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'Tudor Economic Thought After the Reformation: a 'Genre' of Early English Mercantilism.'

Michael W. Watts

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TUDOR ECONOMIC THOUGHT AFTER THE REFORMATION:

A GENRE OF EARLY ENGLISH MERCANTILISM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

The Department of Economics

by

Michael W. Watts
B.A., Louisiana State University, 1972
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1974
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ABSTRACT

The formal discussion on mercantilism usually includes all economic thought in the approximate period from 1500-1775. The ends of mercantilist thought are typically assumed to be national power and/or maximization of wealth, although William Grampp has suggested an alternative end of maximizing employment. Much attention is paid to how mercantilist foreign trade programs were used in attempts to achieve these various goals.

No fundamental distinction is suggested to explain how or why economic thought in the sixteenth century is unlike economic thought after the 1640's and before Adam Smith. This assumed sameness of ends has persisted in spite of much recent work by historians which has repeatedly emphasized the differences in English social thought and institutions before and after the English Civil War. And in fact, in the first half of this century when several scholars were discussing the general phenomenon of the rise of economic individualism, many prominent economists and economic historians suggested that economic thought from 1500-1640 was something fundamentally different than economic thought of the Restoration and the early eighteenth century. Discussion of the mercantilist period has not allowed economists to make these important distinctions. Therefore, it is argued that economists should either discuss "genres" of mercantilism, or else
abandon the idea of mercantilism entirely in their consideration of economic thought of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early-eighteenth centuries.

When the primary sources from the Tudor period are examined independently, apart from the concern over mercantilism, it becomes clear that the economic thought of the period was intended to complement and support what has been called the "world view" of the English Renaissance. The ends of the economic writers were expressed in terms very similar to those used by political and religious writers of the period, often by using such images as the Great Chain of Being and the body politic. There was no conception of, and usually no desire for, an autonomous science of economics. An essentially classical and Christian view of order was defended, in which economic thought and policy played an important, but subservient role.

Lesser guiding principles were developed by the Tudor writers, which help to distinguish Tudor economic thought from the medieval and Scholastic body of literature. Because there was some important disagreement on these themes among the Tudor writers themselves, these concepts are also important in trying to identify the different nature of the economic thought of some of the more important Tudor writers. Briefly, the four themes are: 1) the concept of civic activity, 2) the imperial theme, 3) the ideas of delight, diversity, and plenitude, and 4) a growing acceptance of individual profit seeking and self-interested activity. All of these ideas have been discussed in one place or another, but they have not been brought together to explain
the general pattern of Tudor economic thought. And, it has not been
generally recognized that these themes were designed to maintain and
support a broader conception of world order.

The Tudor writers have never ranked highly as positive
analysts, and rightly so. It is suggested, however, that if the ends
of the Tudor writers are properly understood their simple attempts at
analysis and policy recommendations are usually understandable, based
on the sole criterion of consistency with their stated ends.

Finally, it is conceded that it is likely that modern econom-
ists will take few, if any, lessons from the body of Tudor economic
literature. To some extent, that reflects the generally undeveloped
analytical abilities of the Tudor writers, but it also reflects a
major limitation in modern economic thought which has been openly
challenged by many contemporary economists.
The economic categories of modern society, such as property, freedom of contract and competition, are as much a part of its intellectual furniture as its political conceptions and, together with religion, have probably been the most potent force in giving it its character. Between the conception of society as a community of unequal classes with varying functions, organized for a common end, and that which regards it as a mechanism adjusting itself through the play of economic motives to the supply of economic needs, between the idea that a man must not take advantage of his neighbor's necessity, and the doctrine that 'man's self-love is God's providence,' between the attitude which appeals to a religious standard to repress economic appetites, and that which regards expediency as the final criterion—there is a chasm which no theory of permanence and ubiquity of economic interests can bridge, and which deserves at least to be explored. To examine how the latter grew out of the former; to trace the change, from a view of economic activity which regarded it as one among other kinds of moral conduct, to the view of it as dependent upon impersonal and almost automatic forces; to observe the struggle of individualism in the face of restrictions imposed in the name of religion by the Church and of public policy by the State, first denounced, then palliated, then triumphantly justified in the name of economic liberty; to watch how ecclesiastical authority strives to maintain its hold upon the spheres it had claimed and finally abdicates them—to do this is not to indulge a vain curiosity, but to stand at the sources of rivulets which are now a flood.

—R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism
INTRODUCTION

Gustav Schmoller, in his 1884 study of *The Mercantile System*, set out to explain

... the connection between economic life and the essential controlling organs of social and political life,—the dependence of the main institutions of any period upon the nature of the political body or bodies most important at the time.\(^1\)

Schmoller also commented that

Political organisms and economic organisms are by no means necessarily conterminous; and yet the great and brilliant achievements of history, both political and economic, are wont to be accomplished at times when economic organisation has rested on the same foundations as political power and order.\(^2\)

Most contemporary historians of economic thought would not put such a heavy emphasis on political institutions, though many certainly would claim that economic freedoms and institutions are closely related to political freedoms and institutions. In this study, however, I have chosen to expand and redirect Schmoller's approach, by examining the aspects in Tudor intellectual thought


\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 3.
which formed a common foundation for religious, political and economic ideas and institutional arrangements of the period.

This organic nature of Tudor society did lead to "great and brilliant achievements," in terms of economic expansion and development as well as the better-known achievements in the fields of literature, art, architecture, the law, and in religious and political thought. Therefore, it is important for the historian of economic thought to have a good understanding of the nature of Tudor economic thought, and of the basis of that thought in the intellectual history of the period.

Instead of a good understanding of Tudor economic thought, what we currently have is an extensive amount of literature on the mercantilist period and another set of material on the rise of economic individualism. Chapter One is a treatment of much of this literature, which shows why the standard discussions fail to adequately explain most Tudor economic thought. At the end of the chapter are suggestions on what sources can be used to develop a true picture of that thought.

The second chapter is a consideration of the ends of Tudor economic thought. The chapter includes a description of what has been called the "world view" of the Tudor writers, and some illustrations which show how this world view did shape the Tudor writers' discussions of general social arrangements, and economic matters in particular.
The third chapter concerns four general themes in Tudor economic literature. Although the discussion is primarily limited to developments in English thought, each of these themes did have counterparts in the general European Renaissance. Briefly, the four themes are: 1) The concept of civic activity, which stressed the duty of all individuals to work for society's benefit, even if that conflicted with one's personal gain; 2) The imperial theme, in which the need for state action in spiritual as well as secular matters was stressed, as opposed to the Marxian concept of imperialism. This idea was patterned after the Renaissance interpretation of imperial Rome, where the Christian emperors of the later Empire had ruled on both secular and spiritual arrangements; 3) The ideas of delight, diversity, and plenitude, which emphasized man's nature as a creative agent with the capacity to invent and enjoy new forms of art and material goods; and 4) A growing acceptance of individual profit seeking and self-interested activity, as long as such activity did not disrupt the social order or violate basic religious precepts. All of these ideas have been discussed in one place or another, but they have not been brought together to explain the general pattern of economic thought in the English Renaissance.

Chapter Four is a brief discussion of the positive economic thought of the leading Tudor writers of the post-Reformation period. The Tudor writers were often more willing to rely on liberal, market-directed institutions to achieve their ends than is commonly believed. However, the real misunderstanding concerning positive economic
thought of the period has been to assume that when the writers supported forms of economic regulation which were not compatible with the end of maximizing wealth they did so only out of ignorance, or as a matter of expediency. A proper statement of the ends of the thought of the period opens up a new set of criteria to use in understanding the positive analysis of the period.

Chapter Five is a brief statement on the relevance of post-Reformation Tudor economic thought to economic thinking today. It is not likely that we will take any lessons from the Tudor experience to apply to our own situation, at least in the foreseeable future. To some extent that reflects the generally undeveloped analytical abilities of the Tudor writers, but it also reflects a major shortcoming in modern economic thought.
CHAPTER I

TUDOR ECONOMIC THOUGHT: A DARK AGE IN
THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH ECONOMIC THOUGHT

More than twenty years ago F. J. Fisher pointed out that economic histories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not, and could never hope to be, truly complete in any sense that might satisfy the modern quantitatively-minded economist and/or historian. Because of the lack of hard statistical data from these periods, a broad, traditional approach to the economic history is the best that can be hoped for in most areas.  

The historian of economic thought can offer no such excuses to explain the generally poor, and at best fragmentary, quality of work published to date on sixteenth century economic thought. There is a great deal of primary material to be read and explained, and only a little of this material is not readily available in most large libraries. To paraphrase one noted Tudor author, the problem is not in our stars, but in ourselves.

A large part of the problem is that no major failing in our present interpretation is currently perceived. At best, an indication that the period is troublesome comes from broader complaints

about our understanding of the entire "mercantilist period." As one reviewer recently summed things up, "mercantilism is notoriously difficult... ."4

Turning to the material from the Tudor period, and specifically to the post-Reformation material, some very concrete problems face any student who chooses to rely on the secondary references for an explanation of this body of thought. First, and most noticeable, is the problem that Raymond de Roover and Jacob Viner described long ago—namely, the Tudor material is generally ignored. De Roover implied this in his complaint concerning the lack of attention paid to Scholastic Economics. He wrote that

... most of the standard textbooks on the history of economic thought—if they do not omit the subject altogether and start with the physiocrats—devote little space to what they call 'medieval' economics. After some trite comments on Thomas Aquinas, they greet Oresme (c. 1330-1382) from a distance and then hasten on to


There are, however, a few passages more specific in nature. For example, in Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, (New York: Mentor, 1954), p. 139, R. H. Tawney discusses one of the problems that must be faced in trying to develop a general picture of Tudor economic thought:

"In practice, since new class interests and novel ideas had arisen, but had not yet wholly submerged those which preceded them, every shade of opinion . . . was represented in the economic ethics of Elizabethan England."

Tawney's well-known work was first published in 1926.

Arthur B. Ferguson describes Renaissance English thought as "... that twilight zone which is both medieval and modern in character, yet is, in a sense, neither." "The Tudor Commonweal and the Sense of Change," The Journal of British Studies, (1963), p. 11.
Thomas Mun and the theory of the balance of trade. Usually, the treatment is not only superficial but replete with errors which could have been avoided by going to the sources instead of repeating clichés.  

Viner had suggested much the same problem nearly twenty years earlier, when it first seemed that many scholars were ready to accept the standard treatments on "the mercantilist period" without further study:

It is a common impression that [the mercantilists] have already been sufficiently studied, but the economic historians and the economists of the German historical school have been almost alone in studying the mercantilists, and they have generally been more interested in the facts than in the ideas of the mercantilist period, have often based sweeping generalizations as to the character of mercantilist doctrine on what they found in a handful of the mercantilist writings, have displayed neither interest in, nor acquaintance with, modern economic theorizing . . ., and have almost without exception shown a tendency to defend the mercantilist doctrines by reasoning itself of a decidedly mercantilist flavor.  

And so it continues even today. One recent textbook by Robert B. Ekelund, Jr. and Robert F. Hebert was chided for discussing "nine major concepts" and "eleven mercantilist writers" in a "ten-page


stint on mercantilism." Another recent text by Harry Landreth covers "the mercantilist period" in less than six pages. Active research on the sixteenth century economic writers was probably most intensive in the 1930's and seems to have declined steadily ever since, with only periodic revivals of interest arising primarily, again, from the work of the economic and social historians. It might be easier to forgive the general lack of attention given to the Tudor writers if there was somewhere a good, clear, complete statement on the ideas of this group of authors. But, instead of such an acceptable statement, when the Tudor writers are considered their ideas are almost always discussed as a part of the literature on mercantilism or as a part of the literature on the rise of economic individualism, a topic perhaps even as notoriously difficult as mercantilism. And to further complicate matters, the conclusions concerning the Tudor economic writers of those who have studied the rise of capitalism and economic individualism have generally been contradictory.

One group of students with a definite interest in establishing just when the capitalistic spirit was first fully developed is, of

7Murdock, p. 302.


course, the Marxists. Unfortunately, as Fisher pointed out, the Marxists have been forced into a position that is often inconsistent with the facts of economic history and thought from the periods that we do know. As Fisher explained,

It is part of the Marxist creed that feudalism was overthrown by capitalism. But it is also accepted by Marxist historians that whereas feudalism was in an advanced state of disintegration by the end of the fourteenth century, the capitalist period cannot be said to open until considerably later. Indeed at a conference of British Marxian historians held in 1947, it was agreed that 'the Tudor and Stuart state was essentially an executive instrument of the feudal class more highly organized than ever before . . . only after the Revolution of 1640-1649 does the state in England begin to be subordinated to the capitalist. . .' The revolution of 1640 replaced the rule of one class by another. Thus the Marxist is faced by the problem of finding for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an interpretation which, while permitting feudalism to disintegrate in the later Middle Ages as the evidence requires, will nevertheless preserve it to be slain in the seventeenth century as theory demands.10

Setting broad problems of historical fact aside for the moment, however, there were aspects in Tudor economic history and thought that were strongly medieval, if not feudal.11 For example, Tawney points out that, "... all Tudor Governments . . . made experiment(s) in fixing just prices."12 And further that

10 Fisher, pp. 5-6.

11 See E.A.J. Johnson, Predecessors of Adam Smith: The Growth of British Economic Thought, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1937), pp. 5, 14, 285. Johnson credits Heckscher and Ashley with earlier statements on this point. Heckscher's views are considered in some detail below, at the beginning of Chapter II.

12 Tawney, p. 122.
The England of Shakespeare and Bacon was still largely medieval in its economic organization and social outlook, more interested in maintaining customary standards of consumption than in accumulating capital for future production, with an aristocracy contemptuous of the economic virtues, a peasantry farming for subsistence . . . , and a small, if growing, body of jealously conservative craftsmen.\(^\text{13}\)

But precisely the opposite position can, and has, been made with some support. The Distributivists, under the leadership of Hilaire Belloc, saw in the Tudor period the systematic unleashing and fostering of the self-interested, capitalistic spirit which, presumably, inexorably led to the modern industrial economic structures of our own time.\(^\text{14}\) And, those who are not inclined to oppose mass-scale capitalism have also found many of the same ideas. Eric Kerridge, for example, can still look back to the period of time between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth century and see a movement where...

\ldots ineffective and outmoded diatribes against greed gave way to a utilitarian philosophy of free capitalist enterprise, actuated by profit motives, spurred by competition, guided and controlled by market forces, and producing the greatest happiness of the greatest number.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 192.
The problem then, for anyone who reads Tawney, the Marxists, Kerridge and the Distributivists, and their primary references, is to explain a period where there are both medieval and capitalistic ideas afoot. Among those who have attempted such a reconciliation, the natural tendency has been to label the era as a "transitional period."

A fairly mild version of this proposed solution is in Bruno Surviranta's *The Theory of the Balance of Trade in England: A Study in Mercantilism*. Even Henry Spiegel titled one chapter in his *The Growth of Economic Thought* as "The Transition of the 16th Century." Spiegel's use of "transitional," however, was restricted to mean primarily that the period came, in a historical sense, between the thought of the "unified" medieval world and the confident reliance on individualism that developed in the classical period.

The "transitional" interpretation of the sixteenth century does create a serious problem by implying that the economic thinkers from this period had no clear ideas on how economic arrangements should be ordered unless they were calculating progressives who looked forward to nineteenth, or at least eighteenth-century capitalism, or romantic traditionalists looking back to the scholastic teachings of

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the medieval Catholic writers. This will not do. As Schumpeter pointed out in a tantalizing passage from, of all places, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy,

The related processes of the rise of the capitalist bourgeoisie and of the rise of national states produced, in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a social structure that may seem to us amphibial though it was no more amphibial or transitional than any other.\(^\text{18}\)

The debate on the rise of economic individualism has established then, that English economic thought in the sixteenth century can at times appear very medieval or, at other times, rather utilitarian and modern. But if, as Schumpeter suggests, there is a core of thought that does represent a unique, distinguishable body of sixteenth century economic thought that is not simply a transitional episode, the literature on the rise of economic individualism has not presented it for us in any complete fashion. So, we must look to the other body of secondary material which deals directly with the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth-century writers, the discussion on mercantilism.

As Tawney pointed out long ago, it is quite possible to "make play" with the concept of mercantilism.\(^\text{19}\) There are so many


problems with the concept that one must be careful to identify only those problems which are clearly relevant to the topic at hand. In terms of understanding the Tudor economic writers, the literature on mercantilism presents two major problems. The first stems from the practice of using mercantilism to explain all economic thought from a two-and-a-half century period; the second, though related, problem involves the discussion on the ends of mercantilism. Both problems result in claims that all economic thought from 1500 to 1750 or so can be conveniently, and more or less accurately, treated (or dismissed) as "mercantilist" thought, which still may mean something very different to different authors.

Actually, it was not always the prevailing practice to set the end dates of the mercantilist period so precisely or uniformly. Edwin Cannan claimed that, "mercantilism proper rose about the beginning of the seventeenth century." 20 Edgar Furniss argued that mercantilism's "dominant" period was from 1660 to 1775. 21 Eli Heckscher left the end dates more open, but included many sixteenth-century writers. 22 For a while, some writers saw 1620 as a dividing


point between "early" and "late" mercantilist thought, primarily to
preserve a distinction between the naive bullionists and the more
"enlightened" mercantilists who wrote after Malynes, Misselden and
Mun. 23 But for the past several decades, it has become common prac-
tice to be more exact in setting the mercantilist period between 1550
and 1775, or sometimes 1750. 24

The desire to set such exact dates, and especially the par-
ticular dates of 1500 and 1775, is very understandable. It reflects
to a large extent the mainstream economist's (and historian's) desire
to fill out and complete what might be described as a neoclassical
view of history. The evidence requires that medieval economic thought
must end, or at least wither away sharply, by 1500. Evidence and
theory require Adam Smith to slay mercantilism in 1776, allowing only
for a handful of exceptional writers such as Cantillon and the
Physiocrats who broke from mercantilism before the Wealth of Nations
was published.

Heckscher strongly implies that he set the mercantilist period from
"the beginning of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth"
centuries.

dividing date around 1650-1675.

24 See William J. Grampp, "The Liberal Elements in English Mer-
cantilism," The Quarterly Journal of Economics, (1952), reprinted (and
somewhat revised) in his Economic Liberalism, 2 vols., (New York:
Random House, 1965), pp. 48-97. And, see Ekelund and Hebert, pp. 28-
29; and Landreth, p. 19. William R. Allen, however, seems to set the
mercantilist period from the "seventeenth to the early eighteen
century," in his article on "Modern Defenders of Mercantilist Theory,"
The orthodox historian of economic thought then, is faced by the problem of finding for the sixteenth century an interpretation which is neither basically medieval nor utilitarian, and yet also allows for the heightened levels of economic individualism pointed out by Weber, Tawney, Robertson, and the rest. Lumping all economic thought from 1500 to 1775 together, into "the mercantilist period," seems to be an obvious solution. But, as seen earlier, a similar line of reasoning has led the Marxist historians into a confused interpretation of the period; and, in truth, the practice has made many mainstream writers uneasy for some time, and continues to do so today.\(^25\) Unfortunately, this anxiety has not led to any major attempt to reformulate our interpretation of sixteenth century thought; and we have even chosen to sweep many earlier warnings and complaints about the practice under the broad intellectual carpet of general neglect.\(^26\)

To date, in the major discussions of the ends of "the mercantilist system," the same end (or ends) is assumed to hold for the entire period. There has been some disagreement about just what those ends truly were--Schmoller claimed the end was statemaking,\(^27\)

\(^{25}\text{E.g., Landreth, p. 8.}\)
\(^{26}\text{Several of these warnings are discussed below, see n. 33-45.}\)
\(^{27}\text{Schmoller, pp. 50-51.}\)
Dean Cunningham suggested power, 28 Heckscher added wealth, 29 Viner argued that power and plenty were co-equal ends, 30 and William Grampp opted for employment. 31 But recently no historian of economic thought has even considered the possibility that during "the mercantilist period" the ends of orthodox economic thought changed. 32 Two


29 Heckscher, I, p. 25, and in his comments on Viner in the revised edition.

30 Jacob Viner, "Power Versus Plenty as Objectives of Foreign Policy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," World Politics, (1948).

31 Grampp, pp. 56-57.

32 R. H. Tawney, John U. Nef and the historian Christopher Hill have suggested that mercantilism was something very different prior to 1640 than afterwards—see the discussion below. Historian Conyers Read once noted that mercantilism does not mean "exactly the same thing at different times, or in different places at the same time." He even suggested that Starkey, Crowley, Wilson and the other Tudor reformers "... all sang the same song—the swan song of the old order." The problems with Read's work are that: 1) it is not cited any longer by historians of economic thought; 2) in his broad statements on mercantilism Read's account is more like the standard versions—Read claims that

"... mercantilism advocated a controlled economy as a means of promoting the wealth and power of the state in the aggregate, whereas collectivism starts from the individual and undertakes to apply state control to promote the welfare and happiness of the individual. We might say that mercantilism exploited the individual to promote the power of the state, whereas collectivism exploits the power of the state in order to promote the welfare of the individual;" and 3) Read is avowedly writing about economic policy, and clearly states that he is not confusing policy with thought. Conyers Read, "Mercantilism: the Old English Pattern of a Controlled Economy," reprinted in The Constitution Reconsidered, edited by Conyers Read, expanded and revised edition by Richard B. Morris, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), pp. 63-77.

H. M. Robertson, in his Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism (Clifton, New Jersey: Augustus M. Kelley, 1973), p. 61,
surprising things about the widespread acceptance of this recent position are that: 1) earlier writers who are still regularly read in history of thought courses suggested that such an understanding was not true, and 2) many leading economic and social historians have openly abandoned this interpretation in the past few years.

Tawney saw the problem with the current understanding of mercantilism first and most clearly. In general he argued that all "isms" create problems of interpretation, and that broad histories of "isms" would usually not serve useful academic purposes. He wrote that

noted that "... the doctrines of mercantilism did not remain unchanged." However, Robertson saw mercantilism, including sixteenth century thought, as based on the ideas of individualism set down by Machiavelli and Hobbes, which is not compatible with Tawney and Nef; nor, it will be suggested in Chapter II, is it compatible with most of the primary English sources from the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, Robertson's more general idea that "the coming of the Renaissance state was a much greater step toward the regime of economic freedom than is always recognized," (p. 81), will be supported; on this point cf. Johnson, pp. 5, 24, 34-35. Robertson's book was first published in 1933.

Charles Wilson's 1959 article, "The Other Face of Mercantilism," reprinted in Coleman, ed., *Revisions in Mercantilism*, was directed toward the post-1640 period. And in 1957 Coleman himself briefly criticized Heckscher's treatment because it obscured "the counterpoint of old and new conceptions," with the new period set from 1650-1750. D. C. Coleman, "Eli Heckscher and the Idea of Mercantilism," reprinted in *Revisions in Mercantilism*, p. 113. Even these latest articles, so recently reprinted in a major collection of secondary sources, have failed to improve general accounts of the mercantilist period.
Obviously the word 'Capitalism,' like 'Feudalism' and 'Mercantilism,' is open to misuse. Obviously, the time has now come when it is more important to determine the different species of Capitalism, and the successive phases of its growth, than to continue to labour the existence of the genus.\textsuperscript{33}

More specifically, Tawney pointed out a dividing line between two "genres" of mercantilism, if it is really useful to call two periods of thought with different ends (but sometimes with similar means) both parts of the same whole. Tawney argued that

\textbf{\ldots the word mercantilism \ldots is apt to blur distinctions that ought to be emphasized. In England it was one thing before the Civil War, and another after it. Before 1640 it had been a policy imposed by the government on business interests; after it, it became, to an increasing degree, a policy imposed by business interests on the government. At the first period the course of domestic economic conditions and the attempt to stabilise class relations had been features in it as important as the regulation of trade; at the second, though the repudiation of the older tradition was not explicit, a militant Machtpolitik in matters of commerce was accompanied by a large measure of doctrineless individualism in the sphere of social policy.}\textsuperscript{34}

John U. Nef also pointed toward this change in social policy that accompanied the weakening of the English monarchy:

\textsuperscript{33}R. H. Tawney, \textit{Religion and the Rise of Capitalism}, p. 3. Interestingly enough, most mainstream histories of "capitalism" are more narrowly defined today.

