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TRAGICAL-COMICAL-PASTORAL-COLONIAL:
ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY, GLOBALIZATION,
AND THE FORM OF TRAGICOMEDY

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Tragicomedy may have been the most popular form of drama in early-seventeenth-century England, but it has also long been the black sheep in the family of Renaissance dramatic genres. In the period itself, Philip Sidney famously criticized “mungrell Tragy-comedie” as a promiscuous blending of genres and classes, “mingling Kings & Clownes.”¹ But it may be G. W. F. Hegel who initiates the main line of modern criticism, seeing the genre as marking the decline of the universal validity of the conflicting ethical obligations dramatized by tragedy: without this “objective” ethical dilemma, “there is no sufficient ground for mere suffering and unhappiness,” and tragedy veers toward the happy endings of tragicomedy.² For Hegel, tragicomedy signals a fall into subjectivity, a vision of the genre that has recurred throughout its critical history, even as critical trends have shifted. For much of this history, English Renaissance tragicomedy has been thought to embody the narcissistic fantasies of social harmony projected by and for a self-deluded and absolutist elite hiding from themselves the social problems leading to 1642.³

More recently, two edited collections, *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics* and *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After*, have brought a welcome renewal of interest in the genre and a more subtle approach to its politics. Despite the important work in these collections, however, and sometimes even despite their editors’ stated goals, the essays often continue the traditional way of reading tragicomedy in one important respect: they read it, in a sense, backwards, with the Civil War as its *telos* and the central location of its political meaning. Thus, Walter Cohen begins with the premise that tragicomedies “are shaped by the forces that led to the civil war and . . . often anticipate many of the conflicts of the revolutionary era,” while Lois Potter and Nancy Maguire emphasize the form’s implication in royalist culture during the Interregnum and Restoration.⁴ In so doing, these essays risk proleptically unifying the

politics of tragicomic form around the constitutional issues of 1642 or 1649 or 1660, thereby ignoring the political formations and issues central to the earlier English society in which tragicomedies were born.⁵ Indeed, this view seems to begin in the Civil War era itself, in the activity of publishers like Humphrey Moseley, who collected the Beaumont and Fletcher canon into a forthrightly royalist folio, or of the brothers Andrew and John Crooke, who published a series of tragicomedies by amateur courtier-dramatists like Henry Killigrew, chaplain to Prince James, and Lodowick Carlell.⁶

Whereas most criticism of tragicomedies has tended to polarize English politics around the battle lines of 1642, tragicomic form itself resists polarization almost by definition. But neither does it simplistically resolve opposition into harmony by wrenching tragedy towards comedy in the final act. Rather, tragicomedies bring the opposing forces of tragedy and comedy into a tense and paradoxical unity—indeed, paradox is its characteristic figure, as in the title of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *A King and No King*, and, as Rosalie Colie notes, “[P]aradox is always . . . involved in dialectic.”⁷ Giovanni Battista Guarini, the genre's leading theorist in the seventeenth century, sought a form that did not simply graft a comic ending onto a tragedy “in such a way that they can be disjoined without doing injury to either,” but rather sublated both into a unity that preserved “contraries” while overcoming them.⁸ Guarini's justification for this mixed form was explicitly political, but he would surely have been surprised by modern accounts of tragicomedies's politics. In his *Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (1601), Guarini seeks analogies for tragicomedies and concludes with one “so fitting to our condition that the figure is as it were the same thing as that which it sets forth”—less a metaphor than a mirror:

Does not Aristotle say that tragedy is made up of persons of high rank and comedy of men of the people? Let us give an example of men of rank and men of the people. The republic is such a thing. . . . I speak of the forms that spring from the diversity of these two, that is, the power of the few and the power of the masses. Are not these two species of government very different among themselves? . . . [Y]et the Philosopher puts them together and makes of them the mixture of the republic. . . . Are not these contraries? Yet they join in a single mixed form. . . . Why cannot poetry make the mixture if politics can do it?⁹

While most criticism on tragicomedies has assimilated its politics to absolutism—or, in rarer cases, to anti-absolutist parliamentarianism—Guarini finds the genre's justification in a form of sovereignty

that blends the rule of the one, the few, and the many into “a single mixed form.”

What I want to suggest is that the development and success of tragicomedy in Jacobean England can be attributed to the adequation of its self-consciously mixed form to the pressing political questions of early Stuart society, which relied on the same kind of paradoxical mixture to prevent debates from becoming unbridgeable divides. As I have argued elsewhere, many in early Stuart England believed that their own government of king-in-parliament exemplified the Aristotelian (and Polybian) ideal of mixed government to which Guarini refers. In early-seventeenth-century conflicts, the question was not (as it would be by the late 1640s) whether sovereignty ultimately resided in king or parliament but rather precisely how royal authority would co-exist alongside other centers of power and how various authorities could be reconciled.¹⁰ As Guarini recognized, through its articulation of a paradoxical unity, tragicomic form could encode this ideal mixture.

I want to turn now to one striking formal feature of Jacobean tragicomedy, setting, and to one specific instance of the mixture of competing authorities to which the genre speaks: the relation between the king's prerogative and an emergent idea of economic natural law. In its fully theorized form, tragicomedy begins as pastoral, in England with Samuel Daniel's *Queen's Arcadia* (1605) and Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* (1608), elsewhere with Tasso's *Aminta* (1573) and Guarini's *Pastor Fido* (1590). Around 1620, however, English playwrights began to locate the genre in very different spaces, not the homely and familiar countryside but rather the exoticized sites of England's new import trades: the Levant in Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624), the East Indies in Fletcher's *The Island Princess* (1621), and in Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* (1622), the play I will discuss here, a pair of recognizably “Indian” islands, probably but not certainly located off the South American coast. I will argue that this shift in setting—or better, the location of the tragicomic plot structure in these new settings—reveals the genre's engagement with debates over the nature of the early modern economy in an age of increasing globalization. Sparked by the rapid growth of global trade after the chartering of the Levant Company in 1581 and the East India Company (EIC) two decades later, these debates were fundamentally concerned with issues of political authority.

With England facing depression and an apparent scarcity of coin in the 1620s, London bookstalls were flooded with a series of pamphlets that comprise the first sustained public, theoretical debate over eco-

conomic policy in England. Gerard de Malynes, a master of assay at the royal mint; Thomas Mun, a director of the EIC; and Edward Misselden, affiliated with both the Merchant Adventurers and, later, the EIC, were arguing over the very nature of an increasingly global economy, and over the role and authority of the king in this economy.¹¹ For Malynes, the central problem was the exchange rates that English merchants were paying for foreign coin. Because English merchants “doe not know the *weight* and *finenesse* of monyes of each Countrey”—that is, the amount of bullion contained in different coins—they are duped into unfavorable rates of exchange with foreign merchants, causing treasure to flow out of the country.¹² The resulting scarcity of bullion—and hence of capital and ready money—slows trade and raises the relative price of foreign commodities, creating a vicious circle.¹³ More perniciously, some merchants seek to profit from the fluctuating exchange rates, turning exchange into a kind of usury—the making of money out of money.¹⁴ Malynes’s solution was to reinstitute the Royal Exchange, where official rates would be set by royal proclamation, ensuring that all exchanges would be “at par,” with an equal amount of bullion changing hands in coins of different countries.¹⁵

For “bullionists” like Malynes, and like the customs official and influential economic writer Thomas Milles, the value of money is stable and determined, a product of its intrinsic value (the amount of precious metal it contains) combined with its extrinsic value (the denomination stamped on it by the king and guaranteed by his authority).¹⁶ Merchants who exchange currency based on their own expertise usurp the authority of the king, treasonously “*making KINGS to be Subiects, and VASSALLES to be Kings,*” since “*Princes and Gouvernours are to sit at the sterne of the course of Trade and Commerce.*” Regulating the mint and setting foreign exchange rates are “matter[s] peculiarly appertaining to [princes’] *Praerogatiues.*”¹⁷ By meddling with this royal prerogative, merchants turn coins into “wares and Merchandises, buying and selling the same for more and less price, as well as any other kind of ware and Merchandise they traffick in, contrary to the nature of Money.”¹⁸ According to the bullionists, the price of money in the foreign exchanges cannot fluctuate with supply and demand—as price does for other commodities—not simply because the valuation of money comes under the royal prerogative but, more fundamentally, because money is not in fact a commodity at all but rather the measure of commodities: “*The publike Measure, the yard, doth measure the Cloth, but the Cloth doth not measure the yard.*”¹⁹ In Malynes’s world, money is set apart from the world of goods; gold and silver

are inherently valuable and somewhat mysterious objects beyond the capacity of mere merchants to assess. Money and the economy more broadly, in other words, are part of the *arcana imperii*.

