simply to gesture nostalgically to a firmer basis for wealth and the values of civic humanism associated with the landowning gentleman, but also to make vivid to the reader the hypocrisy of maintaining these values in an age of modernity. Melmotte exemplifies this hypocritical shuttling between the old and new values systems that is pervasive among the novel's English characters—the very practices of "dishonesty" that Trollope claims in *An Autobiography* motivated him to write the novel (294).

In this regard, Roger is an emblem of just the opposite tendency: a man whose family has not entered into nor ever been touched by modernity. Roger Carbury represents a model of gentlemanly character and one of the few landed families that had not recently acquired the land but, the narrator claims, had possessed it since the War of the Roses. "Now the Carburys never had anything but land. Suffolk has not been made rich and great either by coal or iron. No great town had sprung up on the confines of the Carbury property. No eldest son had gone into trade or risen high in a profession so as to add to the Carbury wealth. No great heiress had been married" (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 45). Roger represents the only character in the novel who unswervingly adheres to absolute values, a moral solicitude that Trollope links to his relationship with land. Neither Roger, nor the property his family has passed down since the fifteenth century, have ever become tainted by any association with trade and "new money" like neighboring families in Suffolk such as the Longestaffes, Hepworths, and Primeros (45). Trollope here not only seems to contrast the intrinsic value of land and its fixity to the fictional value of stocks and baseless credit, but also equates the way in which people accumulate and handle money with gentlemanly character (Jaffe "Trollope" 46). Roger Carbury does not "puff" up his reputation for wealth through expenditure or marry wealth. Unlike the Melmottes, Beargarden members, and the neighboring families in Suffolk, Roger believes "that a man's standing in the world should not depend at all upon his wealth" (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 46). Roger denotes an evanescent value system in which wealth and social status are synonymous with moral character in order to make all the more evident that he lives in a modern age that has disentangled character from wealth. Not only are there very few Rogers in the world anymore, but Roger's unwillingness to engage in commercial trade and his continuation of a feudal economy has led to economic stagnation: everything changes except the Carbury family in Suffolk. Roger provides a coun-

terpoint in Trollope's satiric method. Trollope unmasks and critiques characters not in order to show that they are not like Roger, but rather that they operate like Fisker but purport to uphold the values of Roger. He thus demonstrates how the two narratives of capitalism, rather than being distinct, operate in tandem: the segregation of market from non-market values has become a strategy that conceals how their interpenetration furthers capitalist ends and creates social hierarchies.

Trollope's awareness of this strategy casts a shadow over key motifs in the Dickensian plot: the public-private split and the relationship between kinship, marriage, and household gods. Just as Trollope both introduces and then disentangles the relationship between character and wealth, so too he presents speculative investment as what contaminates the private sphere, but then questions the logic behind such causal arguments. Melmotte, in particular, symbolizes the threat of contamination associated with the profane world of fluid values due to his spurious financial dealings and his status as a foreigner and Jew. Like Mr. Alf, another Jewish character in the novel, Melmotte operates under an air of suspicion because "[n]o one knew whence he came or what he had been" (13). The novel repeatedly relegates the economic culture of speculation, fluid values, and contamination to either Jews or American investors like Fisker, two cultures that are contrastively positioned to Roger's infallible virtue as an Englishman.<sup>22</sup> Trollope positions Melmotte as a dangerous outsider, a Jew whose itinerant lifestyle undermines the stability of economic, moral, and national values. Yet the novel simultaneously demonstrates that contamination has nothing to do with Melmotte's Jewish ancestry since even that proves false.<sup>23</sup> "The general opinion seemed to be that his father had been a noted coiner in New York—an Irishman of the name of Melmody—and, in one memoir, the probability of the descent was argued from Melmotte's skill in forgery" (747). Melmotte's talent for forgery and counterfeit now becomes assigned to his possible Irish ancestry and the disreputable practice of money coinage itself. The instability of value and the reversible boundaries of the sacred and profane that had epitomized Frazer's analysis of the taboo characterize modernity and not any one person.

Hence, what Trollope actually illuminates, through both his English and his foreign characters, is that the fluid boundaries of the sacred and profane cannot be disciplined by the binaries of public versus private, intrinsic value versus exchange value, citizen versus foreigner, because modernity both instantiates and transgresses these oppositions. Trollope portrays adherence to such con-

ventional binaries, once again through Roger, as atavistic. Roger identifies Melmotte as the product of England's diseased culture of speculation and easy money (Kincaid 167). Unlike characters like Georgiana, Lady Monogram, and Lady Carbury, he does not ignore his own sentiments and regard Melmotte as a necessary evil for financial advancement, but associates him with filthy contaminants that endanger feminine virtue and the home.

And to Roger Carbury . . . there was no second way of looking at it. . . . The old-fashioned idea that the touching of pitch will defile still prevailed with him. He was a gentleman—and would have felt himself disgraced to enter the house of such a one as Augustus Melmotte. . . . Henrietta Carbury had, he thought, a higher turn of mind than her mother, and had as yet been kept free from soil. (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 61)

In his absolutism, Roger connects the fluid economic and moral values that Melmotte signals with “the touching of pitch” that threatens the separation of sexual and economic and, more specifically, Hetta, who as yet remains “free from soil” and “pure” (64). Hetta's refusal to obey Roger's wishes and stay away from the Melmottes, her defiant assertion that “[i]f that is contamination, I suppose I must be contaminated” (63), exposes the frightening possibility that the home and the domestic woman is not a secure sanctuary. But this, as Trollope's narrator admits, is itself an old-fashioned idea—one that Hetta rejects. Trollope tacitly satirizes the moral norm that Roger seems to represent in the novel, which is old-fashioned and oppressive in its self-righteousness.<sup>24</sup>

The connection between money and contamination may be old-fashioned, but it also represents a binarism that facilitates capitalist ends among those characters who *do* participate in the marketplace and traffic with the Melmottes. It is such binary logic that enables characters like Lord Nidderdale to think that they can continue a life of gambling and unethical financial dealings and then, by marrying an heiress with property, start over “with whitewashed cleanliness” (436). Lord Nidderdale is not the only character who relies on the reversibility of the sacred to gratify self-interested ends. Characters like Georgiana Longestaffe and Lady Monogram perceive Melmotte to be a necessary evil in the public sphere, but shun the thought of interacting with him in the private sphere, or even the countryside. When the Melmottes visit the Longestaffe home in the country, for example, Georgiana complains that she would not have endured their visit had it not been for her father's promise that she could

go to London for the season. “She would not have contaminated herself with the Melmottes but for that promise” (163). To have them in London would be acceptable because London represents, as Hetta states, “selfishness” (244). The self-interested motivation that guides individual values and actions should not contaminate the countryside, which represents a value structure rooted in landed property and paternalistic social relations.

In a similar vein, Lady Monogram distinguishes between personal contact with the Melmottes and going to their house for a public event such as a party wherein people further their self-interests. “People are going to see the emperor, not to see the Melmottes. . . . Somebody chooses to get all London into his house, and all London chooses to go. But it isn’t understood that that means acquaintance” (250). Georgiana shares Lady Monogram’s hypocritical position, acutely aware of the distinction between using the Melmottes of the world for money and power in the public sphere and allowing them to have intimate contact with her higher social position in the private sphere. The contaminating effects of contact with the Melmottes outside the public sphere become evident once Georgiana decides to live with the Melmottes and have access to the London season. Desperate for a husband, Georgiana disregards the separation between private and public conduct that would have protected her character from taint. Hence, once she stays with the Melmottes, she realizes that all “her old acquaintances were changed in their manner to her” and that her “high demeanour . . . was now gone from her, and she knew it” (196–97). Trollope’s satiric portrait exposes how the public-private, sacred-profane divide does not segregate non-market from market values; both are distinctions that further venal ends and create social hierarchies. He makes evident how many Victorians, as Elsie B. Michie claims, equated the worship of wealth with pre-Christian ideas of fetishism in order to disavow the omnipresence of commercial values and their participation in it.<sup>25</sup> In unmasking this disavowal, Trollope makes the very strategies that enabled Dickens’s novel to distance and then reintegrate those values associated with pre-modern, pre-capitalist societies all the more impossible.

Trollope’s attention to such hypocrisy also alters how we read the novel’s representation of household gods. Here too the reader is invited to read objects through the paradigm delineated in *Dombey and Son*—as referencing the presence or absence of familial bonds and an economically productive kinship system—and yet to regard these associations with suspicion. When Georgiana contrasts the presence of household gods in her home with their absence at the Melmottes, for example, we seem to encounter a situation similar to that of *Dombey*’s house prior to his valorization of Florence.

The house in Bruton Street had never been very bright, but the appendages of life there had been of a sort which was not known in the gorgeous mansion in Grosvenor Square. It had been full of books and little toys and those thousand trifling household gods which are accumulated in years, and which in their accumulation suit themselves to the taste of their owners. In Grosvenor Square there were no Lares—no toys, no books, nothing but gold and grandeur, pomatum, powder, and pride. (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 245)

Once goods are sacralized, they serve as markers of individual character, morals, and taste, and in the case of Georgiana, social distinction. Georgiana's household gods are not things but "appendages of life." When they are infused with "life," everyday objects such as toys and books no longer signify their equivalent position with other objects in the circuit of exchange but become "Lares" that connote the social standing and history of a person or group. The problem with the goods in Melmotte's home is the same problem Georgiana perceives in the people that visit their house; they are without history. "She did not even know who they were, whence they came, or what was their nature" (245). The goods in Bruton Street signify not newly acquired wealth but the histories and affections of the family within the home.

Mary Douglas claims that goods in Trollope's novels function as a form of information sharing among members of society about their values and tastes, and thus denote the natural ease with which characters wear culture as a second skin and bar outsiders like Melmotte (*World of Goods* 76–89). Melmotte can buy new things, but he lacks the cultural information and class membership to own household gods. By exposing how the possession of household gods becomes a marker of social distinction, Trollope, much like Bourdieu, "render[s] visible the other, repressed forms of capital: social and cultural" (Franklin 502). Whereas Bessy's household gods straddle the sacred and the profane, public and private, non-market and market values, Georgiana's description of the household gods at Bruton Street underscores her status, taste, and no more. Trollope's narrative use of free-indirect discourse positions us as readers to experience Georgiana's nostalgic relationship to things sympathetically and then to see it critically as yet another affectation of class hierarchy and her desire to marry wealth. The narrator reminds the reader after the passage cited above that Georgiana had come to the Melmotte house "in pursuit of her own objects" (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 245). The word "objects" ironically indicates how Georgiana's relationship to things is ultimately in the service of her financial objectives with respect to the marriage market.



The relationship between personal identity and household gods is but one element that Trollope's plot both retraces and regards with suspicion. Georgiana's observations regarding Grosvenor Square's display of objects also echo the frequent connection found between household gods and domesticity. Dickens's narrator in *Hard Times*, for example, laments the absence of feminine affections in Bounderby's home, where "[t]here was no mute sign of a woman in the room" (Dickens *Hard Times* 97). Rather than emblemize a productive domestic arrangement, Bounderby's "household gods" simply convey to visitors that their owner is "doggedly rich" (97–98). Similarly, the Melmotte home appears drained of the feminine influence that would transform mere commodities into "Lares." Madame Melmotte fulfills none of the typical duties of wife and mother associated with the domestic angel; she is Marie's "pseudo-mother" and has no biological relationship to her (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 658). Both the biological and the affective bonds needed to secure value and shape household gods appear entirely absent.

By contrast, the alternative family that Trollope constructs around Hetta seemingly recuperates the domestic values absent in Melmotte's family. Yet, as we will see, Trollope's novel both replicates the Dickensian marriage plot and intimates, through the marriage between Marie and Fisker, that this marriage plot is the product of social and novelistic conventions that are becoming obsolete. Unlike the Melmottes and Americans, the family Trollope constructs around Hetta, Paul, and Roger incorporates the values of self-sacrifice, virtue, and the stability of a land-based economy. He thereby rescues value and the English family from "American ways" through the uncompromising positions taken by Roger and Hetta. Such absolutism not only appears in the context of Roger's refusal to have contact with the Melmottes or engage in shady business practices, but also in his views of love. "What could be the devotion which men so often affect to feel if it did not tend to self-sacrifice on behalf of the beloved one" (762)? Roger's ultimate willingness in the novel to sacrifice his wishes to be Hetta's lover brings into relief the subtle tie that Trollope forms between feelings and other markers of absolute value in the novel such as land. Because the culture of credit and speculation endangers the traditional estimation of land as an inalienable possession, Trollope makes feelings of love something that cannot change or suffer repeated circulation. Whatever the fate of his love for Hetta, Roger's feelings will remain, like him, "altogether unchanged" (710). Similarly, when Hetta discovers that Paul had been previously engaged to Mrs. Hurtle, she maintains her virtue by severing the relationship with Paul and re-

fusing to shift her attachment from Paul to Roger, even at the cost of her family's financial security. Hetta would be willing to "sacrifice much for her mother. . . . But she did not know how she could give herself into the arms of a man she did not love" (401). In a world where everything, even marriage, is liable to be speculated upon and trafficked, Hetta refuses to allow her love to become subject to the wheel of circulation.

Yet, if Roger and Hetta share such absolutist tendencies, Trollope does not construct a family and economy around their marriage. Despite the novel's apparent valorization of the intrinsic value of land and the moral values that Roger represents, the novel also makes clear that Roger's value system is out of fashion. The stable system of value that Carbury Hall represents seems atavistic and isolated. Roger Carbury is "alone in the world" precisely because he is, as Paul Montague states, "a gentleman all round and every inch" (47, 298). Such praise may render Roger an invariable standard of conduct and values, but not a standard that can or should be replicated in an economy that in no way resembles the feudal relations that Roger maintains with characters like Ruby Ruggles and John Crumb. Roger critiques "the degeneracy of the age," but he remains aware that he "set[s] no example to the nation at large" (423). Like the property he owns, Roger indicates the attitudes of a much older generation. His moral position is too stringent, so much so that Hetta finds him unattractive: "He is so much above me, that, though I do love him, I cannot think of him in that way" (301). While the novel offers a nostalgic and romanticized portrayal of Roger's attachment to the land and his tenants, Trollope also makes clear that there will be no more Rogers.

Roger is, quite literally, a dying breed who will not be able to reproduce himself either sexually or economically. Yet, rather than submit to wholesale destruction of Roger's family lineage, as in Eliot's novel, Trollope rescues both the property relations of a feudal economic system rooted in land and its transmission through the endogamous marriage that symbolically occurs at the novel's close. Roger decides not to marry at all and instead assumes the role of father to Hetta, giving her in marriage to Paul. Roger then violates the law of primogeniture, which is "sacred" to him (711), by entailing his property on Hetta's firstborn son. Trollope papers over the alienation of Roger's inheritance by placing the sanctity of property alongside that of love. While in an older economic and social system it would have been expected of Hetta to marry her cousin Roger and continue the family line, the marriage of alliance is replaced by the absolute value given to romantic love. "Among the holy things which did exist to gild this

every-day unholy world, love was the holiest" (507). The languages of love and property, both symbolizing the holy, the inalienable, and intrinsically valuable, compete with each other in the novel only then to be reconciled through Roger's compromise. Roger settles the property on Hetta, essentially making her an heiress, but conceals this fact by entailing it on a male heir. This compromise makes the marriage plot ending appear, as in Dickens, as both exogamous and endogamous. On the one hand, Hetta's marriage to Paul is exogamous; on the other hand, Roger's decision to settle his property on Hetta supplies a fiction that the system of endogamous inheritance has not been interrupted.

Furthermore, by giving Hetta in marriage to Paul and entailing his estate on Hetta's son, Roger joins the holiness of love with the holiness of the land. "The disposition of a family property, even though it be one so small as mine, is, to my thinking, a matter which a man should not make in accordance with his own caprices—or even with his own affections. . . . These things are to me very holy" (766). In his function as "steward" of the Carbury property, Roger's main responsibility is in guaranteeing the reproduction of the family and the perpetuation of the Carbury property "in the hands of their descendents" (766).<sup>26</sup> Through the marriage between Paul and Hetta, Roger ushers in a compromise: the marriage maintains the transmission of land along the male line and also places Hetta in Carbury Hall, where her self-sacrificing virtue will guarantee the perpetuation of the Carbury name and the sanctity of the home.<sup>27</sup> While Roger facilitates the symbolic return to endogamous, patrilineal inheritance, Hetta's position in Carbury Hall opens up the possibility that she would become the steward of household gods. Trollope hints at this possibility early in the novel through Roger's express determination to make Carbury Hall, like Ruskin's domestic haven, a place watched over by household gods. "But if there were one among all others to whom the house should be a house of refuge from care, not an abode of trouble . . . that one was his cousin Hetta" (119). Trollope intertwines the intrinsic value of love and land, exogamous marriage with endogamous patrilineal inheritance, so that Roger can maintain his feudal relation to the Carbury property and its tenants while Paul and Hetta's love secures the domestic space as a "refuge from care." Unlike the Melmotte home, Hetta's virtue and willingness to sacrifice all else but her love for Paul expresses the possibility that their love-marriage will be economically and sexually productive, an unchanging love that will sacralize the home and its household gods.

Trollope's conservative vision of family faces pressure, however, on a number of fronts. If, as he elsewhere seems to indicate, binaries such as the public-

private or sacred-profane do not protect non-market from market values but work in collusion, the ideological conscription of the woman to the home in order to segregate these schemes of value ceases to have justification. Trollope's adherence to this model of domesticity reflects not only his ambivalence toward historical changes in women's rights,<sup>28</sup> but also toward the changes this agency would have on the novel's marriage plot and conventions of love. Although the novel suppresses Hetta's position as heiress to the Carbury property by entailing it on her son, it also insinuates that there is another, more modern, marriage plot in which women heiresses are not constrained by endogamous patrilineal inheritance: the marriage between Marie and Fisker. Marie's inheritance allows her to resist, unlike Georgiana, the strictures of the marriage market and to choose a mate that will not compromise her desire to be financially independent. Marie's acceptance of Fisker's proposal of marriage and move to America hinges on the reassurance that in America, unlike England, she will retain control over her finances.

“And then,” said he, pleading his cause not without skill, “the laws regulating woman's property there are just the reverse of those which the greediness of man has established here. The wife there can claim her share of her husband's property, but hers is exclusively her own. America is certainly the country for women—and especially California.” (751–52)

Trollope relegates both speculative activity and women's ownership of property to foreign spaces such as America, cautioning his readers that the instabilities that pervade the culture of investment represents but a species of problems that will undermine the home and marriage. The connections between divorce, women's ownership of property, and America is further substantiated by Trollope's characterization of Mrs. Hurtle. Mrs. Hurtle divorced her husband in San Francisco, and since then “she's had the handling of her own money, and has put it so that he can't get hold of a dollar” (703). As a “wild cat” rumored to have dueled with her husband, Trollope portrays Mrs. Hurtle as a seductive but dangerous harbinger of what would ensue should women in England be allowed to control their money and property (292). To underscore this point, Trollope opposes Mrs. Hurtle to the representative figure of virtuous English women in the novel, Hetta. Hetta also serves as Trollope's mouthpiece against divorce and the economic independence Mrs. Hurtle represents. “Had she been divorced then?” asked Hetta—“because I believe they get themselves divorced just when

they like” (582). Hetta expresses the fear of men in England—if women can divorce at will and own property, then they would divest men of financial security. Trollope resolves the problem of the heiress that McLennan poses by exporting the problem to America. If America is, as Fisker states, “the country for women,” then England will remain the country for men.

Trollope’s inability to accommodate the alternative model of marriage and distribution of property that Marie and Fisker represent also reflects the constraint of novelistic convention. Critics have noted, for example, how the traditional love-plot with the virtuous Hetta at its center reinforces gender norms that are at odds with Trollope’s description of the injustices women like Mrs. Hurtle and Marie face in the hands of men.<sup>29</sup> This constraint of novelistic convention proves particularly evident in Fisker’s marriage proposal to Marie, which is a rational argument involving deliberation over interests rather than the sway of emotion.<sup>30</sup> When Fisker assures Marie, for example, that the house in San Francisco is ready and waiting for her, the narrator states, “I doubt whether this last assurance had much efficacy. But the arguments with which it was introduced did prevail to a certain extent” (752). The narrator characterizes this moment of rational discussion and argumentation as also a bold moment of female agency. “‘I’ll tell you how it must be then,’ she said. ‘How shall it be?’ and as he asked the question he jumped up and put his arm round her waist. ‘Not like that, Mr Fisker,’ she said, withdrawing herself. ‘It shall be in this way. You may consider yourself engaged to me’” (752). Amanda Anderson argues that Trollope displays his modernity and “liberal bent” in *The Way We Live Now* by exposing the limitations of gentlemanliness and challenging the customs that underlie the courtship plot (“Trollope’s Modernity” 526). While Anderson examines the rational grounds for marriage that Brehgert presents to Georgiana’s father, I think an even more forceful example of Trollope’s modernity is the engagement between Fisker and Marie and its emphasis on rational argument.

Yet it is precisely the reliance on reason that makes Fisker’s marriage proposal untenable as the central marriage plot of the novel: it lacks romance. The preference for reasoned argument over romantic love was also what spoiled, according to the narrator, Roger’s proposal to Hetta and Georgiana’s initial response to Brehgert’s proposal. After reading Brehgert’s letter, the narrator writes, Georgiana was “pained by the total absence of romance” and the matter-of-fact allusion to such details as her age (Trollope *Way We Live Now* 606). Similarly, Roger professes his love for Hetta and asks her to “try” to love him when she believes, like any good romantic, that “[l]ove should come without a

struggle” (64). The narrator laments that Roger, in his well-reasoned proposal, “had no poetry about him. He did not even care for romance” (65). By contrast, Marie has learned to see through the facade of romance in her love for Felix Carbury and now understands this love as a convention. “But she had taught herself this business of falling in love as a lesson, rather than felt it” (749). Marie sees through the very romantic conventions that Trollope employs in the novel through characters like Roger and Hetta. And Marie’s rejection of the rhetoric of romance is also, simultaneously, a rejection of marriage as heterosexual exchange. By sending her to America, an emblem of change and modernization, Trollope shows that Marie is a model of the modern woman and accommodating her agency not only requires changes in women’s legal status, but also revisions to the traditional marriage plot and the very connections the domestic novel assumes between commodities/money, marriage, and kinship.

I want to close this chapter with a discussion of how the variations that Eliot and Trollope introduce to the plot in Dickens’s *Dombey and Son*, variations that occur in response to the increasing historical reality of women’s marriage and property rights and an entrenched credit culture, can help us understand why the anthropological discourse on totemism undergoes a sudden shift at the end of the century. If, when Trollope published *The Way We Live Now* in 1875, independently wealthy women like Marie Melmotte could only exert their freedom in foreign spaces like America, the decades that followed the 1882 Married Woman’s Property Act made this exportation of the propertied woman an impossible gesture. The propertied woman thus becomes an irrepressible interruption to the marriage plot that the domestic novel and anthropologies of totemism construct. The force of such historical pressures on theories of totemism appears evident, for example, in the changes Frazer himself made to his understanding of totemism as a universal kinship system. In *Totemism*, Frazer argues that “in the majority of the totem tribes at present known to us in Australia and North America descent is in the female line, i.e. the children belong to the totem clan of their mother, not to that of their father” (*Totemism and Exogamy* 65), and that the rule of exogamy stipulates that “[p]ersons of the same totem may not marry or have sexual intercourse with each other” (54). In “The Origin of Totemism” (1899) Frazer continues to insist that these two features formed the core of totemism as “a primitive system both of religion and of society” (101). Years later in “The Beginnings of Religion and Totemism Among the Australian Aborigines” (1905), however, Frazer wrote with less certainty on such conjunctions and questioned the necessity of viewing either matriarchal descent or exogamy

as part of the origin of totemism. “[E]xogamy forms no part of true totemism” but “is a great social reform of a much later date” (162). Additionally, the claim that the “inheritance of the totem through the mother always preceded inheritance of it through the father” may also be incorrect (167).

The year Frazer’s *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910) was published, as Lévi-Strauss remarks, marks the beginning of the end. That year the American anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser contested the category of totemism as the yoking of disparate phenomena into a universal system (Lévi-Strauss *Totemism* 4). Goldenweiser’s skepticism was later echoed by Franz Boas, who claimed in “The Origin of Totemism” (1916) that those characteristics that Victorian anthropologists grouped under the phenomenon of totemism, such as worship of the totem and exogamy, represent “the unification of heterogeneous material” whose appearance was historically contingent and only retrospectively formed a set of systematic relations (318–19). Lévi-Strauss would deepen such skepticism, comparing what he called the “totemic illusion” to the invention of hysteria (*Totemism* 1–2). Rather than denoting a universal social system, totems simply offered a metaphor to explore the connection between man and nature and were, as such, “good to think” (1, 89). Reading anthropologies of totemism in relation to the domestic novel allows us to recognize the historical contingencies that initially made totems “good to think” with and also why their metaphorical efficacy eventually eroded. Robert Alun Jones credits the sudden demise of totemism to the increasing critical pressure on the social evolutionary paradigm (*Secret* 4).<sup>31</sup> My reading in this chapter does not dissent from Jones, but it does demonstrate the specific historical pressures exerted by the feminist movement on the symbolic relations between value, things, women, marriage/kinship, and property. Women’s legal equality and the increasing separation of the laws that govern marriage from those that govern property’s transmission made the “imaginary anthropology” that the novel and anthropology construct seem decidedly imaginary. What had once seemed necessary, even logical, connections between women, the sacred, home, intrinsic value, kinship, and capital, prove to be just an arbitrary set of assumptions—historical conventions rejected as much by heroines like Marie Melmotte as by twentieth-century anthropologists, before whom an entire category seemed suddenly to disappear.

# Part IV

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## CHAPTER 7

# Magical Technologies

### *Forces of Interest in Rudyard Kipling and Marshallian Economics*

It may seem surprising for an argument that has been so concerned with the development of capitalist thought and its relation to literary and anthropological discourses to close with Kipling. Unlike Ruskin or Dickens, whose critiques of capitalism have been given repeated critical attention, critics have largely viewed Kipling as the mouthpiece of dominant British ideologies. It was Kipling's celebrated portrayals of the engineer, civil servant, industrial machinery, and colonial life that, as H. G. Wells remarks, catapulted him into "a national symbol" of British imperial and economic prowess (qtd. in Green 305). Recent criticism that departs from his reputation as a nationalist ideologue tends to underscore his ambivalent responses to the aesthetic, cultural, and political currents of his time.<sup>1</sup> Kipling may have been an "ardent imperialist," but his fiction conveys to its readers "a bundle of contrary impulses" rather than a cohesive vision (Brantlinger "Complexity" 88). In the chapters that follow, I neither wholly adopt nor dissent from these approaches, but instead recast Kipling's fiction, and the contrary impulses they display, in relation to the double narrative of capitalism. To read Kipling in this way allows us to see more clearly how tensions within his work, whether they be his critique of the capitalist varieties of imperialism in favor of one grounded in moral duty and self-sacrifice or his conflicted fascination with magic (88–90), participate in less visible intellectual and ideological patterns.

To situate Kipling's fiction within my broader thesis on the double narrative

of capitalism, however, requires a different interpretive strategy than that exercised in the preceding chapters on the domestic novel. Kipling's narratives, with their fabulist and allegorical tendencies, are a reminder of the generic instability and hybrid genealogy of realist fiction.<sup>2</sup> Laurence Davies remarks that Kipling's susceptibility to the marvelous or magical makes his fiction seem "immune to the *Entzauberung* that Weber saw as a consequence of modernity" (55). Such aesthetic features not only indicate the presence of the marvelous alongside the mundane, they also point toward the possible limitations of interpreting the relationship between fiction and the social world it depicts through the mode of historicist metonymy.<sup>3</sup> In the introduction, I discussed how nineteenth-century fiction can be read as presenting a "mythic," or imaginary, relation to the social world (Michie *Vulgar* 6). In the domestic novels by Dickens, Eliot, and Trollope, this relation to the social largely unfolds metonymically, where novelistic plot and tropology reference various historical conditions and the discursive contexts in which the novels emerged. Kipling's fiction also offers an imaginary relation to the social and emerges within a particular historical and discursive context, but his narratives rely heavily on the techniques of allegory, which, unlike metonymy, operates by substituting one narrative code for another that it obliquely references.<sup>4</sup> As Walter Benjamin states, the allegorist "dislodges things from their context" (211). Benjamin interprets allegory as a symptom of modernity and posits a corollary between the disjunctive techniques of allegory and capitalist economics, reading the commodity form as allegorical since it too dislodges things from their context by translating all values into exchange values (207).

The parallel Benjamin draws between allegory and capitalist economics is particularly relevant to Kipling's use of allegory, which frequently discloses patterns salient to the double narrative of capitalism. This unfolds in Kipling's fiction in a manner distinct from previous chapters. We have seen throughout this book how the work of segregating, displacing, and reintegrating the two narratives of capitalism relied on excluding a set of values and practices deemed pre-capitalist or pre-modern to the imperial periphery even as these values and practices were synthesized with capitalist models of value at the metropolitan center. Yet unlike the "metropolitan autoethnography" of Dickens or Eliot, Kipling's fiction often combines an autoethnographic representation of Britishness at (not away from) the colonial periphery with ethnographic descriptions of the colonial other. Kipling's fiction thus cannot similarly perform the work of segregating, displacing, and reintegrating the two narratives of capitalism by

excluding empire to the margins since his fiction so frequently unfolds in colonial, rather than metropolitan, spaces. Instead, Kipling relies on the disjunctive element within the allegorical mode itself to create distance between his fictionalized representations and the political, economic, and cultural processes they encode. To understand how his fiction discloses aspects of the double narrative of capitalism we must read his allegories for the economic, historical, and cultural logics they supplant.

Such an approach to Kipling's fiction clarifies tensions within the double narrative of capitalism that were not apparent in previous chapters. Kipling's fiction displays how the two narratives of capitalism come into conflict when the deterritorialized image of the economy as a self-regulating global system is cut through by nationalist economic and political agendas. In Kipling's allegories of British imperial and economic power, we see how the consecration of labor through sacrifice and the idealized representation of exchange as a highly coordinated, reflexive information system that equilibrates self-interest and self-sacrifice, secure social cohesion in order to exert imperial economic and political dominance. Hence in Kipling, the various modes of sacralization I discuss in this book such as sacrifice, magic, and ritual are neither the means by which he corrects asymmetric power relations nor a set of pre-modern values that critique capitalism, but values that modern Britain co-opts from its primitivized "other" in order to sanctify and legitimate political and economic imperialism. If, as Uday Mehta argues, imperialism constitutes an "urge . . . *internal* to [liberalism]," Kipling suggests that it exerts this urge not by "[denying] the archaic, the premodern, the religious," as Mehta suggests, but by rearticulating them (20, emphasis original).

In this regard, Kipling helps us track how anthropological notions of magic or ritual undergird representations of imperial economic and political power. In the introduction to this book, I made an extended argument for the genealogical continuities between political economy, anthropology, and literature. I demonstrated, for example, how anthropology drew on the "*literary* anthropology" epitomized by such genres as the novel (Zammito 222, emphasis original). Following Zammito, however, not only can we see genres such as the novel as what shaped anthropology's investigation into human nature and sociality, but we can also see literary genres as what drew on anthropological findings in their own representations of human nature and cultural practices. Such mutually implicating lines of influence are particularly relevant for Kipling and the circle of nineteenth-century writers and intellectuals with whom he interacted, from H.