Carmarden warned the Queen, somewhat prophetically, that
the subjects might pay duties grudgingly if they knew
that a large portion of the revenue flowed into the
pockets of private merchants. If this consideration had
any weight in the opposition to the impositions of the
early seventeenth century, the subjects who were moved
by it appear to have leaped from the frying pan into the
fire. By opposing impositions they were also preventing
the monarch from becoming financially independent of
Parliament. And the fall of absolute monarchy removed
a power whose policies were less in harmony with the
interests of the principal merchants than were those
of Parliament.35

In another article, Nef pointed out that the particular
genres of the "Protestant ethic" expounded by Ashley and Weber,
and which are also important to Tawney's later chapters in Religion
and the Rise of Capitalism, were actually most appropriate in
describing attitudes which gained some general acceptance only
after 1640.36 Until then, the orthodox social thinkers and


36 John U. Nef, "The Protestant Reformation and the Birth of
Industrial Civilization," reprinted in Nef's, The Conquest of the
pp. 222-223. Nef also notes that Tawney was probably the first to
suggest that
"... it is at least as plausible to regard economic
development at that period [Elizabethan and early Stuart England]
as modifying Christian ethical doctrine and molding the thought and
the moral teaching of Protestant clergymen and laymen as to regard
that economic development as a response to the teachings of Calvin's
disciplines."(p. 223),

Cf. Robertson, pp. 6, 15, and 37 especially. Robertson
wrote that, (p. 6),
"Even if Weber is correct in his interpretation of the
[Puritan] doctrine [of the 'calling'] in its eighteenth century
manifestations, he is incorrect in projecting this back into the
sixteenth century, when the doctrine wore an entirely different
aspect."
even most of the Puritans defended the more traditional hierarchy of values. Tawney seems clearly to agree with Nef on this point of dating the elusive religious spirit which accepted a "doctrineless individualism," as in the passage from Religion and the Rise of Capitalism where he writes that

It was not till a century after Machiavelli had emancipated the State from religion, that the doctrine of the self-contained department with laws of its own begins generally to be applied to the world of business relations, and even in the England of the early seventeenth century, to discuss questions of economic organization purely in terms of pecuniary profit and loss still wears an air of not quite reputable cynicism.

Tawney, drawing partly from the economic writings of the Tudor period but largely from economic history as well, did describe some of the differences in English economic thought before and after the English Civil War:

When the sixteenth century opens, not only political but social theory is saturated with doctrines drawn from the sphere of ethics and religion, and economic phenomena are expressed in terms of personal conduct, as naturally

Significantly, one of the earliest statements of the Weber-type "Puritan ethic" comes in the year of the last Tudor monarch's death. That, at least, is the interpretation given by Louis B. Wright in his article, "William Perkins: Elizabethan Apostle of 'Practical Divinity," Huntington Library Quarterly, (1940), pp. 181-182.


and inevitably as the nineteenth century expressed them in terms of mechanism.\textsuperscript{39}

During the sixteenth century, Tawney noted,

The social functions matured within the Church, and long identified with it, are transferred to the State, which in turn is idolized as the dispenser of prosperity and the guardian of civilization.\textsuperscript{40}

But, moving further into the seventeenth century,

The theory of a hierarchy of values, embracing all human interests and activities in a system of which the apex is religion, is replaced by the conception of separate and parallel compartments, between which a due balance should be maintained; but which have no vital connection with each other.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 15. Cf. Hill, pp. 165-169, who quotes with approval (p. 167) another statement by Tawney:

"The difference between the England of Shakespeare, still visited by the ghosts of the Middle Ages, and the England which emerged in 1700 . . . was a difference of social and political theory even more than of constitutional and political arrangements. Not only the facts, but the minds which appraised them, were profoundly modified . . . . The natural consequence of the abdication of the authorities which had stood, however imperfectly, for a common purpose in social organizations, was the gradual disappearance from social thought of the idea of purpose itself. Its place in the 18th century was taken by the idea of mechanism. The conception of men as united to each other, and of all mankind as united to God, by mutual obligations arising from their relation to a common end, ceased to be impressed on men's minds."

\textsuperscript{40}Tawney, \textit{Religion and the Rise of Capitalism}, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.
And again, the period of the English Civil War, the 1640's, is of crucial importance since,

If the Church of the Middle Ages was a kind of State, the State of the Tudors had some of the characteristics of a Church; and it was precisely the impossibility, for all but a handful of sectaries, of conceiving a society which treated religion as a thing privately vital but publicly indifferent, which in England made irreconcilable the quarrel between Puritanism and the monarchy. When the mass had been heated in the furnace of the Civil War, its component parts were ready to be disengaged from each other.42

Unlike the Marxist historians, Tawney and Nef emphasized the importance of the 1640's not because of some doctrine, but because of their understanding of the social and economic thought, and the economic history, of the pre-and post-1640 periods. And, more recently, many historians have been led to the same conclusions. According to one eminent historian, "... between 1640 and 1660 Europe witnessed a series of political revolutions. Whether successful or not, they marked a watershed: on the one side is the Renaissance and on the other the Age of Enlightenment."43

The economic historians have long recognized the significance of the 1640-1660 period, even to the point of obscuring certain

42 Ibid., pp. 13-14.

physical trends of economic production, consumption and distribution that were perhaps not directly and immediately related to the changes in social and economic ideas that are under consideration here. Joan Thirsk and J. P. Cooper have complained that

... because of the paramount influence of political events on the [seventeenth] century, economic historians have been persuaded to divide its economic history along the same lines ... The first period from 1600 to 1640 has become merged with the sixteenth century; the third period from 1660 to 1700 has been merged with the eighteenth century; and the economic developments of the twenty years between 1640 and 1660 have been allowed to lie for the most part shrouded in the dark shadows cast by political instability.44

Such a division of the seventeenth century may be bad economic history, but the same division should lead to a better history of thought than we currently have with the literature on the one, long, basically unchanging, mercantilist period. And, even if the economic historians do rejoin the seventeenth century for their purposes, they are not likely to re-adopt some idea of the mercantilist period. As D. C. Coleman, a leading authority on the economic history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has described it, the economic historians are:

... moving gradually away from the continued pursuit of mercantilism as a thing in itself towards examination of specific acts, periods, phases, or areas of government

policy in relation to both economic and social matters.\textsuperscript{45}

At one time, Coleman was prepared to abandon the term "mercantilism" as "an unnecessary piece of historical baggage."\textsuperscript{46} Later, with evident relief, he simply assigned the term to the historians of economic thought, though he did point out some problems with the term even there. In his introduction to \textit{Revisions in Mercantilism}, Coleman argued that

\ldots mercantilism remains a convenient shorthand for a set of ideas. Possessed of certain common elements, they nevertheless varied a good deal, by time and country. Their logical structure and their relationship to preceding and succeeding ideas are matters of study for the historian of economic thought.\textsuperscript{47}

The historians of economic thought have not considered seriously enough Coleman's first suggestion, to dump the term "mercantilism."\textsuperscript{48} But there would admittedly be costs in such a procedure. The discipline does have an "investment" in the term "mercantilism" which it will not, as yet, consider a sunk cost. But, more importantly, there are common elements in the economic thought of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

\textsuperscript{45}Coleman, p. 10.


\textsuperscript{47}Coleman, \textit{Revisions in Mercantilism}, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{48}See, however, Johnson, p. 4.
Despite the fact that those elements involve relatively superficial questions concerning policy means, no doubt many would defend the use of any available intellectual shorthand that can help to simplify the "infinite complexity of the past without adding to the confusion of the present." And, pragmatically, it appears too late to effectively rid the term from the minds of scholars in several fields. So, as Tawney suggested, perhaps the best we can do now is simply try to avoid misusing the term.

That will not be, and has not been, an easy task. One major problem stems from the practice of combining studies on the history of ideas with studies on the history of law, politics, and economic development. As William Grampp notes:

The word 'mercantilism' has always been used to describe the [economic practices of the period and its economic writings], which is unfortunate, because they were not consistent. In what has been written about mercantilism and the mercantilists rather than what has been written by them, the author will explain, say, the restriction of imports by referring both to the trade policy of the English government and to the concurrent doctrine of a favorable balance of trade. He will move indiscriminately among expressions of public officials, laws, economic tracts, and discourses. The obvious inference is that what was written was a justification of what was done, and that what was done must have found an apologetic in something or other that was written. No one would write this way of recent economic policy. It would be unthinkable to explain the stabilization policy of the Republican administration of the 1950's


50See p. 18, at n. 33 above.
by a random reference to the economic reports of the President, the actions of the Federal Reserve Board, the 1950 policy statement of the American Economic Association, and other quite discrete events. When studies of mercantilism employ such a method they present a view that is quite mistaken.51

But, at the other extreme, when the history of ideas has been studied with too little attention given to major social changes, the results have been no better.52 English scholar Louis B. Wright discussed this problem, which clearly does explain a part of how the concept of "the mercantilist period" developed, at a Renaissance Conference held in 1940. Wright noted that

By and large, social histories as they exist today do the person who is interested in detailed ideas very little good . . . . The general treatises range up and down and use an illustration of a mood dominant in 1580-90 for, say, 1620. Certain fundamental attitudes may be the same, but others are vastly different. It would help if there were some way by which we could realize the difference in every few years, or take into account the great upheavals that influence a particular period. In social history and the history of ideas, there is the tendency to forget chronology and to pursue naked ideas without regard for the modifications that come with the passage of time. We all need to realize more keenly the complexity of the age that we set out to study and to cultivate a great awareness of the subtle changes that each generation brings about.53

51Grampp, Economic Liberalism, I, pp. 48-49.

52See DeRoover, pp. 184-185, who said simply that "in dealing with the history of economic thought, it is not enough to know the writings of the economists; one must also know something about the institutional framework and the social environment of the period."

Conclusions

The idea of the mercantilist period obscures several fundamental distinctions that historians of economic thought should be making. In particular, the basic differences in English economic thought before and after the English Civil War are ignored.

Even if the studies on mercantilism and the rise of economic individualism are read together, no systematic, reasonably complete picture of post-Reformation Tudor economic thought is developed that: 1) makes the distinction between what economic policies were adopted and what policies the leading economic writers were supporting; 2) presents a clear picture of the ends of Tudor economic thought to recognize Schumpeter's point that the Tudor writers did not believe they were defending, or arguing for, a "transitional" system of economic arrangements; 3) evaluates the positive thought of the Tudor writers in terms of its compatibility with the true ends of the Tudor period; 4) examines to what extent the thought of this period is unchanging, pointing out which writers might be called mainstream thinkers (if any), and which writers (if any) were moving against that stream; 5) explores the indebtedness of the Tudor economic writers to earlier writers, and their influence on those that followed, and; 6) discusses the relevance of the ideas of the Tudor writers for our own economic and social thought today.

It should be quite possible to develop a study to meet these six points. There were only five or six major post-Reformation
Tudor authors whose ideas were largely economic in nature—Sir Thomas Smith, Thomas Starkey, Dr. Thomas Wilson, Gerard de Malynes and, perhaps, Robert Hitchcock and Clement Armstrong. There were numerous minor writers, and writers who touched on economic points even though their primary interests were in such fields as politics, religion, law, or even literature. Included in this group of writers would be such figures as Francis Bacon, Thomas Becon, Roger Bieston, Lord Burghley, Robert Crowley, Sir Thomas Elyot, Simon Fish, Gresham, John Hales, William Harrison, John Howe, Hugh Latimer, Thomas Lever, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Lupset, John Marston, Sir Richard Morison, Miles Mosse, Thomas Nash, Sir George Pecham, James Peele, William Perkins, Sir Hugh Platt, John Ponet, John Rastell, Nicholas Ridley, Nicholas Saunders, Henry Smith, John Stow, Philip Stubbes, Robert Thorne, William Turner, William Tyndale, Nicholas Udall, John Wheeler, and Thomas Wilson (the nephew of Sir Thomas Wilson). There are, of course, several anonymous works also to be considered.

Which of these minor writers must be considered depends, of course, on the nature of the study at hand. And, of course, all of

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54Smith's position as a major economic writer depends, primarily, on his likely authorship of A Discourse of the Common Weal of This Realm of England. See Mary Dewar's edition of this work on the question of authorship, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1969).

55De Malynes' early works, England's view, in the unmasking of two paradoxes . . . . , A treatise of the canker of England's commonwealth, and Saint George for England, allegorically described . . . . , were published by 1603.
the works of all of these writers are not widely available. But, there is no reason why a statement on the general nature of Tudor economic thought cannot be presented including some evaluation of the place of the major writers in that thought, and even some categorizations of the more interesting minor writers and tracts.

The study can be manageable enough to indicate where attitudes have shifted, and where they remain unchanged. But, more importantly, such a study must concentrate on re-establishing the aspects of Tudor economic thought which make that thought an identifiable genre of mercantilism, fundamentally different than the thought of the English mercantilism of the post-1640 period. It is essential that at least this distinction be made if the idea of "mercantilism" is to be used in the study of the history of economic thought. Without the distinction, the concept of mercantilism further obscures and confuses the complexity of the past, and makes it very difficult for a significant part of the past to show its true value to the present.

To the extent that Tudor economic thought proves to be unique, and unlike the thought of medieval, capitalist, Marxist, or what is usually thought of as mercantilist thought, it can be properly evaluated for its potential value and service to modern economic thought. At present, it has not even been established whether Tudor economic thought is compatible and generally supportive of modern economic thought, or opposed to our current conceptions of the nature and role of economics.
CHAPTER II
MERCANTILISM AND THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order.
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd
Amidst the other, whose medicinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil
And posts like the commandment of a king,
Sans check to good and bad. But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! Oh, when degree is shaked
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools and brotherhood in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark, what discord follows. Each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy. The bounded waters
Should life their bosoms higher than the shores
And make a sop of all this solid globe.
Strength should be lord to imbecility,
And the rude son strike his father dead.
Force should be right, or rather, right and wrong,
Between whose endless jar justice resides,
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite,
And appetite, a universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce a universal prey,
And last eat up himself, Great Agamemnon,
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,
Follows the choking.
And this neglection of degree it is
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose
It hath to climb.
—William Shakespeare,
_Troilus and Cressida_,
(I., iii, 85-129)

This famous passage is probably the most frequently cited statement on the Tudor conception of order. It is quoted by historians and, of course, by students of literature; it is seldom, if ever, mentioned by historians of economic thought. That is unfortunate, since Shakespeare apparently used the passage primarily to remind an audience of young, skeptical lawyers of the intellectual position which had laid behind social thought throughout most of the Tudor period, but which was, by this point in Shakespeare's career, in desperate need of strong defenders.

This traditional position was made up of many familiar ideas—ideas which had been for a long period of time widely used and

56Nor is the passage from Sir Thomas Elyot's _The Boke Named the Governor_, (London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1928), p. 3, which foreshadowed Shakespeare's passage: "... take away order from all things what should then remain? Certes nothing finally, except some man would imagine fetsones Chaos... ."

accepted. These ideas and this traditional overall position were not, however, an important part of Eli Heckscher's understanding of what was meant by social order in sixteenth century England.

Mercantilism, Heckscher wrote, "... was directed toward liberty, and on account of its general economic tendency primarily toward economic liberty." He added, in 1936, that

The remarkable feature of this conception was its fundamental concord with that of laissez-faire; so that, while mercantilism and laissez-faire were each other's opposites in practical application and economic theory proper, they were largely based upon a common conception of society.

The importance of this "common conception of society" was not to be underestimated since, Heckscher believed, under mercantilism it resulted in a naturally cruel economic system. As Heckscher explained...

... it was precisely this general mercantilist conception of society which led statesmen to even greater ruthlessness than would have been possible without the help of such a conception; for though they had rationalized away the whole social heritage, they had not arrived at a belief in an immanent social rationality. Thus they believed themselves justified in their interference and, in addition, believed in its necessity without being held back by a respect for such irrational forces as tradition, ethics, and religion. The humanitarian outlook was entirely alien to them, and in this they differed fundamentally.

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58 See Tillyard, and the discussion below.


from writers and politicians like Adam Smith, Malthus, Bentham, Romilly, and Wilberforce.61

In other words, the mercantilists out-dismal the dismal scientists. To be painstakingly fair to Heckscher, he did point out that

The descriptions particularly common in the sixteenth century of the economic interdependence of various countries on account of the differentiated allotment of the material gifts of nature, occasionally include a really lucid idea of the economic function of international division of labour, and are probably, at least to some extent, to be derived from the religious and ethical heritage of the Middle Ages.62

Heckscher also recognized that the "canonical medieval conception . . ." opposed to taking interest on "moral and religious grounds . . . still flourished at a comparatively late period [as] may be seen clearly in Thomas Wilson's Discourse Upon Usury."63 At one point, when Heckscher discussed the growth of the "ration-alism" which ". . . expressed itself in references to nature,"64 he even commented that

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61 Ibid., p. 33. It is not clear that even most economists would consider ethics an "irrational" force, but that is another matter.

62 Heckscher, Mercantilism, II., p. 278.

63 Ibid., II, pp. 286-287.

64 Ibid., II, p. 308. Heckscher's emphasis is given.
Nature was conceived as a factor which also influenced the social sphere, social life being placed parallel to the physical life of the individual; and society was regarded as a body with functions similar to those of the physical body. The latter conception was linked to old traditions, and even early in the sixteenth century these traditions determined the form taken by the discussions. Starkey, for instance, in his dialogue between Cardinal Pole and Thomas Lupset was as tireless as he was tiresome in making use of this kind of metaphor.65

But Heckscher made it clear in laying out his idea of "the mercantilist conception of society," which was clearly intended to cover most post-Reformation Tudor economic thought, that

The point in which the breach between mercantilism and the medieval outlook was widest and most decisive was certainly in the domain of the ethical. We may say that the mercantilists were amoral in a two-fold sense, both in their aim as also in the means for the attainment of their ends. This two-fold amorality arose from their widespread indifference towards mankind, both in its capacity as a reasoning animal, as also in its attitude towards the eternal.66

The whole tendency of mercantilism made economic policy antagonistic to the church and priesthood and on the other hand brought these into harness against mercantilism.67

A study of the secondary works on the Tudor conception of social order, and more importantly a study of the primary sources on

65Tbid. My emphasis is given to indicate that Heckscher thought the "old tradition" was clearly medieval and somewhat anachronistic by the early sixteenth century.


67Tbid., II, p. 302.
Tudor economic thought, will make it clear that Heckscher's ideas on the mercantilist conception of society are simply not applicable to Tudor economic thought. This, in turn, constitutes another basic argument for not using some simplisitic idea of the mercantilist period to cover the entire historical period from 1500-1775. It also provides a proper foundation of material to use in placing and evaluating Tudor economic thought in terms of its usefulness today, its importance in the development of economics as an autonomous science, and all of the other usual concerns of the historians of economic thought. Leaving Heckscher aside for the moment, a new start can be made.

The Tudor Conception of Society

The Tudor idea of order was not fundamentally new, and indeed the idea was under active attack by the end of the sixteenth century. Again, in disciplines other than the history of economic thought, it is commonplace now to see the old system of ideas giving way under the diverse but always disunifying influences of the Reformation, Machiavelli, Copernicus, and expanding commercial interests. Eventually the old system collapsed—looking backward it is tempting to see that collapse as inevitable. But it can not have seemed inevitable to the Tudor writers who, despite their many complaints about how their social and economic systems were functioning in practice, repeatedly defended their conception of order and their monarchs' duty to preserve that order. Most of the Tudor writers
did not see themselves, as Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke would more than a century later, as a dissenting minority group, arguing against the corruption of the Crown and the masses alike.\textsuperscript{68} Instead, as E.M.W. Tillyard has suggested, representatives from the most diverse elements of Tudor society held many truths in common. Tillyard considered the church and the court:

\begin{quote}
... the Puritans and the courtiers were more united by a common theological bond than they were divided by ethical disagreements. They had in common a mass of basic assumptions about the world, which they never disputed and whose importance varied inversely with this very meagerness of controversy.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

The basic assumptions that laid behind the Tudor conception of order were expressed many ways—sometimes in statements on harmony or with images of a cosmic dance. Most directly and popularly, order was explained by the Tudor writers with the image of the Great Chain of Being. Tillyard explained that

\begin{quote}
This metaphor served to express the unimaginable plenitude of God's creation, its unaltering order, and its ultimate unity. The chain stretched from the foot of God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects. Every speck of creation was a link in the chain...\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{68}See Tillyard, p. 26, for a brief statement on some of the difficulties that troubled ideas of social order in the eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{69}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{70}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 25–26.
In the Great Chain, man was seen as a link firmly set midway between the beasts and the angels, in a scheme where disorder in any one group immediately upset the order of all the other links in the Chain. This universal order and interdependence was mirrored in human society, where each social function formed a particular link in a greater chain of social order. As in the Great Chain of Being, the chain of social order was disturbed throughout by any disruption in any of the particular social groups that represented a link in the chain. Disorder in the social chain disturbed the order of the Great Chain, creating confusion and disorder in nature and heaven alike. In short, in this scheme social and economic arrangements had a cosmological significance.

Actually, the less poetic Tudor writers generally described social relationships using the metaphor of a social "body" or organism. Whitney R. D. Jones, in discussing a particularly turbulent phase of Tudor social and economic thought, comments that

If the mid-Tudor ideal of the Commonwealth emerged from the conjunction of forces and circumstances [associated with the economic, social, religious, and constitutional crises of the English Reformation], it is equally true that this development occurred within the context of traditional thought. It is symbolic that the ideal of the Commonwealth was so frequently related to the completely medieval analogy of the body politic. This

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71 This idea explains several of the most powerful passages in Macbeth, and also a well known passage from Richard Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, quoted by Tillyard, p. 16.
device was admirably suited both to the continuity and to the metamorphosis of economic and social thought at this time. *Per se* it expressed the medieval ideal of an organic society, and served both for exposition of the social and economic values inherited from medieval religious teaching and for criticism of the ills of the body politic and of the shortcomings of its various members. Yet at the same time increasing emphasis upon the power and duties of the head could express growing realization of the responsibilities of the prince in economic and social spheres, and of the transfer to the secular ruler of the onus of enforcement of the desired code of conduct.72

The corporeal analogy, which usually described the Prince as the head of the body politic, workers as the stomach, and soldiers as the arms, legs, hands or feet,73 was used

... in order to stress the mutual interdependence of all the members of the body politic, and to explain and justify differences in rank, of function, and of rewards... Equal stress was laid upon the sinews of obedience, through which the whole body was directed, and upon the folly of feet or legs setting themselves up against the head. At the same time, the higher members were warned not to disdain the lesser; even the very poor were necessary members of a Christian body politic.74

Ferguson makes a similar point in discussing how economic analysis was influenced by the Tudor world view, in saying that


73Shakespeare uses the same image throughout *Coriolanus*, for example see (I, 1, 108-162).

74Jones, p. 15.
It is hard for a modern person, accustomed to thinking of cause and effect, of 'linear' relationships, to appreciate how little meaning such relationships had to the medieval mind and how satisfying it found those 'lateral' relationships based on similarity and reflection. Renaissance Englishmen continued to envisage all created things as in one way or another reflecting the divine purpose and in the process presenting a complex series of divinely ordained comparisons. And the use of symbols, so inveterate a part of medieval thought, still tended to call attention to parallelisms rather than causal connections. Relationships of this sort were within the framework of a Providential history, essentially static. Static also was the idea of society as an organism in which each member has its appointed place and function. And it is also profoundly conservative, for place must be maintained and function dutifully performed if the whole body is to be kept in health.  

The idea of the body politic was obviously compatible and consistent with the ideas that are summarized in the image of the Great Chain of Being. The economic and social thought of a period that uses either or both of these images should be expected to reflect the "world picture" and conception of order that those images depict. Most treatments of Scholastic economic thought have traditionally accepted this point. The literature on Tudor economic thought, however, has devoted little attention to this general set of ideas. This is perhaps because of the apparent paradox involved

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76 See, for example, Tillyard, p. viii.

in claiming that the Great Chain of Being image is compatible with both medieval economic thought and Tudor economic thought, which is admittedly often more secular and even capitalistic in nature than scholastic thought. This apparent paradox can be resolved simply by understanding two different traditions of thought associated with the Great Chain of Being, both of which were discussed by Arthur O. Lovejoy in 1936.78

The Great Chain of Being and Economic Thought

The Great Chain of Being was

. . . until not much more than a century ago, probably the most widely familiar conception of the general scheme of things, of the constitutive pattern of the universe; and as such it necessarily predetermined current ideas on many other matters.79

Concerning economic matters, the idea of the Chain could be interpreted in two basically different ways. In medieval thought a guiding principle adopted by many leading thinkers was

and its effect on social thought in very general terms, but with appropriate references to the work of Arthur Lovejoy, in his The Role of Providence in the Social Order, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1972).