This economic model was particularly dangerous to the EIC. Because English goods were in low demand in the Indies, the EIC had to buy its Indian goods with money; while the Company was repeatedly granted exceptions to the laws against exporting bullion, Malynes's position suggested such exceptions should be abandoned, as the East Indian trade appeared to be a massive bullion drain.²⁰ Further, since Spanish *rials* were the preferred currency in the Indies, the EIC often paid a premium above par to acquire them, a practice that Malynes's Royal Exchange would have ended.²¹ When the government drew up plans in early 1620 to restrict the EIC to exchanging money at par and, two years later, set up a commission to look further into the causes of the depression and shortage of coin, the EIC employed Mun, and later Misselden, to argue on their behalf.²²

Mun and Misselden developed a model of the economy that was abstract and global, removed from the control of the king and naturalized in a system of self-regulating economic "laws."²³ Both Mun's and Misselden's writings are contradictory (within a single text and between texts), and at times each can sound rather like Malynes in stressing the intrinsic value (specie content) of money and the unique worth of bullion. In their first pamphlets, Mun wrote that floating exchange rates were one of the chief causes of the scarcity of money, and Misselden favored currency manipulation and regulation as a solution to the depression (though both always attacked Malynes's Royal Exchange).²⁴ But even in these same texts, Mun and (to a somewhat lesser extent) Misselden powerfully and pervasively exhibit an emergent ideology of money, exchange, and wealth that downplays bullion entirely. Instead, this economic ideology imagines a nation's wealth as its portion of the total global wealth achieved through trade and stresses merchants' expertise in judging the supply of and demand for different coins, and hence their relative values.²⁵ In this view, trade itself governs the value of money rather than, as Malynes supposed, money governing the value of traded goods.²⁶

For Mun and Misselden, England's economic problem was therefore not money per se but an unfavorable balance of trade, caused by excessive consumption of foreign imports and insufficient promotion of English exports: "[I]ndustry to increase, and frugalitie to maintaine, are the true watchmen of a kingdoms treasury; euen when, the force and feare of Princes prohibitions cannot possibly retaine the same."²⁷

Money and exchange rates are governed not by “Princes prohibitions” but by the same laws as any commodity: “For example, when here is plenty of money to be delivered for *Amsterdam*, then shall our money be undervalued in Exchange, because they who take up the money, seeing it so plentifully thrust upon them, do thereby make advantage to themselves in taking the same at an undervalue” (*E*, G8r).²⁸ Since the balance of trade determines the plenty or scarcity of English money to be exchanged in settling foreign accounts, the value of coins in international trade is finally determined not by their specie content nor by the king’s denominational stamp but rather by exchange, like other goods.²⁹

Indeed, Mun constantly stresses the transmutation of coin and goods, creating the abstract and hence fungible notion of value that founds our own understanding: “*Money begets trade and trade encreaseth money*” through “a continual and orderly change of one into the other” (*E*, D3r, D5r).³⁰ A favorable balance of trade, not plenty of money or bullion in itself, equals real wealth, and this is the force of Mun’s play on “treasure” in the title of his masterpiece, *England’s Treasure by Forraign Trade* (published in 1664 but written in the 1620s and incorporating earlier published works). Treasure is not bullion but rather the entire process of accruing a favorable balance of foreign trade: “It is not therefore the keeping of our money in the Kingdom [that will increase England’s wealth], but the necessity and use of our wares in forraign Countries” (*E*, D6r).³¹

As a mere commodity, money is removed from the monarch’s absolute prerogative, and the economy is ruled instead by a reified notion of economic law—what Mun repeatedly invokes as the “Law of Commerce”—binding the globe in an interlocking network of trade (*E*, G3r). It is this globalized idea of the economy that Mun finds most difficult to explain to his readers. Abstracted geographically from the marketplace exchanges that, even in a growing metropolis like London, were still largely visible and personalized, and abstracted temporally from the immediate exchange of ready money for goods, the global economy epitomized by the EIC required a difficult leap of faith for Mun’s readers.

Mun countered attacks on the EIC and its export of bullion, for example, by arguing that, because goods and bullion were fungible forms of wealth, the Company ultimately brought in more wealth than it sent out. The mere fact that this wealth took the form of goods available for re-export rather than bullion to fill England’s treasury made no real difference.³² But in order to see this increased wealth, one had

to view the economy in its abstract totality, which Mun knew was “so contrary to the common opinion, that it will require many and strong arguments to prove it before it can be accepted of the Multitude, who bitterly exclaim when they see any Monies carried out of the Realm” (*E*, D1v). The problem, Mun writes, is that “the Multitude” consider economic actions as discrete events; thus, the export of specie to buy Indian goods appears to diminish England’s wealth. By contrast, Mun’s model attempted to represent trade “in *its end* . . . [where] it is found much contrarie to that which most men esteeme thereof, because they search no further then the beginning of this worke.”³³ As Valerie Forman has astutely argued of the EIC’s development of the modern concept of investment, for Mun the protracted rhythm of outlay and return in global trade requires that we look beyond the seeming drain of money to consider the entire “economy”—a reified system of exchanges forming an organic whole.³⁴

In such a complex, global economy, monarchs are likely to do more harm than good if they attempt to impose their authority on the flow of goods and money. Attempts to regulate the export of specie to the East Indies, for example, will not “keep our Siluer from thence, as long as the *Dutch* goe thither: for . . . when their Ships returne from *India*, shall not our Siluer out againe to helpe pay a double price, or what they please, for all those wares which we shall want for our necessities?”³⁵ Royal prohibitions will not prevent English silver from flowing to the East Indies but will merely cause that flow to operate from a distance, via the Dutch merchants who will sell East Indian goods to English merchants at marked-up prices. Mun’s totalized vision of the economy reveals (or creates) the impossibility of royal control of the flow of bullion, as the king’s intervention here leads only to greater losses.

Other royal impositions on what is increasingly seen as economic natural law similarly have far-flung and seemingly inevitable repercussions. For instance, “debasing” coins (reducing their specie content) and “enhancing” them (raising their denominational values) were the two main fiscal mechanisms by which monarchs created more purchasing power for the same amount of bullion, but Mun notes the reverberating effects of such practices:

[I]f we be inconstant in our Coins, and thereby *violate the Laws of forraign Commerce*; other Princes are vigilant in these cases to alter presently in proportion with us, and then where is our hope? or if they do not alter, what can we hope for? For if the stranger-merchant bring in his wares, and find that our moneys are raised, shall not he likewise

keep his Commodities until he may sell them dearer?² and shall not the price of the Merchants exchange with forraign Countries rise in proportion with our Moneys?² (*E*, F6v–F7r; my emphasis)³⁶

Another measure designed to keep coin in the realm, the Statute of Employment, prevented foreign merchants from exchanging money at all, in the hopes of forcing them to spend their newly earned English coins on English goods. But this law too “doth *violate the Law of Commerce* . . . and therefore to be considered, that whatsoever (in this kind) we shall impose upon strangers here, will presently be made a Law for us in their Countreys” (*E*, G3r; my emphasis). Such violations of this “Law of Commerce” will “of necessity destroy much trade” (*E*, G4r).³⁷

In the end, then, Mun and Misselden’s globalized and naturalized economic model constructs all means of affecting the international flow of money and goods other than trade—all the traditional economic prerogatives of monarchy, including the regulation of the mint—as impositions on and violations of the law of commerce. According to Mun, increasing the kingdom’s wealth “can be done onely by a *lawful* gain, and this gain is no way to be accomplished but by the overbalance of our trade, and this overballance is made less by restrictions” (*E*, G6r; my emphasis). The very notion of such a “law” indicates the extent to which Mun has abstracted the economy from actual, material exchanges of goods, for the law he invokes is not a positive law—no such law had been passed in parliament or agreed in international treaties. Rather, it is posited as a natural law, both a moral claim about the nature of human beings and a natural philosophic claim about the regular, predictable functioning of the world.³⁸