Rider Haggard and Andrew Lang to Thomas Hardy and James Frazer. Kipling, like his literary cohorts, was well-versed in the theories propounded by Tylor and Frazer and was particularly drawn to the Tylorian notion of “survivals.”<sup>5</sup>

Kipling’s fiction not only evidences the cross-pollination that took place between literary and anthropological discourses during the nineteenth century, his fiction also makes legible the structural-functionalist preoccupation with social cohesion that my introduction earlier aligned with narratives of coherence in sociological and literary discourses. To recapitulate briefly, I argued that fictional narratives, in particular, display the connections between aesthetic models of organic unity and social cohesion. Kipling’s fiction exemplifies these patterns. In his seminal essay on Kipling, Noel Annan claims that Kipling resembles sociologists like Durkheim insofar as he addresses the functionalist problem of social cohesion by examining how “[a] society without moral consensus or rituals and sacred objects would disintegrate” (101); and like Durkheim, he ends by fetishizing society itself (99–100, 122). Yet in contrast to the representations of social and cultural togetherness seen previously in domestic novels, Kipling’s fiction demonstrates how the affective consolations of social cohesion come at great political cost. Kipling’s stories depict social cohesion within British social formations as what advances British political and economic interests in the colonies. In exposing this dynamic of power, Kipling’s fiction also lays bare how notions of the sacred and profane, magic, and ritual can be recast in order to legitimate British economic and social order.

The patterns I have outlined emerge most forcefully in Kipling’s middle fiction at the turn of the century, particularly during the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) and its aftermath when Kipling feared that British arrogance and apathy had weakened its political and economic hold over its colonies. In texts such as *The Day’s Work* (1898), *Kim* (1901), and *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904), Kipling addresses the incursions into British imperial dominance by the French and Germans in Africa, as well as Russian aggression at the Afghan-Indian border, by consistently exploring the tactics of coordination and efficient control necessary for the technologies of empire to maintain possession over its colonies. These technologies, such as steam engines and the electric telegraph, hinge on a particular manipulation of the magical. Rather than present colonial resistance in relation to its historical and material conditions, Kipling’s narratives allegorize such resistance as the deviant and unruly force of the magical—a supernatural force that Britons must appropriate and discipline through their technological innovations in order to transform these very technologies into omnipotent

agencies of colonial power.<sup>6</sup> This chapter examines these strategies in *The Day's Work*, focusing in particular on Kipling's depictions of mechanical systems such as steamships.<sup>7</sup> These self-contained systems represent the expansive field of political and economic action as a tightly coordinated, ritualized network of actions that rearticulate the disruptive, magical energies of colonial resistance into the literal energy (steam/electricity) that fuels imperial technologies and consecrates its interests. Kipling stages the conflict between colonial and imperial self-interest as a contest between colonial and imperial expressions of the magical, which he represents as either consecrating or profaning the social order depending on whose interests are at stake. Thus Kipling was not just "a magician in the art of the short story," as his obituary in the *Times* remarks, his stories portray empire as the consummate magician (qtd. in Green 392).

I give concentrated attention to Kipling in these closing chapters not only for the reasons already stated, but also because the continuities that Kipling's stories display between modern technology, energy, magic, and capitalist self-interest allow us to trace further the cross-disciplinary labors that were necessary to segregate the "religious" from the "economic." In what follows, I demonstrate that anthropologists from Tylor to Mauss repeatedly invoke magic to demarcate the boundaries between primitive and modern capitalist societies, true science and religion from its profane (magical) forms. Despite these efforts to quarantine magic from the sacred, science, religion, and modern capitalist societies, however, magic plays the role of a "dangerous supplement" within these binary formulations (Derrida *Of Grammatology* 149): on the one hand, the exclusion of magic as what constitutes the profane or as illegitimate science is the precondition for defining true religion, the sacred, and science, and yet on the other hand, magic's supplementarity threatens to replace these categories and transgress the binary oppositions on which they depend.<sup>8</sup>

Magic's proximity to the sacred, science, technology, and capitalist self-interest in anthropological texts structures the arguments of other sibling discourses such as sociology and political economy. I demonstrate in this chapter how the latter proximity undergirds Herbert Spencer's theory of force/energy and his representation of the economy as a mechanical system that balances quasi-magical forces. Spencer's representations of the economy epitomize patterns in the nineteenth-century discourse of thermodynamics and its reliance on allegory to construct, as Bruce Clarke states, "workable models of energy" (18). In addition to referencing cosmological crises, these allegories also functioned as explanatory models for monetary and class dynamics within the cap-

italist system (44). Kipling's allegorical representations of the economy and imperial administration are thus indicative of the allegorical imagination that shaped nineteenth-century sciences more broadly. I trace this line of thinking not only in Kipling and Spencer, but also in late nineteenth-century economists such as Francis Ysidro Edgeworth and Alfred Marshall. Edgeworth's and Marshall's depiction of the economy as a mechanical system animated by transcendent, competing forces, moreover, points to a fault line within the double narrative of capitalism. Much like Kipling's imperial fiction, asymmetric power relations shadow Edgeworth's and Marshall's ideals of reciprocity and mutuality. In Edgeworth's and Marshall's technological analogies for the economy, the numinous energies that propel the economic system toward equilibrium by balancing self-interest with self-sacrifice also promote inescapable inequalities and exploitation. The ethical ideals of commutative and/or distributive justice, which underpin theories of equilibrium, thus appear at odds with the instabilities that self-interested competition generates.

### *Magic, Modernity, and Capitalism*

I begin my discussion of magic with an example from a late nineteenth-century novel written not by Kipling, but Thomas Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886/1912). Much like Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, Hardy's novel relates the problematic transition into modernity by nostalgically returning to the past; the fictionalized town of Casterbridge represents a rural, agricultural community as it existed during the 1820s and 1830s when it was still "untouched by the faintest sprinkle of modernism" (*Mayor of Casterbridge* 27). In this tragic tale of transition, Michael Henchard occupies a central position if only because his pre-capitalist, pre-modern business practices all but ensure his economic obsolescence. Henchard's decision to consult the "weather-prophet" in order to predict the next harvest rather than employ the more successful capitalist practices of Farfrae, his economic rival in the novel, is but one of many examples of Henchard's "fetichistic" and "superstitious" tendencies (18, 173). The continued belief farmers in Casterbridge place in the weather-prophet seems to provide a classic example of those primitive practices that, much to Tylor's and Frazer's chagrin, continue as "survivals" in modern England. But Hardy's portrayal of the weather-prophet's magic powers, far from indicating a pre-modern, pre-capitalist value system, casts the weather-prophet's prophecy as a type of labor

that, like any other labor within a capitalist system, must be recompensed monetarily. When Henchard asks him, for example, whether he can “[f]orecast the weather,” he replies, “With labour and time” (174). Henchard then offers in exchange for his labor and time “a crown piece” as payment (174). The weather-prophet’s magical powers are here not antithetical or prior to capitalism, but are quantified through a rudimentary version of the labor theory of value: the exchange value of the weather-prophet’s services is determined by its labor-time, and Hardy elsewhere describes time itself as “the magician” (32).

My contention in this section is that the overlap we see between magic and capitalist theories of value in Hardy’s portrayal of the weather-prophet is not peculiar to his novel, but points to a constitutive feature in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theories of magic. Just as chapter 3 demonstrated how ritual constitutes a flexible category in the nineteenth century that potentially included acts of exchange, in this section I illustrate how nineteenth-century anthropology starkly opposes magic to religion, the sacred, and science but, in so doing, renders it genealogically continuous with science and those self-interested, purposive acts that characterize economic agency in the public sphere. Hence, while the dominant narrative of capitalism depends on those constitutive separations we have come to associate with modernity—public from private, religious from secular—theories of magic muddy these traditional binaries by allying magic with utilitarian behavior. Secular capitalism thus becomes implicated in the very values it wants to cordon off as either the realm of religion or primitive superstition. But magic’s proximity to the self-interested individualism of capitalism not only reveals the incomplete efforts of modernity and secularization, it also demonstrates how the propensity for rebellion and conflict that self-interested individualism generates within capitalism becomes allied to the magical. Those self-interested acts that manipulate the numinous forces in the world to challenge the existent social order are deemed rebellious (profane) manifestations of the magical, whereas those self-interested acts that legitimate the capitalist economic and social order instantiate the sacred—a dichotomous understanding that relies on the reversibility of the sacred and profane evidenced in theories of taboo.

The genealogical contiguities I have just sketched violate the very hierarchical divisions that nineteenth-century anthropologists posited between magic, religion, and science. This hierarchical division, as I mentioned earlier (see chapter 3), is the enabling premise for the opposition that nineteenth- and twentieth-century anthropologists frequently assume between rational and



non-rational acts. The distinction between rational acts that follow an empirical means-end schema and those acts that are purely symbolic accompanies a further segregation between acts that are magical versus religious. Thus while Tylor defines religion in *Primitive Culture* as “the belief in Spiritual Beings” that manifests itself “in some kind of active worship” (*Primitive Culture* 1:383, 386), magic constitutes a “pseudo-science,” a “fallacious system of philosophy” that explains phenomena in the material world in order to exert control over them through rites and spells (1:122). The distinctions Tylor draws between religion, magic, and science, however, are highly unstable. Both magic and religion, as was shown in the chapter on gift sacrifice, seek to manipulate supernatural powers toward practical, self-interested ends. And however much he regards magic as a “pseudo-science,” he nevertheless considers it an expression of human reason and a precursor to the emergence of true science and its accurate understanding of causal laws.

The precarious boundary between magic, religion, and science marks Frazer’s arguments in *The Golden Bough* as well. Frazer defines magic first under the broad rubric of sympathetic magic and then introduces two sub-categories, homeopathic (imitative) and contagious. These two categories correspond to two types of faulty causal reasoning: homeopathic/imitative magic infers cause and effect from the “Law of Similarity,” that “like produces like” and “an effect resembles its cause”; contagious magic follows the “Law of Contact,” that “things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed” (*Golden Bough* 1:52). While Frazer presents magic as an intellectual stage that precedes and informs the progressive development of religion and science, he treats the logic of magic as categorically different from both. In contrast to religious rites and prayers, which induce the gods to intervene in favor of our self-interested ends through “propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man” (1:222), magic “constrains or coerces” impersonal forces by performing the appropriate rites, incantations, and spells to achieve self-interested ends (1:225). Yet in differentiating magic from religion, Frazer renders it science’s genealogical precursor. Unlike religion, which assumes an “elasticity or variability of nature,” magic expresses in its nascent form the general scientific principle that the natural world is governed by “a necessary and invariable sequence of cause and effect, independent of personal will,” and in so doing, it “directly prepares the way for science” (1:374). In order to delimit the proximity between science and magic, Frazer asserts that while both magic and science comprehend cause and effect

according to immutable laws, “magic is always an art, never a science” because it misapplies the laws of association (1:53). Magic is science’s “bastard sister” and its “next of kin” (1:222).

The continuities between magic, religion, and science yield another significant consequence: symbolic rituals that traffic in the sacred are nevertheless theorized as orienting themselves toward utilitarian, empirical ends. This intersection of the symbolic and empirical led Talcott Parsons to conclude that magic tends “to employ ritual means for the attainment of empirical ends” (432). Magical rites, like science, posit a means-end schema and seek to have empirical results in the material world even as they assume that supra-empirical forces underpin the order of the material world. The resemblances between magical and utilitarian acts become even more pronounced in Robertson Smith’s attempts to differentiate magic from religion proper. We had seen in chapter 1 how Robertson Smith rejected the utilitarian model of sacrificial ritual as self-interested exchange in favor of an interpretation of sacrifice as a social rite of communion—one averse to the economizing logic of private interests. Robertson Smith’s communitarian definition of religion makes all acts that convey private desire and need to the gods an example of magic rather than religion. Hence he claims that “Semitic heathenism was redeemed from mere materialism by the fact that religion was not the affair of the individual but of the community” (Robertson Smith *Lectures* 263). This transition from magic to religion hinges not only on the assumption that magic entails a highly materialistic relation to the natural world whereas religion addresses a transcendent power, but also on a modern public-private separation. Because “the recognised religion of the family or of the state” addresses communal and public interests, ancient Semites address “purely personal concerns” by turning to “magical ceremonies, designed to purchase or constrain the favour of demoniac powers with which the public religion had nothing to do” (264). Insofar as the ancient Semites turned to magic to satisfy self-interested, private desires in opposition to the public and communal duties demanded by religion, they engaged in “illicit,” socially deviant acts that thrive in “times of social dissolution” when individuals are most susceptible to the fear in supernatural beings that magic (unlike religion) engenders (264, 55). Hence the narrow difference between magic and religion for Robertson Smith is that magicians manipulate the sacred to destabilize the social order whereas priests consecrate it. As Andrew Lang succinctly states, “The sin of witchcraft is as the sin of rebellion” (*Magic and Religion* 46).

Robertson Smith's distinction between magic and religion poses an alternate narrative of modernity to the one that undergirds his argument on gift sacrifice. While he interprets communal sacrifice through a pre-capitalist, pre-modern lens, the radical separation he poses between magic and religion requires that he reshuffle the oppositions that are typically found in narratives of secularization and capitalism. Instead of privatizing religion and rendering the secular, public sphere the realm of self-interested action, it is primitive magic and its materialist conception of the deity that are associated with private expressions of self-interest, whereas those modern religions that inevitably supersede magic are public and communal. Robertson Smith's argument on magic typifies many of the oppositions that would recur in later theorizations of magic. As Randall Styers argues, theories of magic repeatedly conceive magic as deviant, individualistic, self-interested, utilitarian, anti-social, power-seeking, and rooted in a materialistic conception of the world, whereas religion is deemed communal, public, moral, orderly, disinterested, and oriented toward a transcendent rather than materialized deity (9–12 and *passim*). Styers suggests that magic poses a threat to organized religion not only because it represents a rebellious force associated with marginal, deviant groups that destabilize the established social order, but also because it poses a threat to capitalism. Magic is dangerous to the extent that it represents a rebellious and socially deviant variant of individualism that challenges the *institutionalized* individualism of capitalism and its segregation of public and private spheres: "Only deterritorialized, disruptive forms of individualism are problematic, a disruption emblemized by the magical invocation of supernatural power to threaten the regularity of the natural order and economic relations" (Styers 115).

But magic does not simply intrude on the realm of science and economic markets; it too much resembles them. Hence we find that the functionalist arguments by Mauss, Hubert, and Durkheim only amplify the underlying similarity between magic, science, and capitalist logic found in Robertson Smith. Unlike Tylor and Frazer, Mauss and Hubert do not define magic as the precursor to true religion and science; instead they assert that magic, in contradistinction to religion, derives its powers from *mana* rather than the sacred. The Melanesian concept of *mana* was first theorized by the nineteenth-century missionary and anthropologist Robert Codrington, who defines *mana* as a supernatural and ubiquitous force that manifests itself physically in the material world or in expressions of human power (118–19, 191). In *A General Theory of Magic* (1902), Mauss and Hubert expand on this earlier formulation and claim

that *mana* is a vague, obscure concept because it not only designates “a force,” but “is also an action, a quality, a state” (133). *Mana* is both “supernatural and natural,” a transcendent force that nevertheless manifests itself in the material world (137). While in all these things *mana* resembles the sacred, Mauss and Hubert distinguish the sacred from *mana* by claiming the latter pertains to things “outside the normal world and normal practices” (147). Magic and *mana* are simply the deviant siblings of institutionalized religion and the sacred.

Throughout *A General Theory of Magic*, Mauss and Hubert are at pains to distinguish magic from religion since both are “collective forces” and both employ beliefs, rites, and representations. The primary difference is that magical beliefs and practices do not belong to “organized systems”; they are not “predictable, prescribed and official” and are thus done illicitly in private (29). However collective a phenomena magic may be, magic ultimately represents an aberrant form of individualism. Individuals who practice magic have simply “appropriated to themselves the collective forces of society,” whereas in religious rites everything is done by and for the group (111). The apparent contradiction that magic poses, namely a collective phenomenon that is nevertheless individualistic and anti-social, disappears according to Mauss and Hubert if we regard magic as the sibling of science and technology. Like science and technology, magic’s “sole promoters are individuals” (111); it is pragmatic and is “concerned with understanding nature” and, as a consequence, much of modern science (e.g., medicine, alchemy, chemistry) owes a debt to magic (176). Durkheim would reiterate the essentially anti-social, utilitarian nature of magic. As he succinctly puts it: “A church of magic does not exist” (*Elementary* 43, emphasis original). Magic, like religion, “also consists of beliefs and rites,” but it “[pursues] technical and utilitarian aims” rather than concerning itself with metaphysical speculations or group interests (41).

This distinction between religious and magical acts troubles claims by Mauss, Hubert, and Durkheim that rituals are symbolic rather than utilitarian. Their contradictory position can be understood, however, if we situate it in relation to the circular economy of sacrifice and its synthesis of communitarian and utilitarian functions. I had demonstrated in chapter 1 that, despite their criticism of bourgeois capitalism and socialist leanings, functionalist theories of sacrifice in fact replicate a synthesis in economic theories of value.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, the contradictory position Durkheim, Mauss, and Hubert take with respect to magic points to a tension between the two narratives of capitalism that functionalist theories of sacrifice attempt to reconcile. The potential conflict

between self-interested exchange and self-sacrificing reciprocity is recast as the aberrant individualism and destabilizing effects of magic versus the stabilizing forces of the sacred, where self-interest is always subsumed to the group. In this manner, the destabilizing effects of self-interested action and extreme individualism, rather than being a potential within bourgeois capitalism, characterize the anti-social nature of magic and its tendency to “[profane] holy things” (Durkheim *Elementary* 42). When self-interested relations with the supernatural advance individual aims that counter the capitalist social order, they are deemed magical and profane, but when they stabilize the capitalist social order they are sacred rites.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever proximity exists between magic and capitalism remains latent in Mauss and Hubert’s arguments on magic’s genealogy. Magic, they argue, is solely the kin of science and religion and no other domain of human knowledge or social intercourse (Mauss *General* 174). Nevertheless, their description of how magic anticipates the techniques of science and technology discloses its kinship to capitalist production as well. “Magic works in the same way as do our techniques, crafts, medicine, chemistry, industry etc. . . . Magic is the domain of pure production, *ex nihilo*. With words and gestures it does what techniques achieve by labour” (175). Just as the only difference between science and magic for Tylor and Frazer was that science got the laws of causation right, the only difference between magic and capitalist production for Mauss and Hubert is that the latter makes labor central to accomplishing aims similar to that of magic. Hence we can understand the earlier response by the weather-prophet in Hardy’s novel as the proleptic substitution of magic for the techniques of labor. Primitive magic ironically becomes the kin to those very aspects that distinguish modern civilization: science, technology, and capitalist production. But if magic is kin to technology and capitalism, it also represents a liminal, disruptive force that capitalist technologies must discipline and redirect toward the consecration of the social order lest it become an instrument of rebellion.

### ***Balancing Magical Forces in Spencer, Edgeworth, and Marshall***

The continuities I have thus far outlined between technology, science, and magic should come as no surprise to those familiar with Victorian spiritualism. Victorian interest in occult practices such as mesmerism, séances, and telepathy intersected with emerging information technologies like the telegraph. As

Bown, Burdett, and Thurschwell argue, Victorian notions of the supernatural stress its invisibility and protean nature, a tendency that led Victorian spiritualists to attribute supernatural qualities to invisible forms of energy (e.g., electricity) (7–9). But much like anthropological theories of magic, Victorian spiritualism did not depart from science so much as offer an alternate model of science and natural law to orthodox scientific practice. This is largely because, as Gillian Beer writes, “Victorian scientific materialism never quite relinquished the transcendental” (“Foreword” *Victorian Supernatural* xv). Beer’s comment proves particularly instructive in relation to Herbert Spencer. Spencer’s theory of force, or energy, occupies the uncertain boundary between scientific materialism and the transcendental. Spencer conceives of force as an invisible, primordial energy that animates all matter and causes evolution in the material world.<sup>11</sup> Spencer’s account of force not only links it to modern scientific discourse, but also to theories of primitive animism—what Tylor refers to as “the belief in the animation of all nature” (*Primitive Culture* 1:258). Spencer asserts in the third volume of the *Principles of Sociology* that the conception modern physicists hold of the natural world is “less that of a Universe of dead matter than that of a Universe everywhere alive” (3:172).<sup>12</sup> The latter notion of a universe everywhere animated by energy, or force, “gives rather a spiritualistic than a materialistic aspect to the Universe” and is the means by which science, rather than displacing religion, comes to “transfigure” and supplement it (3:173).<sup>13</sup>

Durkheim, Mauss, and Hubert would posit an even more direct relationship between scientific notions of force/energy and the supernatural by linking it to the concept of *mana*. At the conclusion of *A General Theory of Magic*, Mauss and Hubert write that “notions of force, causation, effect and substance could be traced back to the old habits of mind in which magic was born” (178). As Durkheim states, “*mana* is the notion of force in its earliest form” and is therefore central to the history of both religious and scientific thought (*Elementary* 151). *Mana*, like the Sioux concept of *wakan*, “is the cause of all movements in the universe” and expresses “the modern idea that the world is a system of forces that limit, check, and balance each other” (151). Here Durkheim relates *mana* to scientific conceptions of force and, more significantly, to those early nineteenth-century systems theorists, such as Spencer, who explicitly theorized the evolution of organic or inorganic formations as the balance of forces.

Spencer’s writings not only display the connections between force, magic, and early systems theory, they also link these concepts to technology and capi-

talism. Spencer's technological analogy of the steam engine for capitalist economic systems makes apparent how theories of capitalism turn to similar analogies in order to address the potentially disruptive effects of self-interest by conceiving the economy as a closed network of coordinated exchanges that equilibrates contrary forces and disciplines the magical. Magic, as I previously demonstrated, represents an aberrant form of self-interested, utilitarian, and individualistic behavior that does not subtend the capitalist social order, but destabilizes it from without. Yet as the latent kinship between magic and capitalism demonstrates, such instability is not extrinsic to capitalist exchange but representative of tensions within the double narrative of capitalism: rather than simply equilibrate self-interest with self-sacrifice through ritualized networks of exchange, aggressive competition in the economy generates states of disequilibrium and economic inequalities. In this regard, Spencer's technological analogy of the economy as a steam engine casts the disruptive potential of self-interest as the dual nature of force, which can lead to either equilibrium or disequilibrium within the system depending on the degree of coordination and cooperation between all the interdependent parts.

The dual nature of force in Spencer, I contend, parallels theorizations of magic as either the sacred force that consecrates or the rebellious, profane force that destabilizes. Hence in Spencer's analysis in the *First Principles* (1862) of the "persistence of force" that drives the dynamic process of evolution and dissolution, force temporarily destabilizes the internal organization of systems and creates disequilibrium within its structure. In so doing, the persistence of force triggers the dynamic "double process" of integration and disintegration that enables systems to evolve and achieve higher complexity (Spencer *First Principles* 1:283). What checks any system's propensity toward instability is the "ever-increasing co-ordination of parts" and "co-operative assemblage"—a state of "mutual dependence" that characterizes the ecosystem and social phenomena such as the division of labor and capitalist economies (1:328).

Christopher Herbert writes, however, that such interdependence is unstable since unity is identical with the antagonism of its parts (*Victorian Relativity* 61). The opposing forces of evolution and dissolution tend toward a balance that they never perfectly establish because the constant infusion and diffusion of forces disturbs the system's internal equilibrium. Spencer terms this dynamic balance of opposing forces a "*dependent* moving equilibrium" and employs the steam engine as his first and illustrative example (*First Principles* 1:487, emphasis original). "Here the force from moment to moment dissipated in overcom-

ing the resistance of the machinery driven, is from moment to moment replaced from the fuel; and the balance of the two is maintained by a raising or lowering of the expenditure according to the variation of the supply” (1:487). In the analogy of the steam engine, it is steam that embodies force’s magical nature. Spencer alludes to the transcendental qualities of steam in the chapter “On Idol-Worship and Fetich-Worship” from the *Principles of Sociology*, where he claims that primitives associate a person’s spirit with his or her breath—an association that persists in the contemporary use of the word “*spirit*” for the “steam which distils from a thing” (1:318, emphasis original). Steam embodies the magical force the steam engine’s apparatus disciplines through the integrated, coordination of all its parts. Through such heightened coordination, steam’s transcendent force becomes an instrument of progressive integration rather than permanent dissolution. The moving equilibrium established by the input and output of forces in the steam engine becomes the paradigm for discussing the evolution of all complex systems, whether social, economic, or biological, and represents any system’s capacity to adapt and survive.

Modern machines such as the steam engine not only provide the technology that facilitates capitalist expansion and industrial advance, they also exemplify the complex coordination, balance of interests, and division of labor within capitalist economic systems. The dynamic balancing of forces in the steam engine and the interchange between the “supply” and “expenditure” of fuel provide Spencer with a corollary to economic processes in which “[t]he production and distribution of a commodity,” as well as its price, entail an adjustment of forces (*First Principles* 1:508). “The price of this commodity, is the measure of a certain other aggregate of forces expended by the labourer who purchases it, in other kinds and amounts of motion. And the variations of price represent a rhythmical balancing of these forces” (1:508). Like the steam engine, the economy must continuously adapt to the presence of conflicting forces in order to reestablish its equilibrium and progress. Such advanced capitalist societies are ever tending toward an ideal social state in which they not only balance supply and demand, but also “those tendencies to seek self-satisfaction regardless of injury to other beings” and the opposing force of what Spencer calls “the general sympathy of man for man” (1:511). Spencer’s analogy of the steam engine represents an ideally functioning industrialized economy that balances self-interest and disinterest and, given the transcendent properties attributed to steam, instantiates the overlap between technology, capitalism, and magic.

Spencer’s *First Principles* had a significant impact on late nineteenth-



century economists such as Jevons, Edgeworth, and Marshall, particularly their application of energetics to the economy's balancing of utilities (Mirowski *More* 266). Drawing on Spencer's theory of force, Jevons states in *The Principles of Science* that "[l]ife seems to be nothing but a special form of energy which is manifested in heat and electricity and mechanical force" (735).<sup>14</sup> Energy in Jevons's political economy assumes the form of utility, and economic exchange, as a model of protoenergetics, balances utilities. Spencer, of course, was not the sole source of such tendencies. Nineteenth-century economists had already drawn on Newtonian mechanics and subsequent developments in physics from Laplace to Lagrange, as evidenced in Jevons's comparison of exchange to a lever or pendulum coming to rest. According to Philip Mirowski, late nineteenth-century neoclassical economists like Jevons and Edgeworth essentially applied the concept of energy conservation in physics to economic exchange and, given their background in engineering, were attracted to mechanical analogies (*More* 196, 264).<sup>15</sup>

But while the influence of energy physics on economics precedes the writings of Spencer, Spencer's theory of energy/force occupies an exceptional position with respect to late nineteenth-century political economy for two reasons. First, the relationship Spencer's writings establish between magic and force enables us to trace the continuities between magic, science, and capitalism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century theories of magic into economic formulations of utility as the expression of force. If Hardy's novel foregrounds the proleptic substitution of magic for labor, Spencer's work makes this substitution legible in late nineteenth-century economists as the (magical) force of economic utilities. Second, Spencer's representation of the economy synthesizes the static, mechanical model of forces coming to a rest with a dynamic model of organic systems that evolve and progress over time through the competitive interplay of forces—a process exemplified in his analogy of the steam engine for a moving equilibrium. Spencer's notion of a moving equilibrium renders the dual nature of force as either the magical force that disrupts or the sacred force that stabilizes integral to the economy's progressive dynamism and continual reassertion of equilibrium through complex coordination and mutual interdependence. In the economic theories of Edgeworth and Marshall, however, the dual nature of force underscores a tension within the double narrative of capitalism: both economists struggle to reconcile idealized representations of the economy as a ritualized, coordinated network of exchanges in which agents balance the forces of self-interest and self-sacrifice with a model of the economy in which force spurs self-interested domination, inequalities, and disequilibrium.

We see this conflict within the double narrative of capitalism in Edgeworth's representation of economic equilibrium as a normative social ideal that maximizes utility for all. While he is associated with the marginalist era of economics alongside Jevons, Walras, and Marshall, economic historians typically credit Edgeworth with concepts now developed in game theory (e.g., the "core"), the application of probability to economics, and problems of imperfect competition in the market such as monopoly and oligopoly (Mirowski *Edgeworth* 2; Niehans 279, 284). Seen in the light of contemporary game theory, Edgeworth's ideas were cutting edge for his day; nevertheless, his reputation was outstripped by his mentors, Jevons and Marshall, whose ideas gained more currency among nineteenth-century economists (Niehans 285–86). Given his close alliance with Marshall, Edgeworth is often associated with the rise of Marshallian economics despite notable differences.<sup>16</sup> But I am less interested here in the degree to which Edgeworth replicates Marshallian economics than the fissures he identifies more broadly within marginalist economics. These fissures are particularly apparent in Edgeworth's adoption of the steam engine as an analogy for an ideally functioning economic system—an analogy that then proves inapposite to the dynamics of exchange and price determination.

Spencer's use of the steam engine as a model for complex integration and the moving equilibrium of forces in advanced capitalist societies supplies the key analogy for Edgeworth's discussion of economic exchange as a social utopia in which individuals maximize the pleasure and happiness of society as a whole just as a machine's highly integrated parts maximize energy. As in Spencer's discussion of force, Edgeworth's *Mathematical Psychics* (1881) attributes a mystical quality to pleasure. Pleasure is "a fluent form, a Fairy Queen guiding a most complicated chariot" that disciplines the twin horses of self-interest and self-sacrifice as it propels society toward its ideal state of social and economic equilibrium; and economics, as the science of pleasure as it maximizes itself, studies "[t]he attractions between the charioteer forces, the collisions and compacts between the chariots" (Edgeworth 15).<sup>17</sup> Despite such quixotic language, Edgeworth assumes that the science of pleasure is akin to physics: while physics measures units of energy and takes "*maximum energy*" as its object of study, economics measures "*[a]toms of pleasure*" as individuals seek to maximize energy and achieve a sympathy of interests—a state that Edgeworth compares to Spencer's discussion of evolutionary integration (8, 9, 12, emphasis original). By presenting the forces of pleasure in the market as forms of energy that achieve a maximum, Edgeworth posits a utopian social vision in which social mechanics ("Mécanique Sociale") and celestial mechanics ("Mécanique Celeste") stand

on equal footing (12). Edgeworth extends the disciplinary parallel by comparing “the invisible energy of electricity” that physicists examine to “the invisible energy of pleasure” that is the object of economic analysis (13). But however much Edgeworth claims that the transcendent, invisible properties of energy that organize the cosmos or economic system are apparent only to “the eye of faith,” energy in the social like the physical sciences remains subject to scientific measurement (12). Following Jevons, he argues that economics can also be an exact science like physics because it measures energy, i.e. utility, through the visible effect of price.

While Edgeworth attributes transcendent qualities to pleasure/energy, his analogic use of the steam engine for the economy’s optimization of utility initially downplays the dual nature of force. Rather than a dynamic system in which force may function either as the magical force that promotes instability and disequilibrium or the sacred force that stabilizes, force for Edgeworth establishes the tight coordination and cooperation of parts working toward a unified, optimal goal. Hence Edgeworth compares the maximization of pleasure by agents in society to a cosmic machine composed of “all manner of wheels, pistons, parts, connections” in which each part subordinates its energy to establish the maximum energy of the “complex whole” (9, 10). Just as the charge of electromagnetic force makes steam locomotives move along rails by impelling “the movements of the steam-engine so as to satisfy her own yearning towards *maximum*,” so pleasure obeys the law of force and “sways the subject energies so as to satisfy her own yearning towards *maximum*” (14, 15, emphasis original). Edgeworth thus theorizes a metaphorical utopia in which human “*pleasure machine[s]*” operate like steam engines (15, emphasis original), subordinating the desires of the part in order to maximize the energy of the whole. In this context, equilibrium occurs when the total energy (pleasure) of those parties involved in exchange achieves a relative maximum (24).