79 Ibid., p. vii. Lovejoy's emphasis is given.
. . . the belief that both the genuinely 'real' and the truly good are radically antithetical in their essential characteristics to anything to be found in man's natural life, in the ordinary course of human experience, however normal, however intelligent, and however fortunate. The world we now and here know—various, mutable, a perpetual flux of states and relations of things, or an ever-shifting phantasmagoria of thoughts and sensations, each of them lapsing into nonentity in the very moment of its birth—seems to the otherworldly mind to have no substance in it; the objects of sense and even of empirical scientific knowledge are unstable, contingent, forever breaking down logically into mere relations to other things which when scrutinized prove equally relative and elusive.80

This "otherworldliness," when expressed using the image of the Great Chain, led social thinkers to dwell upon "... the goal of the 'way up,' of that ascending process by which the finite soul, turning from all created things, took its way back to the immutable perfection in which alone it could find rest."81 The medieval writers accepted, as did "almost all Western philosophers for more than a millennium," that the final good for man, "consisted in some mode of assimilation or approximation to the divine nature."82 In the "otherworldly" tradition, the proper modes of achieving this good were "contemplation or absorption," and were to be accomplished by ascending ever so gradually up the Great Chain of Being to a God who was the "apotheosis of unity, self-sufficiency, and quietude."83

80Ibid., p. 25.
81Ibid., p. 83.
82Ibid., p. 82.
83Ibid.
The social and economic effects of this otherworldliness are not of direct concern here except to point out, as Lovejoy did, that, "... otherworldliness has always been compelled in practice to make terms with this world and has often been instrumental to ends foreign to its principles."\(^{84}\) In the medieval period, the otherworldly often remained in the monasteries. But outside of the monastery "terms" were reached too--more easily and quietly in some times and places than in others.\(^{85}\) Still, it is important not to overestimate the practical influence of the "otherworldly" tradition associated with the idea of the Great Chain of Being, and to remember that, especially when such ideas are primarily studied, taught, and defended by an elite but very small minority,

... the general character and tone of a society in which, at least nominally, an otherworldly philosophy is widely accepted or officially dominant is little affected by that circumstance. The spectacle of medieval Europe, or of India before, and even since, its infection with the Western plague of nationalism, is sufficient evidence to the contrary.\(^{86}\)

The writers of the English Renaissance did continue to use the image of the Great Chain of Being and, especially in economic and social tracts, the image of the body politic was used extensively.

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84 Ibid., p. 28.


86 Lovejoy, p. 28.
These ideas were still meaningful and important at the end of the Tudor period, and as Tillyard pointed out, "The greatness of the Elizabethan age was that it contained so much of new without bursting the noble form of the old order." The new, in terms of the image of the body politic, involved an increasingly important role for the "head," the Monarchy, in economic affairs. But more important, because of the general nature of the changes involved, were the modifications that were made in the uses of the image of the Great Chain of Being.

The ideal of ascending the Chain, emphasizing the contemplative life and the "otherworldly" understanding of the world discussed above, "dominated European thought down to the Renaissance." During the Renaissance, a different tradition "comes fully into its own." This tradition stressed what Lovejoy termed the "principle of plenitude," and the ideal of imitatio dei. Both of these concepts emphasized, imagistically, movements down the Great Chain. The principle of plenitude at its core is an expression of gratitude for and acceptance of the creation of man and the universe, including both the spiritual and material realms. The "mode" of "approximation" was most frequently defined as an imitative and active process

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87 Tillyard, p. 8.
88 See p. 21 at n. 40, and p. 37-38 at n. 72 above.
89 Lovejoy, p. 84.
90 Ibid., p. 86.
91 Ibid., pp. 86, 82, and see n. 95 below.
emphasizing the kinship of the work of the artist, the craftsman, the husbandman and theoretically even the industrialist, with the divine office of creation. God, as understood in this tradition, represented the apotheosis of "diversity, self-transcendence, and fecundity," a God who was "... the source and the informing energy of that descending process by which being flows through all the levels of possibility down to the very lowest." 92

The principle of plenitude, and this alternative understanding of God, had been tentatively expressed by Aquinas and other medieval writers; but the ideas and "the scheme of values implicit in the principle of plenitude . . ." were "... for the most part, undeveloped in medieval philosophy and religion." 93 The Renaissance, in England as well as on the Continent, marked the period of change to the new ideas of plenitude and action. The English Renaissance writers, though they maintained and perhaps even extended the traditional Christian view of world order by applying themselves to practical problems and issues to a greater extent than most of the medieval writers, were consciously aware of the fact that their world was changing—changing in part because the humanist tradition called on men to participate in and reform the existing social order. 94

Their limited discussions of medieval thought (for the most part they

92Ibid., pp. 82-83.
93Ibid., p. 85.
94Ferguson, "The Tudor Commonweal and the Sense of Change," p. 11.
preferred to base their writings on the work of the ancients or, where Christian ideas were concerned, directly on passages from the Bible), often simplistically dismissed the "otherworldly" view by describing all medieval thought as an extreme rejection of the created world.

The changes in economic and social thought associated with the shift from the "otherworldly" tradition to the celebration of the idea of plenitude were naturally important since

The one program demanded a withdrawal from all 'attachment to creatures' and culminated in the ecstatic contemplation of the indivisible Divine Essence; the other . . . summoned men to participate, in some finite measure, in the creative passion of God, to collaborate consciously in the processes by which the diversity of things, the fullness of the universe, is achieved. It . . . found the beatific vision in the disinterested joy of beholding the splendor of the creation or of curiously tracing out the detail of its infinite variety; it . . . placed the active life above the contemplative; and it . . . conceived of the activity of the creative artist, who at once loves, imitates, and augments the 'orderly variousness' of the sensible world, as the mode of human life most like the divine.95

Again, it is important to remind ourselves that the "general character and tone of society" was not dramatically inverted by this new interpretation of the Great Chain of Being, primarily because the medieval writers and political authorities had been rather sensible in choosing how to express their "otherworldly" frame of mind.96 What

95 Lovejoy, p. 84.
96 See p. 42, at n. 86 above.
was to prove more important in terms of the general character of society, and even in terms of the development of economics as an autonomous science, was the eventual abandonment of the traditional conception of order, and the systematic effort to strip all ethical content from the modern social sciences. But that is a part of another, or at least a later story.

In Tudor England the emphasis inherent in the principle of plenitude and the idea of moving down the Great Chain of Being was never seen as a termination or fundamental revision of Christian moral thought. The spiritual dangers of covetousness, greed, avarice and pride were denounced just as harshly in the Tudor period as in the middle ages. And the Tudor economic writers relied at least as often on a Christian sense of duty to God and country to repress potentially anti-social, self-interest behaviour as they did on competition as a means of channeling self-interest into socially desirable avenues.

To see how the revised Chain of Being image did influence Tudor economic thought—at once emphasizing man's nature as a creative, active participant in this world and yet simultaneously stressing religious and social limits to that activity—all that needs to be done is to read the primary literature without over-emphasizing the importance of the passages on the balance of trade, exchange rates, enclosures, and other "mercantilist" questions. In other words, before considering the policy means suggested by the Tudor writers, we must pay some attention to their ends.
As Tillyard suggested, these ends were remarkably similar across different groups of Tudor writers; and surprisingly enough, the ends remained virtually unchanged across the different generations of Tudor writers. That does not mean that there are not important intergenerational differences to be noted, but those differences generally do not relate to the matter of ends, or to the type of the economic questions that these writers were examining. Ferguson shows that

Men of different generations and diverse backgrounds, from More of pre-Reformation days to Smith of the mid-century, from humanists like Starkey and Elyot to reforming divines like Latimer, Lever, and Hooper, from Armstrong, the businessman, to Crowley, the social gospeler, these men were all deeply troubled by the problems affecting the welfare of the English community. They accordingly explored with anxious concern the process of change they saw going on around them: the rise in prices and the prevailing 'dearth,' enclosures and the vagaries of foreign trade, social unrest and the problem of the abbey lands, poverty that seemed only to increase in the face of plenty and crime that followed close on the heels of poverty.  

Certainly the analytical abilities of the writers did vary significantly over the period, and Ferguson points out that, "Social analysis of an increasingly penetrating character ... becomes one of the most characteristic and significant contributions of the

97 See p. 36, at n. 69 above.
early Tudor commentators."\textsuperscript{99} In fact, Ferguson went so far as to claim that

After the Discourse of the Common Weal it remained only for later theorists to fill in the outlines therein drawn, not of an organism governed by the universal principles of justice accepted and analyzed with typical subtlety by the medieval schoolmen, but of an economic mechanism impelled by particular, often variable forces, natural in origin and observable, impersonal and amoral, yet subject to the intelligent direction of human agencies.\textsuperscript{100}

Ferguson concludes that, "Virtue became for [the Tudor writers] more the end of civil polity than its means."\textsuperscript{101}

But even this does not imply that the writers at the close of the Tudor period were questioning the ends of their predecessors. It is fairly easy to show that that was not the case by examining passages from several leading Tudor writers in reverse chronological order, beginning with Gerard De Malynes.

**Primary Literature on the Ends of Tudor Economic Thought**

De Malynes was, we know, a merchant who spent some time in jail (perhaps unjustly) for his part in some questionable business ventures; and he also served for some time in Sir Francis Walsingham's

\textsuperscript{99}Ibid., p. 407.

\textsuperscript{100}Ibid., p. 279. On Smith's still-present ethical concerns, see pp. 65-66, at n. 135-137 below. The traditional, ethical face of Tudor economic thought before and after the Discourse is also discussed below.

\textsuperscript{101}Ibid., p. 407.
network of spies. Even with this background, and writing at the very end of the Tudor age, De Malynes upheld the traditional view of world order. In one passage from The Canker of England's Commonwealth he began with a reference to Aristotle and noted that

We have already described riches to either natural or artificial, and that both these are valued by money; and that for as much as the artificial riches do proceed of the natural, therefore reason requires a certain equality in the estimation thereof. Hereupon this consideration is incident, that as there are three temporal things for the behoof of man; namely, food, houses, and apparel; so must we account all the things serving thereunto according to the use of them, and the scarcity or plenty of those things, according to the same use, having always a regard and care, not to pay too much for the things serving for the belly; especially, such as in some sort may be spared or forbore; and not to sell too good cheap, the things serving for the back, or in effect to barter them for superfluous things, always admitting civility, which albeit that men account that civil which is according to the manner of every country, as the Proverb is: (Country's fashion, country's honor,) yet reason must rule herein, with a due consideration of God's good creatures and gifts, which cannot be done without an unfatigable industry, both in discerning the variety of them, and in observing their infinite number and pure creation, in which regard precious things have their estimation. So that the same civility must be reduced to the good of the common-weal, and for the upholding thereof, living together in Christian Society, giving so far place unto reason, that every man may endeavor himself to the preservation of the weal public and conceive generally that other nations not endowed with so much reason, are always inferior to us in that regard, even considering all men

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De Malynes even pointed out that the Frenchman John Bodin expected the President of the French Parliament and the French king to study economic and political matters, "... for the honor of God, and welfare of the Commonwealth," including the "just complaints and griefs of the poor people, which do feel the smart, but cannot for the most part judge of the causes thereof." Gerard De Malynes, England's View in the Unmasking of Two Paradoxes, (New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 50. For an English writer in 1603 to make such a concession to any French social thinker is a little unusual.
alike in an estate of politic government. Who sees not then, that without any cause of admiration, some men do wonder as it were at the simplicity of the West Indians, Brazilians and other nations, in giving the good commodities of their countries, yea, gold, silver, and precious things, for beads, bells, knives, looking-glasses, and such toys and trifles? 103

In Saint George for England, Allegorically described, De Malynes describes an island where, before "Covetousness the root of all evil, brought forth the tree of Political usury," 104 the inhabitants lived

... by the natural riches of the lands they were born unto, or by the artificial riches they were bred unto, according to their education and profession, every man using and enjoying his own, and nothing but his own, which in regard of charity every man possessing, yet seemed not to possess at all; Clergyman and magistrates did live by their revenues and pensions, Noblemen and Gentlemen of their lands, husbandmen by their farms, merchants and citizens by their trade, artificers by their craft and handywork: all of them making a perfect consent and harmony of the government of a common-wealth, in proportionable manner with exercise of religion, and due administration of justice in time of peace, and necessary provision for war, which the Prince is to provide for in the two seasons of peace and war. And from the Prince as from a lively fountain all virtues did descend into the bosom of that common-wealth, his worthy counselors were with the magistrates as ornaments of the Law, and did ministrate (like Physicians to the weal public) good potions for the ridding out of all distemperate humors: every man was contented to live in his vocation with true obedience: so that experience itself made manifest proof, Justice to be ordained of God, as a measure among men on


earth, to defend the feeble from the mighty, for the suppressing of injuries, and to root out the wicked from among the good, prescribing how to live honestly, to hurt no man willfully, and to render every man his due, carefully furthering what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong: to which intent every man did endeavor himself for the good of the common-wealth, observing concord, and all things in the course of traffic were carried with an equality, free lending was used, hospitality maintained, commiseration towards the poor was exercised, and love which is the very sum and substance of the Law, did flourish to the general comfort of a Christian Society.105

This passage is more important since, in the dedication to Sir Thomas Egerton, De Malynes claimed that the story of St. George

. . . may conveniently be applied to these our days of her Majesty's most happy government, wherein the beams of the Oriental star of God's most holy word appear unto us most splendid and transparent, to the singular comfort of all faithful.106

In 1597 a tract entitled Provision for the poore, now in penurie: Out of the Store-house of Gods plentie . . . was published. In this pamphlet, H. A. (probably Henry Arth or Arthington) reminded his readers of their Christian duty to the poor, and of the blessings to be had through charity. The author then proceeded to carefully list the types of poor people in England, what sort of aid had been given to the poor through religious and secular institutions, what statutes had been passed to deal with poverty and vagabonds in Elizabeth's reign, what questions concerning the poor could "rightly"

106 Ibid., pp. i-ii.
be considered, and concluded with a section entitled "That every person at the last day shall give an account of his own stewardship . . ."\textsuperscript{107} The last two sections are of most importance here.

Arthington lists six propositions concerning the poor that may rightly be considered by policy makers and citizens. They are:

1) The proceeding causes of so many poor in all Countries.
2) That God might have made our estate like unto theirs.
3) That we should do to them as we would be done unto.
4) Why we all ought to help relieve them.
5) Those places of scripture tending to compassion.
6) How their present want may be relieved.\textsuperscript{108}

He then notes that the sins, "... which procure God's justice to punish us with penury,"

1) Partly proceed from the poor themselves. \textsuperscript{109}
2) But more especially from the poor makers.

The sins proceeding from the poor themselves are listed as:

1) First, their misspending of former times in idleness, when they might have wrought.
2) Secondly, their willful wasting of their goods when they had them, in bibbing and belly-cheer.
3) Thirdly, their impatient bearing of their present want, complaining often without cause.


\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., III., p. 450.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., III., p. 451.
4) Fourthly, their daily repining at others prosperity, to have so much, and they so little.
5) Fiftly, their banniing and cursing, when they are not served as themselves desire.
6) Sixtly, their seldom repairing to their parish Churches, to hear and learn their duties better.\textsuperscript{110}

But the sins of the "poor makers, . . . the breeders of the poor," are "many and grievous," so Arthington notes only the ten worst:

1) All excessive proud persons in apparel.
2) The unmeasurable wasters of meat and drink.
3) The importable oppression of many Landlords.
4) The unconscionable extortion of all usurers.
5) The unsatable covetousness of corn-mongers.
6) The willful wrangling in law matters.
7) The immoderate abuse of gaming in all Countries.
8) The discharging of servants and apprentices.
9) The general abuse of all God's benefits.
10) The want of execution of good laws and statutes.\textsuperscript{111}

Arthington adds a paragraph on each of these ten abuses. For example, on the ninth sin, "The general abuse of all God's benefits," he notes that,

The ninth sort of poor makers, is the general abuse of all God's benefits (almost in all estates) very few keeping any moderation, besides our unthankfulness, which must needs increase the prices of all things, so as the meaner sort can hardly get maintenance; and must not this dealing make the more poor?\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111}Ibid., III., pp. 451-452.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., III., p. 453.
Arthington goes on to consider, "... how the poor may and must be relieved, if we will show ourselves to be true Christians...", and concludes that the causes of the poor which stem from the poor themselves and from the poor makers must be removed by drawing to "due moderation" all sorts of "excessive persons." But also, policies such as importing grain when domestic crops fail must continue, along the same lines that "... that care has hitherto manifested itself in her gracious Majesty and most honorable Council (as the great abundance of white rye brought into England from beyond the seas does demonstrate). ..." Most importantly, Arthington notes,

... seeing at this present the hand of God is heavy upon us, in most places of this Realm of England, appearing plainly in this great penury, among the poorer sort especially, and threatened further in great measure, by several signs from heaven, by strange diseases on earth, and by foreign invasion of devoted enemies, our sins most of all provoking the same, which will in the end procure our desolation without speedy conversion, which we can never attain unto ... without God's special grace and direction, which must be obtained by earnest petition ..."  

These passages from two economic thinkers who wrote at the very end of the Tudor period show that, however justified historians may be in claiming that social analysis was becoming more secular, more

113 Or as Gloucester says in King Lear, "So distribution should undo excess/And each man have enough." (IV, i. 73-74).


115 Ibid., III., p. 458.
pragmatic, and more insistent on discovering cause and effect relationships in economic matters, the traditional view of order was still strongly entrenched near the time of Elizabeth's death. Passages from earlier writers show that this conception of order did not change significantly during the Tudor period.

In 1587, John Howes' Second Famliar and Frendly Discourse Dialogue Wyse was printed, which described a number of abuses committed in caring for the poor of London and possible remedies for those abuses. The dialogue's speakers are, significantly, "Dignity" and "Duty." Toward the end of the section of the dialogue describing the abuses, Dignity says that

These are foul abuses in a Christian common wealth and specially in a civil City, that the poor should be thus pinched and barred from the common benefit of subjects, and so racked in their rents for such lousy and filthy cottages, too bad and too beastly for dogs to lie in.116

At the conclusion of the dialogue Dignity tells Duty, "... For God's cause chiefly and for your good prince, country and common wealth, let not this be buried in oblivion." To which Duty responds, "My wit, my wealth, my life and my death, and all my power is ready pressed to do my prince, country and common wealth good."117


117 Ibid., III., p. 443.
In 1580 Robert Hitchcock's *A politic Plat for the honour of the Prince, the great profit of the public State, relief of the poor, preservation of the rich, reformation of rogues and idle persons, and the wealth of thousands that know not how to live* was published.\(^{118}\) The tract, which is best known for its proposal of erecting fishing villages around the coast of England, and the numerical examples offered to show how profitable Hitchcock believed such villages would be, begins with a standard statement of the Tudor conception of order:

> Forasmuch as the Almighty God has blessed and enriched this noble Kingdom with the sweet dew of His heavenly goodness; and stored therein many hidden rich and pleasant treasures for our benefits, to reveal unto us when His good pleasure is: I think therefore, every man is rather born to profit his native soil and common weal in revealing the same secrets and hidden treasure to his country, if they be showed (to) him; than to seek after his own private gain and glory thereby.\(^{119}\)

In "The Epistle to England" given before the *Plat* opens, Hitchcock noted

> But as God raises instruments to set out His glory in diverse ways, and by diverse degrees; so let it not be grievous to Thee, O England! nor to the better sort of men, that one of Thine own, though not so finely as others, do set abroad part of Thy riches, wealth, and glory to enrich Thy own peculiar people withal; and has opened

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\(^{119}\) Ibid., II., p. 135.
the golden stream of Thy secret storehouse to the inhabitants of the same. But likewise, open Thou! by Thy divine providence the hearts of the wise, grave, and rich of this land that they will affect it, embrace it, put their helping hands to it, and willingly further it by all possible means they can, for the common profit of the inhabitants. Inasmuch as, by God's means, so great a benefit is offered with small care, little toil, and no cost; to make all this land blessed, the people thereof happy, strong, and invincible.120

It should be remembered too that, at the core of Hitchcock's defense of his scheme was the idea of preserving social order. Hitchcock's scheme depended on finding forty men in each Shire of the land to lend £50 for three years. He asked rhetorically why he should think that many creditors could be found in "this covetous time,"121 but quickly answered his own question:

This realm of England and Wales is very populous, and the most part be the poorer sort of people, who daily do harken when the world should amend with them. They are indifferent in what sort, so that their state be relieved; and so perhaps apt to assist rebellion, or to join with whomsoever dare invade this noble Island, if any such attempt should be made. Then are they meet guides to bring the soldiers or men of war to the rich men's wealth. For they can point with their finger, "There it is!" "Yonder it is!" "Here it is!" "And he hath it!" and, "She hath it that will do us much good!" and so procure martyrdom with murder to many wealthy persons, for their wealth. Therefore the wise and wealthy men of this land had need, by great discretion, to devise some speedy help therein; that this poorer sort of people may be set to some good arts, science,
occupations, crafts, and labours, by which means they might be able to relieve themselves of their great need and want. And being brought to such vocation of life, having some good trade to live upon, there is no doubt but that they will prove good and profitable subjects; and be careful to see this common wealth flourish; and will spend their lives and blood to defend the same, and their little wealth, their liberties, their wives, and children. For having nothing, they are desperate; but having some little goods, they will die before they lose it. Wherefore if this matter be looked into with eyes of judgement there is no doubt of borrowing the money upon the assurance and interest. 122

In 1579 an anonymous tract was published entitled Cyvile and Uncyvile life. A discourse very profitable, pleasant, and fit to be read of all Nobilitie and Gentlemen. Where, in forme of a Dialogue is disputed, what order of lyfe best beseemeth a Gentleman in all ages and times: aswel for educatio(n), as the course of his whole life: to make him a parson [person] fit for the publique service of his prince and Countrey, and for the quiet and cumleynesse of his owne private estate and callings. 123 In this dialogue, a courtier and country gentlemen quickly establish that, however much things go astray in practice, ". . . a virtuous man (though he be poor) deserves to be respected, and honored . . . " 124 Vallantine, the city man,

122 Ibid.

123 Reprinted in W. C. Hazlitt's Inedited Tracts: Illustrating the Manners, Opinions, and Occupations of Englishmen During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, (London: Chiswick Press, 1868). Cyvile and Uncyvile life . . . was also printed in 1586 as The English Courtier and the Country Gentleman.

124 Ibid., p. 44.
further argues that the reason virtue is not properly esteemed by the countrymen is,

... ignorance proceeding from your manner of life in the Country, where in deed you never attend to know what does become you, but what may enrich you, wherein you are far short of the Lawyer and Ploughman, the one having a trade to catch coin, by his counsel and craft, the other by his labour and luck.\textsuperscript{125}

Dr. Thomas Wilson, Dean of Durham, who was also, as Tawney noted, no child in matters of finance, openly defended the traditional view of social and religious order. In the \textit{Discourse Upon Usury}, written in 1569 and first published in 1572, Wilson began the Preface which dedicated his work to Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, by reminding his readers that

The Stoic Philosophers (right honorable and my singular good Lord) have said both truly and wisely that the world is made for man, and man is made for God, to the end that man may have all pleasure, and God may have all honour. Seeing then, that such a creation of man, and the world is thus framed by the mighty finger of God, and man specially made for God, I doubt not but your honour, being God's lively image upon earth, and fashioned to his likeness concerning the reasonable soul, as all others such his creatures are, will remember for your part to foresee, and to do your duty from time to time, and endeavour yourself in all your actions to have God always before your eyes, and to exercise your mind all your life long with all Godly practices, as well in advancing religion to God's glory as in doing Justice for man's benefit, that God alone, as he is always praised in Heaven among

\textsuperscript{125}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 45.
his angels, may even so have His holy name only honored here upon earth among his people.

But because man's nature, through Adam's fall, is altered from that perfection wherein it was at the first, and is much subject therefore to great corruption of life and manners, it is to be feared that all men will not always be mindful of their duty, except they be often warned and put in mind of that they ought to do, whereby they may consider still what they are.126

The rest of Wilson's Discourse is, basically, an exercise in reminding the English people "what they are," and "what they ought to do." One who lectured Dudley so openly, and it must be admitted that Dudley was certainly not beyond reproach, was likely to have in mind for his Discourse, "... the kind of moralistic badgering the early generation of English Puritans directed against the fast-growing system of Renaissance finance..."127 For Wilson, virtue was still a means as well as an end; in terms of ends, Wilson and the other Tudor writers were in basic agreement.