The pursuit of gain and profit that the law of commerce embodies is thus made to seem as inherent to human beings as, for instance, their apparently natural abhorrence of incest, and the movement of bullion as regular and inevitable as the movement of the tides:

Let the Merchants exchange be at a high rate, or at a low rate, or at the *Par pro pari*, or put down altogether; Let Forraign Princes enhance their Coins, or debase their Standards, and let His Majesty do the like . . . Let Princes oppress, Lawyers extort, Usurers bite, Prodigals wast . . . so much Treasure only will be brought in or carried out of a Commonwealth, as the Forraign Trade doth over or under balance in value. And this must come to pass by a Necessity beyond all resistance. So that all other courses (which tend not to this end) howsoever they may seem to force mony into a Kingdom for a time, yet are they (in the end) not only fruitless but also hurtful. (*E*, P5v–P6r)³⁹

Mun's "Necessity beyond all resistance" is the natural law of commerce, which renders irrelevant not only the traditional villains of a moral economy—lawyers, usurers, prodigals—but also the prerogative of the prince, whose fiscal manipulations have become oppressions.

Misselden similarly noted that Malynes's Royal Exchange would inevitably fail: "[A]s all other Naturall things must haue their course, so also must *Exchanges*, and will no more endure a forst *Par* to be put vpon them, then the market will endure to haue the prises of all things prefixed or set." Misselden comes close to making explicit the undermining of royal prerogative that such a view entailed: "[T]rade hath in it such a kinde of naturall liberty in the course and vse thereof, as it will not indure to be fors't by any. If you attempt it, it is a thousand to one, that you leaue it not worse then you found it." He then quotes Jean Bodin: "Naturall liberty is such a thing, as the will being by nature rightly informed, will not endure the command of any, but of God alone." Perhaps realizing he has gone too far, Misselden hedges—"which must be understood of naturall liberty in the vse of things indifferent; and not of Regall authority in the exercise of government"—but the caveat only reinforces the erosion of royal prerogative posed by this new understanding of trade.⁴⁰ Misselden clearly places trade among "things indifferent" and therefore within the realm governed by "naturall liberty" and not "Regall authority in the exercise of government."⁴¹

This natural law of commerce arises in the early seventeenth century out of the political conflicts among king, parliament, and merchant community. Although scholars have not situated this pamphlet debate within the specific politics of the 1620s parliaments, such contextualization is crucial if we are to avoid turning these texts into statements of abstract economic principle, begging the very questions raised by claims for the objective and immutable nature of the "Law of Commerce." Without this context, Mun and Misselden can all too easily seem spokesmen for classical liberalism *avant la lettre*.⁴² But these writers were not advocating free trade in the *laissez-faire* sense; after all, both were speaking from positions of monopolistic power within the royally chartered companies. When Misselden entitled his first pamphlet *Free Trade* (1622), he certainly did not mean to signify the freedom of anyone to engage in any trade or the removal of trade protections, a policy that he thought would only cause further harm as "vnskillfull" and "disorderly" merchants entered the market (*F*, E3v).⁴³

Rather, to Mun and Misselden, "free trade" was free of the king's absolute prerogative over coinage and bullion, which could not constrain

its natural liberty. For this reason, they could argue simultaneously for free trade, which limited the king's prerogative, and for the sanctity of the royal prerogative when used to charter the companies, grant them their monopolies, and otherwise encourage a favorable balance of trade. But "free trade" could also mean something entirely different in the period, especially in a parliamentary context, where it almost always signified the throwing open of the chartered companies or their complete dissolution. Voiced by outport or provincial interests, these calls for free trade were directly opposed to Mun and Misselden's, urging the king to revoke the charters he had granted and often using the language of common law to contest the king's prerogative to issue such charters in the first place.

As Robert Brenner has shown, the 1620s saw growing tensions in the traditional alliance of the Crown and the chartered companies, an alliance built on the exchange of monopolistic trade barriers for extra-parliamentary taxation in the form of customs duties. This arrangement had held strong through the 1610 Commons' debate over James's extra-parliamentary impositions; even though the great London companies were themselves bearing the brunt of these impositions, they supported the new Book of Rates because James protected their trade monopolies from persistent attacks in parliament.⁴⁴ In the 1620s, however, the political winds seemed to be shifting for two reasons. First, in the heightened anxiety of economic depression, the 1621 parliament launched dramatic attacks on monopolies.⁴⁵ The Commons demanded to examine the Merchant Adventurers' charter and accounts, and it debated a bill "for free libertie in bying and selling of wooll," which would have effectively dissolved the company.⁴⁶ Similar attacks were leveled against the EIC, though these focused less on their restriction of trade and more on their export of bullion at a time when, as John Chamberlain wrote, "England was never generally so poore . . . yet there is plentie of all things but monie."⁴⁷ From the very opening of the first session, MPs repeatedly listed the EIC as a primary cause of the scarcity of coin. The Company responded with the arguments Mun prepared for them, claiming that the East Indian trade brought in a net gain of £360,000 from re-export of Indian goods, but (as Mun might have expected) this failed to persuade most members. And when the Company argued that their license was "onely to carrye out forreigne Coyne And that which they take upp in other places would not be brought into this Realme [otherwise]," one MP responded in traditional anti-monopolistic language that, although the Company might not technically export English coin, "[T]hey take up that which

should make the coin, and I never knew but that a forestaller was as great an offender as a regrater.”⁴⁸

In the 1621 parliament, the alliance between Crown and companies once again held: James rebuked the Commons for attacking a royally chartered company, telling them to “Meddle not with those things that belong to me and the state,” and the MP for London, representing company interests, reciprocated by arguing that the Bill Against Monopolies “did abridge the Kinges Prerogative.”⁴⁹ But the attacks were growing increasingly vehement, and, dangerously for the chartered companies, a second geopolitical pressure of the early 1620s threatened to drive James closer to these anti-monopoly, “country” MPs. With the outbreak of the Thirty Years War in 1618 and the Hapsburg occupation of the lands of James’s daughter and son-in-law, “country” MPs had become newly powerful, as James repeatedly had to call parliament to raise finances to prepare for a possible war, and as anti-monopolistic attacks on the court became fused with anti-Spanish sentiment. These MPs repeatedly urged war with Spain, and especially a blue-water strategy of privateering against Spanish ships and plantations in the Americas.⁵⁰

A Spanish war was probably the chartered companies’ worst nightmare. Ultimately, it was Charles’s simultaneous wars with Spain and France in the late 1620s that, for a time, finally broke the alliance of Crown and companies and “[drove] the merchants toward full-fledged resistance . . . [and] open opposition” to the Crown.⁵¹ As Misselden wrote, during wartime “the Course of Trade is stopt and hindered . . . and the monies become so variable” due to currency manipulation and inflation that, even when they are able to trade, merchants cannot be sure of making a profit (*F*, E2v). War with Spain in particular made all English merchant ships traveling through the Mediterranean or to the East Indies prey to powerful Spanish privateers. And such a war was particularly damaging to the EIC, given its reliance on Spanish *rials*: “[A]ny interruption owing to war . . . which hindered the Company from obtaining . . . [Spanish] silver would obviously . . . produce serious repercussions on the stability of the East India trade.”⁵²

While war with Spain was thus especially damaging to merchants trading to the East, it could be a boon for those looking westwards, toward the lands dramatized in *The Sea Voyage*. The colonial movement in the West Indies was dominated, as Brenner has shown, not by company merchants but by a combination of “new merchants”—who came from lower on the social scale and operated outside the chartered companies—and those members of the aristocracy interested

in colonialism, whether for profit, religion, or glory.⁵³ To these men, a Spanish war opened the possibility of privateering along the Spanish silver routes, increasing England's empire, and capturing Spanish colonies. For puritan and "country" aristocrats (many of whom were Virginia Company members), as for militant members of Commons, the war was of course religiously inspired as well.