The economic problems and theories that Edgeworth would later become known for, however, complicate the hodgepodge of idealized mechanical analogies and address force’s capacity to generate instability and competitive antagonism. Rather than a model of mutuality and coordination, *Mathematical Psychics* ultimately demonstrates that the market does not automatically self-adjust to achieve an equilibrium in which all parties maximize happiness through exchange and balance sacrifice with remuneration (24–29). Instead, Edgeworth shows how exchange in the economy is “indeterminate” and subject to renegotiation (19–20). Because Edgeworth is interested in conditions of im-

perfect competition, he begins with the test case of two traders and expands to the innumerable traders necessary for conditions of perfect competition and equilibrium to be realized (Niehans 284–85). By beginning with the example of two traders, Edgeworth undermines Jevons’s assertion that there exists one ratio at which exchange could occur, and hence, one price. Rather than a single equilibrium price to which the market naturally tends, there in fact exists a range of ratios that traders might negotiate depending on their relative advantages—a range that Edgeworth graphs as the “contract curve” (Edgeworth 34–35). This indeterminacy in the market leads to imperfections such as deadlock, unfair bargaining practices, and monopolies since “the pleasure-forces of the contractors are mutually antagonistic” (29). Such indeterminacy and unfair competition decreases, according to Edgeworth, as the number of traders increases. Edgeworth clones traders in order to imagine an economy in which numerous traders with similar preferences and goods are competing against one another to optimize their gains (Mirowski *Edgeworth* 25–28). Edgeworth thus conjectures that the region of final settlements on the contract curve shrinks as the number of agents on the market near infinity, realizing the conditions of “perfect competition” and an equilibrium in which demand meets supply (Edgeworth 31).

But the thrust of Edgeworth’s argument in *Mathematical Psychics* is precisely that this state of perfect competition never occurs in reality and, in the absence of such a final settlement and equilibrium conditions, a settlement has to be decided upon through arbitration on utilitarian grounds; otherwise, “economics would be indeed a ‘dismal science’” in which individual and social happiness are subject to the imperfections of competition such as monopolies (50, 51–56). In identifying force with pleasure/utility, Edgeworth’s argument demonstrates that the pursuit of individual self-interest does not consecrate and stabilize an ideal model of the economy as a coordinated, complex whole in which supply and demand, sacrifice and gain equilibrate, and the economy as whole maximizes happiness for all; instead, the pursuit of pleasure results in those aberrant, imperfect forms of self-interested competition associated with the magical. The transcendent, invisible energies of pleasure that he initially rhapsodized are the very energies that create unrest and inequality in the economy.

These tensions within the double narrative of capitalism were no less problematic for Marshall. Unlike the mixed responses that Edgeworth’s economic writings often elicit from economic historians, Marshall’s reputation as the founder of the Cambridge school of economics is secure. Marshall’s *Principles*

of *Economics* (1890) effectively displaced Mill's *Principles* as the textbook of economics and dominated British economic orthodoxy for decades. Like Mill, Marshall's *Principles* displays a Smithian approach—incorporating real-world facts and history alongside theoretical exposition and lodging its mathematical formulas and graphs in the appendices to make the *Principles* less forbidding to the non-specialist reader. This combination of real-world pragmatism and mathematical analysis marks Marshall's primary theoretical contributions, what economists now refer to as partial equilibrium analysis and the elasticity of demand (Schumpeter 836, 991–93). Marshall's influential analysis of the reciprocal relationship between supply and demand in any change of the equilibrium price of commodities was famously expressed in his metaphor of the scissors, whose dual blades represented the joint influence of production costs and demand on the price of goods (*Principles* 348).

These contributions to microeconomics aside, I am particularly interested in tracing how Marshall's Smithian tendencies and pragmatism led to a preoccupation with contemporary theories of biological evolution as a necessary supplement to the mechanical analogies that had so dominated theories of economic equilibrium. Marshall's decision to combine mechanical and biological analogies points to conflicts within the double narrative of capitalism insofar as it seeks to rescue the normative ideal of equilibrium even as it attends to the very inequalities, imperfect competition, and dynamic oscillations that self-interested individualism generates. In this context, while Marshall's *Principles* does not utilize the transcendent language seen in Edgeworth, the dual and supra-empirical nature of force surfaces in the competing biological and mechanical analogies that he presents for an economy that tends toward equilibrium or disequilibrium. In his essay "Mechanical and Biological Analogies in Economics" (1898), Marshall claims that while theories of static equilibrium offered a starting point for economic theorization, "in the later stages of economics, when we are approaching nearly to the conditions of life, biological analogies are to be preferred to mechanical" (*Memorials* 317). Marshall echoes similar sentiments throughout the *Principles* and draws on his readings of both Darwin and Spencer to explore the relevance of biological analogies for advanced economic processes, incorporating an element of realism into economic theorizations. Spencer's writings, in particular, were integral to Marshall's thinking on biological models of the economic system. As Camille Limoges and Claude Ménard succinctly state, "In economics, differentiation means division of labor, and integration means coordination" (342). Marshall's evolution-

ary conception of industrial organization exemplifies the process of differentiation and integration and organizes society with increasing degrees of self-sacrifice and mutual dependence. Like earlier British economists, Marshall conceived of labor and capital as the corollary of sacrifice and abstinence and viewed the progressive development of civilization through the division of labor as deepening the bonds of interdependence and self-sacrifice (*Principles* 140, 232–33, 243). For Marshall, as for Spencer, integration and coordination go hand in hand: only a society highly differentiated by the division of labor is also highly coordinated.

In accordance with Marshall's usage of biological analogies, the economy not only proves subject to the processes of integration and differentiation as industrialization leads to more complex forms of organization and precise functions, but the economy also experiences the oscillating forces of life and death in which one organism arises only to be later overtaken by another. Drawing on Spencer, Marshall explores this cycle of growth and decay as an analogue for economic monopolies in his famous example of the tree in the forest (315).<sup>18</sup> While only a few "young trees of the forest" survive and "with every increase of their height . . . tower above their neighbours," Marshall claims "[o]ne tree" will eventually tower over all its rivals though even this tree will eventually give way and "lose vitality" (315–16). According to this analogy, the market potentially consists of monopoly prices determined by competition between large firms—a proposition that undermines Marshall's theorizations elsewhere of a "normal," equilibrium price in the market (Hart 1141–42). Because of this problematic tension between equilibrium and monopoly prices, Marshall repeatedly capitulates to static models of the economy for the sake of theoretical simplicity even though he recognizes that the cycle of life and decay more accurately represents the oscillations of the market. Hence, when he analyzes the equilibrium of supply and demand prices, Marshall claims economics must begin with the simpler model of mechanical equilibrium in which the balance of supply and demand prices is expressed as the opposition of two forces, namely sacrifice and resistance to sacrifice, in the manner of a stone hanging from a string and coming back to rest (*Principles* 323–24, 346). Marshall pursues such analysis while insisting that in real life this is not the case since any change alters the equilibrium amount and its price, and the correspondence between sacrifices and pleasures could never really be "exact" due to the effects of time (347).

Marshall invents his abstraction of the "representative firm" as a compro-

mise between two conflicting theoretical paradigms, bypassing the very irregularities his biological approach introduces. The representative firm stands for the “average firm,” which has a “fair” life span and success, as well as “normal” access to the means of production and resources (317, 318). As Neil Hart argues, Marshall’s organic approach “was a framework that came to be challenged . . . when confronted with the burden of accommodating ‘equilibrium’ configurations that somehow accord with a process of continuous change. Marshall had invented the Representative Firm concept as a medium through which such a correspondence could hopefully be accomplished” (1149). The representative firm, as a tree in the forest, conforms to the biological model of development at the metaphorical level only; it may be in a forest, but unlike other trees that are subject to change, the representative firm embodies constant averages. Limoges and Ménard claim that Marshall devises the vague concept of the representative firm because he was unable to synthesize the metaphor of the economy as an evolving, biological system with the prevailing metaphor of the market as a mechanistic system that balances forces (354–55). Marshall’s failure to reconcile two competing analogies again makes visible a complication within the double narrative of capitalism, where competition itself generates those deviant forms of self-interest associated with magic and destabilizes models of economic equilibrium. In both Edgeworth and Marshall, the normative ideal of the economy at equilibrium remains at odds with a dynamic model of competition. Rather than a system that establishes the ethical ideals of commutative and/or distributive justice, the economy’s progress hinges on strategic advantages that generate disequilibrium and imperfect competition.

### ***Contested Interests and the Rituals of Law and Order in The Day’s Work***

Marshall may have failed to synthesize two competing models of economic processes, but he lauds British imperial and economic administration for achieving the balance between mechanicity and dynamic elasticity that his economic theories could not. In “The Social Possibilities of Economic Chivalry,” Marshall critiques contemporary accounts of laissez-faire as misconstruing Smithian political economy. As a kind of middle path between governmental non-interference and a systematic welfare state, Marshall calls on the spirit of “chivalry” that already exists in economic life, where individuals combine self-

interest and self-sacrifice (*Memorials* 342–43). The agencies of British imperialism stand as an example of the “elastic methods of administration” that economists should adopt in an effort to promote such chivalry (343). A socialism modeled on imperial administration and its paternalistic form of Burkean chivalry would, claims Marshall, retain “individuality and elasticity” and avoid the “mechanical symmetry” associated with Marx’s socialism (346). Imperial administration combines the efficiency and highly differentiated set of functions that Spencer attributed to the division of labor yet retains the elasticity that Marshall associated with biological systems.

Marshall’s praise for imperial administration highlights the very synthesis of mechanical coordination and dynamic elasticity that Kipling’s mechanical analogies for the economy and imperial administration in *The Day’s Work* epitomize. These mechanical analogies, however, expose the hegemonic relations that operate within such a synthesis that Marshall’s notion of “chivalry” obscures. Kipling delineates the problem of competing interests and the dual nature of force across nationalist lines, opposing the interests of Britons to that of the colonials. In this context, the colonial expresses those very rebellious, extra-institutional forms of self-interest that are deemed magical and disrupt the British imperial and economic order. Kipling’s analogies for effective imperial and economic systems suppress colonial rebellion and interests by rearticulating the (profane) energies of colonial magic into the (sacred) energy/force (e.g., steam, electricity) that fuels British technologies and consecrates imperial order. But because Kipling draws on the continuities between magic and technology in order to translate colonial magic into the energy that animates imperial technologies, the very technological edifices Kipling erects as symbols of Britain’s economic and political power remain implicated in, and potentially overwhelmed by, the magical energies they draw upon.<sup>19</sup> It was not just, as Lewis Wurgaft suggests, the self-conscious mythmaking of British civil servants as self-martyring demi-gods that evinces the “British fascination with magic” and its uncomfortable proximity to primitive magical thinking (58, 83, 95),<sup>20</sup> but also British technology. Kipling’s stories contain the threat such proximity poses through coordinated acts of self-sacrificing reciprocity—acts that in Kipling are linked to ritual and his notion of the “law.” The story that opens *The Day’s Work*, “The Bridge-Builders,” dramatizes the contest between British and colonial interests as the contest between articulations of the magical and their containment. This story sets the stage for the collection’s subsequent stories, which revisit these strategies of articulation and containment by



deploying mechanical analogies as representations of the economy and imperial administration.

“The Bridge-Builders” depicts a contest between the magical force of the Ganges and the force embodied by imperial edifices and technologies—a contest that doubles for the conflict of interests between imperial and colonial subjects. The story narrates the efforts of two civil engineers, Findlayson and Hitchcock, who build the Kashi Bridge over the Ganges in order “to hold the river in place” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 3). Kipling opposes the unruliness of the Ganges’s energy to the bridge’s fixity and the relentless work ethic of Findlayson and Hitchcock—both preeminent examples of those civil servants (or “Sons of Martha”) who thanklessly martyr themselves on behalf of empire in acts of self-sacrificing labor (Islam 109–11; McBratney xvi; McClure 18). In the tension between the bridge and the Ganges—between British and colonial interests—Kipling dramatizes the dual nature of force and the degree to which British technology draws on the magical. Kipling makes the continuities between British technologies and magic most apparent through the character of Peroo, the lower-caste Indian who assists Findlayson and Hitchcock and often ventriloquizes their fear of the Ganges’s supernatural power. It is Peroo who attributes animistic powers to the river and exclaims, “The bridge challenges Mother Gunga. . . . But when *she* talks I know whose voice will be the loudest” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 16, emphasis original). While Findlayson and Hitchcock dismiss Peroo’s fear that the Ganges will rebel by flooding the bridge and mock Peroo for praying to the low-pressure cylinder in the engine room of a steamship, Findlayson admits that Peroo’s worship of technology is “[n]ot half a bad thing to pray to” (12). Kipling would allude to the continuity between Peroo’s worship of inanimate things and the power Findlayson ascribes to technology in a 1925 letter to Rider Haggard, in which he concurs with Tylor that animism survives in altered form in modern society.<sup>21</sup> “It stands to reason old man that the world’s *very* limited modicum of thinking was done millions of years ago; and that what we mistake for thought nowadays is the reaction of our own damned machinery on our own alleged minds. Get an odd volume of Tyler’s [*sic*] *Primitive Culture* and see how far this squares with fact” (Kipling *Rudyard* 138–39, emphasis original). According to this logic, there exists little difference between the thinking of a Peroo and a Findlayson, between the magical omnipotence of the Ganges, the Kashi Bridge, and steam engine.

This lack of difference, however, then enables Kipling to present the competition between colonial and British interests as the competition between the

force that animates the Ganges and that of the electric telegraph. At the very moment that Findlayson dismisses Peroo's superstitions, a telegram arrives, informing him that the Ganges has flooded due to heavy rains and will flood the bridge within fifteen hours. Even the continuous stream of telegrams cannot keep up with the pace with which the Ganges travels, which floods six hours earlier than initially predicted (Kipling *Day's Work* 14). Pamela Thurschwell argues that Victorians often compared the telegraph to forms of magical thinking such as telepathy because both collapsed time and distances (7, 14).<sup>22</sup> In "The Bridge-Builders," the Ganges's energy not only threatens to collapse distances faster than either the telegraph or Findlayson's workers can respond, but also intimates political rebellion. The competition Kipling stages between two types of energy and message systems—the "wall of chocolate-coloured water" that functions as the Ganges's "messenger" versus the electric telegraph's messages—implicitly returns to the scene of political disorder caused by the 1857 Mutiny (Kipling *Day's Work* 18). In the wake of the Mutiny, British officials claimed that information about their military weakness circulated among rebels with a speed that was "almost electric," demonstrating the administration's vulnerability to the amorphous, magical powers of rumor (Bayly 315, 320–22). It was the electric telegraph and its rapid relay of news that aided British efforts to stymie the Mutiny by "[mobilizing] an international system of communications" (336). In "The Bridge-Builders," the powers attributed to electricity compete with the unknown and magical powers of the Ganges, a competition that doubles for competing British and Indian interests.

Kipling contains the threat of colonial rebellion encoded in the competing forces of the Ganges and telegraph by emphasizing a model of coordinated, self-sacrificing labor that dovetails with his notion of the "law" and ritual as the means by which one maintains social order. Kipling had explored the latter model of action and social order in writings that both precede and follow *The Day's Work*. Kipling's law, first developed in the *Jungle Books* (1894–95), concerns less the issue of right and wrong than the opposition of order and disorder (Randall 115). The law emerges within social groups and represents a set of agreements that governs and controls its individual members such that each subsumes her individual desires in favor of the group (Dobrée 69–70).<sup>23</sup> Kipling, according to Annan's Durkheimian analysis, views society as "a nexus of groups" in which group "patterns of behaviour," rather than individual will, "determined men's actions" and social order (100). In this context, Kipling's law functions much like anthropological notions of culture: individuals move in a

network of relations in which various codes of behavior such as religion, laws, customs, and social mores function as means of control that prevent disorder (102). Following Annan, I argue that adherence to the law in Kipling is identified with performing ritualized, coordinated acts of self-sacrificing labor that consecrate the social order.

That adherence to the law is synonymous for Kipling with ritual and self-sacrificing labor is particularly apparent in those stories that represent Masonic ritual and its relationship to imperialism.<sup>24</sup> Kipling's interest in ritual, especially in connection to Freemasonry, is well documented and represents his overall interest in action as the mode by which individuals communicate who they are and their values. Charles Carrington argues that Freemasonry's "cult of common action," "masculine self-sufficiency," and "hierarchy of secret grades" supplies Kipling with a model in which to explore his social ideals (543). Freemasonry's emphasis on brotherhood, in particular, conjoins Kipling's preoccupation with collective action and self-sacrificing labor. In *The Day's Work*, for example, not only are British civil servants represented as working together as brothers on behalf of empire, but in ".007," Kipling describes trains who belong to a lodge and form "the Amalgamated Brotherhood of Locomotives" (*Kipling* 250). Like these machines, Freemasons are craftsmen devoted to acts of self-sacrificing labor that maintain the British domestic and imperial order.

Freemasonry's connection to empire appears in Kipling's fiction and in the organization's history as well. The lodges that the Freemasons first established in India were deeply connected to the East India Company, whose employees composed its membership base (Mulvey Roberts 103). Kipling's penultimate collection of short stories, *Debits and Credits* (1926), contains several linked stories centered on the unofficial instructional lodge "Faith and Works 5837 C.E.," in which Kipling opposes the formal procedures of ritual and imperial order to colonial disorder and lawlessness. In the story "In the Interests of the Brethren," Kipling describes the encounter between an unnamed narrator and the head of the lodge, Lewis Holroyd Burges, who owns a tobacco shop that also functions as a lodge for Masonic war veterans in London. However much Burges may emphasize the importance of ritual, whether in the workplace or in the Masonic lodge, as what is "fortifying" and "a natural necessity for mankind" (*Debits and Credits* 50), the lodge itself has not been authorized by the Grand Lodge, and its performance of Masonic ritual unfolds in an improvisational manner—a fact he excuses by stating that "it's the Spirit, not the Letter, that giveth life" (51).<sup>25</sup> Such improvisation would not be troubling if the narrator did

not present a parallel between the informality of the lodge's rituals and the disorder of empire. When the members of the lodge perform their greetings, for example, the narrator claims that they speak "without order, in every tone between a grunt and a squeak" (59). The mishmash membership of the lodge and its cacophonous performance of Masonic rituals are "as mixed as the Empire itself" (59). Kipling had echoed similar sentiments in "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888). In this story, two rowdy ex-soldiers of the British Indian Army, Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan, briefly colonize a portion of Afghanistan, and Dravot founds a lodge there despite Carnehan's warning that it was "against all the law" to set up a lodge without sanction from the Grand Lodge (Kipling "Man" 174). Dravot and Carnehan "have to fudge the Ritual" since they do not know fully what they are doing (175). Both their violation of the "law" and their improvisation of ritual, as their violent deaths indicate, contribute to colonial disorder rather than erecting structures that discipline it.

Unlike Burges or Peachey and Carnehan, Kipling's civil servants in *The Day's Work* epitomize the ritualized networks of self-sacrificing labor that reproduces the law and social order in order to constrain the rebellious force of self-interest represented by colonial magic and political insurgency. Hence, Findlayson responds to the disorderly upheaval that commences with the news of the flood by calling all the workers to attention in a coordinated effort of labor that will forestall the destructive rebellion of the river and effectively translate the Ganges's magical energy into the sacred energy that stabilizes imperial power. This coordinated effort appears not only in their actual acts, but also in the call-and-response pattern in which the "conch, drum, and whistle echoed the call" of the gong that signals the flood, and "[e]ngine after engine toiling home along the spurs after her day's work whistled in answer till the whistles were answered from the far bank" (Kipling *The Day's Work* 13–14). The call-and-response pattern mirrors the coordinated labor of the workers who "stand by the day's work and wait instructions" (14). As in each of the stories in the collection, scenes of mutual self-sacrifice and interdependence in which both men and machines perform synchronic acts of labor on behalf of empire become hallmarks of "the day's work" that forms the foundation of empire. In opposition to the frenzied torrent of the Ganges, Kipling describes an organized call to attention in which, as Daniel Bivona states, "a complex—and hierarchical—division of labor" fosters "disciplinary interdependency" and forestalls social disorder (71).<sup>26</sup>

Despite the advance warning of the telegrams and acts of coordinated labor,

the conclusion of “The Bridge-Builders” suggests that the order these tactics generate remains tenuous and destabilized by British investment in the magical forces it rearticulates. The story concludes with a nighttime dream sequence in which Findlayson, in an opium-induced stupor, experiences a vision in which he and Peroo watch various animals identified with gods from the Hindu pantheon hold council about the Ganges’s desire to destroy the bridge as an act of political resistance against the bridge-builders who “have chained [her] flood” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 29).<sup>27</sup> In the debate that unfolds, Hindu gods such as Krishna and Hanuman debate as to whether they will be replaced by new gods—British technology—or if Hinduism has gained the upper hand since in worshipping such objects as the “fire-carriage” Britons replicate animistic tendencies within Hinduism (40–41). Through the dream sequence, Kipling highlights the fact that the “energy” that animates the gods of the Hindu pantheon and sacred rivers such as the Ganges also animates imperial technologies—a point underscored by Indra’s enigmatic words at the story’s conclusion: “When Brahm ceases to dream the Heavens and the Hells and Earth disappear. Be content. Brahm dreams still. . . . The Gods change, beloved—all save One!” (42). Kipling here emphasizes how the steam-breathing machines that Findlayson worships as emblems of imperial power are similarly enlivened by the prime mover, Brahm, the creator god in Hinduism whose breath sets the universe in motion. Thus the decision of the gods to let the bridge stand typifies Kipling’s ideological position that the forces of empire are inevitable and pointless to resist; yet it also suggests that the omnipotence of empire—its visible edifices and machines—is ultimately under the thrall of colonial magic. The ambiguous ending of “The Bridge-Builders” frames two possibilities that Kipling’s representations for the economy and imperial administration in subsequent stories explore: agents of empire and imperial technologies either discipline the dual and competing forces of the magical through ritualized, coordinated acts of self-sacrificing labor, or they succumb to the contagious powers of magic and thus become emblems of disorder rather than the “law.”<sup>28</sup>

### *The Magic of Steam Engines*

Kipling’s use of the steam engine as a metaphor for the economy does not reflect a self-conscious integration of Spencerian arguments as it did in Edgeworth and Marshall. While Kipling had read Spencer, his use of the steam en-

gine draws equally on the technology's broader cultural and economic significance. The steam engine served as an iconic symbol of Victorian progressiveness and scientific advancement, as well as being integral to establishing networks of global economic trade.<sup>29</sup> Timothy Alborn argues that the steam engine, in particular, served as the most common representation of "centralized economic administration" (176–77).<sup>30</sup> This connection between the steam engine and representations of the economy has earlier precursors than nineteenth-century writers and thinkers such as Spencer or Kipling; Ben Marsden and Crosbie Smith argue that eighteenth-century economists like Adam Smith contributed to a cultural climate that identified national wealth, power, and labor with engines (42–43). An attraction to engines as symbols of British imperial and economic power was not all Kipling shared with Spencer and economists.<sup>31</sup> Just as Spencer claimed that those systems that maintain their moving equilibrium are most likely to compete successfully, so Kipling's steamships epitomize a dynamic model of equilibrium necessary for global economic competition. Moreover, both Kipling and Spencer articulate the nineteenth-century fascination with energy as a type of supernatural power—an energy expressed in the case of the steam engine as steam itself.

What is particularly striking in Kipling's use of these analogies for the economy, however, is that he situates his steamships in a global, imperial context where strategic (if not violent) competition threatens the equilibrium and orderly functioning of the ship and, by extension, Britain's global economic power. The disruptive effects of self-interest within the double narrative of capitalism surface along nationalist lines, that is, as the sacred force and ritualized coordination that animates British steam technology versus profane forces of colonial disorder and magic. In the short story, "The Ship that Found Herself," all parts of the ship's engine participate in a coordinated, ritualized system of reciprocal acts in which self-sacrificing labor disciplines the magical powers of energy—an analogue for efficient yet elastic administration and economic exchange at equilibrium. "The Ship that Found Herself" articulates a model of action in concert wherein steam acts as a prime mover and magical force, impelling all parts of the ship to unite as one voice through acts of mutual self-sacrifice and interdependence. In this manner, the coordinated acts of the ship, the *Dimbula*, exemplify Kipling's conception of ritual as a type of action that reproduces the social order and law through self-sacrifice and the bonds of fraternal kinship.<sup>32</sup>

The poem that opens the story, "Song of the Engines," announces the prin-

ciples of self-sacrifice, mutuality, and brotherhood. “We now, held in captivity, / Spring to our labour nor grieve! / See now, how it is blessed, / Brothers, to give than receive! / Keep trust, wherefore ye were made, / Paying the duty ye owe” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 78). This model of action united on the basis of duty and mutual labor results in a steamship that, like Edgeworth’s description of steam engines at equilibrium, achieves a balance through the interdependent function of all parts as they maximize the energy of the whole. The steam engine and ship that Kipling describes, however, retain elasticity and incorporate biological elements. As a result, the *Dimbula* is not constrained by the static model of equilibrium that delimited the theorizations of Edgeworth and Marshall, but offers a model of action as a dynamic, internally calibrated system epitomized in Spencer’s description of a moving equilibrium. As the captain of the *Dimbula* states, “a ship . . . is in no sense a reegid body closed at both ends. She’s a highly complex structure o’ various an’ conflictin’ strains, wi’ tissues that must give an’ tak’ accordin’ to her personal modulus of elasteecity” (80).

Such dynamism, however, is contingent on an ethic of mutuality. Prior to engaging on her first cross-Atlantic voyage, the *Dimbula* has not yet acted as a unified entity and borne the struggle of rough waters. In order to be truly animated or “livened up” with the powers associated with a ship, each part has to coordinate its function with that of others and “work together” (80). This coordination does not simply require a balance of forces; rather, each part must accommodate and adjust to the impact of force experienced by other parts of the ship and the sea as well. In this sense, the ship possesses the dynamic element of change that Marshall sought to incorporate into his model of the economy as a biological system in which forces do not simply balance each other in a static system, but also change and are changed by the forces with which they come into contact. The ship tempers mechanical systematicity with, as the engineer of the *Dimbula* surmises, “spontaneecity” (80). The *Dimbula* is not a “reegid body,” but like the tissues of a body possesses a degree of elasticity that allows it to adapt to conflicting forces within and against its structure, thus blending mechanical systematicity with biological spontaneity.

The mutual coordination of the *Dimbula*’s mechanical parts mirrors the balance of forces and interests in economic systems at equilibrium. In depicting such mutuality and coordination, moreover, Kipling’s story implicitly adopts a labor theory of value.

The *Dimbula* was very strongly built, and every piece of her had a letter or number, or both, to describe it; and every piece had been hammered, or forged, or

rolled, or punched by man, and had lived in the roar and rattle of the ship-yard for months. Therefore, every piece had its own separate voice in exact proportion to the amount of trouble spent upon it. Cast-iron, as a rule, says very little; but mild steel plates and wrought-iron, and ribs and beams that have been much bent and welded and riveted, talk continuously. Their conversation, of course, is not half as wise as our human talk, because they are all, though they do not know it, bound down one to the other in a black darkness, where they cannot tell what is happening near them, nor what will overtake them next. (81–82)

Each part of the *Dimbula* bears traces of its individuality insofar as it stands as an artifact of past labors. The individual voice of each mechanical part expresses the labor quantities or “amount of trouble” expended in production. By giving each part a voice, Kipling’s articulation of the labor theory of value links its bioeconomic vitalism to magical thinking. These individually animated parts then stand in for agents in the economic system. And as in my discussion of exchange in chapter 4, wherein each discrete act of exchange came to be harmonized within an interdependent network of exchanges without conscious coordination, so the discrete parts of the ship coordinate their voices in a “conversation” though no part knows “what is happening near them.” Instead of being guided by Smith’s invisible hand, Kipling figures the prime mover in his parable of the economy, like Edgeworth, as energy itself—steam.

Kipling’s representation of the *Dimbula* resembles a capitalist economic system in yet one other respect: the *Dimbula*’s internal equilibrium continuously faces unrest from opposing forces of self-interest. As the narrator of the story remarks, the *Dimbula* was built cheaply and for speed in order to survive in “these days of competition” (78). The *Dimbula* participates in global trade, carrying cargo from Liverpool across the Atlantic to New York. Rather than directly engage with global economic competition, however, Kipling allegorically stages the conflict of competing economic forces through the threat the Atlantic waves pose to the *Dimbula*—a competition that hearkens back to the contest between the Ganges’s waters and that of the bridge and telegraph. As the foremast exclaims, “There’s an organized conspiracy against us . . . every single one of these waves is heading directly for our bows” (88). Once the boat moves into the Atlantic, the voice of the steam plays a leadership role as the waves begin to challenge various parts of the ship. As in Spencer’s analysis of the military and the division of labor as examples of evolutionary integration and differentiation (*First Principles* 1:342–47), the steam acts like the leader of a regiment, directing each disgruntled part of the ship



to stay its course because one part abandoning its post is “contagious in a boat” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 93).

The *Dimbula* encounters its first experience of ‘the day’s work’ and, by anthropomorphizing the ship, Kipling dramatizes the dissent that ensues when each part of the boat must subsume its egoism in order to become one voice. Thus, for example, the plates grumble that they do not know “whether the other plates are doing their duty,” whereas the web frame laments that it does all the work “entirely unsupported” and bears sole responsibility for the expensive cargo (86, 87). The funnels, stays, and decks all tell each other to “pull together” and fight the waves, while the frames say they must expand and the engines call for rigidity (91). In this comical scenario, Kipling demonstrates that the ship must be both rigid and elastic at once in order to effectively unite in its action and find its voice as one ship. All the while, the steam urges all parts of the boat to “hold on” and “[s]hare [the strain]” (92, 93), encouraging them to cooperate with one another until they are able to balance rigidity with elasticity. As the cylinders relate to the steam: “If you’d been hammered as we’ve been this night, you wouldn’t be stiff—iff—iff, either. Theoreti—retti—retti—cally, of course, rigidity is the thing. Purrr—purrr—practically, there has to be a little give and take” (97). While Kipling does not consciously respond to the methodological problems that faced Marshall and Edgeworth, the *Dimbula* succinctly allegorizes the conundrum that these economists faced. Theoretically, static equilibrium articulates an ideal state of the economy, but pragmatically speaking, forces not only balance each other but affect each other and evolve, requiring elasticity in its highly integrated system. Having achieved such integration and a moving equilibrium, when the *Dimbula* comes to port it addresses the steam in “a new, big voice,” and “[t]he Steam knew what had happened at once; for when a ship finds herself all the talking of the separate pieces ceases and melts into one voice, which is the soul of the ship” (101). While the ship has found her voice and learned to calibrate all the forces that animate it to form a unified whole, the steam addresses the *Dimbula* as a separate entity. Like Brahm in “The Bridge-Builders,” the transcendent energy that enlivens all other entities nevertheless remains distinct from them.

In addition to allegorizing the economy as a moving equilibrium, the coordinated acts of the *Dimbula* serve as yet another example of arguments I have previously made regarding the concept of ritual during the nineteenth century, namely, that rather than simply denoting acts of worship toward a deity, ritual references a type of collective action in which agents participate in a reflexive

information system that conveys shared knowledge even when face-to-face contact is absent. In the example of the *Dimbula*, the ship “found herself” through functional participation in the mechanized system of the ship, though each part performed its duty without full knowledge about the actions of other parts. Yet, in the end, this disinterested performance of prescribed functions within an orderly system resulted in the experience of unity and an orderly system. Kipling’s example of the *Dimbula* demonstrates the process by which individual parts overcome their sense of separateness through coordinated acts of self-sacrifice and become unified as “one voice”—what Durkheim termed “collective effervescence” and Victor Turner *communitas* (*Elementary* 171; Turner *Ritual Process* 96–97). Here, as in Roy Rappaport’s discussion of ritual as an information system, the parts of the *Dimbula* become fully absorbed in “doing” rather than “saying” and, through their unified action, diffuse the binary conflict between thought and action that so often plagues theories of ritual and practice (Rappaport 50–52; Bell *Ritual Theory* 13–29). For Kipling, the unity that results from collective action encodes and reaffirms the acceptance of the social order, the law. Through the unified performance of duties, whether these duties are performed by agents of empire such as Findlayson or mechanical systems that represent the economy such as the *Dimbula*, collective acts sanctify the very order their ritual performances encode.