Sir Thomas Smith's De Republica Anglorum, written in 1565 and first published in 1583, was intended, to a large extent, as a textbook on the English Commonwealth.128 With all appropriate


references to the classical authors, Smith notes the various possible forms of government, makes some traditional distinctions between justice and injustice and kingship and tyranny, and gives a short history of how commonwealths and the idea of political rule developed. In Chapter Twelve of Book I of De Republica, Smith describes "the first and natural example of an absolute and perfect king." This king loved his subjects

... as his own children and nephews, cared for them as members of his own body, provided for them as one having by long time more experience than any one or all of them. They again honored him as their father of whose body they came, obeyed him for his great wisdom and forcast, went to him in douftfull cases as an oracle of God, feared his curse and malediction as proceeding from God's own mouth. He again used noriture; for each pain put upon them, he esteemed as laid upon himself.129

In Chapter Sixteen of Book I Smith presents his famous description of "The division of the parts and persons of the common wealth." He follows the traditional lines of social order:

... we in England divide our men commonly into four sorts, gentlemen, citizens, yeomen artificers, and laborers. Of gentlemen the first and chief are the king, the prince, dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, barons, and these are called \( \kappa \rho' \chi \o \iota \nu \) the nobility, and all these are called Lords and noblemen: next to these be knights, esquires, and simple gentlemen.130

129 Ibid., p. 24.
130 Ibid., p. 31.
There are two additional passages from the *De Republica* that are of interest here. The first passage is important because it shows that the traditional hierarchial view of society did not imply that society was necessarily static or socially imobile. When Smith discusses simple gentlemen in Chapters Twenty and Twenty-one of Book I, he wrote that

... as other common wealths were fain to do, so must all princes necessarily follow, that is, where virtue is to honor it: and although virtue of ancient race be easier to be obtained, as well by the example of the progenitors, which encourages, as also through hability of education and bringing up, which enables, and the lastly enraced love of tenants and neighbors to such noblemen and gentlemen, of whom they hold and by whom they do dwell, which pricks forward to ensue in their fathers steps. So if all this does fail (as it were great pity it should) yet such is the nature of all human things, and so the world is subject to mutability, that it does many times fail: but when it does, the prince and common wealth have the same power that their predecessors had, and as the husbandman has to plant a new tree where the old fails, so has the prince to honor virtue where he does find it, to make gentlemen, esquires, knights, barons, earls, marquises, and dukes, where he sees virtue able to bear that honor or merits, and deserves it, and so it has always been used among us. But ordinarily the king does only make knights and create barons or higher degrees: for as for gentlemen, they be made good cheap in England. For whosoever studies the laws of the realm, who studies in the universities, who professes liberal sciences, and to be short, who can live idly and without manual labour, and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called master, for that is the title which men give to esquires and other gentlemen, and shall be taken for a gentleman. ... A man may make doubt and question whether this manner of making gentlemen is to be allowed or no, and for my part I am of that opinion that it is not amiss. For first the prince loses nothing by it, as he should do if it were as in France: for the yeomen or
husbandman is no more subject to taille or tax in England than the gentleman: no, in every payment to the king the gentleman is more charged, which he bears the gladlier and dares not gainsay for to save and keep his honor and reputation. In any show or muster or other particular charge of the town where he is, he must open his purse wider and augment his portion above others, or else he doea diminish his reputation. As for their outward show, a gentleman (if he will be so accompted) must go like a gentleman, a yeoman like a yeoman, and a rascal like a rascal: and if he be called to the wars, he must and will (whatevsoever it cost him) array himself and arm him according to the vocation which he pretends; he must show also a more manly courage and tokens of better education, higher stomach and bountifuller liberality than others, and keep about him idle servants, who shall do nothing but wait upon him. So that no man has hurt by it but he himself, who hereby per chance will bear a bigger sail than he is able to maintain.131

A second famous quotation from the De Republica is frequently misinterpreted, usually because only a partial quotation is given, which involves Smith's discussion "Of the fourth sort of men which do not rule." Frequently, the hierarchical conception of society is seen as a rigidly exclusive and elitist sort of social organization. It is all too common to see statements to the effect that, "'the fourth sort of men who do not rule' . . . formed no part of the political nation."132 Smith's full quotation shows such


statements to be patently false. This group expected to be properly ruled and, increasingly, even to participate in matters of local government:

The fourth sort or class among us, is of those which the old Romans called *capite censij proletarij* or *operae*, day laborers, poor husbandmen, yea merchants or retailers which have no free land, copyholders, and all artificers, as Tailors, Shoemakers, Carpenters, Brickmakers, Bricklayers, Masons, etc. These have no voice nor authority in our common wealth, and no account is made of them but only to be ruled, not to rule other, and yet they be not altogether neglected. For in cities and corporate towns for default of yeomen, inquests and Juries are impaneled of such manner of people. And in villages they be commonly made Churchwardens, alecunners, and many times Constables, which office touches more the common wealth, and at the first was not employed upon such low and base persons. 133

Furthermore, Smith made it clear that all people in the realm were expected to have their interests represented:

... All that ever the people of Rome might do either in *Centuriatis comitia* or *tributia*, the same may be done by the parliament of England, which represents and has the power of the whole realm both the head and the body. For every Englishman is intended to be there present, either in person or by procuration and attornies, of what pre-eminence, state, dignity, or quality soever he be, from the Prince (be he King or Queen) to the lowest person of England. And the consent of the Parliament is taken to be every man's consent. 134

133 Smith, p. 46.

134 Ibid., p. 49.
In the *Discourse of the Common Weal* written in 1549, Smith had used the classical form of the dialogue, with speakers representing the learned men, the nobility, the merchants, the husbanders, and the artificers. The *Discourse* has long been noted for its generally high level of positive analysis, but it includes several important passages which reflect the traditional view of social order as well. In the "Third Dialogue" of the *Discourse*, the Knight asks the Doctor how it might be possible to have individuals from different occupations, with widely different interests and opinions, give up "private liberties and privileges" and "give place to a public weal" since

... this diveristy of opinions ... troubles the people very sore and makes great sedition and division among them and in manner makes debate between neighbor and neighbor, father and son, man and his wife, which is more to be feared yet than all other the foresaid losses of worldly goods; for if we were never so poor and did nevertheless agree among ourselves, we should lick ourselves whole again in short space.

To which the Doctor replies:

You say truth. With concord, weak things do increase and wax big, and contrary, with discord, strong things wax weak; and it must needs be true, that (truth) itself Christ

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says, 'Every kingdom divided in itself shall be desolate.' Wherefore I cannot forbear to show you my poor opinion how so great a mischief as this is may be avoided out of this Commonweal. And still I will use one trade, as in seeking out the original causes, and by taking away of that to show the remedy. I take the chief cause here of as well the sins of us that be the ministers of Christ's Holy Word and mysteries as of you that be the flock. And first of ourselves that have swerved altogether from our due course, order, and profession to all kind of carnality not only to the baseness of laymen but far inferior unto them in pride, covetousness, and fleshly lusts. Wherefore you laymen, seeing in us no excellency in our manner indeed, think us unworthy to be your leaders and pastors, or to whose doctrine you should give credit whom you see in living far discrepant from the same. And therefore you take upon you the judgment of spiritual things, to whom it does not appertain, as one inconvenience draws ever another after him. For so long as we ministers of the church were of those manners and conversation agreeable with our doctrines, so long all men, yea, the great princes of the world and the wisest men, are content to believe our doctrine and to obey us in things concerning the soul. And since we fell from the perfection of life, we grew out of credence and the holy doctrine of Christ suffered slander by our sinful living. So we have given the first occasion of this evil, and you have taken it as an instrument to work this schism withal. And though both do evil therein, yet the remedy ought to begin at the root of this mischief which I take to be in us, the ministers and pastors spiritual. And to be plain with you and no more to dissemble our own faults than I have done yours, except we reform ourselves first I can have no great trust to see this general schism and division in religion utterly taken away. It may perchance with authority be for a time appeased, but never so as it spring not up again except we reform ourselves first.137

137 Ibid., pp. 127-128.
Smith was somewhat prophetic in that passage, but his statements on the disorder in secular affairs that resulted from disruptions in spiritual matters were perfectly traditional and familiar.

Thomas Becon used another traditional literary form to present his view of social order, the Catechism. Becon had been Chaplain to Protector Somerset at the time of Edward VI's accession, and so his use of a religious literary form is not surprising. Becon's Catechism, written in 1542 or 1543, was divided into six parts. The final section, "Of the Offices of All Degrees," is most important here. In this section Becon discusses the duties of temporal magistrates, ministers, deacons, subjects of the realm, parishioners, husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, young men, young women, old men, old women, teachers, students, rich men, poor men, and concludes with a lesson, "On the office and duty of all Degrees and Estates Generally." Becon does consider "worldly affairs" at some length in his Catechism, but he too argued that economic and political order was based on spiritual foundations. Citing Proverbs XXIX Becon noted that, "When the preaching of God's world fails, the people perish and run out of order."138

Becon's most famous tract on economic matters, *The Jewel of Joy*, was written some seven or eight years after his *Catechism*. In the later tract Becon takes a harder line against the abuse of riches, but his idea of order is not changed. Addressing one of the favorite topics of the Tudor writers Becon noted that

It is very fitting and praiseworthy enough for all degrees of persons to wear apparel according to their estate and calling, so that vanity, excess, and rejoicing therein be banished. But confusedly every man or woman to wear as them liketh is both without order and greatly discommendable, and ought by the higher powers to be redressed.139

And discussing another familiar Tudor problem, Becon criticized the "greedy gentlemen" who neglected their duties to the commonweal and inverted traditional order:

The scripture says [Psalms viii] that God made 'both sheep and oxen with all the beasts of the field' subject unto man; but now man is subject unto them. Where man was wont to bear rule, there they now bear rule. Where man was wont to have his living, there they now only live. Where man was wont to inhabit, there they now range and graze.

And the cause of all this wretchedness and beggary in the commonweal are the greedy gentlemen, which are sheepmongers and graziers. While they study for their own commodity, the commonweal is like to decay... They which in times past were wont to be fathers of the country, are now pollers and pillers of the country. They which in times past were wont to be the defenders of the poor, are now become destroyers of the same. They by whom the commonweal somet ime was preserved, are now become the caterpillars of the commonweal, and

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139Ibid., p. 440.
such as seem by their manners to have made a solemn vow utterly to subvert the commonweal, and to procure the final destruction of the same. They are insatiable wolves. They know no measure. So they may reign, they care not who suffer pain. So they may abound, they care not who fall to the ground. So they may be enriched, they care not who be impoverished. They are right brothers of Cain, which had rather slay his brother Abel, than he should have any part with him of worldly possessions.140

Robert Crowley, best known for the strained poetry of his One and Thyrtye Epigrams,141 published in 1550 The Voyage of the Last Trumpet, Blowen by the Seventh Angel . . . Calling Al Estates of Men to the Right Path of Theyr Vocation.142 In this work, Crowley gave twelve lessons: to beggars, to servants, to yeomen, to lewd priests, to scholars, to learned men, to physicians, to lawyers, to merchants, to gentlemen, to magistrates, and to women. The messages of the lessons are standard versions of the Christian teachings of the English Renaissance. Compassion for the poor is expressed, all estates are asked to remember their social and religious duties of obedience and charity, idleness is condemned in all estates as theft from the commonwealth,143 a moderate desire for wealth is accepted and defined

140Ibid., p. 434.


142Reprinted in The Select Works.

143Ibid., p. 73.
as "enough in store/for thee and thine in thy degree,"\textsuperscript{144} and a heavy reliance is placed on magistrates who are called by God to maintain justice and rule with equity and with compassion for the weak who are compelled by "extreme need."\textsuperscript{145}

Crowley's \textit{Way to Wealth}\textsuperscript{146} is an essay on the causes and consequences of sedition. It is standard Tudor fare in every respect except, perhaps, in Crowley's willingness to blame the "oppressing gentlemen" who have disobeyed laws by enclosing commons, raising rents, and depriving the people of good ministers by promoting laymen, for the sedition of the poor.

One of the most secular mid-Tudor pamphlets written on economic matters was the anonymous 1549 tract, \textit{Policies to reduce this realme of Englande unto a prosperus wealth and estate}. But in this tract too the problem of maintaining social order in the face of pressure from changing demand for agricultural products was examined. The author began with the customary statement that

\textit{... the strength of a realm against the invasion of enemies consists in having a Noble king and good magistrates, the king having always sufficient of Treasure to maintain war against his enemies, the realm being thoroughly inhabited with people, the people being obedient to the kings majestey, and to the magistrates in the king's behalf. But alas that singular commodity, where with God has endowed this Realm especially above all others; is now like to turn unto}

\textsuperscript{144}Ibid., p. 89.

\textsuperscript{145}Ibid., p. 96.

\textsuperscript{146}Also reprinted in \textit{The Select Works}, and first published in 1550.
our destruction. For the fineness of our wool has herte-
tofof late been the occasion that diverse men of power
have maintained their sheep to get the poor men out of their
houses, and out of all that ever they have had. Yet it
ought to be considered that the mighty force of our enemies
cannot be resisted with Sheep, be their wool never so fine.
But in the multitude of people is the state of a king: and
in the fewness of subjects is the princes dishonor says
Solomon in his proverbs. Likewise the wise philosopher
Pythagoras says that the subjects are to a king as a wind
is the fire. For the grosser that the wind is: the greater
is the fire. Seeing then that the prosperous state of this
realm consists of these things before rehearsed, I intend
first to declare how this realm (God being praised) may
be made populus, the people wealthy, the king rich, the
realm without civil discord, vitalls plenty."147

Sir John Cheke's The Hurt of Sedition, written in response to
Ket's rebellion, repeatedly made the linkage between order and
wealth (or disorder and poverty) instead of power and plenty. Of
course the ordered society was also strongest in matters of defense,
so a sort of transitivity did hold. According to Cheke,

... it is plainly impossible that the country shall
well stand in government, and the people grow to wealth,
where order in every state is not fitly observed: and
that body cannot be without much grief of inflammation
where any least part is out of joint, or not duly set
in his own natural place.148

And, typically, social disorder in an isolated English
village would lead, Cheke thought, to disorder in the universe:


148 Sir John Cheke, The Hurt of Sedition, How greevous it is
When sedition once breaks out, see you not the laws overthrown, the magistrates despised, spoiling of houses, murdering of men, wasting of countries, increase of disorder, diminishing of the realm's strength, swarming of vagabonds, scarcity of laborers, and all those mischiefs plentifully brought in, which God is wont to scourge severally withall, war, death, and pestilence?\textsuperscript{149}

Sir William Forrest's 1548 \textit{Pleasaunt Poesye of Princelie Practice}, presented to Edward VI as a "translation" of a work composed by Aristotle for Alexander the Great, was not only a series of proposed remedies for economic problems, but also set out to show how social order had developed from that time when all men were, "of one stripe or kind." Specialization and division of labor were key concepts in this evolutionary process; but Forrest, like most of the Tudor writers, saw a spiritual reason behind these concepts. He wrote that

\begin{quote}
As scarcitee of thinges cause the dearthe tappeare, 
so, in fewe, at this worldis erection 
thinges weare not brought too their due perfection.

By process as the same can springe and growe, 
and men of experience gathered the fruyte: 
Wone then labored another to overturne: 
thorowe highe preamyntence too beare the bruyte. 
As suche prospered in their saide pursuyte 
at laste it fell by wyse perswasyon 
men too beare rule and have domynation

In all their Studye and wise compasyngye, 
their private wealthe they dyd postponerate: 
the Commune commoditie firate preferryngye, 
of thoise that they had too them made subjugate,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{149}Ibid., III., p. 1010.
undre higheste weies of loove affectionate:
as if thynges Stoode in indifferentee
their ayde inclyned too the more partye.

That Kynge (bee sure) can never bee poore:
where as his Commons lyveth welthelye.
if they bee not able to kepe open doore;
it muste withe hym then but small multylye
ffor kynes of their Commons sumtyme muste ayde trye.
The more therefore the publike weale dothe afflowe
the more is their wealthe: this reason provethe nowe.

And true it is the highe Opificer
sendeth not his giftes too wone perticularlye
but that a multytyde wone withe other,
the same should participate mutuallye.
Sithe hee althinges heere dothe make too multylye
to thende aforeside, of God electa,
see then the same stonde in her full effecte.150

Forrest, who like many of his contempraries "could accomodate
his faith to reigning powers,"151 served at various times as a priest
in the service of Wolsey, Somerset, and Mary Tudor. But this prag-
matic facilenes did not alter his idea that the duty of a Prince was
to put down Vice and to promote Virtue152—as well as insuring that
Englishmen did not have to eat roots, herbs and other "beggerye
baggage," but instead,

150 Extracts from Forrest's Pleaunt Poesye are reprinted in
Tawney and Power and, at slightly greater length, in J. M. Cowper's
dition of Thomas Starkey's England in the Reign of King Henry the
Eighth: A Dialogue Between Cardinal Pole and Thomas Lupset ...,
Cowper's edition was first published in two volumes by the Early
English Text Society in 1878.

151 Ibid., p. lxxix.

152 Ibid., p. lxxvi.
Thomas Starkey, appointed Chaplain to Henry VIII in 1535 at Thomas Cromwell's request, wrote his Dialogue Between Cardinal Pole and Thomas Lupset for a very practical purpose—namely, to persuade Pole to return and serve Henry VIII. Today, however, the Dialogue stands as one of the most complete statements on the Tudor conception of order, Tudor political theory, and Tudor economic conditions and thought. The traditional symbols of order are used explicitly by Starkey throughout the dialogue, as in "Pole's" comment that

...we have noted the most general faults and misorders that we can find now at this time, both in the politic body and also in the outward things of necessity required to the wealthy state and very common weal here of our country, this remains, ... to touch the misorders and ill governance which we shall find in (the) order and rule of the state of our country; the which order and rule we before have declared to resemble the soul in man's body. For even like as the soul gives life, governs, and rules the body of man, so does civil order and politic rule ... govern and stabilize the politic body in every country, city, and town.154

And "Lupset," who is really the leading speaker in the first major section of the dialogue, has earlier approved of this conception of order at even greater lengths:

153 Ibid., p. xcv.
154 Ibid., p. 99.
... as man by nature excels all others in dignity, so he has certain virtues by nature convenient to the same excellency; they which, by the opinion of man, are not conceived and grounded in heart, nor yet be not proper to one nation and not to another, but established by nature, are common to all mankind. As, by example, there is a certain equity and justice among all nations and people, whereby they are inclined one to do good to another, one to be beneficial to another, living together in a companionable life. And, likewise, there is a certain temperance of the pleasures of the body, which is not measured by the opinion of man, but by the health thereof and natural propagation, as to eat and drink only to support the health and strength of the body, and to use moderate pleasure with woman; for lawful increase of the people is, among all men and all nations, esteemed virtue and honesty. And in like manner man, with great courage to defend himself from all violence of other injuries or wrongs, and patiently to suffer all such chance as can not be avoided, is, among all people, taken as a noble virtue. There is also a certain wit and policy by nature given to man in every place and country, whereby he is inclined to live in civil order according to the dignity of his nature; and to perceive to mean how he may attain thereto, there is, furthermore, in all men by nature, without any other instruction, rooted a certain reverence to God, whereby they honor him as governour and ruler of all this world. For yet there was never nation so rude or blind but for this cause they religiously worshipped and honored the name of God. These virtues, and other like, whereby man, of nature meek, gentle, and full of humanity, is inclined and stirred to civil order and loving company, with honest behaviour both toward God and man, are by the power of nature in the heart of man rooted and planted, and by no vain opinion of fancy conceived. And though it be so that among all nations many so live, as they had utterly forgotten the dignity of this their nature, and had no such virtues by nature in them set and planted; yet among them all, few there be, or none, which, so living, judge themself to do well, but think themself that they are slipped and fallen from the excellency of their nature, with great and continual grudge of conscience inwardly.155

155Ibid., pp. 13-14.
Clement Armstrong was the first major economic writer of the post-Reformation Tudor period. Despite the some seventy to eighty years that separate his works from those of De Malynes, Armstrong's statements on the ends of economic and social policy, as reflected in his comments on social order, are thoroughly compatible with those of his fellow businessman who wrote at the end of the Tudor age. In his tract entitled How to Reforme the Realme in Settyng Them to Werke And To Restore Tillage, probably written in 1535 or 1536, Armstrong said that

... his grace and his lords had now need to perceive and know the remedy how to restore the body of his realm to a more wealth than ever it was in, as much as God has not otherwise ordained it; therefore the king and his lords have need to minister right order of common weal, or else they must needs destroy their own weal by the very ordinance of God, for they are upholden and born upon the body. If they will be rich, they must first see all common people have riches, that out thereof must rise their riches and all the people be out of need. A rich welthy body of a realm makes a rich wealthy king being the head thereof, and a poor, feble, weak body of a realm must needs make a poor, feeble, weak king. Our sovereign lord the king of England cannot gather abundance of gold and silver out of the hands of common people in the body of the realm without they have it.156

In A Treatise Concerninge the Staple and the Commodities of this Realme (c. 1519-35), Armstrong firmly placed the source of the wealth of England in the divine scheme of things:

156 This tract, which is attributed to Armstrong, is reprinted in Tawney and Power, III., p. 115.
... the husbandmen and farmers in England received of the gift of God yearly by work of husbandry in a right order (where God first gave the layers thereof when no singularity was sought to have more plenty of work by men's wisdom than God by his wisdom first ordained, that all men by their bodily work should receive of God as gift both meat and clothing together, that is with the work of husbandry to receive the special gift of the fineness and goodness of the staple wool, which God by his first day of everlasting light by virtue of His holy spirit gave into the earth for the common wealth of England, before sun, moon and stars were made, which are but the ministers of the gift of the same). . . . 157

And, the troubles which plagued England because, Armstrong believed, it did not have a domestic staple of cloth, resulted in social and spiritual disorder as well as economic loss. He complained that

No man in England never seeks for no common weal, but all and every for his singular weal. By the wisdom of Adam's fall, under the sun no man's wisdom attains unto God's wisdom, no man's right is met nor measured by God's right, that is the standard right of all common weal. That should be the king's head right, like as the head right of every one man. What other right has God put into the head of every one man, but only the right of common weal of all the members in his body. What man can say by the office of his mouth, feeding all the members in his body, to give to one hand more than to a another or to one finger or to any one member more than to another, whereby to hurt and destroy another, but that all members should receive meat together to live out of necessity, etc. 158

157 This tract is also attributed to Armstrong, and reprinted in Tawney and Power, III., p. 90.

158 Ibid., III., p. 114.
Sir Thomas Elyot, writing in 1530 just after the first meeting of the Reformation Parliament, was in many ways the fully developed humanist of his day, and so one might think a man of very different temperament from businessmen such as Armstrong and De Malynes. Yet in his Boke Named the Governor there is a passage so similar in theme to De Malynes' description of order in The Canker of England's Commonwealth quoted above, that the two passages might be passed off as in-class papers written simultaneously by two promising students for some mythical Tudor schoolmaster. Elyot wrote:

Behold also the order that God has put generally in all his creatures, beginning at the most inferior or base, and ascending upward: He made not only herbs to garnish the earth, but also trees of a more eminent stature than herbs, and yet in the one and the other be degrees of qualities; some pleasant to behold, some delicate or in good taste, other wholesome and medicinable, some commodious and necessary. Similarly in birds, beasts, and fishes, some be good for the sustenance of man, some bear things profitable to sundry uses, other be apt to occupation and labor; in diverse some is strength and fierceness only; some other serve for pleasure; none of them has all these qualities; few have the more part or many, specially beauty, strength, and profit. But where any is found that has many of the said properties, he is more set by than all the other, and by that estimation the order of his place and degree evidently appears; so that every kind of trees, herbs, birds, beasts, and fishes, beside their diversity of forms, have (as who says) a peculiar disposition approprent unto them by God their creator: so that everything is in order, and without order may be nothing stable or permanent; and it may not be called order, except it do contain in it degrees, high and
base, according to the merit or estimation of the thing that is ordered. 159

Conclusions

The point to be made with all of these long and generally unfamiliar quotations is painfully simple; it is a point that scholars in other fields have long accepted. Social thought in Tudor England, even after the disrupting influences of the English Reformation, was guided and stabilized by a classical and Christian view of social order, and by an explicit acceptance of a **summum bonum** for man—"to know the truth about God and to live in communities." 160