To counter this increasingly vocal war party, Mun and Misselden stressed peace, and war itself virtually becomes another violation of the law of commerce. Mun emphasized that trade led to international harmony: "[B]y a course of traffick . . . the particular members [nations] do accommodate each other, and all accomplish the whole body of the trade, which will ever languish if the harmony of her health be distempered by . . . violence abroad, charges and restrictions at home or abroad" (*E*, G2v). Misselden pointedly praised "that blessed disposition in His *Maiesty* to spare no *Cost* to make *Peace*" (*F*, H7v).⁵⁴ This is not to forget that EIC ships themselves occasionally attacked both indigenous and European forces in the East Indies, nor is it to ignore the strong strand of EIC ideology that saw the Dutch as hostile competitors in a zero-sum conception of global wealth.⁵⁵ But in the early 1620s, a hostile policy toward the Dutch was equivalent to a peaceful policy toward the Spanish, and vice versa. The war party's Elizabethan nostalgia cast the Dutch as Protestant allies in a holy war against Spain; military alliance with the Dutch was their first demand.⁵⁶ When the EIC protested against Dutch attacks on their shipping and urged James to grant letters of marque and reprisal, they were necessarily and simultaneously opposing war with Spain; when hawks in parliament advocated a blue-water war against Spain, they were urging a naval alliance with the Dutch and ignoring the EIC's complaints. Mun's argument that war would cause trade to "languish" and the health of global commerce to be "distempered," therefore, was not merely theory but realpolitik in light of a Spanish war that seemed impending.⁵⁷

Company merchants thus found themselves in a precarious situation. Under attack in parliament, they had to defend their bullion exports and ward off demands for "free trade," currying favor with the Crown to protect their royally chartered monopolies. At the same time, they had to warn the Crown not to interfere with "free trade," to reject economic policies that restricted the flow of bullion and capital, and to resist pressures for war with Spain—in short, as Misselden wrote, "not to disturbe or distract Trade vpon any suggestion" (*F*, I7v). Mun and Misselden's global, reified economy governed by the natural law

of commerce was the ideological solution to this difficult bind. If James left commerce to its natural laws (which of course included company charters), England's treasure would increase as its balance of trade became more favorable; customs would rise and Crown finances improve. The mutually beneficial arrangement between Crown and companies would be restored.

Mun and Misselden's formulation of commercial laws can thus be seen as the ideological obverse of Francis Bacon's natural philosophy. Both discourses function, as Julie Robin Solomon argues of Baconian science, "to displace authority from the knowing subject and onto the material world outside the self," and both arise out of the "changing relations between king and Parliament, between sovereign and private subject, and between monarch and merchant."⁵⁸ But while Bacon strives to enhance the king's absolute prerogative, Mun and Misselden seek to maintain a precarious balance between eroding and upholding it.⁵⁹ Bacon's paradoxical dictum that "Nature is conquered only by obedience" might serve as their watchword: if James would obey nature—if he would abide by the natural law of commerce—then his command and authority would in fact be increased, since "when *Trade flourisheth, the Kings reuenuē is augmented*" (F, B2v).⁶⁰ Economic nature can be channeled and directed to the benefit of the Crown and state, but at a fundamental level, represented for Mun and Misselden by exchange rates and the flow of bullion, nature must be obeyed or else the state will suffer.⁶¹

The crucial aspect of this economic vision is its representation of totality, what Misselden called, in the title of his 1623 publication, the "circle of commerce."⁶² Before their theories could be assimilated, Mun and Misselden needed their readers to see economic activity in a new form.⁶³ In this totalized economy, bullion is no different from other commodities, since coin and goods are endlessly transmuted at different points in the global network; currency debasement or other violations of the natural law of commerce are doomed to fail, inviting only retaliation from other parts of the totality. More fundamentally, cause and effect are radically disjunct, distanced across space and time as actions in one part of the world reverberate, with a supposed inevitability, months or even years later in another. This innovative economic vision is a formal effect of early modern globalization, as shown by Misselden's telling comparison of his theory to the "great globe . . . made of Glasse" for "*Sapor the King of Persia*." This globe was made with "such curiosity and excellency, that himselfe might sit in his throne . . . in the *Center* thereof, and behold the motions and

reuolutions of the Starres, rising and falling vnder his feet.” If England’s king “would desire to behold from his throne, the various reuolutions of Commerce, within and without his Kingdome,” he could do so by assessing the balance of trade and following the natural law of commerce.⁶⁴ Like Sapor’s globe, Mun and Misselden’s economic model enables the otherwise impossible comprehension of global simultaneity and totality, the complex imbrications of distant and proximate movements. In this sense, the model is aesthetic—an ideological representation, akin to Fredric Jameson’s “cognitive mapping,” that bridges “the here and now of immediate perception” and “the imaginative or imaginary sense of . . . an absent totality.”⁶⁵

The colonial (in setting if not, as we shall see, in ideology) tragicomedies of the 1620s functioned as another aesthetic form for naturalizing this counterintuitive imaginary. I am building here on the work of Forman, who has recently argued that the tragicomic transformation of apparent loss (tragedy) into the very engine of a redemptive comic ending mirrors the emergent idea of investment developed by Mun and the EIC. Just as the ideology of investment transforms the outflow of bullion into the mechanism for increased profits, so too tragicomedy transforms loss into the mechanism for redemption (in both economic and moral terms). Forman thus provides a crucial materialist context for what Gordon McMullan calls “the essential structural contradiction” of the genre, “the paradox that the vehicle of its regenerative teleology is dispersal, dissemination, and loss.”⁶⁶ Such a view of tragicomic form reveals the relation between the new genre and the new economy that Mun argued had to be understood “in *its end* . . . [where] it is found much contrarie to that which most men esteeme thereof.”

What I want to stress here, however, is that the form of tragicomedy—and particularly its often miraculous or wondrous endings—was perfectly suited to represent “absent totality” and the notions of delayed effect and action-at-a-distance that Mun’s natural law of commerce required. While other genres, of course, trade in many kinds of unexpected revelations, tragicomedy makes the distant, reverberating relationships of cause and effect the preeminent focus of its plots, of the intricate knot that tragicomedy ties and what Guarini called the “credible marvel” (*il mirabile accompagnato col verisimile*) that unravels it.⁶⁷ By locating this plot structure in these new colonial settings, tragicomedies like *The Sea Voyage* engage with the competing claims of royal prerogative and the sovereignty of natural law that were so prominent in the economic debates of the early 1620s. First performed in 1622, *The Sea Voyage* underscores both that exchange,

not bullion in itself, leads to wealth and that transgressing the natural law of commerce—whether through bullionism, war, or colonial aggression—will lead only to barrenness and lack.

The Sea Voyage tells the story of the French pirate Albert, who has kidnapped Aminta from her brother Raymond, another pirate, and fallen in love with her. The play opens with a shipwreck scene heavily indebted to *The Tempest*, but when the survivors of Albert's ship reach the island, Fletcher and Massinger's deviation from William Shakespeare's play becomes apparent. Unlike Shakespeare's island, and indeed unlike nearly all Renaissance islands, Albert's crew lands on what is repeatedly referred to as "this wretched Island" or "the bar-raine Islands," a place devoid of all natural resources and of anyone who might be put to work exploiting them.⁶⁸ As the island's current stranded inhabitants Sebastian and Nicusa lament: "Here's nothing but rocks and barrenes, / Hunger, and cold to eat" (S, 1.3.24–25), "wildnesse, and wants innumerable" (S, 1.4.132). Even the natural rhythms of the earth fail to provide their agricultural assistance: "No summer here, to promise any thing; / Nor Autume, to make full the reapers hands; / The earth obdurate to the teares of heaven, / Let's nothing shoot but poysoned weeds" (S, 1.4.140–43). In short, "All that were made for mans use, flye this desert" (S, 1.4.145). Whereas Shakespeare's island can be self-sufficient because it contains both natural resources and the exploitable labor of Ariel and Caliban, no colonial fantasy of magically enforced work disturbs this island's barrenness. It is worth considering the atypicality of the barren island, because it bears directly on the economic debates: Phaedria's island in book two of the *Faerie Queene*, for example, like many Renaissance islands, represents bounty and the temptations of ease and sloth; Thomas More's and Bacon's island utopias, of course, present fully developed, thriving, and basically self-sufficient alternative civilizations that refuse commerce almost entirely.⁶⁹