If the *Dimbula* stands as a model of the economy’s moving equilibrium and the way ritualized discipline successfully constrains competing interests in a global economy by translating the disruptive force of the magical into what consecrates the British economic and social order, Kipling’s second story about steamships in *The Day’s Work*, “The Devil and the Deep Sea,” represents the very opposite. In this story, magic’s contagion envelops both the crew and steamship, causing it to descend into a state of lawlessness and self-destruction. Like the later poem “The Secret of the Machines” (1911), “The Devil and the Deep Sea” expresses Kipling’s fascination with machines and technology, but it also registers reservations regarding technology precisely because of its magical powers. In “The Secret of the Machines,” for example, various types of modern machines such as the telegraph and steamship boast of their ability to surpass human limitations and yet warn the reader of their supernatural powers: “If you make a slip in handling us you die! / . . . Our touch can alter all created things, / We are everything on earth except—The Gods!” (Kipling *Complete Verse* 600). Though machines seem to possess a power that nears that of the gods, the poem undercuts their fetishized powers by suggesting that the error

lies in our tendency to ascribe supernatural powers to entities that are actually the product of human labor and imagination. Hence, the poem ends by stating that “for all our power and weight and size, / We are nothing more than children of your brain!” (600, emphasis original). While Kipling views the magical powers attributed to technology as merely a product of the mind and a Tylorian survival, he also fears them as potential sources of lawlessness and disorder.

In “The Devil and the Deep Sea,” the crew of a mercantile steamship, the *Haliotis*, eventually goes mad when left to fend for itself in peacetime. Outside the scaffolding of imperial administration and economic exchange, the magical energies that animate the ship lead to lawlessness. Kipling prefigures the ship’s potential for disorder through its mercurial identity, which stands as an analogue for the protean nature of the supernatural. Like other secret agents of empire in Kipling’s fiction such as Kim, “the boat of many names” selflessly served empire by embracing multiple identities and reinvesting “a large percentage of the profits of her voyages . . . on her engine-room” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 150). Yet the ship’s mercurial identity proves to be a liability when peacetime brings an end to her trading. As Kipling would later make clear through the militaristic poem “Big Steamers” (1914–1918), steamships like the *Haliotis* daily contribute to the imperial trade and expansion that Britons take for granted. Such steamships, he admonishes the British consumer, “fetch you your bread and your butter, / Your beef, pork, and mutton, eggs, apples, and cheese” from cities like Hong Kong and Bombay. If Britons want to continue enjoying such privileges, they should send “big warships to watch [their] big waters” (Kipling *Complete Verse* 598–99). Similarly, a passive British populace and government form the backdrop of the *Haliotis*’s demise since it occurs when “peace brooded over Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australasia, and Polynesia . . . and business was very bad for the *Martin Hunt*” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 150). Deprived of the economic opportunities that wartime and imperial expansion affords her, the *Martin Hunt* resurfaces elsewhere as the *Haliotis* and the crew enters a life of piracy, illegally poaching oysters for pearls to sell on the black market (138). Once the *Haliotis* is left to roam outside the structures of imperial administration and trade, the fluid identity and supernatural energy that had allied it to empire become linked to disorder.

Kipling demonstrates through the example of the *Haliotis* that the fluid and magical nature of energy must be carefully controlled or imperial omnipotence will quickly translate into self-annihilation. The *Haliotis* thus exemplifies Kipling’s worst-case scenario: rather than being a model of coordinated, recip-

rocal action, the *Haliotis*'s engine becomes a maniacal beast. Such magical powers spread like a destructive contagion as both boat and crew descend into madness after a Southeast Asian man-of-war shells the ship and damages its engine.

The forward engine had no more work to do. Its released piston-rod, therefore, drove up fiercely, with nothing to check it, and started most of the nuts of the cylinder-cover. It came down again, the full weight of the steam behind it, and the foot of the disconnected connecting-rod, useless as the leg of a man with a sprained ankle, flung out to the right and struck the starboard. . . . There was a sound below of things happening—a rushing, clicking, purring, grunting, rattling noise that did not last for more than a minute. It was the machinery adjusting itself, on the spur of the moment, to a hundred altered conditions. . . . You cannot stop engines working at twelve knots an hour in three seconds without disorganising them. The *Haliotis* slid forward in a cloud of steam, shrieking like a wounded horse. (152–53)

Kipling allegorizes the politics of disorder and the *Haliotis*'s alienation from the structures of imperial administration and economy through the destruction of the engine. Like the *Haliotis* itself, the damaged and dislocated parts of the engine are left either with “no more work to do,” or, because “disconnected” from the framework of the engine, perform their functions in a frenzied manner “with nothing to check it.” Anthropomorphizing the ship's engine, Kipling describes it as a body whose severed limbs cease to function as a highly integrated and coordinated organism. And as with the body's reflexes, the injured engine tries to adjust its actions as it spontaneously responds “to a hundred altered conditions,” but to no avail.

The damage to the ship's engine actually adds to its fetishized powers and leaves it in a state of dangerous excess. Commenting on the ship's instability as it is towed to port, the narrator states that “[t]he forward cylinder was depending on that unknown force men call the pertinacity of materials, which now and then balances that other heart-breaking power, the perversity of inanimate things” (155). Rather than epitomizing Spencer's example of a moving equilibrium, the energy and “unknown force” that animate the *Haliotis* have become a destructive and unbalanced demonic spirit. When the engineer, Wardrop, enters the engine room to repair the *Haliotis*, Kipling describes him as an artist who “composed a work terrible and forbidding. His background was the dark-

grained sides of the engine-room; his material the metals of power and strength” (157). Here Kipling not only casts the engineer as a magician who must control the magical energies of technology in order to maintain order, but also as an artist figure who replicates Kipling’s aesthetic, which draws on notions of magic to depict the prominence and vagaries of British imperial aggression. As a “magician” of the short story, Kipling faces the very complications facing the technologies of empire—the powers of the magical may overwhelm the orderliness he represents and, as author, asserts in his fictions.

It is unsurprising, in this context, that Kipling interprets the powers of machines, especially steam engines, as akin to daemons whose supernatural energies the engineer must translate into unified and regularized action. In “Steam Tactics,” from *Traffics and Discoveries*, the character Hinchcliffe is the “engineer o’ the *Djinn*,” a steamship (Kipling 167). In Islam, “jinn” literally means made from fire and represents “an invisible order of beings” that have supernatural powers (J. Z. Smith 573). The damage to the *Haliotis*’s engine unleashes the demonic and fetishized spirit that had once been regularized within the steam engine as the supply and expenditure of steam. Once disorder is given free reign, no amount of reconstructive work by Wardrop and the crew returns the ship’s engine to its prior state of order. Unlike the *Dimbula*, which spoke in “one voice,” the ship’s “new song” is, in Wardrop’s words, “the voice of a maniac” (Kipling *Day’s Work* 178). Like the disorderly performance of Masonic rituals in Burges’s lodge, the magical forces that animate the ship’s “soul” become a crazed cacophony of conflicting voices (178). “There were outcries and clamours, sobs and bursts of chattering laughter, silences where the trained ear yearned for the clear note, and torturing reduplications where there should have been one deep voice” (178). This disorder eventually infects the crew, who now appear “naked and savage” and “[look] over the rail, desolate, unkempt, unshorn, shamelessly clothed” (180). The “new song” of the *Haliotis* signals, like the many-armed gods of the Hindu pantheon, a proliferating multiplicity and lawlessness that eventually wrecks the ship.

But steamships like the *Dimbula* and *Haliotis* are but one example of imperial technologies that either do or do not effectively combine the mechanical systematicity and elasticity that Marshall so admired in colonial administration. In the next chapter I turn to Kipling’s picaresque novel, *Kim*, where he depicts the relationship between ritualized coordination, magic, and technologies such as the electric telegraph in a decentralized model of global economic imperialism and administration. The decentralized model responds in a spon-

taneous manner to exigent circumstances and epitomizes the open-ended, invisible agencies of imperial aggression; it thus compensates for the inadequacies of centralized administration and holistic representation of the economy and empire found in his mechanical analogies. In this second model, Kipling continues to emphasize coordinated, self-sacrificing action on behalf of empire, but highlights the ludic and improvisational aspects of ritual, specifically the Great Game of imperial conquest.

## CHAPTER 8

# Electric Kim and the Ludic Rituals of Empire

I argued in the previous chapter that in short-story collections such as *Debits and Credits*, where Kipling addresses the uses and abuses of Masonic ritual, he posits an implicit link between the disorderly, improvised performance of ritual and the breakdown of the law and social order. Kipling's steamships, by contrast, epitomize coordinated, ritualized acts of self-sacrificing reciprocity that allegorically reference an optimally functioning economy and centralized imperial administration. Although steamships exemplify efficiency, they are nevertheless machines that sometimes break down and require ad hoc adjustment in order to function again. Hence, despite Kipling's criticism of improvised ritual, his decentralized model of the economy and imperial administration in *Kim* reveals how improvisation (when performed appropriately) is necessary for Britain's continued economic and political domination. This need for improvisation historically relates to differing styles of colonial administration. Lewis Wurgaft argues that post-Mutiny imperial administration often marks the dividing line between the improvisational, "rough-and-ready" administrative style on the Punjab frontier and the administrative red tape that hampered such action in the 1880s and 1890s (37). In Kipling's story "William the Conqueror" from *The Day's Work*, for example, the civil servant Scott typifies what came to be known as the Punjab style of government (37): Scott willingly goes into the most rural areas of India where there are no telegraphs or material comforts to aid in famine relief efforts, selflessly drawing on his own funds to pay for expenses rather than relying on the slowness of government bureaucracy.

In the post-Mutiny era of *Kim*, however, penetration into rural India be-

comes linked to information technologies such as the telegraph and Kim's participation in the Great Game. As Thomas Richards contends, *Kim* depicts the transition from previous modes of colonization, such as deportation or slavery, to "colonization through the mediated instrumentality of information" (*Imperial Archive* 23)—a transition that was crucial to the tactics of the Great Game. The term "Great Game" typically refers to the British mapping of the Indian subcontinent through varied cartographic methods in the scramble to expand territorial dominion in Central Asia against rival nations such as Russia.<sup>1</sup> In *Kim*, the work of ethnological survey and mapping that Kim and others perform functions as a disguise for espionage committed on behalf of the British secret service (Brantlinger *Rule of Darkness* 163). Kipling makes apparent through Kim that maintaining Britain's political and economic interests requires a combined tactic in which Britain mobilizes indigenous and British spies on the ground *and* utilizes its modern information technologies such as the telegraph. Kipling deploys this dual tactic and tackles the problem of decentralized forms of control by casting Kim as both spy and, metaphorically, the magical medium of electricity that penetrates the interior of India's unknown territorialities. Kim, like the telegraph, functions as both medium and messenger, co-opting the formlessness of India that undermines the imperial order with its invisibility. Hence if, as Sara Suleri remarks, Kim's "body is synonymous with the information of empire" (115), Kipling establishes such identity by linking him to the telegraph. In this regard, the continuities I established in the previous chapter between magic, energy, technology, and self-interested capitalism appear in the novel's use of the telegraph as a magical medium that is integral to the Great Game of global economic imperialism and its allied information systems. As both magical medium and messenger, Kim transmits information from the periphery to the imperial center, translating the rebellious forces of the colonial magical into the sacred force that consecrates the imperial order and its institutionally sanctioned interests.

Kipling's depiction of the relationship between centralized and decentralized forms of imperial administration and economic expansion recalls an intractable problem regarding the continuity between Britain's formal and informal empire. While I am not concerned in this chapter with addressing this vexed debate, the seminal arguments by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson did cause a shift in how we understand the relationship between free trade and imperialism that bears on my reading of *Kim*. Gallagher and Robinson argued that in contradistinction to historical narratives of British imperialism that op-



posed mid-Victorian free trade and anti-imperialist sentiment to the era of imperialist expansion that followed at the end of the century, mid-Victorian Britain simply employed informal techniques to develop colonies economically in ways that furthered British economic interests, either as resources for British imports or as markets for British manufacturing through monopolist practices and protective tariffs (4–6, 10–13). Bernard Semmel further argues that “free trade imperialism,” rather than an oxymoron, was part of the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political economy in which mercantilism was not at odds with theories of laissez-faire but integral to the image of Britain as “the Workshop of the World”—a supremacy that was achieved for economists like Ricardo through economic domination (4–5, 8). These coercive tactics reveal the troubling underside that Ricardo’s idealized vision of pan-national economic networks of exchange at equilibrium elides.

Kipling explores the competitive tactics of British economic imperialism by deploying, as he did in *The Day’s Work*, the aesthetic mode of allegory. *Kim* demonstrates the alliance of laissez-faire economics and political imperialism through an allegorical representation of the Great Game as a reticulated and coordinated system of exchanges in which the material exchanged is not commodities or money, but information itself. By metaphorically comparing Kim to the telegraph, Kipling demonstrates how the exchange of information between participants in the Great Game functions, like my previous discussion of social practices such as ritual and exchange, as a reflexive information system that establishes common knowledge and communion among its participants. Furthering this underlying continuity between ritual, strategic games, and information systems is the fact that Kipling deliberately links Kim’s participation in the Great Game to the Freemasons and their self-sacrificing acts of reciprocity. Though an allegorical reading of the Great Game discloses its kinship to representations of the economy as an information system that establishes common knowledge and solidarity, *Kim* exposes the persistent asymmetries in economic and political power that more sanguine visions of laissez-faire economics obscure. This is largely because Kipling’s narrative shows how the Great Game furthers the interests of the nation-state and strategically establishes common knowledge and harmonic relations within one group in order to win advantages over its rivals.

*Kim*’s representation of the Great Game anticipates, to some degree, current debates in globalization regarding the economic power that derives from technology as both the means and the product of a global economy (Castells 67, 91),

as well as game-theoretic models of economic behavior as the competitive play of strategic advantages. Kipling demonstrates that insofar as ritual is akin to a competitive, strategic game between rivals, such rivalries end not with an equilibrium in which each group optimizes its payoff, as game theories would suggest, but a disequilibrium in which one group attempts to win advantages against another. Thus while *The Day's Work* demonstrates the way in which political and economic imperialism draw on notions of equilibrium and the sacred/profane in order to subtend hegemonic inequalities rather than resolve them, *Kim* lays bare yet another complication within the double narrative of capitalism. Kim's manipulation of magic and the novel's indeterminate ending suggest that global economic networks hinge on a model of interdependence and mutuality that is both symbiotic and parasitic, disinterested and keenly self-interested—a game continuously played and replayed by competing parties until one group wins and the other is willingly, or unwillingly, sacrificed.

### *Technology, Magic, and the Global*

Kipling's choice of steamships in *The Day's Work* to represent the complex coordination, hierarchical division of labor, and solidarity necessary for an optimally functioning economy or imperial administration has the advantage of being a discrete, easily visualized representation of social systems. Just as Jevons turned to the price index in order to imaginatively represent the interconnected network that results from countless invisible acts of exchange, so steam cars and steamships in Kipling's fiction become a shorthand for an economic and imperial system that actually eludes such manageable parameters. *Kim*, however, differs from such mechanical analogies in one important respect: the novel allows us to follow the actions of those participating in the Great Game from within, rarely allowing us to glimpse the totalized network of the game from without. Although Kipling rarely offers a distanced and discrete representation of communality in *Kim*, the novel nevertheless becomes a model for how technologies such as the electric telegraph mediate the experience of communion without face-to-face contact. Yet it is precisely the global reach of the telegraph and the communion its magical powers facilitate that give Kipling pause since such technology potentially undermines the unequal distribution of power between colonizer and colonized that it, ideally, should buttress. The telegraph thus plays a paradoxical role in the geo-political landscape of Kipling's fiction: it is an instru-

ment of national self-interest that converts the magical energies of colonial resistance into the energy that consecrates British political and economic power, but it is also the medium by which nations establish transnational, interdependent networks of communication and exchange. Kipling's fiction here exposes the tension between national self-interest and transnational interdependence that political economic visions of a global free market that binds nations in relations of mutual reciprocity otherwise underplay.

While Kipling had already appealed to the telegraph's magical powers and speed in "The Bridge-Builders," later stories such as "Wireless" from *Traffics and Discoveries*, as well as his poem "The Deep Sea Cables" (1898), directly represent the magical powers of modern communication technologies. In "Wireless," the daemonic energies that had earlier inspired engineers leads a consumptive druggist named Shaynor to become the creative medium for Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" and "The Eve of St. Agnes." The anonymous narrator of the story waits in a chemist's shop with Shaynor and the electrician, Mr. Cashell, who has set up a Marconi telegraph to receive wireless messages from his friend named Poole. Though the narrator comes to watch the experiment with the Marconi wireless telegraph, he instead observes the consumptive Shaynor transcribe lines by Keats while staring at an advertisement of a woman named "Fanny Brand" in a drug-induced reverie. Richard Menke has already given extensive attention to the technology of wireless telegraphy in "Wireless." Menke demonstrates how the fin de siècle association of technology with the occult, that is, as something both objectively scientific yet supra-empirical, surfaces in the generic hybridity of "Wireless," which is realist and fabulist at once (234, 242). It is no accident, according to Menke, that a technology that seemingly facilitated the borderless communication of minds akin to séances should then be linked to Romantic poets like Keats, who emphasized sublime unity through the mind (237–38).

But the uncertain boundary between science/technology and the magical, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, is not particular to the late-Victorian interest in psychical experience but part of the theoretical genealogy of magic. The notion that the universe is animated by a supra-empirical energy displays the overlap between modern science and animistic thinking and, as Christopher Herbert argues, evidences the assumption that things are alive "by virtue of their propensity for sending messages" (*Victorian Relativity* 54). Kipling makes this relationship between magic, electricity/energy, and communication explicit in "Wireless." When the narrator asks Cashell to explain the nature of

electricity, Cashell classifies it as “something nobody knows” (Kipling *Traffics and Discoveries* 202). “It’s just It—what we call Electricity, but the magic—the manifestations—the Hertzian waves—are all revealed by *this*. The coherer, we call it. . . . ‘That is the thing that will reveal to us the Powers—whatever the Powers may be—at work—through space—a long distance away’” (202–3, emphasis original). Electricity assumes the position, as once did steam, of the magical prime mover—the noumenon whose nature we only know through its “manifestations” and which the coherer alone reveals. Explaining the way the coherer works, Cashell states that Hertzian waves cause the particles of dust to cohere from the magnetic field it creates. In this magnetic field, a wire becomes charged with electricity simply by being parallel to another wire in a magnetic field “[o]n its own account” (207). As in Frazer’s claim that sympathetic magic operates “at a distance through a secret sympathy, the impulse being transmitted from one to the other by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether” (*Golden Bough* 1:54), wires become charged within a magnetic field without any actual contact. Kipling literalizes the notion that magic operates by sympathy and contagion through Shaynor’s act of automatic writing, which the narrator attributes to the “Hertzian wave of tuberculosis” (*Traffics and Discoveries* 213). Like tuberculosis, the sympathetic magic of electricity transmits its powers from wire to wire simply through propinquity and, hence, imitates the logic of contagion.

This relationship between sympathy, unknown powers, and electricity, according to Jill Galvan, reflects the nineteenth-century gendering of electricity and mediumship as feminine at a historical moment when women themselves were, on the one hand, seen as sympathetic/communicative and, on the other hand, increasingly entering the public sphere and working within the telecommunications industry (1–22, 176–77). Yet the telegraph not only facilitated the transgression of gender boundaries, as Galvan argues, it also threatened to dissolve hierarchical social divisions more generally. Thus although John Durham Peters argues that the telegraph, like other forms of communication, registers a longing for unity and enabled disembodied “spiritual communication” (1–2, 139), Kipling also sees such absence of boundaries as a potential threat. The complete deterritorialization that Deleuze and Guattari associate with the telegraph is for Kipling far from a halcyon image.<sup>2</sup> In the poem “The Deep Sea Cables,” for example, Kipling expresses fear and awe at the electric telegraph’s powers to create unity:<sup>3</sup> “For a Power troubles the Still that has neither voice nor feet. // They have wakened the timeless Things; they have killed their father Time; / . . . Hush! Men talk to-day o’er the waste of the ultimate slime, / And a

new Word runs between: whispering, ‘Let us be one!’” (Kipling *Complete Verse* 138). The unity experienced around the world due to telegraphic communication annihilates distance and time, allowing people to communicate at vast distances quickly.<sup>4</sup> For Kipling, however, the telegraph’s magical powers can also be threatening because, like all forms of magical contagion, they annihilate distinction. The exclamation “Let us be one” does not express enthusiasm for utopian unity and equality, but apprehension that magical forces, when not rearticulated as the expression of imperial omnipotence, can level difference.

The problematic position the telegraph occupies in Kipling recapitulates the previous chapter’s discussion of the inherent duality of force/energy and magic, as either the profane/magical force that destabilizes the social order or the sacred force that consecrates it. *Kim* poses this conflict through the competition between imperial and indigenous information systems. In *Kim*, the principle of contiguity by which magic and electricity communicate their powers becomes a tool for empire to control the dissemination of information—a tool Kim embodies and performs. Unlike other representations of imperial control, Kim’s dispersal into the interstices of India’s deterritorialized regions makes him just as invisible and magical as the energies he channels.<sup>5</sup> Yet, as we will see, in order to avoid a complete erasure of hierarchies, Kim self-consciously mimics the magical thinking associated with Indian culture to assert difference and distinguish the magic of imperial omnipotence and its interests from the illegitimate, unruly interests of the colonized subject. Hence, Kipling first establishes Kim’s authority and control over magic through mimicry before linking him to the telegraph and the Great Game. In this way, Kim’s nickname, “Little Friend of all the World,” anticipates his role in the global information networks established by the telegraph, but renders these networks serviceable to imperial power (Kipling *Kim* 155).

### ***Mimicry and Imperial Magic***

Kim’s magical status appears at the outset of the novel through his connection with the secret society of the Masonic brotherhood; the amulet he wears around his neck contains his “estate” and consists of his baptismal certificate, his father’s military certificate, and Masonic papers. The Masonic papers “belonged to a great piece of magic—such magic as men practiced over yonder behind the Museum . . .—the Magic House, as we name the Masonic Lodge” (50). Kim’s

identity papers represent his totemic membership to the magical and secret brotherhood of both the Freemasons and, eventually, the brotherhood of Secret Service agents who work on behalf of the Great Game. In the poem “The Totem” (1932), for example, Kipling conceives totemic membership in Freemasonry as synonymous with participation in the Great Game. “I was loosed to go my ways / With a Totem on my breast/Governing my nights and days— // Ancient and unbribeable, / By the virtue of its Name— / Which, however oft I fell, / Lashed me back into The Game” (Kipling *Complete Verse* 640). When Father Victor and Bennett catch Kim and discover his true identity by taking the amulet filled with his identity papers, Kim shouts, “Oh give it me. It is my charm” (Kipling *Kim* 132). Kim’s attitude toward his identity papers and his pursuit of the Red Bull insignia from his father’s military regiment as a type of “fetish” intrigues Colonel Creighton, the head of the British Secret Service and avid ethnographer who mentors Kim in the Great Game (161). While Kim initially seems to reproduce the fetishistic thinking associated with Indians, his hybrid racial identity as the child of a “nurse-maid in a Colonel’s family” and Irish sergeant (49), as well as his totemic membership in groups such as the Freemasons and the Secret Service, enables him to self-consciously mimic fetishistic thinking as a tactic within the Great Game.<sup>6</sup>

On account of his unorthodox upbringing, Kim occupies a liminal space in which his deft manipulation and performance of colonial identities furthers the aims of empire. Interpreting Kim as a liminal figure of adolescence and multivalent, colonial hybridity, Don Randall argues that Kipling figures Kim as a mediator, who “serves to integrate and co-ordinate under a continuous *impe-rium* the various, dispersed sites where power intervenes” (17, emphasis original).<sup>7</sup> In penetrating these “dispersed sites,” Kim both draws on and mocks notions of magic that characterize Indian religious attitudes. The novel makes Kim’s liminality apparent when he and the lama encounter a farmer and his wife while on their quest for the lama’s river and they discuss Kim’s search for the Red Bull. The lama says that when he first met Kim beside the cannon he came “bearing two faces—and two garbs” (Kipling *Kim* 81). Kim corrects him and says that he only saw one face by the cannon and that was of “a Hindu boy” (81). This correction is important since it is in his guise as a Hindu boy that Kim later uses the lama while working for Creighton’s spy rings—a working relationship that begins when he finds the Red Bull. The lama’s comparison of his search for the river of salvation with Kim’s search for “a Red Bull that shall come” is thus ironic and points to the way in which Kim self-consciously de-

plays his hybrid identity (82). The narrator underscores Kim's manipulation of indigenous expectations when the farmer's priest, trying to interpret Kim's prophecy, asks when Kim was born and Kim replies that it was the year of the earthquake in Kashmir. "The earthquake had been felt in India, and for long stood a leading date in the Punjab. 'Ai!' said a woman excitedly. This seemed to make Kim's supernatural origin more certain" (87). Kipling uses the narrator's commentary to distinguish Kim's own perception that he is supernatural from Indian ascriptions of supernatural powers to him.

Through Kim's hybrid identity, Kipling demonstrates how mimicry can be a means to manipulate the principles of sympathetic magic without losing one's identity in indigenous cultural practices.<sup>8</sup> In Frazer's analysis of the difference between homeopathic and contagious magic, he claims that while contagious magic transmits its magical powers through contact, homeopathic magic works by way of imitation and mimicry—obviating evil omens by performing acts that mimic them (*Golden Bough* 1:170). Kim utilizes the logic of homeopathic magic, specifically mimicry of colonial identities, as a way to exert colonial control through a type of sorcery. Kipling establishes, early on in the novel, the importance of mimicry and Kim's fluid relationship to identity as a means to engage in information gathering. At the beginning of the novel we are informed that Kim had once received "a complete suit of Hindu kit, the costume of a low-caste street boy," which he hides "in a secret place" and "[w]hen there was business or frolic afoot, Kim would use his properties" (Kipling *Kim* 51). These outer trappings of identity become magical properties in Kim's hands that he then freely manipulates in the pursuit of "intrigue" and "the game for its own sake"—a talent that primes him for his later entry into the Great Game (51).<sup>9</sup>

The malleable and mobile nature of Kim's identity as a costume that he can slip into and out of distinguishes him from both Indian and British characters in the novel. Hence, he scorns the drummer-boy at St. Xavier who calls all Indians "niggers" and yet, by the same token, feels superior to the Hindu boy who serves Lurgan Sahib because he does not possess his powers of mimicry and does not play the "game" of "dressing-up" well (207).

Kim was apparelled variously as a young Mohammedan of good family, an oilman, and once . . . as the son of an Oudh landholder. . . . The Hindu child played this game clumsily. That little mind, keen as an icicle where tally of jewels was concerned, could not temper itself to enter another's soul; but a demon in Kim woke up and sang with joy as he put on the changing dresses, and changed speech and gesture therewith. (207)

Kim's split identity enables him to master the speech, manners, and custom of Indians and "enter another's soul." Though a "demon" awakens as Kim inhabits various identities, they never fully take possession of him because he conceives of identity as part of a strategic "game" to be played at will. Kim proves his resistance to magic when Lurgan Sahib attempts to make him hallucinate that a broken vase slowly reassembled itself. Kim begins to hallucinate while thinking in Hindi, but overcomes the spell and "leaped up from a darkness" once he switches to English and recites the multiplication table, trumping the dark powers of native magic with the light of Western reason (202). Although Kim imitates Indians, he can always return to the fact of his whiteness and avoid being overtaken by the magical thinking he nevertheless imitates.<sup>10</sup>

In his manipulation of magic and identity, Kim functions as the ideal spy for Creighton and the Secret Service since he understands Creighton's basic rule that "there is no sin so great as ignorance" of native customs (167). Creighton's role in the novel as the head of the Secret Service, a division of the Ethnological Survey, as well as his avid interest in ethnography, presents intelligence gathering on behalf of empire and ethnography as interdependent activities.<sup>11</sup> Hence, unlike native Indians who regard the train ticket as "a magic piece of paper" and wonder why conductors "punch great pieces out of the charm" (246), the narrative continuously highlights Kim's manipulation of magic and charms as modes of exerting power. Knowledge of foreign culture, as Creighton intimates to Kim, translates into magical power in the hands of the colonizer. When the French and Russian spies abandon their research, letters, maps, and survey instruments in a bag, their native guides mistake the items as "brass idols" and fear its nature (296). Kim exploits their fear and, "with the craft of his mother-country," convinces them to leave the items with him because he knows how to "draw out its magic" (297). Kipling presents these stereotypical examples of native ignorance and superstition in order to demonstrate how easily Kim assumes insider status to achieve the self-interested ends of empire only then to switch to "a Sahib's point of view" as he inspects the contents of the loot taken from the European spies (302).<sup>12</sup>

Through Kim, Kipling demonstrates that in order for empire to contain the threat posed by the colonial magical, empire must become the expert magician. Kim thus behaves like a sorcerer who, as in Frazer's analysis of magicians, establishes authority and power through his capacity to deceive others into believing in his supernatural powers. Sorcerers, Frazer writes, are "more or less conscious deceivers; and it is just these men who in virtue of their superior ability will generally come to the top and win for themselves positions of the



highest dignity and the most commanding authority” (*Golden Bough* 1:215). Kim exercises his role as a “conscious deceiver” not on behalf of himself but of the British Empire. Kim displays his powers of sorcery on the train to Delhi when he encounters E23, a Mahratta spy working for Creighton, who asks Kim if he has “a charm to change [his] shape” so that he can escape his pursuers (Kipling *Kim* 249). Within minutes, Kim transforms him into a Saddhu and, as Frazer remarks of the sorcerer, Creighton rewards Kim with greater authority by sending him on his first major mission for the Great Game.

Kim’s manipulation of his native knowledge parallels that of the narrator, who functions as an ethnographer and repeatedly brings the reader’s attention to his feats of translation (Randall 150). Not only does the narrator constantly incorporate Hindi words into his description and dialogues, but he also selectively provides bracketed translation of words in English within quoted speech. Occasionally, this translation occurs after the reader has already encountered the foreign word earlier in the novel. When Kim attends St. Xavier, for example, the drummer-boy says, “What was you bukkin’ to that nigger about” (Kipling *Kim* 150), but later when Kim addresses Huree Mookerjee he says, “How can I do anything if you *bukh* [babble] all round the shop?” (269, emphasis original). The narrator forces the reader to encounter something foreign only then to assert control and prove mastery over the culture that disorients the English reader by asserting his prior knowledge. Just as Kim spends thirteen years on the streets of Lahore studying “human nature” and “[copying] the very inflection” of the proverbs he heard (97), the narrator establishes himself as an expert ethnographer and student of Indian culture (Kucich *Imperial Masochism* 170–71). While the level of cultural knowledge established between narrator and reader remains asymmetrical, the reader learns through the narrator’s expert performance that the unknown can be mastered through the processes of translation and astute cultural observation.