As Ferguson notes, the Tudor social writer was still accustomed

... to the ideal of a stable society of fixed order and degree. And it was still very easy for him to see in their baneful effects the collective wages of collective sin, for which the only remedy was collective repentance. 161

While the discussion of means was often thoroughly secular and even mechanistic in spirit, "the most secular of the Tudor writers

159 Elyot, p. 4.


was as ready as his evangelical contemporaries to recognize the moral underpinning and purpose of society . . . ."162

This is all diametrically opposed to Heckscher's ideas on "The Nature of the Mercantilist Conception of Society." And Heckscher clearly meant to include the Tudor writers in his condemnation of the mercantilist conception of society. In Mercantilism he cites, to name only those whose works have already been quoted earlier in this chapter, Clement Armstrong (at least thirteen times), Thomas Starkey, Sir William Forrest, Polices to Reduce this Realme of Englane . . . (at least eight times), A Discourse of the Common Weal . . . (more than twenty-five times), Thomas Wilson (at least six times), Robert Hitchcock, and the early writings of Gerard De Malynes (with more than a dozen references to De Malynes).163

It is conceivable that Heckscher's claims on these matters can be justified in discussions of post-1640 English economic thought.164 The "mercantilist conception of society" may even be of some use in discussing the early Stuart period, from 1603 to

162Ibid., pp. 407-408.
163This count is taken from Heckscher's index, supplemented in some cases by my own count and corrections.
164See, however, Charles Wilson's article on "The Other Face of Mercantilism," reprinted in Coleman, ed., Revisions in Mercantilism. Wilson criticizes Tawney and M. Beloff for their harsh judgments on the post-1640 period, but perhaps he should have also dealt with Heckscher's more general criticism of the mercantilism period.
1640. As Tawney once observed, "Most of the attitudes and measures . . . which were to triumph at the Restoration can be seen taking shape between the death of Elizabeth and the opening of the Civil War."165

It is impossible to precisely set a date to represent when the classical and Christian ideas on order fell out of use in English economic literature. In some literary forms the idea remained strong long after Elizabeth's death, and may be traced to some extent through Shakespeare and Jonson to Dryden and, ultimately, to Pope, Swift and Gay.166 But the traditional "world picture" was under attack even before Elizabeth's death in 1603. John Wheeler's 1601 Treatise of Commerce is markedly more secular in tone and intent than most of the Tudor economic literature, and represents the first major attempt to defend the practices of a particular company of merchants against those who "doubt(ed) of the Necessarienes"167 of such a monopoly to the realm. But even earlier, around 1598, John Marston had complained in doggerel verse that men had lost sight of the Great Chain (or as


Marston would have it, a system of pipes). Authorities did delay the collapse for a time, as Sir Thomas Smith had thought they might, and interestingly enough Marston's works were among those burned in 1599 in the Archbishop of Canterbury's purge of satirical and indecent literature. But Marston's vision did finally come true. And even if it was a few years premature, his statement serves best to show the coming end of the traditional conception of order, and to point ahead to the growth of the mechanistic conception of methodological individualism. Marston railed that

Sure I nere think those axioms to be true,
That soules of men, from that great soule ensue,
And of his essence doe participate
As't were by pipes, when so degenerate,
So adverse is our natures motion,
To his immaculate condition:
That such foule filth, from such faire purity,
Such sensuall acts from such a Deity,
Can nere proceed. But if that dreame were so
Then sure the slime that from our soules doe flow
Have stoppt those pipes by which it was convai'd,
And now no humane creatures, once disra'i'd
Of that faire jem.
Beasts sence, plants growth, like being as a stone,
But out alas, out Cognaisance is gone.168

CHAPTER III

LESSER GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF TUDOR ECONOMIC THOUGHT

The traditional conception of order held by the Tudor writers and often expressed with images of the Great Chain of Being or the body politic is of crucial importance in distinguishing between Tudor economic thought and the economic thought that succeeded it in England. Properly understood, and allowing for new lines of emphasis associated with Renaissance thought, it is equally important in distinguishing Tudor economic thought from medieval and Scholastic thought. But the problem with this view of social order, and with these images, is that they were for so long and so widely accepted that they are of very little help in distinguishing the "ethical differences" and resulting differences in policy proposals coming from writers within the Tudor period.

Lesser "guiding principles" which extended and developed from the Tudor world view can be of help in making these distinctions, and at least four such principles were being actively discussed by the Tudor economic thinkers. The principles have all been discussed in some secondary literature at one point or another. They may each be said to be, more broadly, "Renaissance" principles, and not specifically Tudor. But the Tudor writers did frequently use particular variants of these principles, and these "Anglicized" principles have
never been brought together to explain Tudor economic thought. That will be the purpose of this chapter.

The Concept of Civic Activity

As Lovejoy noted, the Renaissance version of the image of the Great Chain of Being, emphasizing the concept of plenitude and images of moving down the Great Chain, implied that the active life would be held in more esteem than the contemplative life and that the activity of the creative artist would be seen, "... as the mode of human life most like the divine."[^169] Actually, the Renaissance writers never unanimously accepted that point.

Before tracing through specific Continental and English writers' debate on the active and contemplative life, the major issues involved in the general debate must be briefly set out and discussed in terms of their importance to economic thought.

The question of what sort of life men ought to lead is, of course, a very old one. The debate on the question has often been conducted on such a rhetorical, and even utopian level, that historians of economic thought have simply ignored the debate, or assigned it over to the philosophers. Some attention is given to Christian ideals and models of life by students of Scholastic economic thought, and by those who have taken the economic thought

[^169]: Lovejoy, p. 84. See p. 45, at n. 95 above.
of the ancients—primarily Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle—seriously. The question is also important in discussions on the rise of economic individualism; but as suggested earlier, the Weber-Tawney material which shows that a new mode of life was developed and accepted in certain Protestant nations pertains primarily to the post-1640 period of European history. Little attention has been given to the Renaissance debate over the active and contemplative life by historians of economic thought, which is surprising because during this period, on the Continent and in England, the debate was vital, intense, pragmatic, and anything but utopian.

In extreme versions the issue at the heart of the debate was perfectly clear. Were men to best serve their time on earth in contemplation of the divine nature of God and the universe, or by working for the community to reform evil and promote virtue wherever they might be found, using every moral means available? Subordinate questions were involved in either approach. Could men really learn about the divine aspects of the universe using their own reason and the writings of earlier Christians and philosophers; or, could men hope to bring order and justice to their social systems using reason.

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171 See pp. 18-22, at n. 33-43 above.

172 Barry Gordon does briefly discuss some of the issues involved in his recent *Economic Analysis Before Adam Smith: Hesiod to Lessius*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), and in his separate *Bibliography* on the same period.
government, law, and even religion as their tools? Given the Renaissance faith in education, the answers to both of the subordinate questions were almost always affirmative, at least in areas where the humanism of the Renaissance had not led to atheism. Unfortunately, this agreement on subordinate details did not help resolve the central issue, which became even more complex as some writers tried to develop a synthesis of the two extreme positions.

It should not be too much of an oversimplification, for the purposes of this discussion, to identify three stages of the central debate, with the final stage representing the attempt to reconcile to some extent the earlier two stages. In some early statements on the contemplative life, men were asked to reject completely the life of activity, to "know themselves" thoroughly by looking inward, but ultimately to raise their thoughts above this world toward some beatific vision of grace. The active life was spurned because it distracted man from his higher purposes, and because it actually endangered his soul by involving him in political, contractual and commercial ventures where temptation and corruption were thrust in from all sides.

The response to this early, essentially ascetic version of the contemplative life, was inspired by the rediscovery and renewal of interest in sections of ancient Greek and Roman literature that developed the ideas of civic virtue. The contemplative life was attacked as a selfish, elitist idea, which wrote off the hopes of the majority of mankind for either eternal salvation or worldly justice, order, and security. Civic activity, on the other hand,
stimulated man's capacity as a reasoning creature, and extracted the
greatest benefits from his virtue and skills. Virtuous men were
strengthened by being exposed to corruption and greed, and by being
placed in a position where they might reform evil, not merely avoid it.

Some writers finally pointed out that a good life might be
led either in contemplation or in civic activity. The question of
which life was best, however, remained unsettled. The supporters
of the contemplative life could accept the usefulness and even the
propriety of the active life, and the idea that all men would devote
some time and energy to active attempts to improve the temporal
order. But they still held that only in contemplation could man
reach his true perfection. The defenders of the active life suggested
that different men had different talents, some being more fit for
activity than others who should lead the contemplative life, but
they still maintained that those who could serve the community should
fulfill that duty and at least limit the time they spent in personal
spiritual matters. Many of these writers also suggested that, in
dealing with matters of the commonwealth, the same questions that
men would face in a life of solitary contemplation would be raised,
but at an even more important level involving the whole social order,
not just individual souls.

Once the possibility that men might lead virtuous lives
either in contemplation or in service to the community had been
admitted, the question was immediately raised whether or not the
whole issue of the long debate was "essential," or a "matter of
indifference." Starkey was probably the first English writer to identify *adiaphora*, or things indifferent for salvation.\footnote{Zeeveld, p. 129. The following discussion of "things indifferent" is based on the early section of Zeeveld's chapter on "Starkey and the Cromwellian Polity." Zeeveld cites (p. 128) as a clear statement of this idea a passage from T. S. Eliot's "Lancelot Andrewes" in *Essays Ancient and Modern*, (New York, 1932), pp. 4-7. Eliot saw in the Anglican *via media*, "the finest spirit of England of the time," characterized by, "... that determination to stick to essentials, that awareness of the needs of the time, the desire for clarity and precision in matters of importance and the indifference to matters indifferent."
}\footnote{Ibid., p. 113.} Applied originally by the Stoic writers "in a purely moral sense,"\footnote{Ibid., p. 129.} the discussion of "things indifferent" was used primarily in Tudor literature with respect to questions of Church government, in association with such concepts as papal infallibility and the monarch's role in the national church. Essentially, the English Protestants, led by Starkey, were claiming that Henry VIII and later rulers had the right to assume the leadership of the Anglican Church and to divorce and marry within much broader limits than the Catholic Church allowed. The English writers claimed that such questions were not matters essential to the salvation of the obedient Englishmen's souls, since they were not directly prohibited in the scriptures. The idea of indifference became an important one in the English Reformation. Zeeveld points out that Starkey's "anglicized" version of the idea of *adiaphora*, "appeared in the thirty-nine articles, in Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy*, and in Laud.\footnote{Ibid., p. 129.}
The Tudor writers did not explicitly apply the concept of adiaphora to the debate over civic activity, but questions of "essentially" and "indifference" were openly raised. Starkey himself used the ideas in arguing that neither the laws of nature nor civil law were bound by Papal authority. Custom could justifiably be regarded as a sanction for social, legal, and religious arrangements as long as no "essential" question of order was involved. In spiritual matters, the criterion of essentiality was the word of the Bible. In temporal affairs, the test of essentiality was the "law of nature." Things indifferent in purely spiritual matters were to be controlled by Church custom, ritual, and the decisions of recognized ecclesiastical bodies. Things indifferent in worldly matters were rightly directed by custom, law, and the temporal magistrates. Once guidance on indifferent things had been established by the proper ruling bodies, the duty of all Christian subjects was obedience. This established a new framework and also raised new questions for the Tudor debate on the active and contemplative ways of life.

Was it set down in the Bible or in natural law whether men should lead the life of contemplation or the life of civic activity? Or, if the best manner of life was a "thing indifferent," did custom or law, or ecclesiastical or royal command, call men to one way of

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176 Ibid., p. 130.
177 Ibid., especially pp. 130-133.
life before the other? And if ecclesiastical directions conflicted with royal commands, which body was to be obeyed?

The continuing debate was recognized as a crucial one, involving vital questions of individual salvation and important matters of state. In establishing the particular form that the English version of the debate followed, it must first be shown how the Tudor writers inherited, or took over, many points that had been developed in the earlier Italian Renaissance. Then, the English version of the debate must be discussed, recognizing the importance of the English personalities involved and the institutional background of the English Renaissance and Reformation. Not surprisingly, since most of the Tudor economic writers were themselves men of activity writing for or to ministers highly placed in governmental posts, the active life was seen as the proper life for most men of talents in the Tudor economic literature. However, the issue of essentiality was not finally resolved, even in terms of achieving some consensus. And, more than token attention continued to be given to arguments for the contemplative life, if only because the Tudor writers had to deal with the personal examples that had been set by several prominent Englishmen which called for a return to the private virtue of "perpetual philosophy," and a diminished emphasis on civic duty. But, as noted above, the discussion of specific issues and writers must begin in Italy, at the very beginning of the European Renaissance.
The issue of which sort of life was most noble had been debated openly in Renaissance Italy more than a century before most of the Tudor writers lived. Petrarch, Coluccio Salutati, and Leonardo Bruni Aretino developed, in different stages, the Italian Renaissance's understanding of Cicero as the man whose ethics "recalled citizens to public life" and counteracted the influences Greek philosophy had had on many ancient Romans who, weary of the Roman civil and foreign wars, "were anxious to learn . . . that there was another worthy life to be led, besides that of a politically minded Roman citizen."

Hans Baron noted that, after the publication of Bruni's most important works, "... Cicero taught the Renaissance these two things: the primary task of man is action and service for the community; and, the contact of the spirit with active life does not distract his powers but stimulates his highest energy." Bruni was also important in bringing Aristotle into this debate. As Baron writes,

178 See Hans Baron, The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1955); and, his article on "Cicero and the Roman Civic Spirit in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, (1938) reprinted in the Bobbs-Merrill European History Reprint Series, No. E-13. See also Pullan's work on Renaissance Venice, the city which, Baron said, was more a counterpart of Ciceronian Rome than any other Italian city.

179 Baron, "Cicero and the Roman Civic Spirit . . .," p. 4.

180 Ibid., p. 22.
Bruni, who was the first to reveal Aristotle to the fifteenth century as an ally in the citizen's struggle for the 'vita activa politica,' was also the first to re-discover the other 'civic' characteristic of Aristotelian ethics, the doctrine of the moral value of wealth. Studying the Economics (probably attributed to Aristotle in error, but in any case Aristotelian in conception) Bruni first recognized a kindred spirit. In 1419-20 he translated this book for the greatest merchant prince and richest man of Florence, Cosimo de Medici, and wrote a commentary on it... Bruni considered the quintessence of Aristotelianism to be the doctrine that only the possession of external goods 'affords an opportunity for the exercise of virtue'—especially in the case of liberality and munificence....

This discovery of Aristotle as an ally of the civic mentality was rendered even more important by the wide publicity given to Bruni's translation of the Economics. For the first time the stoic and Franciscan ideas of poverty were seriously threatened.... The stoic rule, [according to] the humanist of the fifteenth century..., cannot be practised by 'human beings' but only by 'soulless blocks' that have cast aside their 'humanity'.... From the Nicomachean Ethics Bruni... takes the sentence: man needs external prosperity 'because he is a human being': as a citizen, he adds that these external aids are the condition of virtue in 'active life.' 'In hac civili vita in qua versamur, he states, referring to Aristotle, the condition of liberality is money; of justice, possessions; of courage, power; of munificence, riches.181

After Bruni, the debate on the life of civic activity and the moral value of wealth was carried on by Gianozzo Manetti, Matteo Palmieri, Leon Battista Alberti (who made extensive use of Xenophon's Oeconomicus, first translated into Italian around 1450) and then, most importantly here, by Lorenzo Valla and Poggio Bracciolini. Valla and

Poggio were both read by the Northern Renaissance humanists, though they were both decidedly less Christian and more hedonistic—in the Tudor phrase more "Italian"—than the Northern writers. Valla's "notorious" dialogue De Voluptate supported, according to Baron, "nothing but that unashamed will to unscrupulous enjoyment of life." 182 Poggio, who succeeded to the office of the Chancellor of Florence at Bruni's death, is described by Baron as a "joyful child of the Quattrocento," who at one time "sought for himself . . . only freedom to enjoy life." 183 Poggio's writings however, did not always reflect entirely his own exuberant activity:

He [Poggio] did not, he said, wish to lead the strict life of the stoic sage, for he was not a 'block of wood': he had grown up at the Roman Curia, where people knew how to appreciate 'voluptas' with the Epicureans or worldly good with the Peripatetics. At times, he himself designated the peripatetic 'mediocratas' in the enjoyment of wealth as the true mean between epicurean frivolity and stoic bitterness. But as a writer he was Florentine enough not to mistake this semiepicurean Aristotelianism for the moral rehabilitation, desired by the Florentine citizens, of worldly goods as indispensable aids to the virtues of political and active life; Florentine enough to perceive that the true danger threatening the ideal of the wise man's poverty and independence, which he revered in Petrarch, did not lie in epicurean levity but in the civic view of life. It was, therefore, the ideals of the citizens with which the stoic teachings had to cross swords. This happened in 1440 in the dialogue De Vera Nobilitate, in which Poggio . . . revived the old humanistic question concerning the part 'divitiae' played in true 'nobilitas' . . . . 184

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183 Ibid., p. 31.
184 Ibid., pp. 31–32.
Summarizing this dialogue, Baron comments that

What the Stoic has to oppose to this civic insistence on the deeds and goods of an active life is the justifiable objection that the creative work of the philosopher in his peaceful study can be to mankind as useful as, nay more useful than the activities of the statesman and warrior. But the experiences of the citizen are not set aside by these arguments, even when the Stoic in Poggio's Dialogue has the last word and at the end impressively lauds as supreme that virtue which is dependent only on itself and needs no help from the external world. The result nevertheless remains—as Poggio himself wishes it to appear—that life has grown richer and that actually two forms of genuine 'nobilitas' must be recognized. Though Poggio may personally place the philosopher's virtue which is sufficient unto itself as 'nobilissima' above the 'nobilis virtus' of the citizen, the times in which stoic poverty and self-sufficiency alone make up the philosophy of humanism are over.185

It is clear that at least some of the writings of Poggio and Valla were known to Erasmus, and through Erasmus to Sir Thomas More and John Colet.186 However, even Erasmus was repulsed by Poggio's excesses of literary style and life, calling him an obscene, illiterate brawler.187 Valla was more admired by Erasmus,188 and Hyma notes that,"[Valla's] humanism found a welcome reception in England

185 Ibid., p. 33.
187 Hyma, p. 6.
188 Hyma notes that, "Erasmus was no doubt too hostile to Poggio and too favorable to Valla." Ibid., p. 6 n.
..." But Hyma shows that, because neither Poggio nor Valla could be considered "among the real Christians," their works did not frequently appear in England, even in the libraries of the leading English humanists. Instead, a peculiarly English variant of humanism developed, including an English version of the debate over the relative merits of the active and contemplative life.

Baron has suggested that the English debate on the active and contemplative life and the proper use of riches went through more or less similar stages as the Italian debate, with an initial acceptance of the ideal of poverty and independence, and later writers developing the ideas of civic duty, liberality, and munificence:

For England . . . it would certainly be possible to show a similar course of events leading from Peckham's Tractatus pauperis, with which the Franciscan spirit descended on the island in the thirteenth century, to Francis Bacon's Of Riches in the sixteenth century. The figure of Reginald Peacock here marks the moment of transformation from the earlier to the later period. 

But to return to the Tudor age proper, the problem now is to adequately describe the English variant of the conception of the civic life. The idea was, as noted above, associated with the development of English humanism, which was also something different from Continental humanism. Hyma states that

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189 Ibid., p. 11.
190 Ibid., p. 6.
191 Baron, "Franciscan Poverty and Civic Wealth," p. 36.
At the close of the fifteenth century English humanism became firmly rooted; it was a form of humanism that differed from the earlier [Italian] kind. It was of a practical nature, a means to an end.192

Ferguson makes a very similar point:

Among the humanists of Tudor England there appeared a new figure, new, at least to England. He was the intellectual, the man, now more often than not a layman, widely read in the secular culture of the antique world, and confident in the broadening beneficence of such studies in the actual ordering of the commonwealth. In him the intelligent citizen becomes fully articulate. No doubt, in the crises of a society in transition, he would eventually have found his voice without the inspiration of classical studies. But, in fact, it was to the ancient Greek and Roman culture that he turned for example and precept more pertinent to the secular life of his day than were those of medieval Christendom. Not that he renounced or even ignored his medieval heritage. On the contrary, he accepted perhaps to a greater degree than we have been accustomed to think, the world picture and the story of man that had been the common property of his ancestors. Like them he sought a life of virtue. But there the similarity ends. For his was not a cloistered or speculative virtue, but virtue informed by experience as well as by philosophy, ordered by reason, and expressed in action. In him the traditional dichotomy of the vita contemplativa and the vita activa tends to disappear, the antithesis resolved in favor of a life of active citizenship in which the mind, quickened by those studies he held most worthy of man, is devoted to the service of the commonwealth.193

192 Hyma, p. 22. For a study contrasting the personal differences of opinion held on this subject by Erasmus and More, see W. M. Southgate's, "Erasmus: Christian Humanism and Political Theory," History (1955). Southgate notes that, "The implications of More's decision to give up his freedom and 'become entangled' in the affairs of courts and princes were clear to both More and Erasmus. The basic problem ... was whether the intellectual should enter the arena of the practical with the chance of losing his freedom of action, or hold to that freedom and remain forever the detached observer." (p. 254).

And contrasting the English conception of the active life with the earlier Italian versions Ferguson adds that...

...it is important to recognize that their purpose in making the journey was somewhat different and that they in fact arrived at a somewhat different destination. The Florentine humanists of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries point, it is true, toward a new realism in the analysis of society, but it is toward Machiavelli that they face rather than the commonwealth of Tudor thought. Their efforts were directed toward the analysis of political rather than of social and economic experience. They looked first of all—and perforce, considering the nature of Italian politics—for those personal factors which constitute the moving parts of the political situation and in which the deeper social forces find overt expression rather than, as was the habit of the more advanced among the Tudor commentators, for the impersonal principles at work within the social mechanism itself. The Italian writers tended to think in terms of a statecraft dedicated to the maintenance of princely power, the English in terms of policies meant to promote the welfare of the national community.194

In sum, this guiding principle of Tudor economic thought, according to Ferguson, "emphasize(d) a distinctly worldly, civic virtue... that comes not so much from the avoidance of sins as from knowledge of things human, interpreted by right reason and expressed in the active service of commonwealth."195 The importance of this principle was evident in broadly defined policy prescriptions too since

Civic virtue was after all capable of being cultivated by education and persuasion, in which the humanists

194Ibid., pp. 201-202.
195Ibid., pp. 206-207.
placed immense faith, whereas the preachers . . . seem to have expected little immediate result, certainly not in worldly matters, from their exhortations to repentance.196

All of this seems consistent with the passages from the Tudor writers cited above, and with other passages in the primary literature that deal with the ideas of civic virtue and the active life. There are two works in the Tudor literature that deal most directly with this theme, Starkey's Dialogue and the anonymous Cyville and Uncyville Life. But scattered references to the theme are widespread, and can come in the most unlikely places. To give just two such examples before considering the more important works here, Thomas Becon's Catechism and two works by Thomas Wilson can be mentioned.

In Part VI of Becon's Catechism, "Of the Offices of All Degrees," the first sub-section deals with the duties of the temporal magistrates. Putting the matter very bluntly, the 'Father' asks his 'Son,' "What manner of men should magistrates be?" And the 'Son,' with references to biblical passages from Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy duly noted, replies, "Men of activity, and such as fear God; true men, and hating covetousness; wise and politic; and whose conversation is allowed of all men."197

196Ibid., p. 207.
197Becon, pp. 302-303.
Dr. Thomas Wilson first discussed the question of the active life not in the Discourse Upon Usury, but in his 1553 Arte of Rhetorique. Wilson wrote succinctly that

Labor gets learning, learning gets fame, fame gets honor, honor gets bliss forever... Of sloth comes pleasure, of pleasure comes spending, of spending comes whoring, of whoring comes lack, of lack comes theft, of theft comes hanging, and there an end for this world.198

In the Discourse Upon Usury, the usurer is significantly described as one who neglects the life of activity:

The usurer is an idle man. He does not travail, nor labor by sweat of his brow to advance himself and his country but uses the pains and troubles of others to his great gain... And, therefore if all should do as the usurer does, the ground should lie untilled, no trade of mercandise should be used, nor yet occupying maintained for the use of mankind... Therefore you see that the usurer is the occasion of all dearth and want that happens to a commonweal.199

These themes are developed much more completely by Starkey and in the anonymous Cyvile and Uncyvile life. Starkey's argument is somewhat more complicated because of historical incidents, so the latter tract will be considered first here.