Writing of the "profusion of islands in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European fiction," Roland Greene identifies an "island logic." Islands reveal "their own constructedness, and the constructedness of the other measures of the world, because they enforce a certain clarity: they have definable borders, they are conceptually autonomous from the world at large." The partial perspective afforded by insularity, its "oblique relation to the accumulating and totalizing worldview of the imperial and economic centres," allows us "to see reality as built, imported, and contingent," especially in the economic sphere.⁷⁰ Such an island logic is at work in *The Sea Voyage*, but its ultimate function

is not, as Greene would have it, to “undermine some of the mystifications of capital,” but rather to help create precisely the economic “totalizing worldview” to which it stands in “oblique relation.” In *The Sea Voyage*, island logic is not, as Greene asserts, “counterposed to worldmaking.”⁷¹ Rather, insularity provides the perspective that moves us from Malynes’s bullionist understanding of money as treasure to Mun’s worldmaking vision of the global balance of trade.

As Anthony Parr has argued, the barren isolation of this island, and the ridiculous incompetence and greed of the pirate-colonists, may reflect “an antipathy to the entire enterprise [of American colonialism],” an antipathy rooted not merely in companies’ opposition to a western-colonial war with Spain but also in their general avoidance of colonial ventures in favor of the heavily regulated, monopolistic carrying trades.⁷² Indeed, when the Dutch East India Company (VOC) offered to end its ongoing hostilities with the EIC by merging the two companies, the English refused in part because the VOC followed a more colonial policy of fortification and possession. One EIC director wrote that “the trade that comes by compulsion is not profitable. . . . [The Dutch] have many castles with much trouble and little profit.”⁷³ Misselden’s “naturall liberty” of trade and Mun’s “Law of Commerce” developed partly out of the EIC’s opposition—more a commercial than a humanistic one, surely—to this colonial “trade that comes by compulsion.” Opposing their practices to those of the VOC, the English presented themselves as simply upholding free trade while the Dutch ruthlessly preyed on both the native populations and English shipping.

But there is more to Fletcher and Massinger’s barren island than a simple attack on colonial ventures. The deeper economic problem comes into view almost immediately, when the shipwrecked crew finds the two starving Portuguese men, Sebastian and Nicusa. In exchange for transport off the island, Sebastian offers ample returns: “Looke on those heaps, they seeme hard ragged quarries” (S, 1.4.168). In fact, the quarries are huge piles of gold and jewels, the origin of which, crucially, will become known only at the finale. As the shipwrecked crew immediately draw swords over the treasure, Albert exclaims that “This money will . . . undoe us all” (S, 1.4.183), and Sebastian tells him:

This Gold was the overthrow of my happines;
I had command too, when I landed here,
And lead young, high, and noble spirits under me.
This cursed Gold entising ‘em, they set upon their Captain,

On me that own'd this wealth, and this poor Gentleman
[Nicusa]

.....
And then their civill swords, who should be owners,
And who Lords over all, turn'd against their own lives
.....

O be you wise and carefull.

(S, 1.4.184–88, 190–91, 194)

As the pirates continue fighting amongst themselves, and Sebastian and Nicusa escape in Albert's damaged but still seaworthy ship, Sebastian's warning might appear a fairly traditional satire of greed along the lines of More's *Utopia*. While gold has no role in the Utopian economy, the senators maintain a supply for hiring foreign mercenaries; to avoid the suspicion that "they themselves were deriving some benefit therefrom," they do not store it in a treasury but melt it down for use in lowly objects like chamber pots.⁷⁴ As Richard Halpern has noted, however, this "ritual debasement" is paradoxical: "[f]ar from devaluing gold," it "invests it with an innate desirability" that the Utopians must be trained to despise, even though gold has no exchange value for them. In *Utopia*, the allure of gold thus "transcends all social contexts," becoming "a quality of the thing itself," the very definition of a fetish.⁷⁵

The Sea Voyage, on the other hand, ultimately demystifies bullion by locating its value (or lack thereof) in a system of commodity exchange, just as Mun and Misselden did in their critiques of Malynes, where the demystification of bullion is ironically the necessary first step in the fetishistic reification of the economy itself. Situated alongside the play's barren island is a more traditional Renaissance island, a "pleasant Island" (S, 5.4.37) of bounty but also of temptation and danger. Inhabited by supposed Amazons, this island is tantalizingly close but cut off by a "blacke Lake . . . / . . . so dreadfull, / Birds . . . / Dare not flie over it." (S, 2.2.3, 9–11). Because "This envious Torrent's cruelly interpos'd" (S, 2.1.70), as Aminta tells Albert, exchange between the two islands is entirely foreclosed. The gold problem that the opening scene presents is thus removed from its traditional moral context: even when order is restored by the less avaricious members of the pirate party, the central problem remains, a lack of trade.⁷⁶ So much treasure and nothing to spend it on. The dilemma is highlighted by the farcical scene at the center of the play; at the opening of the third act, Albert's crew starves while the treasure lies uselessly nearby. Their mouths water for "some mud" that "stinkes damnably," for "old rotten trunks of Trees," for the ship's surgeon's "old suppository" or his

“bladder” used to inject a “cooling glister,” any of which “would serve now for a most Princely banquet” (*S*, 3.1.19, 20, 21, 43, 47, 54). The “hard ragged quarries” of the first scene here become just another object that cannot be eaten: “Here be goodly quarries, but they be cruell hard / To gnaw” (*S*, 3.1.18–19). Since it cannot serve as food, gold is worth no more than the most disgusting, degraded objects in the surgeon’s kit.

While Mun’s balance-of-trade theory emphasized the transmutability of gold and goods, *The Sea Voyage* thus presents a limit case in which treasure abounds but cannot be changed into goods. This limit case isolates the nature of money for analysis, and it clearly shows that *England’s Treasure* was gained not by bullion but by *Forraign Trade*. Whereas Malynes held that the worth of a coin could be calculated by the intrinsic value of the bullion it contained, guaranteed by the denomination stamped on it by royal authority, *The Sea Voyage* shows us piles of gold with no intrinsic value at all, making the greedy desire for it all the more ridiculous. As for extrinsic value, without the possibility of exchange, the gold is literally worthless. Bullion alone is as barren as the barren island. Malynes argued that the “merchandizing exchange” was a kind of usury, but in its repetition of the word “barren”—the common epithet for money in anti-usury discourse—*The Sea Voyage* seems to suggest that bullionism itself is a usurious fetishizing of gold’s power.⁷⁷

If treasure depends on trade, the play also demonstrates that such trade requires the natural law of commerce that Mun and Misselden’s totalized economic vision helped to invent. Natural law is explicitly invoked on the play’s “pleasant Island” of women. As Crocale tells her fellow Amazons, “The strictnesse of our Governesse [Rosselia], that forbids us, / On pain of death the sight and use of men, / Is more then tyranny” (*S*, 2.2.22–24). This tyranny is specifically associated with the violation of natural law when Rosselia’s daughter Clarinda—who, like Shakespeare’s Miranda, has never seen a man—asks the others: “I have heard / My mother say I had a father, / And was not he a man? . . . / Your fathers too were Men? . . . / And without such it is impossible / We could have been.” Hippolyta’s reply is a clear indictment of Rosselia: “A sinne against nature to deny it” (*S*, 2.2.115–20). When Rosselia sins against natural law by denying the imperatives of heterosexual reproduction, her subjects (like King James’s own subjects) have a duty passively to resist: “[I]f she command unjust and cruell things, / We are not to obey it” (*S*, 2.2.133–34). But the force of natural law on this island goes even further than James allowed on his, as the Amazonian

resistance threatens to become active: “We must, and will have men,” exclaims Hippolyta, followed by Crocale’s warning: “I or wee’l shake off all obedience” (S, 2.2.216–17).