### *Information Systems and the Rites of Empire*

I have argued thus far that Kim’s insider/outsider status and self-conscious mimicry of Indian customs and notions of magic enable him to penetrate the Indian interior and gather information that bolsters British interests. As the novel progresses, Kipling increasingly links Kim’s authority over indigenous customs, magic, and information networks to the telegraph. Kipling supple-

ments Kim's identification with the telegraph with his continued participation in those itinerant Indian communities that threaten imperial authority in order to allay Kipling's anxiety that the telegraph, like any technology, is imperfect and does not always convey its messages accurately.<sup>13</sup> Kim not only embodies the magical aspects of the telegraph, but also instantiates the Great Game as a reflexive information system in which ritual performance and absorption in the game parallels his metaphorical conflation with the telegraph. *Kim* thus strips ritual theory to its bare bones: instead of symbolic acts that communicate information and establish common knowledge among participants, what agents in the Great Game ritualistically perform is the exchange of information itself. These acts of exchange are disinterested and interested, strategic and playful at once, and demonstrate how ritual can both be the means of self-sacrificing communion and self-interested competition.

*Kim*'s portrayal of the Great Game as a type of ritual performance exemplifies the continuities I previously established between ritual and models of strategic competition in game theory by linking the "playing" of competitive games to the self-sacrificing rituals of reciprocity among Freemasons. *Kim* is not Kipling's sole depiction of such continuities. The story "Steam Tactics" from *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904), much like *Kim*, allegorizes the improvisational style of imperial rule through a short, picaresque narrative of adventure in which an anonymous narrator travels through Sussex with his friends in a steam car that repeatedly breaks down and requires human ingenuity, ad hoc repair, and the aid of other Freemasons—a journey whose ludic aspects the narrator underscores by comparing it to an actual race he ran against other cars (Kipling 175).<sup>14</sup> Yet in offering us a tale of playful adventure, "Steam Tactics" also expresses Kipling's interest, as Andrew Lycett claims, in the ritualistic aspect of games (384). Kipling indicates the conflation of games and rituals by concluding the men's adventures with a sacramental meal of communion in which they "poured libations and made burnt-offerings" (*Traffics and Discoveries* 193). In displaying the theoretical continuities between games and rituals, stories such as *Kim* and "Steam Tactics" also expose the faulty reasoning underlying Lévi-Strauss's assumption that ritual is "a favoured instance of a game" because it is the only game that "results in a particular type of equilibrium between the two sides" (*Savage Mind* 30). Rather than establish social equilibrium and harmony, Kipling's depiction of ritual's ludic potentialities within an imperial context renders it instrumental to hierarchal power dynamics and conflict.

Thus while the novel portrays Kim taking active membership in the rituals

and exchanges of the secret societies that perform the Great Game, it distinguishes the solidarity Kim experiences through the Great Game from those Indian customs, beliefs, and rituals he mimics. Kim's membership in the Masonic Brotherhood and the Sat Bhai adds to his magical status and introduces him to a set of rituals and exchanges separate from that of mainstream Indian or British society. Kim joins the Sat Bhai (Seven Brothers) through Huree Mookerjee, a fellow spy, who introduces him to the secret Hindu sect when he first joins the Great Game.<sup>15</sup> Because it is a Hindu society, Kim's entrance into the Sat Bhai as a "Son of the Charm" gives him membership in two secret societies, allowing him to synthesize British and Indian identities in a manner that does not contradict imperial power (Kipling *Kim* 231). The Sat Bhai and the Masonic brotherhood overlap in Kim's participation in the Great Game, each emphasizing, as John McBratney states, brotherhood and the "ritualistic exchange" of secret codes and amulets that stage *communitas* in "a casteless enclave cordoned off from the main business of empire" (118).

But however much this "casteless enclave" appears distanced from centralized administration, the rituals they self-sacrificingly perform are anything but "cordoned off" from the strategic interests of empire.<sup>16</sup> The main form of ritualized exchange for the members of the Sat Bhai is information, information that will help Britain to withstand Russian incursions at the Indian-Afghan border and rebellion within India. As the various transactions between Kim and Mahbub Ali show, in the Great Game, information is coin of the realm. "Dost *thou* give news for love, or dost thou sell it?' Kim asked. 'I sell and—I buy,' Mahbub took a four-anna piece out of his belt and held it up. . . . Mahbub laughed, and put away the coin. 'It is too easy to deal in that market, Friend of all the World. Tell me for love. Our lives lie in each other's hand'" (Kipling *Kim* 182, emphasis original). An exchange that begins as the sale of information for the sake of financial gain shifts to one in which two "sons of the charm" share information for the Great Game in which they only have each other and must rely on an ethic of reciprocal sacrifice in order to survive. Mahbub Ali openly affirms such an ethic when Kim later becomes a compatriot in the Great Game by telling Kim, "I am thy sacrifice" (226). The exchange between Kim and Mahbub Ali references the logic of self-interest and self-sacrifice as principles that are not at odds with one another but mutually implicated ideals that they strategically and playfully invoke as they play the Great Game. Mahbub Ali makes this strategic interplay apparent when he gestures toward brotherly self-sacrifice, all the while aware that the game of espionage feeds on competitive and self-interested

instincts. His relationship with Kim arises precisely because he “knew the boy’s value as a gossip” and can relay news heard in the bazaars (66).

Kim’s role as gossip and nickname, “Little Friend of all the World,” draw attention to his intermediary role as a conduit for information and the way in which his position of liminality proffers a means of imperial control since he can penetrate sites of potential resistance. In C. A. Bayly’s historical analysis of the information orders utilized by the British imperial administration in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Bayly claims that there were two systems of information: state surveillance and independent networks of communication (2). While these two systems overlapped to some degree, Bayly argues that the overlap was not complete, especially into the nineteenth century when decentralized forms of information gathering by native informants such as post-runners and astrologers were replaced by centralized systems like the army and district office, creating a “zone of ignorance” between the district office and rural areas that facilitated the spread of the 1857 Mutiny (143, 165). As discussed earlier in the context of “The Bridge-Builders,” the British countered the “electric” speed with which rumor of the Mutiny traveled among Indian rebels with their relatively new system of the telegraph.<sup>17</sup> The telegraph thus sealed the gaps between formal and informal orders of information gathering, between centralized administration and the decentralized networks of informants that roamed the bazaars and the countryside.

Kim’s access to rumor in the novel, rather than being the instrument of indigenous rebellion, actually furthers the tactics of the Great Game. After delivering an encoded message to Colonel Creighton that he received from Mahbub Ali on a possible Afghan-Russian conspiracy, Kim watches and listens in secret as Creighton orders an army of 8,000 to assemble near the Indian and Afghan border. While on the road with the lama, Kim proudly tells other Indians of the impending battle, but they dismiss his claim as “bazar-talk” (Kipling *Kim* 95). Kim relates the same news to the colonel of his father’s old regiment, the Mavericks. When the colonel realizes that Kim’s prediction of the war has come true, he dismisses it as a “bazar rumour,” though he cannot account for how he came to know of a decision that only occurred within forty-eight hours (146). By making rumor the instrument of the Great Game rather than mutinous rebellion, Kipling shows the importance of bridging the two orders of information outlined by Bayly—a bridge Kim himself provides by intercepting indigenous rumor in his various ethnic guises and, as the novel progresses, through his metaphorical relation to the telegraph.

Kim's relationship to rumor demonstrates the importance of decentralized forms of administration like Creighton's Secret Service for the effective exertion of imperial power. Working within a decentralized network, Kim utilizes his liminality to successfully penetrate and disappear into the less territorialized regions of "grey, formless India" (143). Here Kipling does not completely reproduce Bayly's historical account of British information systems insofar as Kim's participation in decentralized circuits of information nevertheless remains coordinated with the machinery of empire.<sup>18</sup> McBratney argues that Kipling links Kim to the Great Game through mechanical metaphors of the "wheel," which not only symbolizes the lama's "Wheel of life," but also the "wheel" of fortune and empire (123). Kipling makes the association between the Great Game and empire's machinery more obvious through Kim's work for the Secret Service as a surveyor or "chain-man" (*Kim* 166)—a role that aligns him with "the chain of empire" and its wheel rather than the lama's struggle to be released from the wheel of life's illusory materiality and its "Chain of things" (Kipling *Kim* 259; McBratney 124). Kim's connection to the machinery of empire becomes particularly clear at the end of the novel when Kim reflects on his journey through the Himalayas with the lama.

He tried to think of the lama—to wonder why he had tumbled into a brook—but the bigness of the world, seen between the forecourt gates, swept linked thought aside. Then he looked upon the trees and the broad fields, with the thatched huts hidden among crops—looked with strange eyes unable to take up the size and proportion and use of things. . . . All that while he felt . . . that his soul was out of gear with its surroundings—a cog-wheel unconnected with any machinery. . . . "I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?" His soul repeated it again and again. . . . and with an almost audible click he felt the wheels of his being lock up anew on the world without. Things that rode meaningless on the eyeball an instant before slid into proper proportion. Roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to be lived in, cattle to be driven, fields to be tilled, and men and women to be talked to. (Kipling *Kim* 331)

Kipling exposes Kim's connection to the machinery of empire through the images of a "gear" and "cog-wheel," but he also demonstrates the perils of such self-awareness. Kim only feels disconnected from the machine of empire, like "a cog-wheel unconnected with any machinery," when he assumes a self-reflective posture with respect to his role in the Great Game that disrupts

“linked thought” and the fluid workings of the machine that made his mission into the Himalayas a success. This sense of disconnection from “the bigness of the world” departs as soon as he becomes absorbed in the given world and the life of action it presents before him. Reentering the world of action and its commitment to the present tense, Kim and the machine of which he is a part resolve their contrarian voices and speak, like the *Dimbula*, in one voice again.

What Kipling suggests through the latter episode is that Kim’s self-reflective stance with respect to his own actions and role in the Great Game disrupts his experience of connectedness and his absorption in the game. Like the coordinated network of parts on the *Dimbula* steamship, wherein each part of the ship performed its duty while remaining “bound down one to the other in a black darkness,” so agents of the Great Game can never be fully self-conscious of the game because they are inside the game, what Bourdieu terms *illusio*. Investment in and commitment to the rules of the game, Bourdieu argues, gives members of a field a “feel for the game,” a feel that cannot be maintained when one assumes the analytical stance of a spectator and questions the beliefs that underlie participation in the game (*Logic of Practice* 66–67). In relation to my chapter on ritual, Bourdieu’s *illusio* highlights the reflexive relationship between thought and action that characterizes social practices ranging from ritual to competitive games and underscores the degree to which self-conscious reflection on *doing* is antithetical to *doing* and the shared body of knowledge such doing tacitly generates.

Such immersion in doing means that actors cannot simultaneously be conscious of the larger network of actions in which they participate. Thus, Mahbub Ali explains the complex series of effects that Kim’s minor espionage activity participates in by stating, “The Game is so large that one sees but a little at a time” (Kipling *Kim* 216). Kim’s desire to witness the game’s visibility appears early in the novel. When he delivers the encoded message to Colonel Creighton and eavesdrops on him ordering the armies to the Afghan border, the narrator comments, “What he desired was the visible effect of action” (84). At this early stage in the narrative, Kim has yet to enter the game and so assumes the position of a detached observer—a role unavailable to him as he becomes involved more deeply in the Great Game. Kipling’s interest in action as the mode of self-assertion and imperial power requires that Kim express his membership and position of power within the field of colonial conquest through absorption in the ritual performance of the game. Only through such absorption does the game realize its effects and can Kim assert his identity as a white man. After

Kim transforms E23 into a Saddhu on the train, for example, the lama scolds Kim for having “loosed an Act upon the world, and as a stone thrown into a pool so spread the consequences thou canst not tell how far” (258). And when the lama advises him to abstain from action, Kim replies, “At the Gates of Learning we were taught that to abstain from action was unbecoming a Sahib. And I am a Sahib” (261). Kim’s racial identity and participation in the Great Game now make him synonymous with unreflective action.

While Kim refuses to adopt the reflective, objective stance in which he examines the effects of his actions, the narrator-ethnographer adopts a distanced perspective and describes the very ripples Kim’s actions on the train cause.

[T]here was then being handed in at Simla a code-wire reporting the arrival of E23 at Delhi, and, more important, the whereabouts of a letter he had been commissioned to—abstract. Incidentally, an over-zealous policeman had arrested, on charge of murder done in a far southern State, a horribly indignant Ajmir cotton-broker, who was explaining himself to a Mr Strickland on Delhi platform, while E23 was paddling through byways into the locked heart of Delhi city. In two hours several telegrams had reached the angry minister of a southern State reporting that all trace of a somewhat bruised Mahratta had been lost; and by the time the leisurely train halted at Saharunpore the last ripple of the stone Kim had helped to heave was lapping against the steps of a mosque in far-away Roum—where it disturbed a pious man at prayers. (258)

The narrator’s detached perspective and description offers the “visible effect of action” that Kim earlier craved, but which he can no longer witness now that he has become one of the game’s actors. Agents of the game like Mahbub Ali and Kim may only see the game’s machinery of effects “a little at a time,” but the omniscient narrator provides a telescopic view of the product of such actions, allowing readers to glimpse a portion of the coordinated network in which characters participate. The narrator’s description of the ripple of effects establishes a consonance between Kim’s actions and the effect of electricity. The passage conveys the experience of simultaneity associated with the telegraph. Even the prose style in places imitates the curtiness of telegrams by eliminating articles (“on Delhi platform”). The parallel presented in the passage between the unfolding effects of Kim’s actions and the transmission of information via telegrams indicates a deeper connection that the novel subtly and progressively establishes between Kim’s magical status, electricity, and the circulation of in-

formation that bridges the gap between formal and informal systems of information. Having heaved the stone, Kim functions as the source from which the concentric circle of effects irradiate—the electrical prime mover that gets the action of the Great Game going. The magical qualities given to electricity in “Wireless” here assume the form of Kim’s agency. Kim’s liminality and the telegraph resemble one another insofar as both mediate the interstices between systems of information, interstices that offer sites of resistance.

Kim’s identification with the telegraph becomes particularly overt at those moments when he confronts his divided identity. When Kim first attends St. Xavier to receive the education of a “sahib” and learns the survey techniques needed to work for Creighton and the Ethnological Survey, Kim questions his identity. “*Hai mai!* I go from one place to another as it might be a kick-ball. . . . But I am to pray to Bibi Miriam, and I am a Sahib.’ He looked at his boots ruefully. ‘No; I am Kim. This is the great world, and I am only Kim. Who is Kim?’ He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam” (166). Such self-division disappears the more Kim becomes the magical medium through which empire transmits information, that is, the more the novel identifies Kim’s hybridity and mobility with the Great Game and the telegraph. On completing his education at St. Xavier, Kim confronts a feeling of alienation and disconnection that he expresses in terms of his capacity to transmit information. “Now am I alone—all alone,’ he thought. ‘In all India is no one so alone as I! If I die today, who shall bring the news—and to whom?’. . . . ‘Who is Kim—Kim—Kim?’” (233). Kipling links Kim’s “speculation as to what is called personal identity” with the circulation of news via telegraph through Kim’s fear that without him no news would circulate and also through the telegraphic punctuation of his name (233). Kipling had employed a similar stylistic effect in “Steam Tactics” to denote a telegraphed message when the narrator “telegraphed Mr. Pyecroft a question” and Pyecroft answers with “Not—in—the—least” (Kipling *Traffics and Discoveries* 165). Similarly, the electrician of “Wireless” describes the electrical power of the wireless telegraph as trying to “kick—kick—kick into space” (210). Kim’s growing association with the telegraph, a development Kipling signals stylistically, transforms Kim into the medium by which empire transmits information: electricity. Like the magical nature of electricity and its ambiguous origin, Kim’s transmutability makes him an ideal agent of the Great Game.

Kim’s assertion of identity as a sahib through participation in the Great Game only invigorates the confluence Kipling establishes between Kim’s magi-



cal status, his devotion to unreflective action, and the telegraph. After being given the task of pursuing French and Russian spies into the Himalayas, Kim exults over his first real assignment in the Great Game. “Now I shall go far and far into the North playing the Great Game. Truly, it runs like a shuttle throughout all Hind. . . .—and I am Kim—Kim—Kim—alone—one person—in the middle of it all” (Kipling *Kim* 273). In this pronouncement of his identity, Kim reveals the significance of his nickname, “Friend of all the World.” Like the deep sea cables that join the world as one, Kim becomes the center of the world through which all others are connected. Kim’s identification with the telegraph that mediates communication and connects the world through its transmission of information occurs at a crucial juncture in the novel since he and the lama are about to trek into a rugged region that has not been territorialized by British information systems: the Himalayas (Bayly 100). When the lama and Kim climb over the endlessly steep peaks, the narrator describes their entrance into “a world within a world” (Kipling *Kim* 283). Yet, through his metaphorical identification with the telegraph and his participation in decentralized systems of information gathering, Kim effectively penetrates those regions barred to the imperial center and gathers the information Creighton needs. Kim’s self-divided subjectivity—the perforation of his identity as he becomes the electric and magical medium by which empire transmits information—becomes sutured at the close of the novel. In the very scene where Kim feels that he is “out of gear” and disconnected from the wheel of empire, Kipling signals Kim’s return to the machinery of the game with the “audible click” heard as Kim refocuses on the physical world and a life of action and, more importantly, through his self-assertion “I am Kim. I am Kim” (331). Kim’s full entry into the Great Game ends with an eternal “I am” that establishes his role as the magical prime mover of imperial machinery, consistently drawing on colonial forms of the magical only to assert his independence and power over it.

### ***The Ending of Kim and the Double Narrative of Capitalism***

My reading of *Kim* thus far has largely interpreted Kim’s agency as colluding with regimes of imperial control. But critics of the novel have long debated Kim’s allegiance to British imperial interests. This debate largely unfolds in discussions of the novel’s inconclusive ending, particularly its inability or refusal to address the tensions between Kim’s relationship to the lama and the British

Secret Service. In a seminal reading of *Kim*, Edmund Wilson asserts that the novel's lack of closure reflects Kipling's failure to address the conflicting allegiances Kim faces between the Indian community in which he was raised and the British community for which he now works as spy: "the two forces never really engage" (29). The novel presents the lama's search and Kim's role in the Great Game in parallel, and each achieves his ends, according to Wilson, without affecting one another (30). In Edward Said's provocative critique of this claim, the ending's lack of conflict is symptomatic of Kipling's imperialism—no conflict appears for Kim between his allegiance to the lama and the British Secret Service because "for Kipling *there was no conflict*" ("Introduction" *Kim* 23, emphasis original). Sara Suleri claims, however, that the novel's lack of conflict between Indian and British agendas does not reflect Kipling's failures as a novelist, but "the structure of imperial ideology" (115). Kipling, she writes, ironically foregrounds the erasure of conflict in imperialist ideology "where economic and political conflict is at its most keenly operative" (115). For Suleri, Kim is a tragic character who lacks any choice in either playing or not playing the game—a lack of choice that displays Kim's ambiguous position as both dispossessed colonizer and colonized victim (116).

The novel's lack of closure not only ironizes the erasure of conflict, it also renders the segregation of the lama's and Kim's respective searches questionable and thus undercuts the dualistic opposition between Britain and India, colonizer and colonized, the lama's mystical search and the Great Game's strategic pragmatism. In this regard, the issue is not that Kipling did not see a conflict between Indian and British interests, but that he makes their mutual complicity visible. Suleri remarks, for example, that both Kim and the lama equally participate in the game. Rather than a self that is antithetical to Kim and his British identity, the lama facilitates an imperialist agenda by paying for Kim's education at St. Xavier and treating knowledge as something that can be bought and sold just like information in the Great Game (122). In a similar vein, A. Michael Matin states that Kipling presents the relationship between the lama and Kim as a microcosm of reciprocity and the "intersection of interests between colonizer and colonized" (336).

But just as Kipling renders Kim's choice in playing the Great Game ambiguous, so he makes the lama's willful participation in it equally murky. At the beginning of the novel, Kim regards the lama as "his trove" and "[takes] possession" of him as a tool for the Great Game (Kipling *Kim* 60). The novel positions the lama as an imperial possession on his entrance into the Lahore Museum in

which, as Zohreh Sullivan notes, the curator of the museum asserts imperial authority over the lama by exchanging spectacles with him so that the lama sees the world thereafter through the eyes of empire (153). The lama's disempowered position stands in contrast to the curator's statement to the lama that they "be craftsmen together" (Kipling *Kim* 59). While the curator echoes the language of Masonic fraternity and Kim repeatedly claims to be the lama's loyal disciple, the lama also functions as a cover for Kim as he travels across India in his work for the Great Game. Complicating this dynamic of exploitation, Sullivan reminds us, is that the lama renounces salvation after finding the river and returns to save his disciple. Sullivan interprets this act not simply as a sign of the lama's submission to the aims of empire, but also as an authoritative act of self-sacrifice to save Kim (177). The lama tells Kim their deliverance is now certain because he has found the river and saved both of them. The elliptical lines that close the novel read, "He crossed his hands on his lap and smiled, as a man may who has won salvation for himself and his beloved" (Kipling *Kim* 338). The balance of power, however much predicated on an act of sacrifice, would seem to ring in the lama's favor. This position of power hearkens back to the opening scene in which the curator shows the lama a map of India. A scene of colonial hubris ends up being a scene in which, as Ian Baucom argues, the lama forces the curator to acknowledge his ignorance of the river of salvation's location and thus gaps in imperial knowledge (96–97). The lama's resistance, for Baucom, is but one of many instances in which the novel does not simply offer a narrative of imperial mastery that erases conflict, but displays how even those recruited to expand its power, such as Kim, experience colonial rule as the vertigo of "bewilderment" (86–88).

The parallels between the lama's and Kim's searches thus pose irresolvable dilemmas: Kim and the lama as victims of the Great Game or agents of subtle resistance; Kim and the lama as engaged in reciprocal relations or strategic opposition. When read in relation to the double narrative of capitalism, however, these critical dilemmas take on a new light. The segregation of the lama's self-sacrificing search for salvation and otherworldly relation to the sacred from the self-interested pragmatism and secular modernity that characterizes the Great Game is not Kipling's failure to demonstrate the conflict of social forces, but a separation of two schemes of value that characterize the shift into modernity. As I have emphasized throughout this book, this separation conceals how the two narratives of capitalism operate within nineteenth-century political economy and its attempts to constrain the instabilities that self-interested behavior

generates. The lack of conflict between the lama's and Kim's searches thus not only brings into ironic relief the very conflict that imperialist ideology erases, as Suleri claims, but also forces us to grapple with the interdependent value-systems that their searches represent. The novel demonstrates how the Great Game's self-interested economic imperialism hinges on Kim's successful manipulation of those native, pre-modern values it deems distinct from British pragmatism and yet is essential to Kipling's brand of imperialism—self-sacrifice and the modalities of the sacred and profane.

Kipling implicitly acknowledges such interdependence in his depiction of the trek from the Himalayas. Just as the lama attains his "reward" of salvation through the extinction of desire (Kipling *Kim* 337), so too Kim's role in the Great Game requires acts of self-sacrifice. During their trek through the Himalayas, Kim bears both the "burden incommunicable" of the Great Game and "the burden of an old man" to whom he proves his loyalty by being the lama's "sacrifice" (327–28, 319, 309).<sup>19</sup> At the end of their trek, the lama marvels at Kim's self-sacrificing devotion to him in his illness until Kim breaks down crying and confesses to the lama his true motives. "Thou leanest on me in the body, Holy One, but I lean on thee for some other things. Dost know it? 'I have guessed maybe,' and the lama's eyes twinkled. 'We must change that'" (321). The lama obliquely acknowledges Kim's role in the Great Game and that he has used the lama for self-interested purposes. Kipling not only parallels the lama's and Kim's searches as equally engaged in the dynamic of self-interest and self-sacrifice, but also shows how this logic is caught up in the sacred. When the lama dictates a letter for Kim in Hindi to a letter writer, the writer translates the self-interest latent in the phrase "to acquire merit" as a "prayer to 'Almighty God'" (154).<sup>20</sup> This failure in translation highlights a conflation that we have seen repeatedly in my analysis of the double narrative of capitalism, where notions of the sacred mediate the dynamic balancing of self-interest and self-sacrifice.

Salient to these exchanges between Kim and the lama, however, is not just the mutual implication of self-interest and self-sacrifice, but a quandary within capitalist economics and its strategic "games" of competition. In describing the theory of social behavior that underlies "decision making in situations of conflict," whether in economics, politics, or poker games, economist and game theorist Martin Shubik writes that in its most fundamental form a game is composed of opposing parties "with different goals or objectives whose fates are intertwined," and each opposing party faces known and unknown variables that must be considered in order to achieve their optimal objectives (8). Each

“player” is a rational, autonomous decision-maker who follows “rules” that dictate how players may use resources (e.g., money or information); the game’s result depends on the strategies each player utilizes as she optimizes “payoffs” and without knowing fully what the other player will do (10–14). In its most basic form, optimization is a zero-sum game in which the gains of one player result in losses for the other (15). In such competitive games, Robert Aumann notes, an equilibrium is reached when no party can act unilaterally in a way that increases the payoff (241). This model of economic man as it is applied across varying social contexts, Shubik acknowledges, is only a normative guide and does not address the range of nettled contexts that unfold in real life (30). Thus, for example, when players have sound information that cooperation will yield the maximum benefit then such pure opposition would be a poor tactical strategy—cooperation is in one’s self-interest (44).

Kipling’s depiction of the lama’s and Kim’s searches at the novel’s close exposes the difficulty in distinguishing between competitive zero-sum games and cooperative games and, more importantly, in assigning a “payoff.” And while the interests and fates of the colonizer and colonized are ostensibly opposed yet intertwined, the dynamic interplay of self-interest and self-sacrifice does not result in each player achieving an equilibrium point where all optimize their respective payoffs, but binds them to repeated struggle. The indeterminate ending of the novel and our inability to decipher who is the consummate player and who is played replicates an indeterminacy within economic theories of competitive behavior. In this regard, *Kim* presents another variant of the problem seen in Edgeworth, Marshall, and Kipling’s steamship analogies. The tendency of any system toward disequilibrium surfaces in the relationship between the lama and Kim, which never balances self-sacrifice and self-interest since the excess of one or the other drives the expansion and continual performance of the Great Game. The lama’s act of sacrifice will not be the last: each act of self-sacrifice and self-interest will spur another. The indeterminate ending demonstrates the perpetual repetition of the Great Game and capitalist expansion in which forces oscillate between the excesses of self-interest and self-sacrifice. The Great Game and the economy, as reflexive information systems, display the feature of repetition that Lévi-Strauss ascribed to ritualistic games: players must continuously repeat the game until they achieve equilibrium. If the ending of *Kim* serves as any indication, however, this process is endless. The novel’s insistence on the undecidability of any strategic game is not only something it thematizes through its inconclusive ending, but also what it performs at the

level of genre. As Patrick Brantlinger states, *Kim*'s generic hybridity as picaresque novel, quest narrative, spy novel, bildungsroman, adventure tale, political allegory, travelogue, and idyll, gives way at its conclusion to the picaresque's "lack of teleological structure—the 'Great Game' played on the 'Road of Life' with no self-evident closure" ("*Kim*" 138).<sup>21</sup>

In its final gesture toward this endless game, *Kim* demonstrates how the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane mediates the perpetual contest between self-interest and self-sacrifice *and* reproduces this contest since it is a tool both for redressing inequalities and for reestablishing them. This unacknowledged aspect of the novel's dualism reverberates, as I have shown, through its identification of Kim with the magical powers of the telegraph, which serves as a conduit for both global collectivity and imperial control. *Kim* can thus be read as a nineteenth-century exploration of a triumphant global capitalism whose economic and political institutions neither sacrifice the imperatives of the nation-state nor, contrary to narratives of secularization, present the expansion of capital as antithetical to religious values. Instead, the sacred is yet another variable in a strategic, endless game of capitalist competition, and, like Kim, capitalism too winks at us as it announces itself as the "Little Friend of all the World."



## *Coda*

REP. HENRY WAXMAN: [Y]ou had an ideology . . . and this is your statement—“I do have an ideology. My judgment is that free, competitive markets are by far the unrivaled way to organize economies. We’ve tried regulation. None meaningfully worked.” . . .

ALAN GREENSPAN: Well, remember that what an ideology is, is a conceptual framework with the way people deal with reality. Everyone has one. You have to—to exist, you need an ideology. The question is whether it is accurate or not. And what I’m saying to you is, yes, I found a flaw. . . .

REP. HENRY WAXMAN: You found a flaw in the reality. . . .

ALAN GREENSPAN: Flaw in the model that I perceived is the critical functioning structure that defines how the world works, so to speak.

—Alan Greenspan testifying before the House of Representatives  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
(October 23, 2008)<sup>1</sup>

When I first began researching the topic that would later become the preceding chapters of this book, I was interested in providing an intellectual history for what I held for many years as a hunch—that notions of the sacred and ritual were somehow intertwined with economic exchange not just in “primitive” societies, but also at the very roots of political economic theory, that capitalism was not just invested in self-interested competition, but also in the principles of reciprocity, disinterestedness, and communality that are typically associated with non-capitalist, “gift” economies. I also believed that such an argument, however much rooted in the nineteenth century, could furnish a means of engaging with the deleterious effects of contemporary capitalism that addressed an impasse currently faced by Marxian critiques. This impasse is partially due to the pervading sense among leftist critics that the triumph of global capitalism has left no alternative economic framework from which to hold capitalism



accountable for its negative effects. Hence, when neo-liberal critics like Francis Fukuyama claimed that the triumph of liberal democracies coincided with the “universal evolution in the direction of capitalism” and the expansion of consumer culture (xv), these pronouncements, however much subject to critique and controversy, did convey a general sentiment among leftist critics that the grounds for critique had evanesced.

Yet the sense that we have no viable reply to neo-liberal celebrations of capitalism is only part of the impasse. The other aspect of the impasse stems from what Michael Bérubé has described as an over-attachment to our own marginal political positions. Bérubé claims that the axiomatic belief in false consciousness “commits itself to a pernicious logic in which to win is to lose and vice versa: the more people disagree with you, the more right you must be” (12). This logic, he writes, is exceedingly flexible and typically demonstrates how “people have been blinded to the economic realities that should rightly determine their consciousness of the world” (12). Thus we are left either feeling silenced before those who proclaim the triumph of global capitalism or feeling that any retreat from a Marxist critique of capitalism as ideological false consciousness would sacrifice moral high ground, or worse, furnish an apology for capitalism. My aim in this book was to mine a path out of this impasse. Rather than offering a critique of ideological false consciousness, this book has addressed the ethical norms and ideals that underlie capitalism’s theoretical framework—the very normative values that had been relegated to the primitive or pre-modern past. The modest hope that guides this argument is that disclosing capitalism’s ethical ideals from within its own paradigms could furnish a first step, though first step only, in holding it accountable for those very ideals within a globalized world economy. I thus want to close this book by examining the possible relevance of my argument on the double narrative of capitalism in relation to the divisive responses to contemporary global capitalism.

Globalization, for better or for worse, has increased the flow of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and peoples across national borders and promoted the formation of transnational financial and political institutions that facilitate such movement—a movement that displaces the dominant position once occupied politically and economically by the nation-state in favor of the transnational mobility of finance capital and the global connectivity that both mobile capital and advanced information technologies generate.<sup>2</sup> This experience of global connectivity remains key to understandings of globalization even when distanced from the rise of capitalism. Roland Robertson, for example, has de-

fined globalization as “the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole . . . increasing acceleration in both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century” (*Globalization* 8). This reflexive experience of communality, despite the absence of face-to-face contact, has been facilitated by the very kind of information technologies depicted in a novel like *Kim*. We see in *Kim* an allegory for global capitalism that anticipates the intersection of mobile capital and information technologies that has been central to our understanding of contemporary globalization: just as the movement of money and capital increases relationships, so too, “[e]lectricity establishes a global network of communication” integral to the creation of a global community (Waters 35). As Manuel Castells states, the current economy is global, informational, and networked at once (66–67).