In the "Author's Preface" to Cyvile and Uncyvile Life (and it should be remembered that the complete title of the tract explicitly claims that the tract will discuss "what order of life best beseemeth


199 Wilson, pp. 283-284. Also quoted by Schmidt, p. 58.
a Gentleman in all ages and times"), \(^{200}\) it is made clear that the author will defend "Town habitation." \(^{201}\) But the author recognizes that, because of men's "diversity of humors" and "fancies," others may disagree. This does not greatly disturb the author, however, for he is willing, like Poggio before him, to admit that either the active or contemplative life may be virtuous. He recognizes that the debate he takes up is an old one, and one that men continue to debate:

... and no marvel, since the wisest, yea the Philosophers themselves, have even to this day disserted in opinion. For some you see have sought the contemplative life: others commended the active: and many preferred pleasure, as that which ought most to be desired. Since then, for so many reasons you find difference in the opinions of men: and that no counsel, wit, or will, can persuade them to one mind: my meaning is not, that though in this Dialogue according to mine own fancy, I prefer the Town habitation, yet thereby to find fault with any, that either because his reason so persuades, or his own mind so delights, will drive out his days in the Country. It shall therefore please me, that every man please himself, using the liberty and will of his own mind: and though it be far diverse from mine, yet I know not why his opinion should trouble me, or mine offend him: so long as the object of either, be still in our own powers. What harm was it to Achilles, though Socrates refusing all honors, put his whole felicity in virtue? And why should Socrates be offended, though above all things, Achilles desired honor? What makes it matter, though Heraclitus, thought that nothing was contrary to other? Or what offence was it that Parmenides, frantically affirmed, all worldly things to be but one thing? And if Zeno persuaded himself that nothing moved? All which opinions and errors, could nothing disturb the patience of the true Philosophers, who set their delight in contemplation, and love of the Almighty. Tot capita, tot sensus, the Proverb says: We see then, that the ends of man's delights be diverse, and for the most part contrary: although

\(^{200}\) See p. 58, at n. 123 above.

\(^{201}\) Cyvile and Uncyvile life, in Hazlitt, Inedited Tracts, p. 6.
the end of every man's life, is one. The life of man may therefore be compared to Iron, which being used, becomes bright and shining, yet at last worn to nothing: Or if it be not used, but layed up, does nevertheless consume with rustiness. Even so, man's age well employed, wears with some gloss or brightness of Fame: or if it be without action, and obscurely passed, yet does it not continue ever: for death (certain) is the end both of the one and the other. God grant that every man may live in the true fear of the Lord, and the due obedience of his Prince, so shall he either in Court, Town, or Country, most happily end his days.202

The author of this tract, writing for "Gentlemen" who would make up the magistrates of the realm, went on to support the active life throughout the text of the dialogue. City life was, he felt, more apt for gentlemen than a life in the country, and more in keeping with the overall needs of the realm.

Country life did have the advantage of wholesome air, but the relative isolation and inactivity in civic affairs that must come with a quiet, country life lead to inexperience, ignorance, seeking after private wealth to the exclusion of public action and private contemplation, and an undue desire for safety and eshewing of peril, pain, and military service. To defend country life in Elizabethan England, and the accompanying rejection of the active life of civic virtue, the author of Civil and Uncivil Life believed that one had to defend the idea, "That men are . . . only born to

202Ibid., pp. 6-7. In fact, Socrates did not "refuse all honors" in The Republic.
themselves," which clearly ignored the teachings of such ancient writers as Tully.

City life admittedly brings individuals into contact with vice more than country life, but it also reveals more instances of virtue. In any case, most things are neither purely virtuous nor purely evil, "and for the most part, things are indifferent, and not perfect." Men must have experience to be able to distinguish between good, evil and "things indifferent." The author claims that if most gentlemen (especially those with no prospects of a good inheritance) adopted the city life, the realm would not want for wise counsellors, good soldiers, adventurers, and proper servingmen. The author considers such occupations essential to the realm, and more in keeping with true forms of liberality and honor than the uses made of men in the country, where they are kept in idle occupations using up wealth in unproductive functions. The author recognizes that some men will be best able to serve as scholars, in a relatively quiet life, but he also suggests that those who do not show any great aptitude for study should not be kept in school. Such a proposal is a little uncharacteristic against the background of English humanism, but it is perfectly consistent with the idea of the active life.

203 Ibid., p. 16.
204 Ibid., p. 18.
Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue* is typically Tudor in theme. In fact, it can almost be said to have been written with royal approval, or even at royal insistence. Starkey was writing to lure Reginald Pole home from Italy and the Papal court to serve Henry VIII. Pole, however, was having doubts about returning.

In one sense those doubts relate to the debate over the proper places of the active and contemplative life. As H. R. Trevor-Roper has described Pole, in an essay aptly entitled "The Crisis of English Humanism,"

Ever since his [Pole's] visit to England in 1530, when Cromwell had shocked him by preferring Machiavelli to Plato and he had immured himself perversely in a Carthusian monastery, he had remained wrapped in enigmatic doubt. He was turning away from humanism, back to contemplation, asceticism and the unfashionable heresy of 'perpetual philosophy'. He was in the clouds, said his friends in Padua, undergoing a great change exchanging man for God! Then, in the sixth year of doubt, he complied with Starkey's request. He gave the King his opinion. It filled a whole book of uncompromising denunciation and bitter personal invective. Having thus rewarded the patron of seventeen years, Pole gathered up his robes and left Venice for Rome, to be a cardinal. 205

Starkey had set out to bring Pole back to earth, and the opening chapter of his dialogue relies on the Tudor conception of the civic life to accomplish that goal. 'Lupset' first reminds 'Pole' of the examples of Plato, Lycurgus and Solon, "by whose

wisdom and policy diverse cites, countries and nations were brought
to civil order and politic life... 206

'Pole' acknowledges that "... it is a goodly thing to
meddle with the matters of the common weal," but wonders if the best
life "... stand(s) in the active life, and in administration of
the matters of the common weal... or else in the contemplative
and knowledge of things."207 He alludes to Plato stating that,
"... when I have had sufficient experience of the ruling of myself,
and by the opinion of other(s) to do that right well, then perad-
venture, I will not refuse the cause of my country and ruling of
others."208

'Lupset' is surprised that 'Pole' would refer to the ancient
philosophers in such a way, and reminds him that Aristotle
teaches and shows most manifestly the perfection of
man to stand jointly in both, and neither in the bare
contemplation and knowledge of things separate from all
business of the world, nor in the administration of matters
of the common weal, without any further regard and
direction thereof... 209

The debate continues, with 'Lupset' citing Aristotle again
in claiming that poor men should study to get riches before philos-
ophy, and likewise that matters of the commonwealth must precede the

206 Starkey, p. 2.
207 Ibid., p. 4.
208 Ibid.
209 Ibid., p. 5.
individual goal of contemplation since, "prudence and policy" strive "to bring the whole country to quietness and civility, that every man, and so the whole, may at the last attain to such perfection as by nature is to the dignity of man due ...."210

'Pole' then argues that the quiet of country life is more virtuous than the corruption of life in the city. "... If this be civil life and order," 'Pole' claims,

... to live in cities and towns with so much vice and disorder, me [thinks] man should not be born thereto, but rather to life in the wild forest, therefore following the study of virtue, as it is said men did in the golden age, where in man lived according to his natural dignity.211

'Lupset' admits that the society of man may become disordered, but claims that any faults in civil society are due to the "malice of man," which causes man to abuse his health, strength, beauty, wit, learning, policy, meat, drink, and everything else "God and nature has provided to him for the maintenance of his life."212 This makes it more necessary, 'Lupset' concludes, for 'Pole' to "apply your mind to be of the number of them which study to restore this civil order, and maintain this virtuous life, in cities and towns to the common utility.213

210 Ibid., p. 7.
211 Ibid., p. 9.
212 Ibid., p. 10.
213 Ibid., p. 10.
This leaves 'Pole' in great doubt, on the grounds now that all men—Turks, Saracens, Jews, and Christians—will claim their laws, religions, and concepts of civic order are "most agreeable to reason and nature as a thing confirmed by God's own divinity."214 'Lupset' rejects this claim, stating that man has a divine nature, excelling all other creatures in dignity. Man's virtues, 'Lupset' claims, are correspondingly set by nature as well as by worldly opinion, and are common to all mankind. And so man's desires to live in civic order and revere God is common to all nations, and reflects "the universal and true law of nature."215 "Therefore," 'Lupset' concludes,

... notwithstanding this diversity of sects and laws, we may yet right well affirm the definition of the civil life before said to be right good and reasonable, which is a politic order of a multitude conspiring together in virtue and honesty, to the which man by nature is ordered.216

'Lupset' asks 'Pole' to end this line of reasoning, and to take up his duties in matters of the commonweal. 'Pole' agrees now that it does "nearest approach to the nature of God "217 to help the many, and not just oneself; he even claims that he never doubted that matter. But he then raises the pragmatic question whether one should "apply himself to the setting forward of the common weal,"

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214Ibid., p. 11.
215Ibid., pp. 11-15. And, see pp. 74-75 at n. 154-155 above.
216Ibid., p. 20.
217Ibid., p. 21.
even when the country is ruled by tyrants or by those who are "bent only to their private weal." \(^{218}\) 'Pole' cites as examples of wise men who faced such a decision Plato, Tully and Seneca. 'Lupset' agrees that this question deserves consideration, but in general does not condone those who "so narrowly and so curiously . . . ponder the time and place, that in all their life they neither find time nor place." \(^{219}\) This sort of reasoning, 'Lupset' argues, leads toward Utopian schemes such as Plato's Republic, or other exercises in "great frantic folly." \(^{220}\) Starkey prudentially has 'Lupset' point out that the current English ruler is noble, rendering to the commonwealth a "fervent love to the wealth of his subjects," \(^{221}\) and a concern for justice and equity. But in general, 'Lupset' says, much tyranny might have been prevented "... if (the) wise, in time and in place, would have bent themself . . ." to the purpose of preventing it.

'Pole' at last admits that 'Lupset' has "bound" him to his office and duty, and that he has "no refuge further to flee." He

\(^{218}\) Ibid.

\(^{219}\) Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{220}\) Ibid., p. 24. Cf. Sir Thomas Smith, De Republica Anglorum, p. 142, where Plato's Republic, Xenophon's idea of Persia, and More's Utopia are described as "feigned commonwealths, such as never was nor never shall be, vain imaginations, fantasies of Philosophers to occupy the time and to exercise their wits . . . ."

\(^{221}\) Ibid.
admits of the virtue of England's current ruler, and promises to always be ready "to my power ever to apply and endeavor myself to the maintenance and setting forward of the true common weal." The remainder of the Dialogue considers the nature of the true common-wealth, the faults and disorders in England, and possible remedies for these disorders. One point made in a later section of the Dialogue is of interest here, however. 'Pole' completed the rejection of his earlier claims on the virtue of country life by proposing that

Our gentlemen must be caused to retire to cities and towns, and to build them houses in the same, and there to see the governance of them, helping ever to set all such things forward as pertains to the ornaments of the city. They may not continually dwell in the country as they do. This is a great rudeness and a barbarous custom used with us in our country. To some extent the Tudors did try to maintain the possibility of leading either a virtuous life of civic action or of contemplation; but it is clear that the active life did hold most appeal to the men who had been trained by the pragmatic, means-oriented English humanists. In fact, the call to civic duty was not clearly a "thing indifferent" to all of the Tudor writers. This tendency strongly reinforced the call to activity that was

222 Ibid., p. 125.
223 Ibid., p. 177.
224 See p. 96 at n. 192 above.
associated with images of moving down the Great Chain of Being, which formed the broader guideline to social and economic thought in the Renaissance—and the general idea of civic duty and activity was, like the idea of the Great Chain, a familiar one. It forms, for example, the base of Touchstone's famous speech on the court and the country in As You Like It.

The Tudor writers were changing the traditional emphasis placed on the roles of the active and contemplative life by the ancients, Aquinas, and other medieval Schoolmen. This new emphasis is defensible if two points suggested by the Tudor writers are developed. First is the claim made by Starkey that many men (and Reginald Pole in particular), would be needed to deal with the affairs of social, political, and economic organization. Those men, when called by the proper authorities to serve in such capacities, had a duty to serve the community even if it meant leaving the contemplative life. Here, essentially, there is little practical difference between the Tudor position and that taken, say, in The Republic. It is only claimed that some men (perhaps more than Plato would have suggested, but still only a part of the whole), should lead the active life.

The more important variation in the Tudor idea of the civic life was the idea that it was better to "serve the many," and not oneself. The highest individual happiness comes in making and enforcing policies that contribute to the social good. This
suggests something of a utilitarian emphasis—achieve the greatest good for the greatest number—but on a spiritual level that emphasis can be defended. On a purely material basis it has been suggested that the Tudors were purposely very far from the utilitarian scheme of social organization, on the grounds that such a system could potentially, and likely, lead to unordered wealth and consumption. This issue is further discussed below, in the section on the Tudor economy of delight.

The idea of "spiritual utilitarianism" would imply that more men can be made virtuous if most men who are suited for the contemplative life will sharply limit the time they spend in individual study and thought, and work to design institutions, laws, and educational and employment systems which will properly form the character of the members of the English common wealth. The emphasis is placed on maximizing the absolute number of virtuous citizens, rather than finding the highest form of happiness for any one individual—but the implication is that the highest good for most individuals is to serve the community in its efforts to properly direct as many subjects as possible. Economic analysis and policy were seen as tools to be used in that task since order, security and prosperity were all considered beneficial, if not essential, to widespread social and spiritual wellbeing.

It should also be noted that there is a sort of spiritual principle of equality behind this defense of the Tudor concept of
civic activity. Every man has a soul, and it is an open question whether the soul of any one person is more valuable than that of another. If the Tudors held this underlying value of spiritual equality (and it is not clear that they did), it is a concept that could nevertheless have been compatible with extreme degrees of economic and political inequality, when such inequality was associated with a functional distribution of wealth and power.

In economic affairs, the call of civic duty and activity supported the Tudor predisposition to accept regulatory efforts in economic affairs from the Court, and even implied that such legislative controls and enforcement practices would often be necessary. The aims of that governmental interference were, however, as likely to reflect a desire to maintain traditional social order as some conscious program to increase overall national wealth and/or power. The ethical effects of this call to the life of civic activity were clearly realized by the Tudor economic writers; the benefits of improved economic efficiency and productivity expected to come with a well educated and active group of royal advisors, judges, and magistrates were, though not incidental, at least secondary.

**The Imperial Theme**

The medieval idea of a unified Christian world, justly ruled by a divinely appointed or sanctioned ruler who carefully
attended to spiritual and secular affairs, has been described as the imperial theme in European history.225

This idea has received no meaningful discussion in the literature on mercantilism. It is not usually mentioned in relation to either questions of domestic rule and policy or to matters of international exploration, trade, or colonial projects where the tie-in with the more standard concept of imperialism is most evident. When any spiritual concept of the imperial theme is mentioned, it is usually dismissed quickly because the traders, explorers and colonists of the Tudor period generally failed to put those ideas in practice. Klaus E. Knorr, for example, in his discussion of the "first decades of British colonial enterprise" and "colonial theory" does not doubt the sincerity of the "sermons" given by such writers as Malynes and Hakluyt in calling for spreading Christian gospel by founding new colonies. But Knorr does say that, in practice, all of the spiritual motives for colonizing "shrink to insignificance "226 when compared to the resources and efforts put into the more secular matters of gaining territory, treasure and raw materials. Knorr further suggests that some of the Stuart economic


writers may have even been insincere in their conception of their Christian duties. He concludes that, "The much professed duty of Christianizing the American natives as an argument for colonization must be dismissed as being either spurious or extremely insignificant in comparison with other arguments." 

Again, the distinction between good economic history and good history of economic thought must be made. In terms of a study of economic thought, the mere existence of "sincere" passages in the primary literature warrants a serious evaluation and recognition of the Tudor imperial theme. A natural topic that evolves once this point is accepted is to make clear the differences involved between the Tudor idea of imperial rule and the Marxian/Neo-classical debate on economic imperialism. To do this, it is most useful to examine the Tudor imperial idea as it related to domestic rule, where it is quite clear that the idea is not simply an appeal for expanding territorial rights and developing colonies for the purposes of exploiting the native population or natural resources.

Like so many of the medieval and Renaissance ideas, the imperial theme was largely inspired by the example of ancient

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 30.\]

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 32.\]
Rome—and where the imperial idea is concerned the allusions are usually to the Roman Empire, not the Republic. As Frances Yates notes,

The age of Augustus was the supreme example of a world united and at peace under the Roman Empire, and to that age had also belonged the supreme honour of witnessing the birth of Christ. By consenting to be born into a world ruled by Roman law under the greatest of Caesars, Christ had consecrated the Roman world order and the Roman justice. Virgil's Aeneid, with its glorification of Augustus, thus became a semi-sacred poem, glorifying the historical framework of the Saviours birth. Moreover, Virgil was believed to have spoken with the inspired voice of a prophet when he proclaimed in the Fourth Eclogue that the golden age was about to return, and with it the reign of the Virgin Astraea, or Justice, and that a child would be born destined to rule a reconciled world. These words were understood to refer to the birth of Christ in the golden age of Augustus. Through such associations it was possible to use pagan imperial rhetoric concerning periodic renovations of the Empire, or returns of the golden age, of medieval Christian emperors, thus retaining something of the cyclic view of history which such expressions imply, though in a Christianized form. A renovatio of the Empire will imply spiritual renovation, for in a restored world, in a new golden age of peace and justice, Christ can reign.

This mysticism must not obscure the fact that . . . it was the power, the imperium in the worldly sense, the right to the world rule, which was renewed or restored in Charlemagne and lived in the medieval emperors.229

With the rise of Renaissance humanism, the imperial idea was modified as the medieval concept of universalism broke down, and "men

229Yates, p. 4.
(began) to limit their hopes of achieving unity to within the boundaries of national states." In Italy, Machiavelli made important revisions in the Italian concept of the imperial theme. Yates notes that

It was Machiavelli, of course, who put Realpolitik on a scientific basis. . . . This realistic approach of necessity ruled out the old idealist and universalist conceptions. He regarded the Papacy with active dislike as the chief cause of Italy's weakness and disunity; and the Empire as an outworn, obsolete institution, an irritating excuse for foreign intervention in Italian affairs. . . . And there is imbedded in Machiavelli's thought a survival of the old cyclic views, for he believes in an organic process of rise and decline in the life of states, and that their renovation consists in a return to a pristine virtu.

So we have arrived at a time when the new orientations of historical thinking set going by Italian humanism seem to have finally dismissed the Empire, even as a myth or a phantom testifying to the universal idea. Henceforward the national states will learn from Machiavelli how to build up their separate powers on a basis of realistic thought and observation.231

Here, however, as in so many instances where the Northern Renaissance took up the general themes of Italian humanism, Erasmus

230Ibid., pp. 12-13. Cf. Robertson, pp. 58 and 83, who did not see a limitation of men's hopes, but rather a belligerent willingness to fight "national wars in favor of the principle of nationality," and a desire to use civil law to support a "relapse into absolutism" behind the idea of the imperial theme. Robertson's emphasis is given.

Robertson's ideas are misdirected in so far as English thought of the sixteenth century is concerned, because of his view of the importance of Machiavelli in all mercantilist thought. The discussion below considers the limited role Machiavelli played in the development of the Tudor imperial theme.

231Yates, pp. 18-19.
led the move that re-Christianized the ends of Renaissance thought in the North, and especially in England. Consciously and actively Erasmus set out to negate the pure secularism of Machiavelli:

Erasmus is a Christian idealist, far removed from the Machiavellian realism. His ideal for Europe is that all its princes should have received a Christian education, with special emphasis on instruction in the virtues necessary for a ruler, to be acquired from moral pagan writers such as Plato, Cicero, Seneca, or Plutarch. Thus trained, the monarchs of the individual states would act in concert to defend and maintain an international pax in Europe... .

Though Erasmus, too, would seem to have discarded the Empire, . . . a vestigal survival of the imperial idea can be detected in some of his writings. . . . He doubts whether it is now either possible or desirable to restore the Empire though he admits that, in theory, a universal monarchy would be the best state for the world. This seems now quite unrealizable and, in any case, the office of universal monarch is too heavy a responsibility for one man to bear. Moreover, the universal monarchy will not be necessary, 'if concord joins the Christian princes among themselves.' The true monarch of the world is Christ, and, if all our princes consent to His teachings, all will flourish under one prince.232

In the English version of the imperial theme, the revisions made by Erasmus are taken over and then, in Elizabeth's reign, further changes in emphasis are made to make the greatest possible use of a carefully developed association between the Virgin Queen of England and the Virgin Astraea. In classical literature, Astraea had been seen as the last of the immortals to abandon earth in the

232Ibid., p. 18.
iron age in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. But Virgil's Fourth Eclogue is more important in the English understanding of Astrea. Thinking of the "golden age" of the Augustan empire, the Tudor writers took up Virgil's passages on "Astraea-Virgo, the just and pious virgin, whose return . . . heralds the golden age of empire. She [Astraea] becomes an imperial virgin."233

Naturally, the post-Reformation English writers also chose to develop the anti-Papist elements of the nationalist Renaissance imperial theme. Yates writes that

The sacred One Ruler of these Catholic imperialist writers [Dante and Marsilio] became in the hands of the imperialist Elizabethan theologians the sacred One Virgin whose sword of Justice smote down the Whore of Babylon and ushered in a golden age of pure religion, peace and plenty. The fact that Astraea for Dante is a symbol of imperial reform and is also a name for Elizabeth is more than a merely literary parallel. The religious side of the imperial legend was easily turned in a nationalist direction as England's power and greatness expanded under Elizabeth's rule.234

Thus the theme of nautical adventure and overseas expansion, purely nationalist and aggressive though it may be in practice, has behind it for these sixteenth-century minds some memory of empire in the ancient and religious sense. The discovery of new worlds raises the problem of the expansion of the concept of holy empire under the One to fit a world larger than that known to Virgil or to Dante.235

233Ibid., pp. 29-30.
234Ibid., p. 47.
235Ibid., pp. 58-59.
The Elizabethans were active in voyages of exploration and attempts at colonization, but they also faced a larger and more immediate problem which required both a strong navy and a strong sense of national unity and purpose—the threat of invasion. The imperial theme played an important role in these matters too:

Elizabeth's victory over the Spanish Armada was a victory, not only over a national enemy, but also over a spiritual power which made a total claim on men's allegiance. To defeat it required not only a strong navy, but also a strong symbolism. By claiming for the national church that it was a reform executed by the sacred imperial power as represented in the sacred English monarchy, the Elizabeth symbol drew to itself a tradition which also made a total, universal claim—the tradition of sacred empire. The extravagant language used of Elizabeth need not necessarily imply that Elizabethan hopes went so far as to expect a world empire for the queen. The arguments for sacred empire—that the world is at its best and most peaceful under one ruler and that then justice is most powerful—are used to buttress her religious rights as an individual monarch. The monarch who is One and sovereign within his own domains has imperial religious rights, and he can achieve the imperial reform independently of the Pope. The lengths to which the cult of Elizabeth went are a measure of the sense of isolation which had at all costs to find a symbol strong enough to provide a feeling of spiritual security in face of the break with the rest of Christendom. 236

The Elizabethan writers and artists were often consciously developing the "cult of Elizabeth," and other traditional ideas that could mold and further support the world picture of their countrymen. 237 So, for example, the concept of chivalry was

236 Ibid., pp. 58-59. Yates' emphasis is given.

joined with the claims of Elizabeth's imperial rights and the idea of the Great Chain of Being. A series of pageants were staged throughout Elizabeth's reign, built around imagery designed to put chivalry "into a cosmological context."²³⁸ This chivalrous "formula," Yates notes, "suited the aristocratic structure of Elizabethan society; and it was the vehicle for the expression of its hopes and fears, whether personal, patriotic, or religious."²³⁹

The imagery and the revived traditions—i.e., the program of propaganda—worked in England, and worked surprisingly well in many other parts of Europe too. Elizabeth's unique position "transcended the Protestant–Catholic antithesis" in some respects, and there was apparently some hope that, "she might stand for those wider and deeper aspirations for some universal solution"²⁴⁰ to the religious problems of post-Reformation Europe. Politically, she represented "a hope of freedom from the fear of the tyrant . . . not only for England, but for all Europe."²⁴¹

In summarizing the Tudor version of the imperial theme Yates states that it was

... a blend of nascent nationalism and surviving medieval universalism. The symbol of the Virgin Queen . . . touched

²³⁹Ibid., p. 111.
²⁴⁰Ibid., p. 119.
²⁴¹Ibid.
tremendous spiritual and historical issues. The destiny of all mankind is at stake in the idea for which the virgin of the golden age stands. . . . In the Elizabethan imperial theme, universal concepts are never far below the surface in the interpretation of history. 242

The discrepancies between the Elizabethan theory and Elizabethan practice have long been noted; they were noted first by the Elizabethans themselves. Refering to Shakespeare Yates notes that

A great comic and tragic genius, surrounded by such a symbolism and such a view of history, would be inclined to dwell, in place of the facile optimism of an official propaganda, upon the contrast between these highest hopes of mankind and their constant disappointment upon the spectacle of the lust and bloodshed of the iron age perpetually dispelling the vision of justice and peace. Shakespeare's narration of the crimes of monarchs or of the agony and death of lovers gains its poignancy from the imagery which so often suggests universal possibilities forever betrayed. 243

Strangely enough, it is this sort of interpretation which has also been used by modern historians of economic thought in discussing issues related to the Tudor imperial theme, to the extent that the concept is studied at all. But even a casual reading of the primary sources shows that the Tudor writers, when discussing the authority and duties of their monarchs, assumed that their rulers had religious as well as secular sanctions and obligations. In

242 Ibid., p. 87.
243 Ibid.
practical terms, this meant that social institutions and legislation were to promote and defend the Christian virtues of the English people as well as their material wellbeing and political security.