The “pleasant” and the “barraine” islands are thus more alike than first appeared: they suffer from a lack of natural commerce, in both the sexual and economic meanings of that word. The Amazonian violation of the sex/gender system, described as “more then tyranny,” works to present violations of the natural law of commerce as similarly tyrannical, harmful, and finally useless: just as the Amazons “must, and will have men,” so too, as Misselden wrote, “trade hath in it such a kinde of naturall liberty in the course and vse thereof, as it will not indure to be fors’t by any.” And the play’s finale reveals the dangers of meddling with this “naturall liberty,” for the problem with the island’s treasure is not simply that it is, in itself, worthless, but also that it embodies the repeated violations of the law of commerce which have ultimately led everyone to the barren island.

After a way is found across the “envious Torrent,” the tragicomic knot is wound up to its height when all the men are threatened with Amazonian human sacrifice. As the two warring pirates Albert and Raymond are brought together, we learn at last the intricate, multi-generational, highly ramified history that has led to everyone’s predicament. Raymond immediately makes clear that the problem arose from mercantile violations: “[O]ur fathers crimes / Are in us punisht. O *Albert*, the course / They took to leave us rich was not honest” (S, 5.2.92–94). Raymond and Albert’s fathers acquired their wealth through colonial privateering, forcing “the industrious Portugals, / From their Plantations in the happy Islands” (S, 5.2.96–97). They “did omit no tyranny . . . / . . . / On the griev’d sufferers; when by lawlesse rapine / They reapt the harvest, which [the Portuguese] labours sowed” (S, 5.2.99–102), forcing the Portuguese to sea and seizing their wealth. The Amazons into whose hands Albert and Raymond have fallen are in fact the same Portuguese women their fathers attacked, the men (including Sebastian and Nicusa) having been presumed lost at sea; the Amazon queen Rosselia is in fact Sebastian’s wife. Soon after attacking the Portuguese, in their lust for gold Albert and Raymond’s fathers began to “turn those Swords they oft had bloodied / With innocent gore, upon their wretched selves” (S, 5.2.112–13), and the conflict descended to the sons. “Thence grew *Amintas* rape,” Raymond tells Albert, “and my desire / To be reveng’d” (S, 5.2.117–18).

If piracy and “the trade that comes by compulsion”—“the course” that Albert and Raymond’s fathers “took to leave [them] rich”—is “not

honest,” then the honest course to riches is clearly trade and diligent industry, reaping the harvest one’s own labors sow. The EIC itself was not above using violence and force in the Indies, but the Company and its spokesmen consistently opposed the “naturall liberty” of trade to the “compulsion” of piracy and colonialism as part of their ideological battle with the Dutch. While “the Hollanders threaten any who do but peep into” East Indian ports, and while English factories are kept “under the slavery of the Dutch,” the EIC stands for free trade and against “the breach of Entercourse by forraine Nations.”⁷⁸ In the early 1620s, an attack on piracy and colonial aggression like *The Sea Voyage* functioned simultaneously as an indictment of a western privateering war against Spain and a rebuke to Dutch attacks on English shipping in the east.

Raymond’s tale of the violation of the natural law of commerce likewise makes clear that privateering, piracy, and perhaps colonialism itself cannot breed the sort of mutual benefit and friendship that Mun and Misselden attribute to commerce, in which diverse nations “accommodate each other” in global trade, leading to “the harmony of her health.” Without a global conception of trade, the pursuit of treasure becomes the fetishization of bullion, the pirate’s lust for gold rather than the merchant’s transmutation of gold and goods. As a result, rather than gaining wealth through foreign trade, the French pirates of Fletcher and Massinger’s play turn to internal warfare that is economically (and, ultimately, sexually) barren. The gold ends up worth no more than old suppositories in a space devoid of any possibility of trade; the Portuguese women end up in a space devoid of the possibility of generation. As Mun and Misselden predicted, transgressing the law of commerce leads not to wealth but—through a series of far-reaching and delayed consequences—to famine, poverty, and the complete cessation of trade and intercourse.

As is typical of the intricate causation of tragicomedy, in *The Sea Voyage* the past impinges on the present, and the distant on the proximate, in complex but deeply determining ways. A nearly forgotten “breach of Entercourse” has devastating consequences here and now. But, as is also typical of the genre, the same causal structure leads to wondrous, paradoxical union. The violence that brings Raymond and Albert to the barren island also brings them together; they “meet on such hard terms, that we need rather / A mutual pitty of our present state, / Then to expostulate of breaches past” (S, 5.2.67–69). Their “Fathers crimes,” which have reached through time to punish them, also save them: it is only because Albert has been shipwrecked on the

same island as was Sebastian (in the course of fleeing from Albert's father), and only because Raymond (pursuing Albert) has found Sebastian, that the demands of the Amazons can be satisfied, for Rosselia will show no mercy "unlesse you shew us / Our long lost husbands" (S, 5.2.126–27). The wondrous twists of the tragicomic denouement require audiences to respond imaginatively to the ability of past actions and distant causes to ramify across time and space. And this imaginative capacity is precisely what is required to grasp Mun and Misselden's concept of the natural law of commerce.

With the human sacrifice averted, Sebastian ends the play with a typically tragicomic sentiment: "[W]ell that voyage ends, / That makes of deadly enemies faythfull friends" (S, 5.4.115–16). Making enemies into friends, and pirates into merchants, depends on viewing the voyage (as Mun wrote) "in *its end*." Following this tragicomedy's path from the beginning of its voyage—which in fact occurs well before the events that transpire on stage—to its surprising end forces us to reconcile "the here and now of immediate perception" with "the imaginative or imaginary sense of . . . an absent totality." It forces us, that is, to envision a totality that exists off-stage, invisible, before or after immediately perceived actions, and yet that is completely implicated in and ultimately controlling these actions. Mun called his natural law of commerce a "Necessity beyond all resistance," which underlies and secretly determines seemingly discrete events. Guarini called this same necessity the "credibly marvellous" plot of tragicomedy.

In *The Sea Voyage*, this narrative transformation from tragedy to comedy comes only with a concomitant ideological transformation from violence to commerce. The voyage that began with piracy, rapine, and violations of the law of commerce ultimately restores natural law in gender relations (Rosselia "give[s] up her selfe, / Her power and joyes . . . to [Sebastian]" [S, 5.4.97–98]) and in economic relations—but only with the renewal of trade and exchange, as the sailors (and their treasure) leave the barren island and "returne / To our severall homes" (S, 5.4.114–15), turning away from colonial privateering and toward European commerce.⁷⁹ Just as Mun and Misselden argued in Baconian fashion that only by obeying economic nature could James control it and enhance Crown revenues, so too in *The Sea Voyage* both the tyrannically unnatural monarchical power represented by the Amazon queen and the violently unnatural commercial power represented by the warring privateers must be given up. What the play's ending paradoxically reveals is that the path to wealth lies not in the piratical

pursuit of bullion itself but rather in exchange and in submission to the natural law of commerce that exchange requires. With such submission comes the harmonious reunion of monarchical and commercial power. It was just this reunion that Mun and Misselden desired.

Tragicomedy thus functions here, as I believe it does throughout the Jacobean period, not as the decadent escapism of an aristocracy blind to the deepening divisions portending the Civil War. Nor can Fletcher and Massinger's play, any more than Mun's and Misselden's economic tracts, be seen as an assault on the monarchy by the bourgeoisie. Rather, these texts try to re-imagine the mixture of political authorities, to renew the traditional alliance of Crown and companies. On the one hand, their appeal is profoundly conservative: any meddling with the traditional privileges of the chartered companies is a violation of natural law, just as any commonwealth of women is a world-turned-upside-down. Yet it is also (and paradoxically) radically innovative. By giving aesthetic form to a naturalized and globalized vision of trade, pamphleteers like Mun and Misselden, and plays like *The Sea Voyage*, make it possible to imagine an entire sphere of human activity—what we now call “the economy”—as beyond the reach of royal power. By subsuming foreign trade under the natural law of commerce, they significantly erode the monarch's prerogative, traditionally seen as absolute beyond England's borders but bounded on English soil by common law and parliamentary privilege.⁸⁰ In thus undermining sovereign power, even if accidentally, they lend a further charge to Jacobean conflicts of sovereignty and drive a deeper wedge into the paradoxical unity that tragicomedy simultaneously aimed to create.