Yet Castells himself notes that while the rise of technology-based competition has increased interdependence, it has “reinforced dependency in an asymmetrical relationship” through the concentration of technological capabilities in developed nations and the persistent inequality between the markets of developed and developing nations (109)—what Wallerstein refers to as the unequal exchange relationship between “core” and “periphery” in the world-system (17). Critics of globalization thus repeatedly underscore the contradictions between the idealism of its rhetoric and the economic inequalities that globalization deepens on a global scale. Arjun Appadurai has described capital in the age of globalization as attaining a “predatory mobility” that is both configured in relation to the nation-state and operates unharnessed by it (*Globalization* 17). Moreover, the free movement of capital and the interdependence generated by global markets is not matched by political processes, which are largely still rooted in the nation-state and favor the West. The self-replication of capital beyond the boundaries of the nation-state does not obviate the continued role of the nation-state in global agencies for policy-making, and this role depends on a nation’s global economic status (Temple 16).

Hence while globalization champions the spread of laissez-faire capitalism as concomitant with the spread of democratic values, freedom, reciprocal exchange, and greater interdependence, entry into and participation in the strategic game of capitalist finance is not equally available to all. The promise of globalization, as Stiglitz reminds us, was to open free trade between nations. But developed countries have dictated the “terms of trade” such that they can exercise a more protectionist policy, whereas developing countries are forced into

importing goods that displace domestic production even as their exports are barred by such economic powers as the United States (Stiglitz 7). Much like the imperialist dynamics that enabled the industrial revolution,<sup>3</sup> the economies of developing nations are made an instrument of Western global economic expansion rather than an equal ally. Rapid liberalization of markets in poorer nations does not stabilize economies, but invites influx and outflux of money and capital that further destabilize currencies and inflation rates (Stiglitz 7, 17). Rather than creating a rise in income levels and economic growth, the universal expansion of the free market has sunk developing nations further into poverty and instability—a rise in inequality not only between developed and developing nations but between rich and poor within poorer nations (Faux and Mishel 93–94).<sup>4</sup>

The image of an economic system that, under conditions of free competition, naturally moves toward greater economic stability and growth seems particularly chimerical now given the recent global recession sparked by the stock market crash in September 2008. What the debate on globalization reveals is a fundamental disjunction, if not a willful critical blindness, between the theory of free-market capitalism and its practical effects on the ground—between the “spontaneous order” that Friedrich Hayek claimed the capitalist economy generates and the economic wreckage that is everywhere its handmaiden (37). I want to resituate this contradiction between theory and practice in relation to my broader argument in this book. I showed in Parts I and II how notions of gift sacrifice, the sacred, and ritual surface in political economy in order to address the economic inequalities that underpin divergences between the expenditures of labor in production and those indicators of distribution in the economy such as prices and profit rates. Attention to the continuities between ritual and other types of collective action such as exchange, I argued, reveals the ethical vision that underlies seemingly scientific models of the economy at equilibrium—a model that represents, at once, the communality achieved by agents who tacitly coordinate their actions on the basis of shared information about the market and a normative ethical ideal in which the economy maximizes welfare by balancing self-interest and self-sacrifice, supply and demand, labor and profits.

Yet as I demonstrated, particularly in Part IV of the book, the cosmopolitan values of global citizenship and solidarity implied by models of free trade remain at odds with the self-interested individualism that Enlightenment philosophies equally advocate.<sup>5</sup> This contradiction, as recent criticism on the nineteenth-century precursors to globalization has made clear,<sup>6</sup> displays a fork

within cosmopolitanism more generally: the global reach of capital, which Mill described as “cosmopolitan,” is not only instrumental to transnational interdependence and global equality in profits, as Mill suggested, but also to imperialist expansion (*Principles* 2:588). I am not interested in theorizing cosmopolitanism here, but the contradictions between its individualist and universalist assumptions surface in the rift I have traced between idealized representations of the economy and its operation on the ground. It is precisely at such moments of contradiction, I contend, that political economic theories of value, exchange, and equilibrium evince their debt to notions of gift sacrifice or ritual in order to suture the gaps in their ethical vision, that is, to supply the very model of order, communality, and just distribution that capitalism cannot generate without interventions by the state apparatuses that bolster its free-trade practices.<sup>7</sup>

Of what relevance is this to contemporary discussions of globalization? Globalization’s investment in the self-regulating capacities of free-market capitalism and in the reflexive experience of belonging and communality it generates can, in some measure, be traced to the double narrative of capitalism. Globalization’s ideal of transnational economic solidarity and interdependence, much like the theoretical paradigm of equilibrium, stands as an ideal that expresses a desire for shared values, communality, reciprocity, and just distribution. Yet if the model of the self-regulating market encodes such values, it does so in response to capitalism’s failure to effect the just distribution and halcyon interdependence it extols. Insufficient appreciation that the free-market economy denotes a normative vision of what the economy *ought* to realize rather than a state that it *is* moving toward exacerbates the problematic gap between theory and practice, between capitalism’s idealizations and its damaging effects. It is this gap that Greenspan refers to as the “[f]law in the model that [he] perceived is the critical functioning structure that defines how the world works.” This “flaw” not only points to a mismatch between ideology and reality but, more importantly, to a fundamental incoherence within free-market ideology: on the one hand, the ideal of the self-regulating market encodes ethical investments that address fissures in the economy, but on the other hand, proponents of the free market refuse to be held responsible for these investments by praising the market’s capacity for self-regulation.

My aim in this book, however, has not been simply to uncover political economy’s ethical vision, but how instantiations of the sacred mediate conflicts between theory and practice in order to articulate this vision—instantiations that reveal persisting continuities between the secular and religious, public and

private, modern and pre-modern despite the secularization that is expected to accompany increased modernization and industrialization. To give a contemporary example of this dynamic, William Greider has recently argued that financial prices are rising more quickly than the economic activity on which they are supposedly grounded, creating a disjunction between the high prices of financial assets and the actualities of commerce that contribute to bubbles (231–32). Future judgments regarding prices in the markets generate a kind of false enthusiasm and self-deluding crowd mentality; in such cases, shared knowledge and the experience of collectivity lead to error and conceal actual economic problems such as growing debt. This disjunction between collective expectations and market reality, between theory and practice, is what George Soros claims creates opportunities for investors to achieve greater profits. Soros would know given that it was precisely the misalignment between actual market conditions and theories regarding the movement and structure of prices that created the gap that he, as an investor, profitably exploited (Greider 241–42). Soros has described this misalignment through the concept of reflexivity: the market does not, as economic theories of equilibrium would have us believe, passively reflect the actions of agents; rather, agents act on the basis of imperfect knowledge about the market and this imperfect knowledge also generates what they confront as the market (Soros *Open* 7–9, 13–21). Hence both perceptions of the market situation and the market situation itself remain contingent and indeterminate, creating a “two-way feedback mechanism” that may confirm expectations of market outcomes or radically depart from them (10).

Soros’s sketch of market reflexivity resembles my earlier discussion of ritual and exchange as reflexive information systems that generate consensus and provide a consoling vision of communality and just relations when anomie, inequality, and hierarchies persist. The model of the economy as an information system that creates shared knowledge thus conceals, rather than corrects, asymmetries in information within the market. Of even greater relevance is Soros’s suggestion that the gap between theory and practice provides the site where profits can be gained *and* where elements of “alchemy and other forms of magic” enter the market (*Crisis* 41). Soros’s claim is particularly striking given his biased view of “primitive societies” as those in which “people fail to distinguish between their own thoughts and the world to which those thoughts relate. They form beliefs that are treated as reality” (Soros *Open* 5). While Soros assumes the typical Enlightenment narrative in which reason and science displace magical thinking, his account of reflexivity in the market and the faulty

perceptions and beliefs it generates fall uncomfortably close to his account of “primitive societies.” If, as Weber once argued, “magic” is what the disenchanting West has lost, it is found again in what Soros describes as “the magic of the marketplace”—in the belief that laissez-faire economics will realize global solidarity, progress, and wealth for all (Soros *Crisis* xx, 33). This belief in “the magic of the marketplace,” moreover, obscures the gap between theory and practice that provides the breeding ground for exploitative economic practices.

Global capitalism’s attachment to such atavistic values as those Soros associates with “primitive societies” is not so surprising when seen in relation to my argument on the double narrative of capitalism—where the very categories of gift sacrifice, the sacred/profane, ritual, and magic participate in a continuum with capitalist economic values and practices rather than being wholly distinct from them. In fact, it is precisely our critical blindness to such continuities, I have argued, that has further perpetuated a misrecognition regarding the ethical vision that underlies capitalist models of self-interest and free trade. My point here, however, is distinct from recent arguments alluding to capitalism’s underlying religiosity. Wendy Brown has recently claimed that Marx’s analysis of money reveals how capitalism “*entails and requires its own religiosity*”—“money’s *divine* aspect” operates through a “perverse conjoining of capital’s godlike power with profanation (or even desacralization)” (95, 99, emphasis original). Brown argues that money’s omnipotent powers appear in our contemporary era of economic globalization, wherein capitalism’s totalizing power bars any alternative economic model of organization—a godly power “beyond accountability to law or morality” (103).

While Brown addresses the role of religion in Marx’s economic criticism in relation to theories of the secular, her reading of Marx (like Marx himself) implicitly recapitulates a false divide that economic theory has too long suborned—a divide that regards economic activity as antithetical to those values deemed “religious” and thus, if ever deployed, appears “perverse.” The reversibility of the sacred and profane is not peculiar to the property of money, but reflective of a fundamental contingency that marks theories of the sacred from the nineteenth century and onward. It is this reversibility that was put to strategic use in the nineteenth century to conceal the very economic inequalities for which Brown would like to hold capitalism accountable. I have shown throughout this book that the values that we have come to associate with the religious categories of the “sacred,” “ritual,” or “magic” are implicitly embedded within political economy’s vision of global solidarity and interdependence. These val-

ues continue to shape theories of globalization, whose monistic conception of global economic order resonates as much with Adam Smith's metaphor of the invisible hand as with early functionalist theories of consensus—an intersection between political economy and social theory I traced earlier in the work of Durkheim.<sup>8</sup> Hence, if the godlike power of money and capital seems beyond accountability, it is perhaps in part due to disciplinary efforts that have segregated “religious” values from the ethical investments that underlie the model of the self-regulating, global market.

If we are to ask, then, whether the various modes of sacralization (e.g., sacred/profane, ritual, gift sacrifice, and magic) that I have examined in the nineteenth century continue to mediate, in altered form, the ethical vision of capitalist economics and conceal its failures, we must pursue this question in a different way than whether globalization theory needs to address religion or how it intersects with the rise of religious fundamentalism.<sup>9</sup> These questions, while important to current reassessments of the relationship between religion, the public sphere, and secularism, lie outside the framework of this book and potentially reify the very disciplinary-based distinctions between economic and religious values and practices that narratives of modernization and secularization have buttressed.<sup>10</sup> Instead, I have repeatedly underscored in this book how the labile boundaries between the private and public, sacred and profane, religious and economic do not solely characterize the medieval European past or those non-European civilizations who have yet to transition fully into modernity, but persisted into the nineteenth century in Britain and potentially thereafter.<sup>11</sup> My argument thus offers an alternative approach to comprehending how, as Roland Robertson states, the contemporary rise of religious values furnishes “*an alternative path (or paths) to modernity*” and deploys a “*strategic atavism*” to achieve its political and economic objectives (“Millennialism” 18, emphasis original). In order to analyze fully this “*strategic atavism*,” however, we must reassess the continuities between capitalist values and those deemed religious since the segregation of religious from secular values has contributed to obscuring the range of capitalism's ethical investments and its failure to hold itself accountable for them. Such reassessment is necessary if we are to reconsider the symbolic tools by which capital irrevocably binds us in a fraught friendship with “all the world.”

# Notes

## **Introduction**

1. Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, ed. Andrew Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 16. All future citations of this novel are from this edition and appear parenthetically.

2. For arguments on the relationship between narrative and the motif of resurrection, see Catherine Gallagher “Duplicity”; Daniel Stout; and Albert D. Hutter “Resurrectionist.”

3. Stout’s essay provides a thorough engagement with how Dickens addresses the problem of individuality at the level of narrative by focusing on how Dickens allegorizes characters into groups that erase individuality (30–36).

4. See Rignall; Baldrige; and Gallagher “Duplicity” for readings of this problem.

5. This synthesis of synchronic and diachronic temporalities discloses the novel’s debt to the comparative historical method that characterized nineteenth-century historiography on the French Revolution and dominated the methodological orientation of evolutionary thought and ethnographic inquiry (Griffiths 814). Such a methodology pursued synchronic comparisons of cross-cultural developmental even as it charted diachronic moments of divergence (819–20).

6. Robert Alter claims that Dickens’s depictions of the Revolution appear religious, “a kind of anti-Christianity” in which the “climactic ritual,” the Carmagnole, demonstrates a “commitment to the elemental force of violence” (19).

7. Gallagher argues that Dickens’s “novel does not just record a social transition” from public spectacle and theatricality to privacy, “it enacts one” (“Duplicity” 142).

8. Critics have regarded *A Tale of Two Cities* as anomalous in Dickens’s oeuvre compared to novels that depict British life (Alter “Demons” 14, 20). My argument demonstrates why his excursion to France is so important to the depiction of British life.

9. I here follow Seymour Chatman’s discussion of the structuralist distinction be-



tween “story” and “discourse,” where “story” describes the sequencing of events and “discourse” how the latter “content is communicated” (19).

10. Herbert and Gallagher join other critics who have examined the commonalities between the literary and social sciences. I am thinking, for example, of Philip Connell, Maureen McLane, and Claudia Klaver.

11. See Posner’s *Crisis of Capitalist Democracy* (8) and his article “How I Became a Keynesian.”

12. Aside from Boyd Hilton’s discussion of how evangelicalism shaped political economy, see A. M. C. Waterman and Peter Minowitz, as well as my discussion of debates on Adam Smith’s deism in chapter 2.

13. Tomoko Masuzawa argues that the emergence of disciplines such as political science, economics, and sociology during the nineteenth century to study Western culture coincides with the emergence of anthropology and Orientalism to study non-European cultures. These disciplinary formations hinged on narratives of secularization, whereby anthropology emerges in a cultural context where religious values are presumably waning yet, as a science of religion, charts their persistence in tribal societies (15–19).

14. Meek discusses this pattern in *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*, as does Herbert (*Culture and Anomie* 74–75).

15. As Masuzawa notes, while late eighteenth-century philosophy showed early signs of theorizing religion, the bulk of such work unfolded during the nineteenth century through disciplines such as anthropology (2, 12, 14). Our contemporary category of “world religions” as denoting simultaneously a universal and pluralistic category is the product of these nineteenth-century endeavors (22–23).

16. We see a problematic reification of the sacred and profane in Dierdre McCloskey’s *Bourgeois Virtues*, which not only accepts the opposition of the sacred and profane as “two modes of being in a God-haunted world” (408), but ascribes a host of economic values such as profit, payment, and prudence to the domain of the profane and notions of soul, sympathy, and social solidarity to the domain of the sacred (407–8). McCloskey then claims that certain economists, such as Smith or Keynes, would have appealed to both domains to explain economic behavior and not just prudential reasoning—an approach she endorses (407).

17. Such formulations of religion continue to shape religious studies. This is made clear, for example, in Robert Bellah’s reliance on Durkheim to define religion in his expansive study, *Religion in Human Evolution*.

18. For some works that do address this problem, see Talal Asad, Vincent Pecora, Gauri Viswanathan, and Charles Taylor.

19. See Giddens’s *The Consequences of Modernity* for an overview of this (1–28, 115–16). Benedict Anderson’s well-known argument in *Imagined Communities* regarding the role print culture played in creating the experience of simultaneity and communality even though face-to-face relations were absent is also relevant.

20. Commenting on the endurance of such arguments, Pecora traces the persistent yoking of secularization with modernization to the Enlightenment, where scientific

progress coincides with increasing rationalization, technological advance, capitalist division of labor and exchange, and a broad-scale retreat of religion from public life into the private sphere. Ironically, thinkers such as Weber and those following his lead (e.g., Habermas) have linked the concomitant rise of modernization and secularization to the religious inheritance of Protestantism. See 8–9, 26, 44–54.

21. Taylor is not primarily concerned with narratives of secularization, but with how the retreat of religion from the public sphere enabled a form of humanism to arise in which “human flourishing” could be pursued outside of religious experience. In addressing problems of secularity, Taylor investigates the “new conditions of belief” rather than narratives of secularization (20). Nevertheless, Taylor accepts the broad outlines of Weber’s argument on modernity, as he himself concedes (156).

22. My argument, at various moments, is indebted to Herbert’s reading of the culture concept and its relation to relativism. This argument, first broached in *Culture and Anomie*, is then extended in *Victorian Relativity*, where he demonstrates how Victorian writings on relativism stress reciprocity and the interconnectedness of relations within a holistic system (9–10).

23. It is at such moments that we see signs of how, according to Pecora, “the society that produces Enlightenment never fully outgrows its desire for sources of religious coherence, solidarity, and historical purpose, and continually translates, or transposes, them into ever more refined and immanent, but also distorted and distorting, versions of its religious inheritance” (22). Pecora’s claim is indebted to Jean-Claude Monod’s dual understanding of secularization as rooted in Enlightenment progress and the transference of religious values into modernity (5–6).

24. Throughout this book, I have relied on a number of economic histories such as those by Joseph Schumpeter, Mark Blaug, Jürg Niehans, and Eric Roll, to name but a few examples.

25. Gallagher succinctly describes this shift in economic thinking and yet underscores how the physiological dimensions of the classical school persist into the neoclassical (*Body Economic* 123–24). See Blaug *Economic* 311–13 for a brief discussion of the utility function.

26. Marshall writes in his essay “The Old Generation of Economists and the New” that “[n]ever again will a Mrs Trimmer, a Mrs Marcet, or a Miss Martineau earn a goodly reputation by throwing [economic principles] into the form of a catechism or of simple tales, by aid of which any intelligent governess might make clear to the children nestling around her where lies economic truth” (*Memorials* 296).

27. Numerous critics have discussed how the disciplinary narrowing of political economy obscures its moral and political contexts, or how political economists addressed the ethical dilemmas posed by capitalism. See the work by Poovey, Klaver, Regenia Gagnier, Jeffrey Young, Donald Winch, and G. R. Searle for a few examples. See also McCloskey’s *The Rhetoric of Economics* for a critique of how neoclassical economics has ignored its debt to humanist disciplines and rhetoric more generally.

28. Philip Mirowski has written extensively on this subject. See *Against Mechanism and More Heat Than Light*.

29. My discussion of Smith here is indebted to Poovey (*History* 243–47).
30. On the sociological dimensions of the novel, in particular, see Kurnick's discussion of its collectivist tendencies and Woloch's analysis of the novel's competing individualist and pluralist ambitions. For a Marxist approach, see Lukács.
31. Smith's work was indebted to French Physiocrats (*les économistes*) like François Quesnay and Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, who critiqued mercantilist policy. As Paul Burton Cheney argues, the *Wealth of Nations* follows its synchronic treatment of economic ideas with lengthy chapters that diachronically present the historical context for core Smithian principles, in particular, the flaws of European mercantilism (88–89, 115–16).
32. Dickens's depiction here may not be historically accurate. In discussing France's problem with debt during the eighteenth century, Cheney mentions that France was opposed to paper money (122). The allusion to paper money is likely taken from Carlyle's discussion of the "paper age" in *The French Revolution*, to which Dickens's novel responds. See Andrew Sanders's editorial notes (*Tale of Two Cities* 371).
33. See Hutter for a discussion of how the narrative of resurrection collapses Darnay's and Carton's identities and both are reborn through sacrifice ("Novelist" 26, 28).
34. Hutter reads this as an example of how the novel contrasts England's model of self-help to the French inability to "[integrate] independent action and submission to authority" ("Nation" 45).
35. I thus disagree with Blumberg, who argues that the novel's transformation of Carton's "suicide" into a redemptive sacrifice that is holy/sacred counters its apparent endorsement of liberal ideology (*Victorian Sacrifice* 62–98).
36. For a related reading of these simultaneous moments in the novel's plot, see Griffiths (830).
37. The broad acceptance of this thesis is largely due to Edward Said's *Orientalism*. See Masuzawa 19–21.
38. For a brief summary of this schism, see Osteen and Woodmansee 28–32.
39. John O'Neill argues that Derrida's interest in the timing of the gift stresses the "spontaneity of the gift" over its "collective necessity" (44). Simon Jarvis's analysis of the phenomenology of the gift claims that the emphasis on an anonymous and ungrateful other as the ideal recipient of the gift is related to the Bible's separation between usury and a giving that bears no resemblance to exchange.
40. Caillé and Godbout argue that gift economies contradict the logic of capitalist equivalence and create a "surplus state" of "indebtedness" (*World* 193, 211). Caillé distinguishes the role that interest plays in capitalism as opposed to gift economies. Capitalism encourage us to take an "*interest in*" something in order to further our self-interest, whereas gift economies ask us to take an "*interest for*" something as an end in itself ("Double" 34, emphasis original).
41. C. A. Gregory claims that there are two economies: the commodity exchanges of alienable possessions between independent persons and gift-exchange practices where

inalienable objects are given and received in a network of dependent relations (43–53, 100–101). Gregory follows Annette Weiner’s distinction in *Inalienable Possessions*, where she argues that unlike alienable things that can enter the sphere of exchange, inalienable possessions represent the personal and communal histories of their owner and cannot. See John Plotz’s critique of this problematic separation (15–17), as well as my response to such oppositions in Part III of this book.

42. Weiner claims that anthropologists like Mauss have retained the magical quality given to reciprocity in Adam Smith’s metaphor of the invisible hand and applied its rule to non-capitalist economies where the point of exchange is to establish not reciprocity but hierarchies (28, 43).

43. See also the work of Ilana Blumberg.

44. Rappoport’s exclusive application of gift theory to women’s exchange practices risks suborning interpretations of gift exchange as “feminine” and thus antithetical to capitalist exchange systems even as it seeks to critique such oppositions. For an overview of the gendering of gift exchange, see Osteen 19–20.

45. In a related vein, Blumberg claims that mid-Victorians began to reject a pure opposition between painful, altruistic sacrifice and self-interested gain. Instead, they sought an intermediate ground and pursued an “ethic of mutual benefit” (*Victorian Sacrifice* 18).

46. See Rappoport 12, 14 and Margot Finn 7–9.

47. For a critique of the post-structuralist approach, see the essay by Regenia Gagnier and John Dupré, as well as Gordon Bigelow (7–8, 56–57).

48. Here the work of James Thompson, Patrick Brantlinger, Audrey Jaffe, Michael McKeon, Deidre Lynch, and Liz Bellamy represent but a few illustrative examples.

49. The traditional interpretation of the is-ought controversy, first articulated in Hume’s *Treatise*, is that one cannot make “a moral conclusion” from “nonmoral premises.” See A. C. MacIntyre for a reading of this problem.

50. See, for example, Joan Robinson’s claim that Marx’s theory of value was “metaphysical” (38) and Blaug’s discussion of the labor theory of value as either a confused treatment of the modern index-number problem or just plain contradictory (*Economic* 37–43, 48–52).

51. By contrast, Gagnier adapts the intellectual narrative of a shift in economic ideas to demonstrate the parallel emphasis on individual consumption, taste, and pleasure within nineteenth-century aesthetics (*Insatiability* 10).

## Chapter 1

1. For an extensive reading of these debates and Victorian literature, see Schramm.

2. In referring to the “liberal subject,” I both do and do not intend the rational engagement and critical detachment that critics such as Elaine Hadley and Amanda Anderson have recently described (Hadley 7–20, 73–89; Anderson *Powers of Distance* 3–33

passim). The rationality represented in political economic and anthropological texts is narrower. It is only when economic agents display poor intertemporal decision-making skills in the pursuit of their self-interest or the modern individual continues to be persuaded by the false causal reasoning associated with animistic thought, that the capacity for rational deliberation and abstraction becomes an issue.

3. For a broad-ranging genealogy of sacrifice's philosophical and sociological connotations, see Mizruchi.

4. Marjorie Wheeler-Barclay claims that the critical reception of Tylor's *Primitive Culture* was mixed. Many reviewers praised the work for extending Darwinian evolutionary thought into the realm of human culture, but other reviewers took issue with the suggestion that the illusory nature of primitive religious beliefs characterized Christian doctrine as well (96–103).

5. The terms "ritualism" and "ritualists," unlike the term "ritual/rite," specifically referred to the controversy surrounding the Anglican Catholic Revival and its recuperation of the ceremonial and liturgical practices that the Anglican Church had discarded after the Reformation (Bentley 21). While ritualism is historically linked to the Oxford movement and such Tractarians as John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey, Nigel Yates adds that the rise of ritualism also reflects a reaction against industrialism's stultifying effects and the challenge to traditional hierarchies (2–4, 68–69).

6. Tylor is here influenced by Comte's tripartite, hierarchical division of science as progressing from religion to philosophy and culminating in the empirical sciences. For Comte's influence on Victorian anthropology, see Stocking *Victorian Anthropology* and Logan *Victorian Fetishism* 31–45.

7. See, for example, Girard's chapter on Oedipus as a "surrogate victim" and the "sacrificial crisis" that ensues once rituals and hierarchies no longer restrain the primal desire for violence (68–88). On Frazer's discussion of the scapegoat as the one who bears away evils that threaten the community and is thus ritually expelled, see *Golden Bough* 9:224–28.

8. See Ackerman on how Frazer's arguments on such matters provoked his Christian audience (*J.G. Frazer* 167–70).

9. Frazer traces similarly structured rites into modern England. The European harvest ceremony, in which the last person to reap, bind, and thresh the corn is dressed in sheaves to resemble corn and is ceremonially drowned, mimetically performs a sacrifice that was once literal (Frazer *Golden Bough* 7:216–36). For a discussion of English harvest rituals and their importance to social cohesion, see Bushaway 107–66.

10. See Bataille's *The Accursed Share* (19–44) and "The Notion of Expenditure" in *Visions of Excess*.

11. As I mentioned in the introduction, the opposition of the sacred (transcendent) and profane (everyday) persists past Durkheim and into the phenomenological approaches of Mircea Eliade and Rudolph Otto, who define the sacred/holy in opposition to the profane realm of everyday activities as that which is "wholly other" (*ganz andere*) (Otto 25–30). The paradox that shadows Robertson Smith's notion of the sacred persists

in these phenomenological accounts, wherein the sacred is seen as an a priori category and yet one that is dependent on the realm of the profane. See also Eliade 8–18.

12. Sacrifice's economic and transcendental objectives are not irreconcilable. Olivier Herrenschildt claims that the efficacy of sacrifice as a mode of desire that brings contact between the visible and invisible worlds requires also that sacrifice be understood as the "necessity of exchange and the circulation of goods" (24).

13. W. S. F. Pickering claims, by contrast, that Durkheim rejected the arguments both by Robertson Smith and by Hubert and Mauss (67).

14. In making this argument, Strenski draws on Robert Alun Jones's claim that Durkheim has two theories of sacrifice—one advanced by Robertson Smith and the other by Hubert and Mauss.

15. Pickering also discusses how the piacular (ascetic) form of sacrifice and sacrifice as a positive rite that establishes communion and collective effervescence are interrelated: "negative rites can be seen as preparatory for positive rites: penance opens the way to communion" (343).

## Chapter 2

1. All textual citations of Ruskin refer to the Cook and Wedderburn library edition and provide parenthetical citations with volume and page numbers.

2. See also R. H. Tawney's claim that Puritanism incorporated into capitalism a practical asceticism that presented the economic system itself as a means to glorify god (239–40).

3. See Alan Lee on Ruskin's approach to value as a moral problem (72).

4. The biological underpinnings of Ruskin's theory of value have been pointed out by other critics. See Henderson 57, 101 and Spear *Dreams* 145–46.

5. For non-biological examples of the "life-availing" in Ruskin, see *Munera Pulveris*'s discussion of the importance of art, books, buildings, and mechanical instruments in cultivating the kind of character that would choose the "life-availing" (17:154). See also "A Joy For Ever," where he distinguishes between property that "produces life" and property that "produces the objects of life" (16:129).

6. Ruskin was not alone in linking the education of a virtuous populous with economic welfare. Christian economists like Chalmers, influenced by Malthusian arguments on scarcity and prudential restraint, emphasize the relationship between a "virtuous peasantry" and the effects on wages, population, and agricultural productivity (314).

7. Sherburne explicitly states that Ruskin "anticipates" subjective theories of value and, on a more dubious note, that he rejected a labor theory of value (137–40). See also Austin 11–12, 92–94, 174–75.

8. Klaver remarks that one of Ruskin's rhetorical strategies is to adopt and then redefine the terms of political economy so that they encompass not just quantitative elements, but also qualitative, moral characteristics (168–71).

9. See Sherburne on Ruskin's use of "vital" as a synonym for the life-availing (127).

10. Ruskin's distinction is based on the original Greek word employed in the Wisdom of Solomon (Apocrypha) in contrast to the translation of it in the Latin Vulgate. Peter D. Anthony remarks that Ruskin distinguishes righteousness, which is absolute and universal, from justice, which is contingent and specific. Anthony claims that the distinction buttresses Ruskin's criticism of Victorian society where judge's justice (contingent) has replaced king's justice (absolute). It also marks the difference between respecting the moral law and the equitable laws/rules instituted by society (Anthony 31). In the context of the present argument, "the sun of justice" as righteousness links the holy, interdependent structure of society with absolute justice. Whenever Ruskin speaks of justice, it must be understood in relation to the absolute character of "righteousness."

11. The relationship between justice and a healthy, holy, and helpful society reflects the influence of Plato in Ruskin's thinking, especially the analogy of the just, harmonious, and healthy soul to the just, harmonious, and healthy society in *The Republic*. For a discussion of Plato's influence on Ruskin, see Henderson 86–106.

12. Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, a text that Ruskin paraphrased while composing passages in *Unto This Last* (Fain 145), was the economic text Ruskin claims he read with greatest care (16:10).

13. For a discussion of the distinctions between labor, toil, and work, see Gallagher *Body Economic* 58–59.

14. Ruskin's distinction between labor and opera is not, as Sherburne claims, a separation between "happy, creative work" and "suffering in effort" (130). What Ruskin achieves by the distinction is to separate labor from anything that does not involve sacrifice, such as mere application (opera), because it is only life's sacrifice that transmits itself as value in labor. It is for this reason that he worries over the value of art since, if the artwork did not require suffering, it would not have real value. For a critique of Sherburne's analysis of labor, see Anthony 161.

15. Ruskin refers to Tylor's *Researches* as "a book of rare value and research" (28:613). See Dinah Birch 117.

16. David Craig contends that Ruskin offers a theory of labor that does not conceive labor as an objectification of an inner potentiality, but as a social practice that establishes intersubjective relations through creative activity (76–104).

17. Blaug criticizes Smith and Ricardo for their notions of absolute value, claiming that the ascription of intrinsic value to commodities independent of any economic use they serve constitutes "welfare economics, not value theory" (*Economic* 112).

18. Such inconsistency did not seem apparent to Smith, who made revisions to the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in the last year of his life and did nothing to seal gaps between the two texts. See Jacob Viner 231, Jerry Evensky 463, and Heilbroner on this point.

19. See the introduction by A. L. Macfie and D. D. Raphael to the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (20) and T. D. Campbell's *Adam Smith's Science of Morals*.

20. Deirdre McCloskey and Pete Clarke argue that Smith's interest in stoicism and virtue ethics influenced his model of an economy founded upon principles of justice rather than simply self-interest.

21. For accounts of this among literary critics, see Poovey (*Genres* 223–25) and Klaver (6–7). See also Young 3–28.

22. Redman's claim is not that Smith was uninfluenced by models of systematicity, but that this facet of his thinking has been exaggerated by historical commentators at the expense of what she considers the “*wide social emphasis*,” “*methodological modesty and realism*,” and “*practical insight*” within the *Wealth of Nations* (255, 257, emphasis original).