Becon's **Catechism** provides the clearest statement on this matter as the 'Father' asks his 'Son' to

Prove by the word of God, that the temporal rulers have to do with matters of Christian religion. For there want not at this present day which think, that civil magistrates ought not to meddle with matters pertaining to the soul, but unto the body only.244

The 'Son' reminds his 'Father' that David, Solomon, Asa, Jehosaphat, Moses, Hezekia, Josia, Jehu, Constantine, Gratianus, Valentineanus and other notable rulers all cared for the spiritual needs of their people as well as their material comforts. Then, most damningly, the 'Son' attributes the belief that the magistrates should not consider spiritual duties to the "Papists:"

But as they [the Papists] alone will be called spiritual, so likewise do they challenge to themselves all spiritual jurisdiction and the determination of all matters concerning religion, leaving to the magistrates authority and power only over the body and bodily matters, making them in this behalf no better than swineherds and shepherds.245

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244Becon, p. 303.

245Tbid., p. 304.
Becon then sets down the two chief duties of the temporal magistrate: to banish false religion and idolatry while advancing true religion, and to govern justly. To govern justly Becon means that a prince must "defend [his people] from all perils, ... preserve their goods, ... maintain the good and punish the evil and wicked."²⁴⁶ He again reminds his readers that temporal rulers are "ordained of God ...; and no man hath justly rule and authority in any commonweal, which is not ordained by God."²⁴⁷

In the Discourse of the Commonweal, Sir Thomas Smith makes a case for educating temporal rulers in moral matters very similar to the proposal Becon makes in a later part of his Catechism. Smith asked simply,

What part of the Commonweal is neglected by moral philosophy? Does it not teach first how every man should guide himself honestly? Secondly, how he should guide his family wisely and prophetically, and thirdly it shows how a city or a realm or any other Commonweal should be well ordered and governed both in time of peace and also war. What Commonweal can be without either a governor or counselor that should be expert in this kind of learning?²⁴⁸

Smith saw the practical side of the imperial theme as well. In his discussion of the ecclesiastical courts and matters of spiritual law in De Republica Anglorum, he notes that in England

²⁴⁶Ibid., p. 307.
²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 303.
²⁴⁸Smith, A Discourse of the Commonweal, p. 29.
these courts obtain their "force, power, authority, rule and jurisdic-
tion, from the royal majesty and the crown of England and from
no other foreign potentate or power under God . . ."²⁴⁹

De Malynes expressed his fundamental agreement with Smith,
and especially with Becon, writing in 1603 that

. . . the office of a Prince is wholly employed about the
government of the persons of men, and of things convenient
and fit for the maintenance of human society, according to
the definition of the heathens: but rather in the observa-
tion of Religion towards God, and administration of Justice
towards man: the one teaching us especially of the life to
come; the other, how we should live in this life. Religion
knits and unites the spirits of men, whereby they live
obediently in unity, peace, and concord: and justice is a
measure ordained by God among men, to defend the feeble
from the mighty. Hence proceeds that the cause of seditions
and civil wars, is the denial of justice, oppression of the
commonpeople, inequale distribution of rewards and punish-
ments, the exceeding riches of a small number, the extreme
poverty of many, the over-great idleness of the subject, and
the not punishing of offenders: which brings destruction of
Common-weals."²⁵⁰

The imperial theme was naturally associated with the idea of
the Great Chain of Being, often by showing that the Prince and his
magistrates served as spiritual examples to the subjects of the realm.
Sir Thomas Elyot made such a linkage in 1531:

. . . for as much as understanding is the most excellent
gift that man can receive in his creation, whereby he
does approach most nigh unto the similitude of God;

²⁴⁹Smith, De Repubuica Anglorum, p. 141.
²⁵⁰De Malynes, England's View, in the Unmasking of Two Para-
doxes, pp. 2-3.
which understanding is the principal part of the soul: it is therefore congruent, and according that as one excels another in that influence, as thereby being next to the similitude of his Maker, so should the estate of his person be advanced in degree or place where understanding may profit: which is also distributed into sundry uses, faculties, and offices, necessary for the living and governance of mankind. . . . Such ought to be set in a more high place than the residue where they may see and also be seen; that by the beams of their excellent wit, shown through the glass of authority, other of inferior understanding may be directed to the way of virtue and commodious living. 251

Elyot wrote more explicitly on the imperial theme, however, in the section of The Boke Named the Governor which dealt with "What things he that is elected or appointed to be a governour of a public weal ought to premeditate." Elyot asked,

How vigilant out a christian man being in authority—how vigilant (I say), industrious, and diligent ought he to be in the administration of a public weal? Dreading always the words that be spoken by eternal sapience to them that be governors of public weals; All power and virtue is given of the Lord that of all other is highest, who shall examine your deeds, and search your thoughts. For when you were the ministers of his realm you judged not uprightly, nor observed the law of justice, nor you walked not according to his pleasure. He shall shortly and terribly appear unto you. For most hard and grievous judgment shall be on them that have rule over others. To the poor man mercy is granted, but the great men shall suffer great torments. . . . Therefore to you governors be these my words, that ye may learn wisdom and fall not. 252

William Baldwin suggested the same idea in his 1559 Mirror for Magistrates:

251 Elyot, p. 5.

252 Ibid., pp. 117-118.
For God (the ordainer of Offices) although he suffer them for punishment of the people to be often occupied of such, as are rather spoilers and Judasses, then toilers or Justices (whom the scripture therefore called Hypocrites) yet suffers them not to escape unpunished, because they dishonor Him. For it is God's own office, yea his chief office, which they bear and abuse. For as Justice is the chief virtue, so is the ministration thereof, the chiefest office: and therefore has God established it with the chiefest name, honoring and calling Kings, and all offices under them by his own name, Gods. Ye be all Gods, as many as have in your charge any ministration of Justice. What a foul shame were it for any now to take upon them the name and office of God, and in their doings to show themselves devils?253

The Tudor imperial theme had certain points in common with the Stuart doctrine of the divine right of kings. The Tudor ideas of passive obedience and patient suffering under poor rulers were often supported with the arguments that evil or inept rulers came as divine punishment to realms that lost their vitue, or that only decay in governmental forms could be expected to accompany civil revolt.254

The imperial theme and the later idea of the divine rights of rulers could both serve to justify an increasing scope for royal prerogative, and could be brought to serve even the call for expansion of territorial and colonial interests. Under the Tudor concept, however, the duties and obligations of the temporal authorities were


254See, for example, Becon, pp. 302-303; and Smith, De Republica Anglorum, p. 13.
stressed more heavily, including the duty of providing spiritual
authority and example to the realm. And, in theory and in practice,
the Tudors succeeded in leaving the judgment of their monarchs to
the highest link in the Great Chain.

The Tudor Economy of Delight

In 1958, Professor John U. Nef presented briefly the idea of
the "economy of delight," which developed out of what Nef described
as a broader "renaissance cult of delight." Commenting on the
Italian version of the cult of delight, Nef noted that in the late
fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, "the search for beauty had
become almost the principle of existence." Nef also pointed out
that, ". . . in many minds a moral life and a life devoted to art
almost exclude each other," and implied in discussing Machiavelli's
play Mandragola that the Italian art and literature of this period
was in fact "lacking in the finer shades of ethics." This "ethical
neutrality," according to Nef,

. . . had been characterisitc of an age in which man,
especially in Italy, made a cult of beauty, to which
no doubt actual sensuous experience contributed strongly.
The Renaissance culminated in a sweep of syphilis and
Protestantism over Europe, and both were evidence of

255John U. Nef, Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization,

256Ibid., p. 107.

257Ibid., pp. 107 and 109.
depravity to the increasingly dogmatic Roman Catholics. There was a disposition, in consequence, to treat the impulses which had nourished art, along with the loosening of monastic life, as responsible for both syphilis and Protestantism. Delight in beauty and in all the joys to which earthly life introduces us through our senses, came to be regarded as vicious in itself.258

After the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, which "in some ways attempted to outdo the Protestants in ethical discipline,"259 there was a "fresh content given to literature and painting, by the fresh emphasis laid on perfection of form, on elegance, order, moderation and clarity..."260 That is, the ethical aim of art and literature was widely reinstated. Nef wrote that, "Virtue and art were joined in a fresh way," in "a more secular, a more earthly union"261 than had prevailed in Europe between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, but in a generally moralistic way nevertheless.

In d'Ufres L'Astree, for example, which Nef compares to Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar and Sydney's Arcadia, a character states that women "give birth to the finest thoughts of men," and that "God has placed them on earth to draw us toward... eternal happiness."262 Nef concludes from this that

258\textit{Ibid.}, p. 111.
259\textit{Ibid.}
260\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 111-112.
261\textit{Ibid.}, p. 117.
262Quoted by Nef, \textit{Ibid.}, p. 115.
... the gift of the body becomes a symbol and an expression of the prior gift of the soul. Through the soul, the total love that the human being instinctively feels for the self is ennobled by being felt for another, even by being transferred to that other. 263

In the later part of the sixteenth century, Nef claimed, the impetus of this re-moralization of art was strongly supported by the rise of the aristocracy. Nef stated that, "hand in hand with the growing authority of the aristocracy went the new disposition to give an ethical content to art, and to work out formal rules for the achievement of beauty in all the arts." 264

The Renaissance in Northern Europe, coming after the first effects of the Reformation had spread throughout Europe, worked out the new ideas on art, architecture, and more broadly on production and consumption, within the orthodox (whether Catholic or Protestant) limits of Christian society. The practical effects of this new emphasis on art forms that were not ethically neutral are generally underestimated. On the continent, these factors came to form an important base for industrial organization. Nef wrote that

Much of Europe turned in the direction of a renewal and an extension of an economy which sought to supply, first and foremost, the requirements of delight. In France and Flanders, partly under Italian inspiration, and to a large extent also in Holland, it was the industries which aimed at beauty and provided the ornaments for elegant and polite living which came into their own between the fifteen-eighties and the sixteen-forties.

263 Ibid.
264 Ibid., p. 129.
The primary objectives of the industrial economy of the early seventeenth century were to give a new form and perfection to buildings, to furniture, to musical instruments, to clothing and bedding, to carriages and boats, and to decorations of every kind, to make these objects, by means of aesthetic inventions, more commodious, more comfortable, more perfect for the purpose for which they were intended, and to increase the number of such commodities in as far as this was consistent with the maintenance and the improvement of their quality. A new elan was given to qualitative progress, which was destined to continue into the eighteenth century.265

Here too the Renaissance conception of the Great Chain of Being is clearly important, providing a general framework of support for the idea of taking appropriate delight from the production and consumption of temporal goods and services.266 But there are several problems which must be met before applying Nef's idea of an economy of delight to the Tudor period.

Nef himself was using the idea of the economy of delight to differentiate Continental patterns of economic history and development from the English, Swedish and, in a more limited way, the Dutch experience in the period from 1540 to 1640:

The move in Great Britain, in Sweden, and to some extent in the shipping and shipbuilding industries of Holland, towards industrial production mainly, if not exclusively, for the sake of a flood of cheaper wares, was the exception, not the rule. The industrial revolution

265 Ibid., pp. 129-130.

266 See, for example, John Buxton, Elizabethan Taste (London: Macmillan and Co., 1963), p. 78.
of early modern times was an experience limited largely to the north of Europe and especially to Great Britain.  

In several publications Nef repeatedly made the point that new production in England during this general period tended to emphasize large-scale operations that provided cheap products for mass consumption. He also pointed out that English taxation policies were, as Sir Thomas Smith had claimed, less burdensome on the commoners than such French taxes as the taille and the gabelle. This helped to maintain the demand for the plain, cheap, utilitarian items, which were scarcely influenced by any concept of an economy of delight.

But Nef did recognize that the influences of the economy of delight extended, in limited ways, to English economic history of the Tudor and early Stuart periods. He wrote that, "There was a demand for elegant wares in Great Britain which was satisfied mainly by imports, but which contributed to the formation of English taste."  

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267Nef, Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization, p. 131.


269See p. 38, at n. 72 above.


271Nef, Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization, p. 131.
Nef also implied that the "admiration of the inhabitants of the British Isles for the charms of fine living, and for the industrial organization that goes with them," was as strong at the end of Elizabeth's reign as it was in the Restoration, when the English "may almost be said to have become more interested in improving the quality of native manufactured goods than they were in constructing steam engines," and when "living had in fact become more charming."272

The Tudor ideas of splendor, delight, and comfort have been noticed by other economic historians, and by writers in other disciplines. Aymer Vallance, for example, noted that Tudor and Stuart "domestic art" were developed around a new principle of "personal comfort":

> It was an eventful period, during which olden customs and olden standards were gradually yielding to fresh ideas of expansion; and, in fine, that sense of personal comfort in his surroundings was developed and embodied into what the Englishman understands by the word 'home.' It can scarcely be said that, previously to the end of the fifteenth century, or even later perhaps, comfort, in the modern sense, existed at all.273

Sir Henry Wotton, a "notable amateur" architect who travelled to Italy in 1591 and was regarded there as a Protestant spy for

272 Ibid., pp. 134-135.

Elizabeth, laid down three conditions of "well building" in his textbook on classical building—Commodity, Firmness and Delight.274

Hans Holbein's important "anti-Italian" influence on later generations of Tudor artists emanated, according to James Lees-Milne, "from his copious designs of every species of decorative work, temples, chimneypieces, jewelry, watches, weapons, vases, cups, salt-cellars, girdles, shoe-claps, buttons and hooks. . . ."275

The pageants and processions that played some part in the development of the Tudor imperial theme were also important in terms of their simple display value, providing a show of material splendor to many who would otherwise have had very little opportunity to participate in any sense of material wealth. William Herbert noted that

The reign of Elizabeth was the age of show. Accounts of levies on the [twelve great livery] companies for pageants, Maygames, masques, and mummeries, occupy a large portion of their books throughout the whole of it.276

274See James Lees-Milne, Tudor Renaissance, (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1951), pp. 76, 99. Wotton's textbook, Elements of Architecture, was published in 1624. Wotton was three times the English Ambassador to Venice, and a friend of Francis Bacon. He may have been the model for one of Jonson's unscrupulous characters in Volpone.

275Ibid., p. 70.

The company's own pageants also began "improving in splendor"\textsuperscript{277} around the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The spokesmen for the companies were perfectly aware that these pageants and processions served a civic purpose, and in his defense of the Merchant Adventurers, John Wheeler pointedly reminded Robert Cecil and his other readers of the services his company had provided in these matters. In one colorful passage Wheeler wrote that

\ldots at the change of Princes and receiving in of new, at triumphs for victories and coronations, the said Company have not forgot the honour of their Prince and Country, but have spent and laid out great sums of money this way, so that at some one Prince's receiving in, they have consumed above two thousand French crowns in shows or triumphal arches, and namely of the late King Philip of Spain, at his entry into the City of Antwerp in September, 1549\ldots .

Master John Sturgeon, at that time Governor of the Company, was at the receiving in of the said Prince, accompanied with thirty Merchants of the Company on horseback, all in a livery of purple velvet in grain coats, and paned horse embroidered full of silver waves like waves of the sea: their doublets and drawing out of their hose purple satin, their hats of purple velvet with gold bands, fair brooches, and white feathers: and each of them a chain of gold about his neck of great value: buskins of purple velvet, their rapiers, daggers, spurs, stirrups, and bridles all gilt: the furniture of their horses was of purple velvet, saddles and trappings, etc., embroidered with gold and green silk, and white and green feathers on their horseheads. They were attended with three score lackeys, appareled in white velvet jerkins cut, embroidered with silver twist, green satin doublets, with hose and buskins of the same, purple velvet caps and green feathers. Behind them rode the abovesaid Governor upon a while English gelding, in a long purple velvet gown, lined with purple satin: a black velvet coat and cap with a fair brooch therein, and a chain of gold about his neck: his doublet and hose with the trappings of his horse were as the others of his Company

\textsuperscript{277}Ibid., I., pp. 194-195.
wore. He was attended on by six lackeys on foot, and three pages on horseback appareled as aforesaid. In which their doing they showed themselves for the honour of their Prince and Country nothing inferior to the merchants of other nations, namely the Germans, Easterlings, Italians, Spaniards and Portugals, and surmounting some of them in costly apparel, furniture of themselves and their horses, and in other preparation to entertain the said Prince, whereby they won great honour and commendation to themselves and the whole English name.278

The English Merchant Adventurers of 1549 clearly knew something about the economy of delight, as did Wheeler, who was recalling this pageant and others in 1601.

Nef was consciously limiting his discussion of the economy of delight to the field of economic history, though with Nef economic history was always (properly enough given the period under consideration) very broadly defined. In this field, and within the limits of the period from 1540-1640, Nef is undoubtedly correct to use the phrase economy of delight to refer to Continental developments, and to exclude or differentiate the English pattern of development. If we drop the time limits adopted by Nef, however, and compare English economic history from 1540-1640 to all other periods of Western economic history, it is clear that the description of the economy of delight can be correctly used to describe developments in England and on the Continent alike in this period, and distinguish them from

such other periods or phases in economic history as industrialization and feudal society.

In this broader sense, what really complicates the idea of a Tudor economy of delight is not the economic history of the period, but the Tudor version of the long-standing tradition in English economic thought to decry luxury goods and services and extol the virtues of simplicity, productivity, and practicality. The English writers' complaints about luxury date back at least to The Libelle of English Policye, but the Tudor writers took a backseat to no other generation in their condemnation of such "unproductive" products.

Starkey complained that English merchants imported "vain trifles and conceits, only for the foolish pastime and pleasure of man," and even worse that many were always "occupied in curious devise of new-fangled things concerning the vain pleasure only of the body."280

Sir Thomas Smith, in A Discourse of the Common Weal, was a little more restrained than Starkey on this matter, and objected more because the "trifles" of luxury were imported than because they were used. He would have preferred, if such goods had to be used, that they had been made in England. But still, Smith saw a

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279 See Heckscher, Mercantilism, II., p. 108.
280 Starkey, p. 80.
qualitative difference in the usefulness of the goods that England
exported—wool, tin, salt, spoons, dishes and linen—and those she
imported—looking glasses, drinking glasses, glass windows, dials,
tables, cards, balls, puppets, penhorns, inkhorns, toothpicks,
gloves, knives, daggers, owches (clasps), brooches, aglets (ornamental
tags or pendants), silk and silver buttons, earthen pots, pins,
points, hawks' bells, paper, oranges, pippins, cherries, tennis balls,
girdles, and petticoats. 281

Gerard de Malynes gave the idea of importing "trifles" a
unique twist, by comparing the English to the savages of the West
Indies who gave their precious metals for "beads, bells, knives,
looking-glasses, and such toys and trifles." 282 He claimed that

... we ourselves are guilty of the like simplicity
... giving our good commodities, or the treasure
which chiefly from the West Indies is received for
our . . . commodities, unto them of the East Indies,
and paying ten or twelve for that which heretofore
did not cost in the said Indies above one. . . . 283

John Marston was, typically, most upset by the rise of
luxury. In his "Cynicke Satyre," Marston brought to the problem
his full force of moral indignation and looked for, "A man, a man,

281 Smith, A Discourse of the Common Weal, pp. 45, 63, 68, 77,
122-123.

282 De Malynes, A Treatise of the Canker of Englands Common-
wealth, p. 66. See p. 50 at n. 103 above.

283 Ibid.
a kingdome for a man."\textsuperscript{284} The Cynic's companion, Linceus, thinks he sees a very good man, "A compleat soule, of all perfection."\textsuperscript{285} But the Cynic is not deceived:

What, mean'ست thou him that walks all opē breasted? 
Drawne through the eare with Ribands, plumy crested? 
He that doth snort in fat-fed luxury, 
And gaps for some grinding Monopoly? 
He that in effeminate invention, 
In beastly source of all pollution, 
In ryot, lust, and fleshy seeming sweetness, 
Sleepes sound secure, under the shade of greatness? 
Mean'ست thou that sencelesse, sensuall Epicure? 
That sincke of filth, that guzzell most impure? 
What he? Linceus on my word thus presume, 
He's nought but clothes, and scenting sweet perfume 
His very soule, assure the Linceus 
Is not so big as in an Atomus 
Nay, he is spightlesse, sence or soule hath none 
Since last Medusa turn'd him to a stone.\textsuperscript{286}

He's naught but budge, old gards, browne foxe-fur face 
He hath no soule, the which the Stagerite 
Term'd rationall, for beastly appetite, 
Base dunghill thoughts, and sensual action 
Hath made him loose that faire creation.\textsuperscript{287}

And women fare no better. When Linceus thinks he sees a "celestiall Angell, faire refinde," the Cynic instead sees

\textsuperscript{284}Marston, \textit{The Scourge of Villanie}, p. 65. The allusion is, of course, to Shakespeare's \textit{Richard III}. 
\textsuperscript{285}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 67. 
\textsuperscript{286}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 67-68. 
\textsuperscript{287}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 69.
The devill as soone. Her maske so hindres me
I cannot see her beauties deditie.
Now that is off, shee is so vizarded,
So steep 'd in Lemons juyce, so surphuled
I cannot see her face, under one hood
Two faces, but I never understood
Or saw, one face under two hoods till now
Tis the right semblance of old Janus brow.

Her maske, her vizard, her loose-hanging gowne
For her loose lying body, her bright spangled crown,
Her long slit sleeve, stiffe buske, paffe verdingall
Is all that makes her thus angelical.
Alas, her soule struts round about her neck,
Her seate of sence is her rebato set,
Her intellectuell is a fained niceness,
Nothing but clothes, and simpering precisenes. 288

Marston gives the Cynic one last rial, and he calls,

Out on these pupets, painted Images
Haberdashers shops, torch-light maskeries, bright
Perfuming pans, Duch antlets, glowe-wormes
That soile our soules, and dampe our reasons light... 289

There were four basic issues at the center of the Tudor
complaints against luxury. First was the presumed foregone oppor-
tunity for domestic employment when luxury items were imported, as
pointed out by Sir Thomas Smith. 290 Second was the adverse effects
on balance of payments accounts that De Malynes mentioned. Neither
of these complaints are, per se, rejections of the idea of an economy
of delight.

288 Ibid., pp. 74-75. Hamlet makes the same complaint in a
speech to Ophelia.

289 Ibid., p. 75.

290 Smith, The Discourse of the Common Weal, pp. 63-64.
The third issue involves the important (though largely unexplored) tradition in economic thought which emphasized the desirability and inherent usefulness of simple, practical, and most importantly, "productive" products. Until a century or so ago, many economic writers simply claimed that some goods, and some types of consumption, were objectively more productive than others. Regardless of wherever and whenever that tradition began, it was fully developed and accepted by the earliest Tudor writers. The tradition survived long after the Tudor period, at least down to the marginal revolution. It was, furthermore, not a tradition limited to economic writers of any one nationality or ideological persuasion—the Physiocrats come to mind as quickly as any English writers as proponents of this set of ideas. In short, this particular issue was historically too enduring and too universal to be useful in making meaningful points concerning the Tudor economy of delight.