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NOTES

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¹ Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London, 1595), K2r.

² G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel on Tragedy*, ed. and trans. Anne Paolucci and Henry Paolucci (New York: Anchor, 1962), 84, 91.

³ On tragicomedy and royalism, with special reference to John Fletcher, see S. T. Coleridge, *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and Other English Poets* (London: Bell, 1897), 260, 281, 405, 429; Frank Humphrey Ristine, *English Tragicomedy: Its Origin and History* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1910), 110–40; Eugene Waith, *The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press,

1952), 198–201; John F. Danby, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Poets* (London: Faber, 1965), 161, 185; Walter Cohen, “The Politics of Golden Age Spanish Tragicomedy,” in *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics*, ed. Nancy Klein Maguire (New York: AMS, 1987), 155–76, and “Prerevolutionary Drama,” in *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After*, ed. Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope (New York: Routledge, 1992), 122–50. Ristine and Waith each stress tragicomedy’s pure or meaningless formalism, which evacuates ethical content, an aesthetic associated with royalist escapism; both thus seem indebted to Hegel’s foundational understanding, though neither mentions him.

⁴ Cohen, “Prerevolutionary Drama,” 122. See Lois Potter, “‘True Tragicomedies’ of the Civil War and the Commonwealth,” in *Renaissance Tragicomedy*, 195–217; and Maguire, “The ‘Whole Truth’ of Restoration Tragicomedy,” in *Renaissance Tragicomedy*, 218–39.

⁵ Philip J. Finkelpearl contests the received tradition by reading much of the Beaumont and Fletcher corpus as a critique of the Crown, but he still tends to do so from the perspective of Civil War and Restoration politics; see Finkelpearl, *Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990). McMullan’s *The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1994) provides the best exception to the general trends, incorporating revisionist and post-revisionist historiography; see, McMullan, 259–62. For more on the critical tradition, see my *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), chapter 5, 157–225.

⁶ On the civil war politics of one Beaumont and Fletcher tragicomedy, see my “Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher,” *ELH* 69 (2002): 947–77.

⁷ Rosalie Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), 10. See also my “Mixed Government”; and Peter G. Platt, who writes that paradox “contains opposites without necessarily resolving them” (“‘Much More the Better for Being a Little Bad,’ or Gaining by Relaxing: Equity and Paradox in *Measure for Measure*,” in *Textual Conversations in the Renaissance: Ethics, Authors, Technologies*, ed. Lesser and Benedict S. Robinson [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006], 46).

⁸ Giovanni Battista Guarini, “The Compendium of Tragicomic Poetry,” in *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden*, ed. and trans. Allan H. Gilbert (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1962), 507. See Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 203.

⁹ Guarini, 511.

¹⁰ See my *Renaissance Drama*, chapter 5, 157–225, esp. 165–66.

¹¹ My reading of these texts is greatly informed by Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978); Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998); and Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare’s England* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Modern historians have explained England’s economic problems in the 1620s by pointing to widespread currency manipulations on the Continent; imbalances between England’s “mint ratio”—the rate at which gold and silver were officially exchanged—and the ratios in other countries; and the disastrous attempt, in “Cockayne’s Project,” to provide new protectionist

regulations for the cloth trade. See B. E. Supple, "Currency and Commerce in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Economic History Review* 10 (1957): 239–55; Appleby, 35–36, 42; and Eli F. Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 2:223. English writers in the 1620s occasionally pointed to these same causes, but none of them was at the center of the pamphlet debate.

¹² Gerard de Malynes, *The Maintenance of Free Trade* (London, 1622), A2v.

¹³ See Heckscher, 2:238–43.

¹⁴ See Harris, *Sick Economies*, 58.

¹⁵ See Malynes, *The Canker of Englands Common wealth* (London, 1601), H2r–I3r, and *Maintenance of Free Trade*, G2v–G3r.

¹⁶ See Poovey, 72–73; and Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970; repr., New York: Vintage, 1994), 168–71.

¹⁷ Thomas Milles, *The Customers Replie* (London, 1604), F2r; Malynes, *Maintenance of Free Trade*, A2v, A5r.

¹⁸ Milles, C4r.

¹⁹ Malynes, *Maintenance of Free Trade*, E7v. On the special nature of gold in Malynes's thought, see Appleby, 42–43; and Andrea Finkelstein, *Harmony and the Balance: An Intellectual History of Seventeenth-Century English Economic Thought* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Univ. Press, 2000), 43–44, 46.

²⁰ See Bruno Suviranta, *The Theory of the Balance of Trade in England: A Study in Mercantilism* (Helsingfors, 1923), 6–7; and Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), 32.

²¹ See K. N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600–1640* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1965), 125; and Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade: 1585–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 130–31.

²² See Chaudhuri, 129; and Finkelstein, 55.

²³ See Poovey, 66–67, 74–75, 78–83; and Appleby, 41, 47.

²⁴ See Finkelstein, 60, 71–72, 79, 84–86; Thomas Mun, *A Discourse of Trade, From England unto the East-Indies* (London, 1621), G2v–G3r; and Edward Misselden, *Free Trade* (London, 1622), H4r–v. *Free Trade* hereafter abbreviated *F* and cited parenthetically by signature.

²⁵ Mun emphasizes the shift from royal prerogative to mercantile expertise by composing *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade* (London, 1664) as a message to his son on "the Qualities . . . required in a perfect Merchant" (B1v), appropriating the genre of King James's *Basilikon Doron*. *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade* hereafter abbreviated *E* and cited parenthetically by signature.

²⁶ See Appleby, 39; and Heckscher, 2:247–48. Malynes's ideal trade shows that his model makes specie content and bullion primary, rather than supply and demand:

One buyeth a packe of clothes, which cost . . . one hundreth angels . . . which hold . . . 11. ounces 2. peny weight in siluer money. The same packe of clothes is to be sold beyond the seas, and to be rated at so many peeces of plate of 8. rials or dollars . . . as hold the same [amount of] . . . siluer aforesayd. And in making sale of these clothes, moreouer to take so much ouer and about these . . . ounces, as both may beare the charges and a reasonable gaine. (*Canker of Englands Common wealth*, E5r)

²⁷ Mun, *Discourse of Trade*, B1v.

²⁸ See also, Misselden, *Free Trade*, H4v.

²⁹ As Appleby notes, intrinsic value served as a “commercial lingua franca” in international trade (49); it is not that Mun is uninterested in the specie content of coins but rather that, contra Malynes, he sees the value of that content as itself fluctuating with the demand for particular currency. Since the bullionists could not imagine money as a commodity, they could not see why English merchants would persist in “esteeming the English pound to be less worth of their *Exchanging Money*, then the Prince alloweth it to be worth of his valued Money” (Milles, E3v). Mun explained the seeming paradox by referring to the low demand for English coins, but to bullionists it could only point to an international conspiracy of bankers. See Harris, “‘The canker of England’s Commonwealth’: Gerard de Malynes and the origins of economic pathology,” *Textual Practice* 13 (1999): 311–27.

³⁰ See Valerie Forman, “Transformations of Value and the Production of ‘Investment’ in the Early History of the English East India Company,” *JMEMS* 34 (2004): “For Mun, the accumulation of wealth . . . depends on not simply an exchange of wares for money, but the repeated transformation of one into the other” (616). Forman astutely describes this key passage as a formative moment in the history of commodity fetishism. On the abstractions of capital, see also Naomi C. Reed, “The Specter of Wall Street: ‘Bartleby, the Scrivener’ and the Language of Commodities,” *American Literature* 76 (2004): 247–73.

³¹ On the dating, see Supple, *Commercial Crisis and Change in England, 1600–1642: A Study in the Instability of a Mercantile Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959), 211–12; and Finkelstein, 77–79. Chaudhuri similarly reads Mun not as seeking to amass bullion as treasure but rather to use it “as working-capital for further expansion of foreign trade” (114); Appleby concurs (39, 48). Their analyses and mine are thus opposed to Heckscher, who thinks “the mercantilists” (Mun included) all “fanatically adopted” policies favoring surplus bullion over all else (2:178).