23. Smith has been typically viewed as a halfhearted deist, but historians have also seen him as an agnostic, atheist, and Christian. See Schabas *Natural* 97–98 and Hill.

24. In the *Second Treatise*, Locke never specifically uses the phrase “sacred and inviolable” to describe labor and the property appropriated through the effects of labor. The term “sacred” appears in his discussion of the law of self-preservation. One could argue that if he deems self-preservation to be sacred, then property as a means to self-preservation would also be sacred since one has to appropriate the gifts of nature in order to survive. Since one's life is also one's property, it is sacred and inalienable. See Locke 14–26. In Hume the phrase “sacred and inviolable” appears in relation to the question of property and justice. Hume argues that, contrary to customs that deem a building sacred on one day but profane on another, property remains immune to the reversible boundaries of the sacred and the profane because its sacredness arises not from superstition but functions as the indispensable condition for communal welfare, happiness, and justice. See Hume *Treatise* 584–85, *Enquiry* 30–33.

25. See Samuelson's summary of this position (42).

26. Ricardo and Mill use the term “sacred” in relation to private property or the sphere of negative liberties (Ricardo 1:204; Mill 3:938). On a somewhat different note, Klaver contends that Ricardo draws on providential logic by imagining the economic system as governed by self-regulating laws (13, 29).

27. For a discussion of Sraffa's approach and other conflicting interpretations of Ricardo's labor theory of value, see Peach *Interpreting Ricardo* 16–27.

28. For a critique of the corn model in Ricardo as unsubstantiated, see Hollander *Ricardo* 255–67.

29. Malthus complains that Ricardo ignored the influence of the manufacturing sector and money by reducing the entire economy to agriculture. See Sraffa xxx–xxxii.

30. For Ricardo's discussion of fixed and durable capital, see *Works* 1:39–40.

31. Economic historians such as George Stigler and Joseph Schumpeter see Ricardo's adherence to the labor theory instead as an empirical expedient to approximate value since he was, as Schumpeter states, otherwise “free from either emotionalism or philosophical preconceptions” (595). See Peach's discussion of Stigler's critique (*Interpreting Ricardo* 25).



32. For a discussion of Ricardo's possible retreat from the labor theory, see Sraffa's introduction to the *Collected Works* and Peach *Interpreting Ricardo* 22–24.

33. On Mill's concern for distributive justice, see de Marchi 145; Pedro Schwartz 105–52; and R. B. Ekelund and R. D. Tollison. As evidenced in essays like “On the Definition of Political Economy” (1836), Mill's ethical orientation distinguishes institutional questions of economic policy from a priori principles regarding economic law (Schabas *Natural* 125–26).

34. This definition of capital persists into Jevons and Marshall. Jevons defines abstinence as “that temporary sacrifice of enjoyment which is essential to the existence of capital” (*Theory* 233). Similarly, Marshall claims that the supply of goods depends on the willingness “to undergo ‘discommodities.’ These fall generally under two heads:—labour, and the sacrifice involved in putting off consumption.” Akin to these is “the sacrifice . . . involved in accumulating the means of production” (Marshall *Principles* 140).

35. See, for example, Gagnier, Bigelow, Klaver, and Poovey.

36. Jevons's concern for scientific legitimacy did not lead him narrowly to oppose Baconian forms of inductive reasoning to the deductive methods of Ricardo (as did William Whewell and Richard Jones); rather, Jevons synthesized the methodologies of both camps by complementing inductive reasoning with deductive hypotheses to explain empirical data (Schabas *World* 54; Maas 50–51, 144–46). When Jevons turned to the task of reforming political economy into a mathematical science, he drew upon a varied scientific education in mathematics, chemistry, and his work as a gold assayer (Keynes 60, 66; Maas 27).

37. See Bigelow for a discussion on the relationship between “national” and “economic” character in Mill (66–69).

38. Mill treats property as an effect of law rather than a natural right (Ryan 42).

39. Senior also takes the position that rent, unlike wages or profits, is neither the product of sacrifice nor abstinence but the remuneration for no sacrifice (91). See also Hollander *Mill* 830.

40. See Mill's critique of how private property is “held sacred” from taxation despite no exertion or sacrifice (2:821).

41. See Gagnier on the relationship between increasing wants and models of civilization/barbarism in political economy (*Insatiability* 50–51).

42. Gagnier claims that Jevons's and Menger's portraits of economic man as a rational agent pursuing his self-interest and ordering his “insatiable” desires according to varying levels of preference delimit the social vision of economic progress and welfare implied in Mill, Ricardo, and Smith (*Insatiability* 50–52). My discussion of the sociological concerns that vexed Jevons departs from this standard account of the marginal revolution. Moreover, as William Jaffé observes, Menger emphasized disequilibrium in economic exchange, in contrast to Jevons and Walras, and presented a view of economic man that portrayed his economic behavior as prone to uncertainties and error (*Essays* 320). Walras's general equilibrium theory is part of a larger vision of distributive justice and limitations to private property (Walsh and Gram 154).

43. For Jevons's discussion of such issues see *The State in Relation to Labour* (1882). The chapter "Principles of Industrial Legislation," in particular, addresses the problem of government intervention to correct income distribution and labor conditions when the "sacred" principle of liberty hampers the economic benefits it is meant to engender (14).

44. Jevons's position is here comparable to Amartya Sen's discussion of "opportunity" as an aspect of individual freedom and valuation of preferences (9–19 *passim*). See also Peart 168–69.

### Chapter 3

1. For a discussion of middle-class prayer as ritual, see Langland 54.

2. I follow Jose Harris's discussion of these two types of action and his translation xvi–xvii.

3. Of particular importance to Tönnies was Thomas Hobbes, Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and Henry Maine. See Harris ix–xxx.

4. I use "utilitarian" in the course of this chapter not only to designate those everyday, functional tasks that follow a means-end schema, but also economic acts that seek to maximize utility. With respect to the latter, utilitarian acts represent a subclass of instrumental action. I am thinking here of Weber's fourfold classification of action, where *zweckrational* is given a preeminent position and is defined as action that is "determined by expectations as to the behavior of objects in the environment and of other human beings; these expectations are used as 'conditions' or 'means' for the attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends" (*Economy and Society* 1:24). This model of instrumental reason as the pursuit of calculated ends approximates his notion of "rational economic action," in which agents manage means-end relations and calculate the maximum allocation of utilities (*Economy and Society* 1:71–74).

5. See, for example, Talcott Parsons's discussion of how theories of rational and logical actions often discount normative values and sentiments central to ritual (196–211). See also Goody's critique of Parsons's notion of ritual as a "residual category" after rational and/or logical/non-logical actions have been abstracted away ("Ritual" 156–57).

6. Anthony Giddens describes reflexivity as "characteristic of all human action," in which "human beings routinely 'keep in touch' with the grounds of what they do as an integral element of doing it" (*Consequences of Modernity* 36). Such reflexivity, he argues, is more insistent in the era of modernity because agents can no longer rely on tradition to supply the grounds for their acts—for the modern agent "thought and action are constantly refracted back upon one another" (38). Giddens's theory of modern reflexivity is related to his theory of "structuration," which explores the dynamic, dialectical relationship between subjective agency and objective social structure and thus overcomes the typical theoretical gap between the two by positing a fundamental, interdependent duality (*Constitution of Society* xvi–xxi). For a discussion of reflexivity in ritual studies, see Bell 75.

7. See Giddens's discussion of the relationship between socialization and structuration (*Constitution of Society* 170–71).

8. The literature that has arisen in response to such flaws is vast and varied in its argumentative orientation. Some limited examples include Giddens's structuration, Bourdieu's habitus, Gramsci's notion of hegemony (189–221), and Simmel's theory of conflict (*Individuality* 70–95).

9. See Manganaro, B. Robbins, and Herbert's *Culture and Anomie*.

10. Janice Carlisle discusses this problem in relation to the problem of character formation (137).

11. According to Gallagher, reformists like Owen and industrial novelists from Gaskell to Kingsley found it difficult to marry their notion of free will and providence with a deterministic view of the causes that shape and delimit the worker's character and agency (*Industrial* 4–87). In a similar vein, Anderson discusses Mill's attempt to reconcile his commitment to individual autonomy and free will with his doctrine of philosophical necessity, wherein action can be predictably inferred on the basis of such determinate conditions as character, disposition, and social circumstance (*Tainted* 23–34).

12. This tendency persists in later anthropologists. Adam Kuper writes that Malinowski's interpretation of the Trobriand Islanders projected a "universal type"—this type being the self-interested, rational economic agent (*Anthropology and Anthropologists* 25).

13. My broad understanding of ritual theory is indebted to Catherine Bell.

14. He saw little difference, for example, between the religious rites of Christians and the communal acts of national life (Lukes 476).

15. For a discussion of Habermas's interpretation of ritual/sacred in Durkheim in relation to communicative action, see Nicholas Adams 70–71.

16. For Max Gluckman, like Leach, ritual is disengaged from the sacred and is simply "the symbolical enactment of social relations themselves" (*Essays* 50).

17. In an effort to get away from the communicative theory of ritual, Ladislav and Humphrey claim that ritual does not require input from the actors but prescribes a series of actions determined by tradition that actors both intend and do not intend. Whether or not something constitutes a ritual does not depend on the person doing it, but on the "shared public knowledge" that the series of actions the agent performs comprise a ritual ("Action" 277). Yet such a theory of ritual is still communicative: meaning is encoded within the action itself rather than generated by the actor.

18. The notion that ritual describes customary routinized behavior stems from its root, *ritus*. The etymology of *ritus*, according to Michael Stausberg, may derive from the Indo-European root of *rē(i)*—to reason (51), which poses an interesting connection given the modern distinction of ritual as irrational behavior. Stausberg admits, however, that the etymological root says nothing about the semantic usage of the term as it evolved over time and place.

19. For an overview of such definitional problems, see Goody.

20. The priority of ritual over myth gave rise to the Cambridge ritualists such as Jane Harrison, who viewed Greek myths and literary folktales as later explications of the ag-

ricultural rituals that Frazer documented in *The Golden Bough*. See Ackerman's *The Myth and Ritual School*.

21. Mauss may present an exception to this approach. Mauss discusses ritual as another technique of the body that people are socialized/trained into embodying until it becomes habitual. But Mauss never discusses the uses of ritual and in what way they differ from other techniques of the body, such as swimming, except to say that actors conflate “technical, physical and magicoreligious actions” (“Techniques” 82). Culturally inscribed and historically evolving practices, such as the gait of Maori women (81), thus may still “communicate” to others.

22. See Bell's discussion of Tambiah's performative approach (*Ritual Theory* 41–42; *Ritual* 50–51).

23. Catherine Bell's concept of “ritualization” offers a much needed corrective to the focus on social cohesion; Bell views ritual as “a flexible strategy” expressive of power relations that can either “promote social solidarity” or “promote the forces that have traditionally thought to work against social solidarity and control” (*Ritual Theory* 218, 216). In the context of the nineteenth century, David Cannadine's analysis of the Diamond and Golden Jubilees demonstrates how the monarchy revived the public ceremonial in order to revitalize Queen Victoria's power at a time when the empire's power was waning. These ceremonies were not only necessary to legitimate her power, he argues, but also to create a “symbol of consensus and continuity to which all might defer” (133).

24. Bentham's suggestion that an agent's actions provide information on her subjective preferences/pleasures etc. is an early articulation of what would now be referred to as “revealed preference” (Binmore *Rational Decisions* 7–10).

25. Amartya Sen critiques the assumption in rational choice theory that agents' decisions be “internally consistent” in order to explain their behavior and preferences (233). This, he argues, relies on the position that “acts of choice . . . on their own . . . can contradict, or be consistent with, each other” (126, emphasis original). Rational choice theory and revealed preference theory ignore the dependence of choices on such things as social norms and roles (Sen 122–205). Some emendations to rational choice are found in discussions of “bounded rationality,” where the agent is no longer viewed as possessing perfect information of the market in order to maximize her desires but possesses a limited/bounded rationality. See Hodgson and Gerrard. See also Hollis and Nell for a general critique of rationality in neoclassical economics.

26. Janet Semple also points to ceremonial aspects of the panopticon. The initial reception of the prisoners into the panopticon, she states, functions more as an “initiation ceremony” than as a bath (122).

27. For a discussion of how Bentham's panopticon offers an ideal model of economic management that anticipates modern theories of economic efficiency, see Guidi.

28. Goodlad argues that Foucault's panopticon is “a distorting lens” that conceals British resistance to large-scale bureaucracy and their emphasis on local, voluntary forms of governance (*Victorian* 7).

29. Semple claims that Bentham proposed using these conversation tubes over lengthy distances in order to make the prison a center for “a national system of intelligence and defence” (118). She also points out how, despite these tubes and the ideal of visibility and communication, “there were no official channels of complaint” (269).

#### Chapter 4

1. Alejandro Nadal makes this point as well, suggesting that the influence of Smith’s invisible hand ranges from contemporary theories of general equilibrium to the social theories of Hayek, Rawls, and Nozick (181).

2. Along similar lines, Eleanor Courtemanche argues that the “invisible hand represents a kind of social ‘mirror stage,’ in which an atomized social body recognizes itself as a whole” (27). The metaphor of the invisible hand mediates the “worm’s-eye view” of the individual agent with the “bird’s-eye view” of the sovereign or theorist (34) precisely because the connection between the individual and social “is not *visible*” (37, emphasis original).

3. The idea of harmony through economic exchange appears among other political economists as well. Frédéric Bastiat, for example, presents economic exchange under *laissez-faire* as naturally creating social harmony between competing individual interests (*Harmonies* 42–58). For a discussion of models of balance, harmony, and mechanical analogies in seventeenth-century political economy, see Andrea Finkelstein. See also Mirowski’s *More Heat Than Light* for the influence of physics on economic thought. Lionel Robbins critiques the frequent charge of mysticism against classical political economy’s emphasis on the harmony that results from exchange in a system of perfect freedom. What the Germans call *Harmonienslehre*, he claims, does not mean that classical political economists presented a mystical theory of exchange that resulted in social and economic harmony. Whatever harmony resulted was under the aegis of governmental intervention and was a limited social harmony since they understood that society tended toward disharmony. See Robbins *Theory* 22–29.

4. As Ingrao and Israel argue, one of the central concepts of equilibrium theory is price. Individuals in the market try to satisfy their subjective tastes and preferences by choosing from a set of scarce goods. Price acts as an objective “indicator” measuring the relative scarcity of goods on the market and conveying information about such scarcity between various markets (5, 101).

5. Jaffe claims that readers of financial journals interpreted the stock market’s numerical figures as “a reflection of their collective material and emotional condition” (*Affective* 15).

6. Henderson discusses how Ruskin stresses “the visible hand of management” in order to create a predictable setting wherein members of society interact harmoniously (84).

7. David Lewis attributes this formulation to Hume in *Convention* (5–6). Hume

raises the example of two rowers in the *Treatise* while discussing private property as a “convention” that members of society agree to in order to stabilize social relations (541–42). Private property, like other conventions, arises when a “common sense of interest is mutually express’d, and is known to both” (541).

8. See Rouchier’s review of Chwe for a related criticism.

9. The singularity that Ruskin values is not akin, as David Wayne Thomas suggests, to liberal individualism (62). While it is true that Ruskin values the expression of individuality in labor and skirts the boundary between valuing individual genius and the emphasis on individuality in liberalism, his organic, interdependent view of society and “life” is contrasted to the perception of agents as autonomous actors coming together as the result of a social contract.

10. Ruskin interestingly adds in this passage that one should give in exchange for labor not just the exact time but “some minutes more” (17:66). While the “law of justice” requires absolute exchange to prevent imbalances of power and unjust profits, Ruskin’s sense of the just stresses the moral feeling we have toward others and hence claims we should give in return a little more as a symbol of our bonds. Money, in this type of exchange, is “an acknowledgment of debt,” a promise that each will reciprocate the sacrifices of the other (17:50).

11. Ruskin also experimented with the idea of fixed prices for goods so that different sellers could not undersell others and create unfair conditions of competition in the market. He chose to sell *Fors Clavigera*, for example, at a set price (Spear *Ruskin Polygon* 158).

12. The central question in debates regarding money’s viability as a unit of account was the neutrality or non-neutrality of money in the economy, that is, whether the increasing supply or production costs of money impacted the relative prices of other goods in the market. Thus while Richard Cantillon claimed that money cannot be considered “neutral” since money is a commodity governed by the costs of production, Hume argued that in the long term money is neutral because the rise in money quantity only affects the price level and this is proportional to the increased supply of money (Niehans 31–33, 53–55).

13. Spear argues that Ruskin’s use of water as an economic metaphor for circulation differs from political economists because Ruskin analogizes the circulation of water to that of blood in the body, thus connecting economics with life. The “body politic,” in this regard, parallels the biblical image of the body of Christ and the members of the Church (*Dreams* 148).

14. As Linda Austin remarks, Ruskin’s description of money as “a token of right” (28:135) contrasts exploitative power over men within a capitalist economy from just authority over others within a paternalistic hierarchy (77). Similarly, Paul Sawyer states that Ruskin’s theory of fixed wages prevents money from being a sign of fluctuating market forces and instead makes it a standard of value and social ties. Money acts as a symbol of a just economic system (202–5).

15. Ruskin's model of reciprocity and just exchange echoes Aristotle's discussion of exchange in the *Ethics*. Aristotle insists that "[w]ithout exchange there would be no association, without equality there would be no exchange, without commensurability there would be no equality" (185).

16. Consciousness of others is not extrinsic to the utilitarian tradition but, as Blake reminds us, part of its ethos (43). The consequentialist ethics of utilitarianism requires that agents constantly remain attuned to and include in their deliberations the interests of others—it is not my self-interest that is of greatest importance but the "greatest happiness of the greatest number."

17. Marshall attributes his narrative of progressive subsistence techniques to Tylor's anthropological writings on early systems of wealth in *Anthropology* (1881) (*Principles* 220), indicating the degree to which the ethnographic narrative of progress had been alienated from political economy and associated with the distinct discourse of anthropology. Marshall also cites Bagehot, who claims that the chief difference between "primitive" and capitalist economies is that capital is the result of sacrifice and the abstinence from immediate pleasures—a feature not found in "primitive" societies (*Economic Studies* 161–82).

18. Maine was not alone in depicting ownership in ancient society as communal. In *Ancient Society* (1877), the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan likewise conceives of ancient society's gens as ruled by blood bonds, primitive communism, and reciprocity, ironically idealizing the social organization of the Iroquois tribe for epitomizing the democratic principles of "[l]iberty, equality, and fraternity" (85). Drawing on Morgan's (and McLennan's) counterargument that matriarchy and communal ownership was replaced by patriarchy and private property, Marx and Engels argued that communal ownership was undermined by the transition from barbarism into the increased division of labor that dominates modern civilization (Engels 112, 149–50).

19. As George Stocking observes, Maine saw elementary kinship as patriarchal and perpetuating the sanctity of the community through sacrifice, ceremony, and pledges. Maine explains the difference between progressive and stationary societies through the emergence of property laws and contracts, which did not exist in ancient societies (*Victorian Anthropology* 122–25).

20. As Burrow and Collini note, the influence that Maine's treatment of "primitive" communality had on subsequent historians is ironic since he disapproved of those who critiqued private property. Nevertheless, Maine's depiction of primitive communalism inspired such historians as M. de Laveye and Cliffe Leslie to idealize communal values in modern society as a movement toward a future state of co-proprietorship (Collini, Burrow, and Winch 218–19).

21. With respect to Smith and the four-stages theory, Maureen Harkin argues that Smith articulates contradictory responses to the "primitive," both affirming and questioning narratives of progress. Harkin argues that Smith's frequent portrayal of the "savage" as a model of stoic self-discipline, usually associated with modern man, reflects his

vacillation between history as progressive modernization and his nostalgia for previous systems of social organization.

22. According to Schumpeter, Quesnay's table describes the economy as a synchronized process in which "the fundamental flow of goods (and money) that constitute the economic process consist of a flux and an (augmented) reflux of 'advances'" (564). For a summary of Quesnay's *Tableau Economique*, see Blaug *Economic* 25–28; Walsh and Gram 28–40; and Roll 131–33.

23. Alejandro Nadal argues that in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, the "impartial spectator" rules the social system through "a network of interlocking jurisdictions" that leads to an unintended outcome (183). Smith's concept of the "jurisdiction" in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* links internal self-evaluation with the evaluation of one's conduct as reflected in others (183, emphasis original). In this manner, society is comprised of linked and self-regulating impartial spectators. Nadal states that, in the *Wealth of Nations*, Smith substitutes this conception of society as a series of interlocking jurisdictions with "a matrix of relative prices" whose balance is the unintended effect of the invisible hand (191–92).

24. Peach argues that, as in the *Essay*, the claim seems to be once again that the profit rates of farmers and manufacturers conform to one another (*Interpreting Ricardo* 94).

25. Smith sometimes vacillated as to whether labor had any bearing on the profits of stock (*Wealth of Nations* 42). For Ricardo, this was yet another untenable Smithian contradiction. If different principles govern the uniform rate of profit, wages, and prices, then the economy's price structure at equilibrium (and hence distribution) would cease to correspond to labor's sacrifice.

26. Ricardo here accepts Say's Law, namely, that there can never be an oversupply of goods within a barter economy where money is also considered a manufactured commodity (Niehans 11–112; Blaug *Economic* 143–44).

27. While most classical political economists had a negative view of the stationary state, Mill views it as a positive state in which society has developed its economy to the utmost and energies can be diverted to the development of intellectual faculties and people can concentrate on "the Art of Living" (3:756).

28. In Marx's model of simple and extended reproduction, he divides social production into two departments: Department I produces the means of production and Department II produces the goods of consumption (Walsh and Gram 111). Exchange between these two departments takes place at labor values so that a balance (equilibrium) between the two departments is maintained (110–11). In simple reproduction the revenue created in Department I is spent entirely in Department II, whereas in extended reproduction revenue is reinvested in Department I for more means of production.

29. Michael White claims that Jevons essentially presents a theory of action in which the "correlation of forces" found in mechanical theories of levers becomes transposed to human action (198). Harro Maas traces the influence of de Morgan's logic on Jevons's logical machine as an early mechanical understanding of the mind's processes. Here,



thought processes are formally represented without reference to psychological introspection. This was important because, like Mill, Jevons also faced the problem of free will and determinism that comes with a mechanistic view of the human mind. In this context, Maas claims that the notion of a “correlation of forces” from physiologists like William Carpenter helped Jevons’s approach to bodily states as expressions of mental states that could be measured objectively as utilities. See Maas 123–81.

30. See my article on Ruskin.

31. Sandra Peart states that unlike the pendulum, Jevons’s use of water as a metaphor for equilibrium shows the interdependence of all prices since water, if prevented from flowing in one direction, will flow and fill up another (92). See Jevons *Theory* 140.

32. Economic historians have long debated the relationship between the purely mathematical/scientific features of Walras’s economic analysis and its normative dimensions—what has been referred to as the “Walras paradox” (qtd. in Debs 480). While Alexandre Debs concludes that there is no such paradox, he nevertheless writes that “Walras develops his own doctrine of natural rights, which concludes the necessary harmony of ‘what is’ and ‘what ought to be.’ Mankind is naturally in possession of the principles leading to the realization of the Ideal, necessarily just. And this Ideal, Walras contends, is revealed to man by the faculty of reason” (487).

33. On this see Blaug *Retrospect* 551 and Schumpeter 953.

34. Walras’s model of general equilibrium integrates a theory of exchange and production to form four systems of equations. The question is how the relative prices of goods emerge through a system of free competition such that the relative prices are identical to the unknown variables in the equations (Blaug *Economic* 577–78; Jaffé *Essays* 228–29).

## Chapter 5

1. George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 133. All future citations refer to this edition and appear parenthetically in the text.

2. As William Pietz shows, Marx’s discussion of fetishism participated in a discourse on religious fetishism that began with Charles de Brosses’s *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches* (1760). Pietz claims that fetishism represents a new category in the eighteenth century, insofar as it “identified religious superstition with false causal reasoning about physical nature, making people’s relations to material objects rather than to God the key question for historians of religion and mythology” (138). In this context, Marx’s argument on commodity fetishism interpreted the capitalist as a fetishist, who falsely believes that capital embodies “(super)natural causal powers of value formation” (141, emphasis original). Peter Stallybrass concisely states that “[t]he problem for Marx was thus not with fetishism as such but rather with a specific form of fetishism that took as its object not the animized object of human labor and love but the evacuated nonobject that was the site of exchange” (186–87, emphasis original).

3. Aside from the contributions by Brown, Freedgood, and Plotz to the field of “thing theory,” see also Lorraine Daston, Francesco Orlando, Susan Stewart, and the numerous essays collected and edited by Brown in *Things*. Asa Briggs’s *Victorian Things* offers a densely researched catalog of Victorian commodity culture and analyzes the material contexts of various household things and domestic architecture. For the increasing description of things in the eighteenth-century novel and its connection to shifts in perception, see Wall.

4. See Derrida on the elided reference to ghosts in English translations (*Specters of Marx* 164).

5. I borrow the term “inalienable” from the anthropologist Annette Weiner and her analysis of “inalienable possessions” (6–8), which I discuss more fully in the next chapter.

6. Michie borrows the phrase “imaginary anthropology” from Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (197).

7. On a related point, Kathy Alexis Psomiades states that the homology between the circulation of goods and women within heterosexual exchange emerges at a time when capitalism provides the enabling concept that grants women equal political and economic agency instead of conceiving them as either alienable or inalienable property (“Heterosexual” 93–94). For a general discussion of the links between capitalism and legal changes to women’s property and divorce rights, see Shanley (9–14).

8. For a discussion of how the eighteenth-century domestic novel naturalized the separation of the public and private yet exposed it to repeated violation through either its publication of domestic privacies or its depiction of the middle-class family’s implication in the competitive practices of the market, see Watt 174–207 and Thompson 27, 187–90.

9. McKeon is indebted to Habermas here. The moment of segregation, as Habermas writes, is also one of interpenetration. Although the family may have been seen “as the domain of pure humanity, it was, of course, dependent on the sphere of labor and of commodity exchange” (*Structural Transformation* 46).

10. As critics such as Mary Poovey and Nancy Armstrong have noted, the rhetoric of separate spheres indicates a prevalent Victorian middle-class construct in which the deification of the home and the non-working, middle-class wife functions to delimit the incursion of capitalist market forces even as the domestic realm was constituted by capitalist economics (Armstrong *Desire* 47–48; Poovey *Uneven Developments* 76–78). The identification of the middle-class woman’s role in the domestic sphere and her intrinsic virtue transforms the home into a locale where the alienated experience of the self in the marketplace could be unified through feminine affection and self-sacrifice (Poovey *Uneven Developments* 2, 77).

11. James Thompson astutely argues that the novel “remains this preserve of misrecognition, imagining a space in which symbolic capital is privileged over material capital.” As a form of misrecognition, then, the novel can be seen as the locus of either the “mystification of capitalist relations” or a “utopian anticapitalism” (197).

12. For a discussion of such reductive readings of the novel and the novel's ambiguous position between these extremes, see J. Jeffrey Franklin, who claims that we need not regard the novel either as simply reproducing capitalist ideology or as critiquing it, but as doing both at once. My argument takes a similar position.

13. Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, ed. Peter Fairclough (London: Penguin, 1970) 298. All further references are to this edition and appear parenthetically. Nina Auerbach's essay is the most seminal treatment of how the novel replaces the masculine world of Dombey with Florence's femininity. For similar discussions, see Marsh 405–10 or Jaffe *Vanishing Points* 74.

14. Criticism on the homology that the novel constructs between the sexual and economic overlaps with that on their feared interpenetration. Aside from Nunokawa, the most thorough treatment of this problem is by Robert Clark, who argues that the novel represents "economic exchange tangling with the sexual" (73). See also Marsh's claim that the correspondence between the worlds of the economic and sexual is central to the novel's plot (411–13).

15. Catherine Waters, by contrast, argues that the novel explores the consequences that attend Dombey's failure to separate the domestic and economic (39–40). This approach is echoed by Lisa Surridge, who writes that Dombey violates the home's sanctity by making it a site of violence and fails to mitigate the alienating effects of capital through femininity (45, 67). Raymond Williams claims that Dickens's reference to Dombey's counting house as "the House of Dombey" purposely plays on the affinities between house and home in order to show how Dombey's governance of house and home according to a similar logic leads to his ruin (17). This problematic confusion of family and firm is reiterated by Jaffe (*Vanishing Points* 80), Elfenbein (364–65), and Schor (49–50).

16. Louise Yelin claims that *Dombey and Son* reflects Dickens's response to the woman question and the ways in which capitalism fostered greater gender equality (297). For an examination of the propertied woman in the Victorian novel, see Dolin.

17. The connection between household gods and the hearth predates the Victorians and stems from the meaning Romans gave to their fetishes. Every Roman family had its household gods (Lares and Penates) that it worshipped in the home. The Lares and Penates represented, respectively, the spirit of the family's paternal ancestors and the guardians of the hearth and storehouse (Hornblower and Spawforth 815–16; Warrior 28–30). Alexander Welsh remarks that the worship of "household gods" in Victorian novels seems pre-Christian, but became connected, especially in Dickens, with the sanctity of the domestic and affections. The religion of the domestic redeems individuals from the disaffected modern city and substitutes the home for Augustine's city of god (Welsh 147–48). In addition to these associations, the phrase "household gods" is also connected to problems of national culture. For the connection between the phrase "household gods" and English national culture, see Buzard's discussion of Brontë's *Villette* (257), Plotz's discussion of the connection between Englishness and portable prop-

erty (20–22), and McClintock's analysis of advertising campaigns for ENO's fruit salt (228–29).

18. Dickens's use of household gods was not limited to the fictional hearth represented within the novel but includes those sitting by the hearth and reading his novels. Commenting on his literary success after *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37), Dickens says that “[t]o be numbered amongst the household gods of one's distant countrymen, and associated with their homes and quiet pleasures; to be told that in each nook and corner of the world's great mass there lives one well-wisher who holds communion with one in the spirit, is a worthy fame, indeed” (qtd. in M. Dickens 71).

19. C. B. Macpherson's *Possessive Individualism* claims that seventeenth-century political philosophy conceived of individuals as owners of their personhood and capabilities. Ownership, individual liberty, and independence from others go hand in hand in liberal-democratic theory; political society thus becomes a means to protect the right to property. While this conception of “possessive individualism” reflected the market relations of the seventeenth century, Macpherson argues that its assumptions no longer coincided with society in the nineteenth century when the cohesion of working-class interests opposed those of landowners and democratization undermined the exclusive political authority of landowners (3–4, 263–77).

20. Dickens composed his novel during the railways panics of 1847–48, which ensued after excessive speculation in railways. The collapse of railway shares in 1847, concomitant agricultural failures, and the vulnerable credit system based on bills of exchange were factors that undermined the stability of the economy and increased fears of insolvency (Weiss 25). This increasing insubstantiality of value arising from a culture of debt and credit, Brantlinger argues, paradoxically gave rise to the “imagined community” of the British nation-state, which was founded on the fetishized belief in public credit (*Fictions of State* 20–26).

21. The novel is full of characters who are baffled by the credit system despite the fact that, historically, nineteenth-century financial journalism established greater transparency by publishing listings of prices and exchange rates, governmental blue books, and essays on financial policy (Poovey *Genres* 243–47).

22. Frazer's description of “taboo” resembles the effect of the fetish insofar as the double process and state of contingency that characterize the taboo appear in Freud's definition of the fetish form as the oscillation between “the disavowal and the acknowledgement of castration” (157). Derrida similarly concentrates on the indeterminacy of the fetish as it shuttles between contraries (Pietz 125). In their representation of the individual's relationship to things, the Victorian writers I examine manipulate this state of indeterminacy in order to reposition the tabooed object in a determined state of being sacred.

23. The novel's manipulation of tabooed objects counters critical assessments that it presents a polarized vision of the private and public spheres. See, for example, Nina Auerbach's claim that the novel depicts “each sex moving in a solitary orbit inaccessible to the other one” (108).

24. In a slightly different vein, David Toise considers the fusion of these two systems of marriage as symptomatic of Dombey's attempt to synthesize capitalist and early modern models of value, wherein the two realms were not segregated (324–26).

25. Jonathan Arac states that Dickens connects Florence to dead spirits such as her mother and Paul right after Paul's death, which transforms Dombey's house into a gothic home animated by spirits. Florence's solitary presence initiates a process of estrangement in which Dombey's home becomes uncanny (Arac 103–4). While I agree that Dickens draws on gothic elements to describe the house's state just prior to its renovations, he invests Florence with an animating power to transmute the ghostly.

26. For a discussion of the importance of spectacle and display to the rise of commodity culture, see Richards *Commodity* and Miller *Novels*.

27. For related discussions of Brogley's shop, see Weiss (106), Waters (55), and Ellison (95–96).

28. In a letter to A. C. Haddon, for example, Frazer insists that the meaning of totemism is “a cooperative system of magic designed to provide the community with the necessities of life, especially of food” (qtd. in Jones *Secret* 162).

29. Disparaging Dickens's romanticized portrayal of the Wooden Midshipman, Julian Moynahan argues that the back parlor of Sol Gills's shop establishes “a quasi-religious society” in which Florence, and all those who near her worshipped presence, have a good relationship with the “the quasi-sacramental element of wet” (128).

30. For discussions of the importance of such segregated spaces as the Victorian parlor for familial intimacy and the display of things, see Davidoff and Hall (377, 380) and Thad Logan (7, 23).

31. I borrow this idea of secondary functionality from Francesco Orlando (12). For related arguments, see Brown *Things* (11) and Appadurai (16, 25–26).

32. The ancient Roman concept of family and household is not a nuclear family but included slaves and their children (Warrior 28–32). Maine's *Ancient Law*, for example, examined how the “fiction of adoption” stretched the rule of *patria potestas* so as to include outsiders and assimilated them into the kinship group (110). In this context, the adoptive family that Dickens assembles in *Dombey and Son*, which includes friends and “slaves” like Susan Nipper, is not so different from its ancient precursor. For criticism on the adoptive families that populate Dickens's novels, see Helena Michie and Holly Furneaux. For a discussion of how Dickens's families reflect a broader cultural instability in how Victorians defined “family,” see note 41 to chapter 5 (below, this volume).

33. For discussions of metonymy and metaphor in *Hard Times*, see Gallagher (*Industrial* 147–66) and Spector.

34. Several critics have discussed the motif of water in the novel. See Moynahan 125–26 and Auerbach 107–29.

35. Nunokawa writes of the bottle of Madeira that it “furnishes a totem for secure, because secret, property in *Dombey and Son*” (44).

36. For a discussion of the numerous surrogate relationships in the novel and patterns of substitution and repetition, see Waters 56; Schor 50, 69; Sadoff 63.

37. See, for example, Andrew Miller's discussion of the novel's "domestic system" as following a structuralist pattern of substitutions (*Burdens of Perfection* 164).

38. My reading of the ending is in keeping with those by Andrew Elfenbein and Lynda Zwinger. Elfenbein claims that Dickens restores the "dynastic transfer of power" through Florence (381) while Zwinger states that Dickens restores patriarchal rule even as he critiques it (42). By contrast, Moglen sees the ending as a new domesticity that replaces dynastic ambitions (175–80). Lynn Cain and Nina Auerbach also claim that the novel supplants Dombey's patriarchal rule with Florence's femininity, symbolized in the images of water with which the novel concludes (Cain 68; Auerbach 127). This approach to the ending takes a more acerbic form in Julian Moynahan's well-known essay on the novel. Moynahan sees the novel's surrender to Florence's influence as the substitution of patriarchy with matriarchy (130). Moynahan's reading voices a fear of female autonomy/authority that, when seen in relation to my argument, resembles fears expressed by Dickens and Victorian anthropologists.

39. In what follows I concentrate on McLennan's *Primitive Marriage* since his arguments on the developmental stages of kinship are largely recapitulated by Frazer and Robertson Smith.

40. For an extensive discussion of the historical context of McLennan's argument, see Stocking (*Victorian Anthropology* 197–208). Anita Levy examines how Victorian anthropologists redefined kinship and the blood-bond in order to legitimate middle-class domestic ideology and its notions of gender difference. Matrilineal exogamy, for example, plays a crucial role in the development of the patriarchal middle-class household on which McLennan's theory was based since the recognition of the affections that tie mother and child in the totemic stage was central to middle-class notions of domesticity (Levy 48–74).

41. Recently, critics have focused on how anthropologists like McLennan render the conjugal family normative when the category of kinship and marriage itself was highly flexible. Sharon Marcus contends in her study of female marriage that Victorian debates about the legal institution of marriage reveal that "marriage was already relatively plastic" (212). The plasticity Marcus attributes to the institution of marriage underlies notions of kinship and family as well. While Ruth Perry states that the eighteenth century witnessed a transition from consanguineal to conjugal bonds that substituted a family constructed by marriage for the biological family (2), such a substitution remained incomplete even in the nineteenth century. The concept of the blood-relation, according to Leonore Davidoff, did not emerge until the beginning of the twentieth century ("*Where*" 208). In fact, British notions of kinship during the nineteenth century did not clearly distinguish between consanguineal and affinal bonds. The ambiguities over the basis of kinship and family coalesce in the controversy that surrounded the Deceased Wife's Sister's Marriage Act, which sought to repeal prohibitions forbidding marriage between a widowed husband and his sister-in-law (Corbett 57–85). Since, as Sybil Wolfram states, the biblical conception of marriage as the union of husband and wife into "one flesh" united kin as well, the bill's

nineteenth-century critics contended that lifting the prohibition would loosen the interpretation of husband and wife as “one flesh” and result in increased levels of divorce, polygamy, incest, and adultery (35–36). Lawrence Stone and Christopher Flint have shown that Victorian notions of family were equally in a state of flux despite claims that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed the rise of the patriarchal conjugal family. Legal definitions of family in the nineteenth century were at variance with general practice. George Behlmer notes that in 1851 a “household” frequently “sheltered individuals beyond the nuclear family core—servants, apprentices, and lodgers, not to mention distant kin” while common-law definitions of family privileged the nuclear family consisting of the husband, wife, and children (26). Karen Chase and Michael Levenson remark that this incoherence suggests a conflict between notions of “family” and “household,” where the latter identifies lodgers of an architecturally restricted space that conflicts with normative definitions of family as a domestic circle ruled by a male head (4–5).

42. It is this concern that prompts McLennan’s ambiguous temporal positioning of endogamy and exogamy within an otherwise sequential evolutionary framework. “[Tribal systems] may represent a progression from exogamy to endogamy, or from endogamy to exogamy. . . . The two types of organisation may be equally archaic” (60). McLennan’s evolutionary narrative presents exogamy and endogamy as both synchronic and diachronic because their contemporaneity is necessary for their synthesis.

43. In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Lévi-Strauss interprets marriage as the reciprocal exchange of women and other goods in primitive society in order to establish alliances between families and tribes. Within this schema of reciprocal exchange, he argues, women are not only “a sign of social value, but a natural stimulant” of the very reciprocal act of exchange that transforms nature into culture (62).

44. See Michie “Woman” 421–23, 426–29 and *Vulgar* 3, 9–12; Corbett 1–29; Psomides “Heterosexual” 112–17; and Sharon Marcus 217–22, 227–55.

45. See also Michie *Vulgar* 15–16 and 206.

46. For a discussion of how fiction mediated value in the nineteenth century, see Poovey *Genres* 89–124 and Thompson. For a discussion of how Florence mediates value, see Klaver’s examination of the connection between the intrinsic economic value of gold and Florence’s moral value. Florence structurally symbolizes what the nation’s gold reserves did for those in search of a secure basis of economic value in the 1844 Bank Charter Act (Klaver 79–82).

47. Ruth Perry explores the relationship between shifts in economic systems and kinship systems in the eighteenth century, prior to the emergence of anthropology, through the novel. The shift that Perry examines during the eighteenth century from a family organized by consanguineal bonds to conjugal bonds accompanied the increased accumulation of wealth in the hands of men and thus less economic liberty for women (38–76).

## Chapter 6

1. Peter Melville Logan claims that Eliot critiques the conflation of thing and representation that fetishism assumes and, through her realist aesthetic, strives to educate her readers in the falsity of fetishistic logic, although this paradoxically requires that readers take the fictional world she creates as real (69, 87). Logan also sees Eliot's interest in fetishism as part of her portrayal of English provincial life, which bears resemblance to primitives (67).

2. Eliot claimed in a letter to John Blackwood that the characters in *St. Ogg* represented "a lower level" than those explored in *Adam Bede* (qtd. in Levine "Intelligence" 403).

3. Bill Brown argues that the democratized access to commodities within the marketplace makes exclusive inheritance questionable since, theoretically, all are free to own what others own (*Sense* 48). In decommo-difying things through such acts as signature, Bessy tries to restore to them their exclusiveness since they now refer back to her rather than their exchangeability. See Kopytoff on the manipulation of conflicting exchange systems and the risks facing "decommo-ditized" goods (76, 88).

4. Blackstone remarks that early British legislators regarded personal property such as money, household goods, and jewels with less esteem because they represented a "transient commodity" (354). Whereas laws deemed land to be sacred and inviolable property, movable wealth was marked by its "precarious duration" (357).

5. Weiss discusses the bailiff's violation of the hearth in relation to the general moral stigma and disgrace attached to bankruptcy (15, 86, 92, 95, 103).

6. Elaine Freedgood has argued that the recurring reference to "Negro head" tobacco in Dickens's *Great Expectations* memorializes Australia as both the source of colonial wealth and the horror of Aboriginal genocide (81–110). Published only a few years earlier, it is possible that Eliot's novel also draws on the connections between imperial trade and tobacco. Nancy Henry's examination of empire in Eliot's oeuvre shows, for example, how Eliot figures empire at the periphery of the imagination in *The Mill on the Floss*—yet another element disrupting *St. Ogg's* self-enclosed continuity (81).

7. Jeff Nunokawa makes a similar argument (8–9). Susan Stewart also foregrounds such loss in the supplemental play of desire that occurs as individuals try to objectify themselves/desires in things such as souvenirs and collections. Andrew Miller argues that Eliot signals the emergence of a consumer mentality in *St. Ogg* through plate glass in shop windows: objects on display incite consumer appetite for goods, but such appetites quickly translate into a knowledge that any act of possession will lead to its inevitable loss (*Novels* 5, 10). The presence of plate glass anticipates the "era of the spectacle" and a consumer society that, Thomas Richards argues, arose with events like the Great Exhibition in 1851 (*Commodity* 3).

8. Meyer discusses another example where Eliot complicates the binaries of primitive and modern in her comparison of Maggie to a chimpanzee when she is eating the



jam-puff. Maggie's unrestrained grief is compared to a "lower creature," but her capacity for emotion is also a sign that she is a "highly civilized woman" (137).

9. For Nord, gender heterodoxy is an "anomalous" masculinity or femininity that is then cast as racial difference (Maggie) or physical deformity (Philip Wakem) (117–18).

10. See Meyer's discussion of racial identity and Eliot's feminist critique 128–30.

11. There's a wealth of feminist criticism that has analyzed Eliot's portrayal of Maggie and her relationship to desire/self-sacrifice. I give here but a few examples. Judith Lowder Newton faults Eliot for curtailing her critique of the social system that oppresses Maggie's self-development and desires by praising the powers of sacrifice and dependent love; Eliot embeds Maggie's final act of resistance through the flood, in which she sacrifices both herself and destroys the patriarchal community of St. Ogg (150–57). Elaine Showalter analyzes how Maggie's desires are neither channeled into "productive work" nor achieve sexual fulfillment, but rather take the perverted form of renunciation (127–30). Elizabeth Ermarth sees Eliot as dramatizing how Maggie is engaged in a "long suicide" in which she suppresses her desires and internalizes social norms that cripple her and leave her feeling inferior and deformed. By contrast, Nina Auerbach interprets Maggie as a powerful demonic figure whose untrained hunger gives her witch-like tendencies that surface in the gothic descriptions of her appearance, relationship to nature, and reading choices (230–52). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar also emphasize Maggie's resemblance to witches. Maggie channels her satanic desire to harm into things like dolls or rabbits, or through the "self-inflicted martyrdom" that Eliot promotes in the novel's ending (492–93).

12. I here disagree with Meyer's reading of savageness as indicative of Eliot's "opprobrium" for what the novel initially praises as "natural" and "wild" (141).

13. Elizabeth Fee argues that the scandal of promiscuity, incest, and unstable family ties, which shadowed Victorian debates on marriage and family, were then projected onto primitive stages of kinship. Victorians were thus encouraged to interpret changes to divorce and property laws as a degeneration into primitivism.

14. Daniel Cottom argues that Maggie's "doubleness," her vacillation between private desire and self-sacrificing duty, imitates the double process of the sacred and accursed (196–97). In the context of my argument, Maggie's inability to commit to self-sacrificing duty, and the gendered role therein implied, jeopardizes her ability to manipulate the double process of tabooed objects.

15. My argument here is indebted to Joshua Esty ("Nationhood" 111–12; *Unseasonable Youth* 60–62).

16. Corbett reads this embrace as yet another example of the Victorian preference for union within one's group, a preference for endogamous over exogamous relations (116). Yet, as I argued in relation to Dickens, the preference is for a strategic synthesis of endogamy and exogamy.

17. Gillian Beer reads the final embrace not only as "the fullness of incestuous love," but also as a "profound reconstitution of the self as split between the permitted potenti-

alities of male and female” (*George Eliot* 101). George Levine argues that the ending demonstrates “a crisis in the process of realism” insofar as Maggie’s death reflects the impossibility of imagining a life “beyond the self” (*Realistic* 44).

18. For discussions of fatalism in the novel, see Knoepflmacher 212–13; McDonagh 47; and Law.

19. Anthony Trollope, *The Way We Live Now* (New York: Penguin, 2001) 7. All parenthetical references refer to this edition.

20. For a discussion of how Lady Carbury’s literary production mirrors the forgery committed by Melmotte and the Beargarden’s IOUs, see Brantlinger *Fictions of State* 166–67. Nathan K. Hensley argues that Lady Carbury is but one example of how Trollope’s novel feminizes the vulgar credit economy and opposes it to the masculine, gentlemanly ethos of virtue and landed property (154–55).

21. As Audrey Jaffe remarks in her discussion of *The Prime Minister*, stocks can falter when founded on what Alan Greenspan referred to as “irrational exuberance,” a kind of magical thinking in which people’s beliefs about the value of shares alone stands as a surety of their value (“Trollope” 45).

22. For Trollope’s portrayal of Americans as individuals with an uncertain past and America as a nation of risk in which speculation thrives, see Annette Van.

23. I here agree with Amanda Anderson that Trollope’s anti-Semitism is, at times, questionable. For a more traditional reading of how Melmotte represents the anti-Semitic associations between the fluidity of finance capital and Jewish itinerancy, see Delany 26. Michael Ragussis traces Trollope’s characterization of Melmotte as “the secret Jew,” an imposter that threatens to Judaize England, to broader cultural patterns regarding Disraeli’s political influence and Jewishness (234–60).

24. Both James Kincaid and Christopher Herbert note that Roger’s almost exaggerated moral punctiliousness shows that Trollope does not endorse him fully as the novel’s moral center (Kincaid 172; Herbert *Trollope* 176).

25. Michie identifies this strategy in relation to *Doctor Thorne*, wherein the fetishistic worship of wealth as akin to the worship of fetishes in pre-Christian cultures allows Victorians to “[disavow] the power of wealth” (“Woman” 173).

26. As Delany argues, “The continuity of landed property is the foundation of [Trollope’s] ‘myth of the land,’ which sets out his ideal for the condition of England. This myth has three elements—identity, trusteeship, and duty—that bind together the fate of the individual landowner with that of the commonwealth” (20).

27. Ilana Blumberg, by contrast, argues that Trollope dissents from the prevailing valorization of self-sacrifice found in other nineteenth-century writers and instead critiques it by comparing it with forms of theft (“Unnatural”).

28. Trollope is typically seen as ambivalent about feminist issues. Richard Barickman, Susan MacDonald, and Myra Stark note a tension between Trollope’s disparaging remarks regarding women’s rights and his sympathetic portrait of women. Trollope repeatedly presents the ideal of marriage and domesticity for women, but continuously

shows how flawed an institution it is (195–97). P. D. Edwards makes a similar claim that Trollope became more sympathetic to feminist issues in his later novels, but that he did not wholly endorse full equality since he was ambivalent about women's entry in the public sphere (92–93). Jean Nardin claims that while critics typically see Trollope as becoming more liberal in his views on women in his later novels after the 1860s, he had already begun to question traditional notions of masculinity and femininity in his early novels (xvi–xviii). For another consideration of Trollope's feminism in relation to contract theory, see Wendy Jones.

29. Margaret Markwick claims, for example, that Mrs. Hurtle's life story contradicts the description of her as a "wild cat." She is portrayed as violent, but when she confronts Paul she does so with words, not violence (Markwick 73–74).

30. This marriage proposal offers a different model of how Trollope's conservative liberalism engaged with the transformation of marriage as a legal institution after the Second Reform Act. Kathy Psomiades argues that Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* provides models of marriage in which liberal subjects enter into marriages that modernize primitive models of male violence/tyranny into the romanticized submission of women ("He" 35–36, 40).

31. Jones also states that totemism offered Victorians a way to "write about themselves" and "was a powerful object to think with" (*Secret* 304).

## Chapter 7

1. See Stephen Arata's approach to Kipling in relation to fin de siècle deviance and decay (151–77).

2. For a discussion of the relationship between realism and the supernatural, see Srdjan Smajić. On Kipling as a realist and fabulist, see Dobrée. McKeon's *Theory of the Novel* is a useful introduction to the novel's generic hybridity.

3. I am thinking here primarily of Harry Shaw's work on the realist novel and "historicist metonymy" (104, emphasis original), but such an approach is also applicable to critics such as Freedgood.

4. See, for example, Jameson's discussion of allegory as a "master code" (*Political Unconscious* 17–102 and passim)

5. Kipling's friendship with Andrew Lang, Rider Haggard, and James Frazer is well-documented. Kipling, like Lang and Haggard, expressed interest in anthropology, as evidenced in his readings of Tylor and Frazer (Lycett 184; *Stocking After Tylor* 149; Seymour-Smith 244).

6. My discussion of imperial omnipotence relies on Lewis Wurgaft's *The Imperial Imagination* (54–78). Wurgaft argues that imperial omnipotence and charismatic authority drew on magical thinking and the psychoanalytic belief in the "omnipotence of thought" (55). John Kucich's *Imperial Masochism* also presents arguments on imperial omnipotence and draws on psychoanalytic paradigms to demonstrate how the masochist transforms narcissistic suffering into feelings of omnipotence (1–30).

7. Zohreh Sullivan examines how Kipling's mechanical analogies (trains, bridges, engines, and ships) function as "metonymies for empire" (119).

8. Randall Styers's book *Making Magic* also advances this claim; my discussions of magic are indebted to this fine study.

9. For Durkheim's critique of political economists and their tendency to read both self-interested "economic man" and economic phenomena narrowly according to laws independent of cultural values, see Lukes 79–80, 250, 499–500. We can here think of Durkheim's critique of the "anarchic state of *laissez-faire*" in relation to the magical (Lukes 266, emphasis original).

10. I am here reading Durkheim and Mauss somewhat against the grain given their ambivalent response to capitalist self-interest and their conflicted leanings toward socialism. For a discussion of these responses, see Graeber 155–63 and Gane 135–64.

11. On this point, see the essays by Derek Freeman and Valerie A. Haines in John Offer's edited volume (5–69; 70–89). For a general overview of Spencerian thought, see Jonathan H. Turner, David Wiltshire, and Mark Francis.

12. Spencer similarly claims in *First Principles* that "the primordial experience of Force" stands as a correlate for the absolute force that acts as a universal prime mover but which we only know through its "conditioned effect" (169–70). In the concept of force, "Religion and Science coalesce" (192d).

13. For a related discussion of this passage, see Herbert *Victorian Relativity* 54.

14. For the influence of Spencer's *First Principles* on Jevons, see Jevons *Principles of Science* 448.

15. Theodore Porter claims that engineering and economics overlap at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in analogies such as the steam engine and electricity (141).

16. Mirowski contends, for example, that Edgeworth disputed claims central to orthodox Marshallian economics such as the relationship between supply and demand (*Edgeworth* 54).

17. It is possibly this kind of poetic, mystical language that led some economists to regard Edgeworth's writings as "eccentric." See Niehans 279, 282.

18. Limoges and Ménard also discuss the problem that monopoly poses to Marshall's arguments but attribute such tensions to the influence of Darwin rather than Spencer (352). Margaret Schabas, by contrast, privileges the influence of Spencer, who, she claims, provided Marshall with biological metaphors of evolution while Comte furnished him with the language of statics and dynamics ("Greyhound" 325). Marshall's *Principles* contains references to both Spencer and Darwin, though Spencer predominates (50, 136, 240, 252, 136, 726, 770).

19. Such susceptibility, according to Andrew Lang, is inherent to magical thinking because it entails an absence of boundaries between self, world, and others (*Myth* 47). In a related vein, Nancy Armstrong argues that the romantic adventure tales by Rider Haggard and others undermined the bounded subjectivity often depicted in novels by representing energies that transgress the boundaries between individuals such that the dis-

tinguishing feature that separates Western individualism from the “savage” ceases to exist (*How Novels Think* 105–35).

20. John Kucich advances a related claim, suggesting that “masochistic fantasy” converts pain into magical omnipotence and provides the “foundational myth” that sanctifies “the imperial martyr’s suffering” as a form of “ecstatic rebirth” (*Imperial Masochism* 5, 26).

21. Luckhurst discusses how Kipling’s early stories explore notions of magic at the colonial periphery that seemingly denounce native superstition but in fact expose how British thought is imbricated in similar assumptions (*Invention of Telepathy* 177, 179).

22. Luckhurst makes a similar argument, claiming that the British compared African incidents of clairvoyance to the electric telegraph. Psychical tales operated like rumor and thus resembled the unorthodox information systems of the colonies, where information seemed magically to circulate with supernatural speed through rumor—an effect most notably felt during the 1857 Mutiny (Luckhurst *Victorian Supernatural* 200–205). Kipling, he argues, was aware of research by the Society for Psychical Research regarding the relationship between technology and telepathy, but explores it at the imperial fringes (Luckhurst *Invention of Telepathy* 75–76, 179). See also John Durham Peters on the relationship between the telegraph and telepathic contact between souls during the nineteenth century (94–97).

23. Yet, as Carrington notes, this ethic of social integration in which the wolf submits to the pack allows for, and even enjoins, the ruthless aggression of individual actors within accepted bounds (260).

24. See Islam on how Kipling’s law emphasizes suffering through work, discipline, obedience, and the value of action in maintaining social order (25).

25. Coates’s discussion of stories from *Limits and Renewals* (1932) reveals a similar use of Masonic ritual as a source of healing for war veterans by drawing a close relationship between sympathetic magic, ritual, and psychoanalysis (91).

26. By following a transparent chain of command, Findlayson’s workers model the style of efficient imperial administration that Bentham instituted in India wherein imperial law conformed to the “language of command” and authority could clearly be traced to the district officer (Stokes 72). For a discussion of this style of administration, see Stokes 72–74, 148, 164.

27. Zohreh Sullivan argues that the dream narrative of the Hindu gods contradicts the narrative of daytime work and imperial rationalism (126).

28. Christopher Harvie discusses how integrated technology in Kipling becomes a model of socialization identified with the law. Harvie claims that Kipling’s stories of transport technology display the importance of a disciplined managerial structure that is linked to national, imperialist aims that develop economic industries (273–78).

29. See Marsden and Smith’s discussion of this and the technological and economic difficulties British engineers and businessmen faced to transition from sail- to steam-driven ships (88–128).

30. Alborn claims, however, that the metaphorical language of the economy as a machine that required cooperation stood in tension with the metaphor of the economy as a system that automatically self-adjusts through laissez-faire individualism, suggesting that the “natural” functioning of the economy required mechanical supplements such as centralized administration (176–78).

31. Kipling faulted Spencer for his brand of Comtian scientific rationalism but concurred with his social Darwinism (Seymour-Smith 105, 108, 116, 244–45).

32. Carrington claims that for Kipling “[t]he ship was an expression of the Law, of that undefined *nomos* which provided him with a sort of stoical substitute for religion” (397, emphasis original).

## Chapter 8

1. Thomas Richards writes that the term “Great Game” was a political metaphor that Kipling took from Arthur Conolly’s *Journey to the North of India* (1838). Conolly used the phrase “to explain Russian diplomatic maneuvers within a superpower economy and over a particular terrain, India” (*Imperial Archive* 27). Richards argues that while the phrase is associated with the game of chess, a more appropriate analogy would be Go since it, like the Great Game, is a game of “pure strategy” (28). See also Baucom (93).

2. Menke makes this point in relation to Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of Henry James’s *In the Cage* (210–11). But I think it applies to Kipling as well.

3. According to Marvin, electricity was feared as a magical power that could either be a tool for destruction or a utopia (146–48).

4. Nickles claims that this annihilation of time and space increased metropolitan control over the imperial periphery and made nations more interdependent, diminishing the prominent role once held by government middlemen like the diplomat (32–34).

5. In a similar vein, Randall argues that Kim’s liminal status as an adolescent and hybrid identity enables the British to infiltrate the unknown space of India’s rural landscape and acquire knowledge that furthers British power. Kim thus supplements centralized administration and the “law” through disciplinary techniques such as surveillance (116, 128, 136, 141).

6. Parama Roy argues that mimicry and the exchange of identities in *Kim* become pivotal to the Great Game insofar as the exchange of clothing parallels the exchange of information (88). These exchanges function as “rituals of nationness” and must be repeatedly performed to generate “[c]itizenship and nationness” (88–89).

7. Homi Bhabha argues “that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*” (86, emphasis original). Bhabha claims that because mimicry both mimics and generates difference, it creates a resemblance that menaces colonial discourse (86, 88). Kipling capitalizes on the creation of such ambivalence and yet constrains whatever threat Kim’s capacity to mimic poses to colonial discourse through his conscription in the Great Game.

8. See McClure's discussion of the risks Kipling himself faced regarding his immersion in indigenous culture and the attendant loss of Englishness (48).

9. McClintock discusses how cross-dressing and mimicry in *Kim* is a means for colonial surveillance rather than resistance (69).

10. Zohreh Sullivan's discussion of *Kim* focuses on Kim's split identity as an Anglo-Indian and the reproduction of Kim's divided self through the series of political oppositions in the novel, e.g., the lama's search vs. the Great Game, India vs. Britain, etc. Kim's self-division is necessary to produce the fantasy colonial agent who is both of the Indian people and yet differentiated from them as a Sahib (148, 176–77). McBratney claims that Kim's racial identity as a white man appears absolute, but this is destabilized by his class and mixed ethnicity (104–7). Ali Behdad also discusses the issue of self-divided identities in Kipling. Behdad claims that Kipling's British colonial figures are characterized by "self-exoticism" in that they are culturally alienated from both Indians and the British at home (77–78).

11. Interestingly, Peter Hopkirk claims that the connection between the Secret Service and the Ethnological society was entirely Kipling's invention (126). For a fuller discussion of ethnography in relation to the Foucauldian dynamic of power/knowledge, see Randall 137–59.

12. Ian Baucom argues that Kim's sahibness is a "middle step" between his whiteness and Englishness. Kipling's depiction of colonial forms of knowledge, such as cartography, serves as the means by which Kim consents to becoming a sahib (90–91).

13. On the problems of technological failure, see Menke 247 and Luckhurst *Invention of Telepathy* 178.

14. For discussions of Kipling's interest in steam and motorized cars, see Mason 142–43, 186–87; and Lycett 344, 359, 402.

15. Hopkirk suggests that the Sat Bhai is yet another Kipling invention (194).

16. Thomas Richards discusses how "everyone and everything . . . forms part of the state's internal lines of communication" in *Kim* (*Imperial Archive* 24).

17. While only a few telegraph cables were present at the time of the Mutiny, many more were built in the colonies during the 1880 and 1890s. After the Mutiny, the British government gave money to the Red Sea and Indian Telegraph Company and the Gutta Percha Company to establish a connection between the East India Company's possessions and Britain. See Kieve 110–16.

18. While Kipling's fictional account contradicts Bayly's depiction of empire's information order, there is other historical precedence for Kipling's description of decentralized procedures as part of the centralized administrative machinery of empire. Stokes claims that the portraits of charismatic men like John Lawrence and John Nicholson exaggerate the improvisational aspects of the Punjab style when they were actually subject to a rigid system of administrative overview—a fact substantiated by the numerous detailed reports the government produced (245–48).

19. While A. Michael Matin states that Kipling presents the relationship between the lama and Kim as reciprocal, he also claims that it is clear throughout the novel that Kim

takes more than he sacrifices and thus emblemizes Kipling's notion of the "White Man's Burden" (336).

20. Suleri reads this mistranslation as "the urgency underlying the communication of cross-cultural desire" (123).

21. Jed Esty interprets the endlessness of the Great Game and the novel's ending as the bildungsroman's tendency toward a static, antidevelopmental temporality that defers fulfillment (*Unseasonable Youth* 11–13).

### **Coda**

1. A transcript of the hearing can be found at [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/july-dec08/crisishearing\\_10-23.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/july-dec08/crisishearing_10-23.html). Accessed October 12, 2011.

2. I am drawing on a number of critical definitions of globalization. See Stiglitz 9–10; Giddens *Consequences of Modernity* 70–78; and Appadurai *Globalization* 5–7.

3. See Gagnier's discussion of this in *Globalization* 24–25.

4. For a recent appraisal of global economic inequality as a contradiction endemic to capitalism, see Piketty.

5. See Ayşe Çelikkol on the problems market individualism and free trade pose to interpretations of cosmopolitanism as "utopian world citizenship" (19).

6. For recent examples of this, see Goodlad "Trollopian 'Foreign Policy'"; Agathocleous 1–7; Anderson's *The Powers of Distance*; Cheah and Robbins's *Cosmopolitics*.

7. For a discussion of the state's regulation of free trade, see Polanyi 139.

8. For a discussion of monism in globalization, see Beyer *Religion and Globalization* 33.

9. A number of recent books have addressed the intersection of religion and globalization, but they tend to focus on organized religious movements or to entrench such binaries as sacred/profane, immanence/transcendence, traditional/modern rather than to interrogate the constructedness of religion as a category and its relation to theories of modernity. See *Religion and Globalization* and *Religion, Globalization, and Culture* for examples of where these tendencies dominate. See also Robertson's essay "Globalization, Modernization, and Postmodernization" for an example of where this interrogation does, to some extent, take place.

10. Judith Butler contends that we need to hold the terms "religion" and "public sphere" suspect since it leaves unspecified what religion we are talking about, its particular relation to the public, and the degree to which the very category of the "public sphere" as distinct from the private was the work of religion (Protestantism) (70–71).

11. Meredith McGuire argues that in medieval society the sacred and ritual activity were integrated with the ludic and everyday rather than being segregated from it as profane (61–63). See also Eduardo Mendieta's discussion of how the term "religion" has varied definitions depending on the language and culture, and that this varied understanding of religion is not unrelated to the tendency in many contemporary cultures to regard religion as inseparable from public life ("Society's Religion" 52–53).





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