³² See Mun, *England’s Treasure*, D5r.

³³ [Mun], *The Petition and Remonstrance of the Governor and Company of Merchants of LONDON, Trading to the East Indies* (London, 1628), F1r. See also Harris on the pre-1600 tendency to “regard commercial activity” as a series of “mostly individual transactions spiced with the sins of covetousness and usury” (“The canker of England’s Commonwealth,” 312; my emphasis).

³⁴ See Forman, “Transformations of Value”; and Appleby, 48.

³⁵ Mun, *Discourse of Trade*, F4v–G1r.

³⁶ See Appleby, 38–39.

³⁷ Note that Misselden disagreed about the Statute of Employment specifically; see Misselden, *Free Trade*, H4r.

³⁸ On the relation between these two ideas of “natural law,” see R. S. White, *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), xvii, 9.

³⁹ On Mun’s recognizably modern theory of economic agency, essentializing the profit motive, see Appleby, 93–95; and Poovey, 20, 86–89.

⁴⁰ Edward Misselden, *The Circle of Commerce* (London, 1623), 2B4r, 2C3v; emphasis removed.

⁴¹ Harris makes a similar argument in *Sick Economies*, 145; see also Appleby’s seminal account (46–47).

⁴² Alfred F. Clark’s otherwise valuable work is marred by his view of these debates “as an anticipation of laissez faire theory,” which leads him seriously to misstate the history of free trade claims in the period (“Natural Law and the Rise of Economic

Individualism in England,” *Journal of Political Economy* 59 [1951]: 333). By contrast, Finkelstein’s desire to oppose all three debaters—Malynes, Mun, and Misselden—to classical liberalism leads her to erase the important differences among them; the same is true of Heckscher’s *Mercantilism*.

⁴³ See Chaudhuri, 25.

⁴⁴ See Brenner, 207.

⁴⁵ See Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621–1629* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 94.

⁴⁶ *Commons Debates 1621*, ed. Wallace Notestein, Frances Helen Relf, Hartley Simpson, 7 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1935), 4:49.

⁴⁷ John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 10 February 1621, in *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), 2:342.

⁴⁸ *Commons Debates 1621*, 4:229, 2:30; see also 2:138, 212–13; 4:149; and Dudley Digges’s response at 5:517.

⁴⁹ *Commons Debates 1621*, 3:157, 4:173.

⁵⁰ *Commons Debates 1621*, 4:442–43, 5:216. See Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989).

⁵¹ Brenner, 225.

⁵² Chaudhuri, 124. See Israel, 134. For merchants’ views of war’s effects, see also *Commons Debates 1621*, 4:228, 230.

⁵³ Brenner, 149. See also Brenner, 159–68, 358–59; and McMullan, 197–206.

⁵⁴ See also Robert Markley, “Riches, power, trade and religion: the Far East and the English imagination, 1600–1720,” *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003): 494–516.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Mun, *England’s Treasure by Forraign Trade*, O1v–O8r. Misselden, however, urgently desired peace with the Dutch as well; see Misselden, *Free Trade*, I1r–I2r.

⁵⁶ See the quotations from the Duke of Buckingham (“[I]f the King and the Low Countries joined they shall be masters of the sea and Spain’s monarchy will have a stop”) and an anonymous poet (“while English and Dutch doe brawle / The Spaniard watcheth and advantage catcheth”), quoted in Cogswell, 181–82, 90.

⁵⁷ Mun did believe that England should try to weaken Spain’s empire by taking its treasure, but these goals were to be accomplished through trade not war; see [Mun], *Petition and Remonstrance*, C4v–D2v.

⁵⁸ Julie Robin Solomon, *Objectivity in the Making: Francis Bacon and the Politics of Inquiry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998), xii, xiv.

⁵⁹ See Julian Martin, *Francis Bacon, the State, and the Reform of Natural Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992). Solomon qualifies Martin’s thesis in important ways but maintains that Bacon is ultimately working “in the service of royalist control” (24).

⁶⁰ Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), 33.

⁶¹ *Pace* Finkelstein, Misselden’s statements on the importance of channeling commerce and his claim for its “naturall liberty” are not necessarily contradictory.

⁶² The development of this vision may be partly attributable to the nature of the East Indian trade. Unlike most companies, the EIC “was forced by the small and inelastic home demand for its trade products to organize its operations on a supra-national basis,” emphasizing re-exports and intra-Indies trade, “the first indication of English participation in the evolution of a world-wide multilateral trade system” (Chaudhuri, 5).

⁶³ I thus disagree with Poovey's claim that "none of these writers was specifically trying to devise an image for this system of international and domestic trade" (66).

⁶⁴ Misselden, *Circle of Commerce*, 2G2r.

⁶⁵ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1991), 415. Jameson's theory is rooted in a very different historical moment, and a very different political stance, from Mun's and Misselden's; I adapt it here because I find it useful for thinking through that older moment of globalization. On "cognitive mapping" and globalization, see Michael Rothberg, "Construction Work: Theory, Migration, and Labor in an Age of Globalization," in *On Jameson: From Postmodernism to Globalization*, ed. Caren Irr and Ian Buchanan (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 2006), 117–41.

⁶⁶ McMullan, 262. See also Forman, "Preposterous Prosperity: The Economics of Redemption in Early Modern Tragicomedy," Shakespeare Association of America annual meeting, 17 March 2005; and Doran, 204. Forman's thesis will be expanded in her forthcoming book on economic practices and dramatic genres.

⁶⁷ Guarini, *Il pastor fido e Il compendio della poesia tragicomica*, ed. Gioachino Brognoligo (Bari: G. Laterza, 1914), 282; my translation. Thanks to Robert Rushing for help with this translation.

⁶⁸ Fletcher and Massinger, *The Sea Voyage*, in vol. 9, *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1966–1996), act 1, scene 3, line 66; 5.3.132. Hereafter abbreviated S and cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line. As McMullan notes, however, the barren island—and its neighbor—may be indebted to *The Faerie Queene*, book 5, canto 4, in which Artegall finds two brothers fighting over their inheritance, which consists of two similar islands; see McMullan, 240.

⁶⁹ Harris locates this fantasy of self-sufficiency in the "premercantilist discourse of commonwealth," which stresses "internally generated wealth," as opposed to the mercantilists' "tripartite typology of the domestic, the foreign, and the global" (*Sick Economies*, 22).

⁷⁰ Roland Greene, "Island Logic," in *The Tempest and Its Travels*, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 140, 141, 142.

⁷¹ Greene, 140.

⁷² Anthony Parr, introduction to *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1995), 24. See McMullan, 246–47. McMullan notes that Fletcher seems to deviate here from his patron, an enthusiastic Virginia Company member, claiming that Fletcher "was writing for a theater audience with very different points of view from those of his country patrons" (255)—and this is an audience, I would add, that included many company merchants. On Company aversion to colonialism, see Brenner, 106, 171–72; Chaudhuri, 26–27; and Forman, "Transformations," 621.

⁷³ George Cockayne to the Court of Committees of the EIC, quoted in Chaudhuri, 57; see also 50, 61, 68.

⁷⁴ Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. Edward Surtz, S.J. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964), 85.

⁷⁵ Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 145–46.

⁷⁶ This lack is further emphasized because Amazons were traditionally associated with gold and western colonialism. But unlike most Amazons—who arouse "interest in exploration" through "their close association with other objects of desire" (Kathryn

Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* [Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2000], 52)—these pseudo-Amazons are cut off from their treasure and reveal nothing about the new world, only the old.

⁷⁷ Malynes, *Canker of Englands Common wealth*, E4r. On money's sterility as "the dominant discourse about usury," see Harris, *Sick Economies*, 55.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Chaudhuri, 48, 67; [Mun], *Petition and Remonstrance*, G2r.

⁷⁹ On this line, see Claire Jowitt, "'Her flesh must serve you': Gender, Commerce and the New World in Fletcher's and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* and Massinger's *The City Madam*," *Parergon* 18 (2001): 93–117, esp. 115–16.

⁸⁰ See Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1992), 139–62; and Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth and the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos, 2003), 92–100.