The final issue in the Tudor complaints on luxury is both important and useful in distinguishing the peculiarities of the Tudor economy of delight. The Tudor writers were acutely aware of the problems in the social order that came about when individuals begin to overreach their social standing and, in practical terms, began to eat, dress or spend inappropriately. Such activity was  

291 See, however, Johnson, pp. 279-297. Johnson's chapter on "Idleness and Luxury" examines the long-standing tradition in English economic thought which "went beyond," but did not fail to make "an ethical condemnation" of immoderate luxury and idleness.
seen as potentially ruinous to the individual, as well as socially disruptive. The central idea here was that, while wealth was desirable for people in all estates since wealthy citizens made for a wealthy and strong king and kingdom, all individuals were to use their wealth in ways appropriate to their degree. This did not refute the idea of an economy of delight, it merely shaped and refined it, in the hope that moderate use of wealth by all men would lead to improved order, security and, ultimately, to an even wealthier nation.

The Tudor writers were very consistent in their application of this theme. Bacon, as noted earlier, thought it was "very fitting and praiseworthy enough for all degrees of persons to wear apparel according to their estate and calling..." Wilson acknowledged that "the world is made for man... to the end that man may have all pleasure," so long as man remembered that "man is made for God," and strove to promote religion and "Justice for man's benefit." Starkey saw the virtue of "companionsable life," with men taking "a certain temperance of the pleasures of the body." Hitchcock agreed that God had stored "rich and pleasant treasures for our benefit" in this world. Smith's description of the English


293Wilson, p. 175. See p. 60, above, at n. 126.

294Starkey, p. 35. See p. 75, above at n. 155.

295Hitchcock, reprinted in Arber, II., p. 60. See p. 56 above, at n. 119.
gentleman, who faced greater expenses in meeting "any show or muster," lived "without manual labor" surrounded by "idle servants," and maintained a "bountifuller liberality," all of which "he bears the gladlier and dares not gainsay for to save and keep his honor and reputation."\(^{296}\) is certainly in keeping with the anti-Puritanical nature of an economy of delight, while still recognizing the idea of social order and responsibility. The author of *Civile and Uncivile Life* put things very concisely, writing that, "the ends of man's delights be diverse, and for the most part contrary: although the end of every man's life, is one."\(^{297}\)

The pleasant benefits as well as the usefulness to be derived from imported goods, along with the idea that nations received different gifts from God at the creation and so were meant to trade, frequently led the Tudor writers to make clear statements on the propriety of moderate importing—a rather "un-mercantilist" aspect of Tudor thought that is generally ignored, especially the defences of importing luxury items. De Malynes advised the Prince and the subjects of the realm to make

\[\ldots\] moderate use of foreign commodities, \ldots both for victuals and other wares; without studying how to live without the traffic and commerce with other nations;  

\(^{296}\)Smith, De Republica Anglorum, pp. 40-41. See pp. 62-63 above, at n. 131.

\(^{297}\)Cyvile and Uncyvile Life, pp. 6-7. See pp. 100-101 at n. 202 above.
seeing that God caused Nature to bestow and distribute benefits, or His blessings to several Climates, supplying the barrenness of some things in one country with the fruitfulness and store of other countries, to the end that interchangably one common weal should live with another. 298

Wilson's 'Preacher' admitted that "lawful trading and adventuring to bring in our want and to carry out our plenty has ever been allowed, and without such traffic no country nor kingdom can flourish." 299

Starkey was ready to import, "such things as shall be for the maintenance of honest pleasure," but like Smith, wanted to prohibit imports that might be made "by the art, labor, and diligence of our own people." 300 He would have imported moderate amounts of wine and silk, but primarily for the nobility who could afford such goods, and use them moderately. 301 Both speakers in Starkey's dialogue recognized that the fault of immoderate use of these luxury goods lies with the people, and not in the goods themselves; but 'Lupset' saw "great disorders" where "measure were good," 302 and so was ready to improve public standards of consumption through legislation.

298 De Malynes, England's View, in the Unmasking of Two Paradoxes, p. 105.
299 Wilson, p. 203.
300 Starkey, p. 155.
301 Ibid., pp. 94-95.
302 Ibid.
Smith argued that the King "must have from beyond the seas many things necessary not only for His Grace's household and ornaments as well of his person and family as of his horses . . . , but also the furniture of his wars . . . ."303 But the relationship of the King's wealth to his subjects was clearly recognized—"His Grace can have no lack so long as his subjects have it."304 And, while Smith also recognized the dangers of immoderate dress, recalling that excesses of clothing "were used in Rome a little before the decline of the Empire," he worried more about immoderation at court than in other parts of the realm where, "the law of necessity keeps men in good case for exceeding either in apparel or fare."305 As an incidental point of economic history, a series of sumptuary laws and proclamations designed to maintain moderate dress were issued in the Tudor period, and partially enforced in court and throughout the realm (though admittedly "high offenders were dealt with more tenderly")306 to preserve moderation and order.

The idea of the economy of delight also touches on some fairly minor points in Tudor economic thought. De Malynes, for example,

303 Smith, A Discourse of the Common Weal, p. 35.
304 Ibid., p. 36.
305 Ibid., p. 82.
gives a non-mercantilist defense of accumulating treasure that is based on the physical, rather than economic properties of gold:

Neither is [gold] inferior unto any other metal to make useful and curious works; it defiles not the thing it touches as silver does, wherewith you may draw lines: it resembles in color the celestial bodies, and it is medicinable and bring gladness to the heart of man... With great reason therefore has gold his due estimation above other things. Also such things wherein the art of man is illustrated; as in pictures and other curious works, are worthy of great commendation, and to be preferred before many other things that man does use, for to live in the most civil manner above other nations which live barbarously.  

Elyot uses the idea of delight and usefulness to support his proposal to have children and young men read Virgil, or have Virgil read to them, saying that,

In his Bucolics lord what pleasant variety there is: the diverse grains, herbs, and flowers that be there described, that, reading therein, it seems to a man to be in a delectable garden or paradise. What ploughman knows so much of husbandry as there is expressed? Is there any astronomer that more exactly sets out the order and course of the celestial bodies: or that more truly does divine in his prognostications of the times of the year, in their qualities, with the future estate of all things provided by husbandry, than Virgil does recite in that work? If the child have a delight in hunting, what pleasure shall he take of the fable of Aristeus... If he have pleasure in wrestling, running, or other like exercise, where shall he see any more pleasant esbatements, than that which was done by Eurealus and other Trojans, which accompanied Aeneas? If he take solace in hearing minstrells,

307 De Malynes, England's View. In the Unmasking of Two Paradoxes, pp. 105-106.
what minstrell may be compared to Jopas, which sang before Dido and Aeneas?

... If he be more desirous (as the most part of children be) to hear things marvelous and exquisite, which has in it a visage of some things incredible, where at shall be more wonder, than when he shall behold Aeneas follow Sybil into hell...? How shall he... abhor tyranny, fraud, and avarice, when he does see the pains of Duke Theseus, Prometheus, and Sisiphus...? And in the last books of the Aeneid shall he find matter to minister to him audacity, valiant courage, and policy, to take and sustain noble enterprises, if any shall be needful for the assailing of his enemies.308

Robert Crowley in "The Scholar's Lesson" from The Voice of the Last Trumpet, gives a delight-oriented defense of appropriate recreational and leisure activities. He recommended

To fish, to foul, to hunt, to haulke,
Or on an instrument to play;
And some whiles to commune and talk,
No man is able to gain say.

To shote, to bowle, or cast the barre,
To play tennis, or toss the ball,
Or to run base, like men of war
Shall hurt thy study not at all
For all these things do recreate
The mind, if thou canst hold the mean.309

Robertson considered Crowley a "militant Puritan,"310 with some justification. But it is clear that the ideas of delight and

309 Crowley, Select Works, pp. 72-73.
310 Robertson, p. 11.
moderate pleasure were strong enough in the Tudor period to make parts of the Tudor Puritans' ideas compatible with the thought of the more orthodox Tudor writers.

All things considered, Nef's phrase, the "economy of delight," must have been chosen very carefully, for the words delight and pleasure repeatedly appear in the works of the Tudor writers--often in titles. Wilson wrote his Discourse Upon Usury "for the better variety and more delight of all those that shall read this treatise."311 Forrest wrote a "pleasant" poetry for princes.312 Howes perhaps claimed the most for his dialogues, since they were both, "Pleasant for the Reader and Profitable for the State."313 And again, the same ideas appear in the popular literature of the period as well, as in Thomas Deloney's 1597 Pleasant History of John Winchcomb.314

If the English version of the economy of delight was, in theory, somewhat more sober and restrained than its Continental

311Wilson, p. 173.
312In Starkey, p. lxxix.
314Or see a different sort of popular literature, John Donne's, "That the Gifts of the Body are Better Than Those of the Mind," from his Paradoxes and Probleme, reprinted in The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne, Charles M. Coffin, ed., (New York: Modern Library, 1952), pp. 288-289. This selection also has some points of interest concerning the Tudor concept of civic activity.
counterparts—i.e., emphasizing quantitative increases in output somewhat more than qualitative improvements—matters of delight in form and variety can not be disregarded in England during the Tudor period. In any case, it is not correct to view the idea of the economy of delight is an impediment to industrialism. Nor is it proper to see industrialism as necessarily opposed to the economy of delight. The example of Wedgwood should teach us that much. But in fact, it is even proper to see these two forces as, to some extent, mutually dependent; and as Nef concluded,

The disposition of economic historians to regard the preoccupation of the Europeans with an economy of quality as a stumbling block in the way of the eventual triumph of industrialism is one-sided. There is an important sense in which the dedication of the Europeans to the construction of a beautiful Europe, by the strengthening of fine craftsmanship in the service of the crown and the various ranks of the nobility and higher bourgeois, was essential to industrialism.315

The English tradition held out the possibility, or at least the hope, that prosperity and delight could be a mass (though ordered) phenomenon—an idea even more essential to the rise of industrialism. Economic historians and historians of economic thought generally recognize the part of this point concerning mass production (though not the idea of ordered production and consumption), but incorrectly place the development of the idea much later than the

315Nef, Cultural Foundations . . . , p. 135.
Tudor period. This is probably due in part to the rather murky passages in Heckscher's *Mercantilism* concerning, "the gradual transition" from the medieval "hunger for goods" to the mercantilist "fear of goods." At one point Heckscher even uses the terms "fear of goods" and "mercantilism" interchangably. This confusion, like so much of the confusion relating to English economic thought from 1500 to 1775, stems from paying too much attention to the primary passages on the balance of trade, and too little attention to all of the other ideas in that literature.

The Rise of Economic Individualism

The last of the lesser guiding principles of Tudor economic thought to be discussed here can only be considered a lesser principle in comparison to such a broad idea as the Great Chain of Being. Compared to the usual questions studied in the history of economic thought, the issue of the rise of economic individualism seems itself to be almost unmanageably broad and wide-ranging. Nevertheless, it is undeniably an important issue that must be faced in any study on sixteenth and seventeenth century economic thought or history.


There is, of course, an extensive, intricate, and controversial bulk of secondary literature on the rise of economic individualism. At times, in the most simplified accounts of that literature, it is described as the Weber-Tawney thesis. There is no hope of dealing with even most of the major points related to this literature without contributing at least another volume to that debate. But several crucial points concerning Tudor economic thought have been made in the literature on the rise of economic individualism, and must be dealt with here.

First, as Tawney and Nef pointed out, in the Tudor period economic development and change were modifying—straining would be a better description—traditional attitudes and beliefs. Most of the literature on economic individualism is concerned with periods when causation ran the other way. But the Weber idea, that new ideas and attitudes were causing increased rates of economic growth, is not generally relevant to the pre-1640 period in England. Any reading of the primary literature that examines the statements on the ends of economic thought in this period will make that point quite clearly.

Second, as early as the sixteenth century there was, as many writers including Heckscher and Ferguson have pointed out, an increasing willingness to take men as they existed—which meant a

\[318\text{See pp. 18–22 above, at notes 34–43.}\]
willingness to recognize that men were generally motivated by self-interest in economic matters—and a growing desire to design institutions to channel their activities toward socially desirable ends.

The most famous Tudor passages on these matters come from A Discourse of the Common Weal where, for instance, Smith wrote,

You have heard that by this free vent and sale of corn the husbandman's profit is advanced. Then it is showed that every man naturally will follow that wherein he sees profit, and therefore men will the gladder occupy husbandry. And the more they do occupy husbandry, the more plenty of corn must needs be; and the more plenty there is, there is the better cheap and also the more will be spread over that shall suffice for the realm. And then, that may be spared in a good year shall bring us again other corn or else the commodity of other countries necessary for us. Then the more husbandry is occupied, the more universal breed should be of all victuals as of neat [goats], sheep, swine, geese, eggs, butter, and cheese for all these are reared of much corn.  

Smith recognized, citing Tully, that commonweals are held up by two things, "reward and pain," and that some things will have to be "constrained by the straight penalties of the law" while other things should be promoted by "allurement and reward." He makes a plea for equity—"Either let us all be restrained together or

319 Smith, A Discourse of the Common Weal, pp. 60-61.
320 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
else let us all be at like liberty . . . ," but also for pragmatic policy in asking,

For what law can compel man to be industrious in travail and labor of his body or studious to learn any science or knowledge of the mind? To these things men may well be provoked, encouraged and allured as if they that be industrious and painful be rewarded well for their pains and be suffered to take gains and wealth as reward for their labors. And so likewise if they that be learned be advanced and honored according to their forwardness in learning, every man will then study either to be industrious in bodily labor or studious in things that pertain to knowledge. Take these rewards from them and go about to compel them by laws thereto, what man will plow or dig the ground or exercise any manual art where is any pain? Or who will adventure overseas for any merchandise? Or use any faculty wherein any peril or danger should be, seeing his reward shall be no more than his that sits still? But you will percase answer me that all their rewards shall not be taken away but part of it. Yet then you must grant me that as if all these rewards were taken from them all these faculties must decay, so if part of that reward be diminished the use of those faculties shall diminish withal after the rate and so they shall be the less occupied, the less they be rewarded and esteemed.

Smith also recognized that self-interest would lead most men to try to get around poorly designed or enforced laws. Sounding very much like the next great Smith in economic thought, Sir Thomas wrote that, " . . . it were very hard to make a law . . . , so many as have profit by that matter resisting it. And if such a law

321 Ibid., p. 57.
322 Ibid., p. 59.
were made yet men studying still their most profit would defraud the law by one mean or another."323

In Thomas Wilson's Discouerse Upon Usury, the Mercant Gromel Gainer clearly recognizes the power of self-interest as a stimulant to men's activity, asking, "... who is he that will not make his own the best he can?"324 The Merchant goes on to defend usury on the grounds that

Hope of gain makes men industrious, and, where no gain is to be had, men will not take pains. And as good it is to sit idle and do nothing, as to take pains and have nothing. Merchants doings must not be over-thwarted by preachers and others, that can not skill of their dealings. And this over great curiosity of some to meddle in other men's matter, I must tell you plain, it is even the very right way to undo all in the end. Therefore say what you will, I will live and amend, so as I may live every day better and better, by any means, I care not how. Yea, I will make hard shift with the world, and strain my conscience narrowly, before I will either starve or beg, both I and my children after me. Provided always that I will not come within the compass of positive laws: and this I know well, that by all laws a man may take as much for his own wares as he can get, and it is no sin for one man to deceive another in bargaining, so that it be not too much beyond God's forbode, and a bargain is a bargain, let men say what they list. Such your straight prohibitions and strange preciseness, my masters, do make men weary of their lives.325

323 Ibid., p. 51.
324 Wilson, p. 249.
325 Ibid., pp. 250-251.
Alfred J. Chalk’s 1951 article on "Natural Law and the Rise of Economic Individualism" shows that statements recognizing the power of self-interest and economic individualism were becoming more and more common in the sixteenth century, and in this particular issue most works on the mercantilist period are reasonably accurate about the Tudor writers. There is no reason to argue that in Tudor economic though there was not a growing recognition of increased levels of economic individualism.

The third issue in Tudor economic thought related to the rise of economic individualism is the question of how the different writers reacted to such a phenomenon. Though all of the writers accepted the Tudor world view, and the ethical end inherent in that world view, they often disagreed on other ethical questions concerning how individuals, businessmen and public officials should act in this world to achieve that end. In other words, the general belief that a Christian social order should be maintained to promote virtue here on earth did not end the long-standing debate on the role that wealth and individual wealth-seeking were to play in the virtuous man’s life.

The debate over wealth and the proper role of self-interest was not, it must be noted, always directly related to the debate over the active versus the contemplative life. John Hales was in

every sense of the word a man of action, working for what he saw as
a more vituous society. His views on self-interest, however, have
led several scholars to label him, and his associates Thomas Lever
and Thomas Latimer, as the forerunners of the English Puritans.327
Hales felt that he had personally suffered at the hands of those
who

. . . pass more on the world, than God, more on their
private profit, than on the common wealth. . . . Such
is the corrupt nature of man, he passes not what he
says, nor what he does, so that he may satisfy his ungodly
desires and filthy pleasures.328

More importantly, Hales believed that the social problems
facing Tudor England stemmed from the self-interest of certain
powerful and wealthy individuals, and he prided himself on having
attempted to set up laws and effective enforcement programs to shaply
limit, or even "root out," these "worldlings." Hales claimed that

It may not be lawful for every man to use his own
as he likes, but every man must use that he has to the
most benefit of his Country. There must be something
devised to quench this insatiable thirst of greediness

327 See, for example, A. G. Dickens, The English Reformation,

328 John Hales, "The defence of John Hales ayenst certeyne
sclaundres and false reaportes made of hym." Reprinted in Elizabeth
Lamond's edition of A Discourse of the Common Weal of This Realm of
Lamond attributed the Discourse to Hales.
of men. Covetousness must be weeded out by the roots, for it is the destruction of all good things. Covetousness expelled the wholesome laws of Lycurgus, which so many hundred years maintained and preserved Sparta in his flourishing and happy state, and brought it shortly to confusion. Covetousness as soon as it had gotten an entry into the Church suddenly subverted Christ’s Religion, and brought in hypocrisy and superstition. And doubtless I fear covetousness will in short time work the like effect in this Realm of England, if the King’s Majesty and his Counsel do not the sooner put to their helping hand. Who will maintain husbandry which is the nurse of every Country, as long as sheep bring so great gain? Who passes on breeding of beasts, where of no gain can be felt within three or four years, when of his sheep he shall be sure of his profit once every year? Who will be at the cost to keep a dozen in his house to milk and make cheese, [and] carry it to the market, when one poor soul may by keeping sheep get him a greater profit? Who will not be contented for to pull down houses of husbandry, so that he may stuff his bags full of money? Who passes on offending and breaking the laws when he has plenty of money to stop the execution of them?

And the matter of this bill [to restore husbandry] did not so much grieve them [Hales’ accusers], as for that there was a way found thereby to have it always truly executed. For I had thus devised that the parson or Curate of every parish to whom belongs the tithes, and two honest men should yearly survey every man’s pastures and should not only present who did transgress this law, but who also did observe it. This was it that bid the mare by the thumb. Men pass not much how many laws be made, for they see very few put in execution.

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329 Ibid., pp. lxiii-lxiv.

330 Ibid., p. lxv. I have generally excluded administrative reports and pleas, such as Hales’ "Defense," from the main body of economic thought in the Tudor period. In general, that seems to be the proper course, as Grampp had suggested it would be. But an exception should be granted to Hales, I think, because of his importance as a recognized spokesman for the "Commonwealth Party," the literary nature of his "Defense," his close ties with Latimer and Lever (whose economically oriented religious tracts have been carefully discussed and properly labeled as Puritan in tone by Robertson, pp. 7-11
Hales, like De Malynes, Bacon, and Wilson, found the idea that most men would predictably follow self-interest before social interest more upsetting than Smith. Wilson, in fact, in some ways apparently found the whole question of the rise of economic individualism even more disgusting than Hales. In the "Preface" to The Discourse Upon Usury, he made it perfectly clear that he himself would never condone the opinions of the "Gromel Gainers" in this world. But most men, Wilson thought, were not so virtuous in a time when moderate interest-taking was to be legally authorized:

... men have altogether forgotten free lending, and have given themselves wholly to live by foul gaining, making the loan of money a kind of merchandise, a thing directly against all law, against nature, and against God. And what should this mean, that, instead of charitable dealing, and the use of alms (for lending is a spice thereof), hardness of heart has now gotten place, and greedy gain is chiefly followed and horrible especially), and because of his former standing as the supposed author of The Discourse of the Common Weal. These quotes, I think, support the claims that Hales did not write the Discourse, as does a passage from a letter (another form of writing I have not used as a part of the body of primary literature) written by Hales to Protector Somerset regarding Hales' Commission on Enclosures. Hales wrote that,

"... albeit these worldlings think that it shall be but a money matter, yet am I fully persuaded, and certainly do believe in your Grace's sayings, that, maugre the Devil, private profit, self-love, and such like the Devil's instruments, it shall go forward, and set such a stay in the body of the commonwealth that all members shall live in a due temperament and harmony without one having too much, and a great many nothing at all, as at this present it appears plainly they have...."

This passage is quoted by Robertson, p. 63, who took the quotation from P. F. Tytler's England Under Edward VI and Mary, pp. 115-116.
extortion commonly used? I do verily believe, the end of this world is nigh at hand.331

The Tudor writers were in basic agreement that self-interest and social interest were not always identical, and that it was not always possible to design laws or institutions which would insure that self-interest would be channeled in some way to provide public benefits, or at least limited to protect social interests. They disagreed about how severe the problem of self-interest was in Tudor England, and they all recognized that self-interest could be potentially useful in drawing men from idleness to activity. Even the "Godly and Zealous Preacher" in Wilson's Discourse limits his attack on the Merchant to the "foundation" of his argument, the defense of usury.332 No question is made of the ability of self-interest to bring men to action, though lending is not seen as an especially active act.

The distinctions that can be made between the Tudor writers on the basis of their opinions on self-interest, covetousness, and private gain relate generally to how repelling they found the idea that men were so motivated, and how far they were willing to go to repress cases of anti-social profit seeking. As Robertson has pointed out, and as discussed above, the Tudor writers with Puritan

331 Wilson, p. 177.
332 Ibid., p. 252.
leanings were likely to be more hostile towards such activity than
the more secular writers such as Smith.\textsuperscript{333} De Malynes, however, was
upset by such activity because, as De Roover has pointed out, of his
Scholastic heritage and grounding.\textsuperscript{334} Repeating what has been said
before, the simple idea of the Weber-Tawney link between Protestantism
and capitalism is not applicable to the Tudor period; and for that
period at least Robertson is correct in saying that

Some day the tangled antecedents of economic individualism may be unravelled. But they will not be unravelled by concentrating on religion, or by search for the clues in greed, selfishness and the self-centered righteousness of men who work hard in their 'calling.'\textsuperscript{335}

The Tudor economic writers with Puritan leanings were themselves apparently somewhat more restrained and moderate than their seventeenth century counterparts—less intent on renouncing all worldly comforts, and activities, and certainly less likely to see material success as a sign of spiritual election. The acceptance of the broader Tudor world view seems to have taken precedence over

\textsuperscript{333}See, for example, Robertson's chapter on "Protestant Opinion on Usury," pp. 111-132.


\textsuperscript{335}Robertson, p. 213.
other tendencies in strongly Protestant-oriented thought which
might have lead to unilateral acceptance or rejection of capitalism.
As Robertson notes, "Weber has not proved that the Puritans intro-
duced a new economic ethic. The Protestants as well as the Catholics
spoke with an ambiguous voice." Only when the Puritanically-
oriented thinkers began to disrupt the Tudor social order were they
truly considered revolutionary; and they were then likely to suffer
the consequences of their beliefs and actions at the hands of those
who were in many ways sympathetic to their economic thought. Thus
Hales found himself literally "racked" by Thomas Wilson.

When the Tudor view of order was abandoned, or split apart,
religious, political, and economic sects were left, perhaps for the
first time, with the idea that they were in a fateful struggle for
control of the commonwealth, opposing rival sects that had entirely
different ideas about the organization and purpose of human society
here on earth. After the English civil war, when it became apparent
that toleration was necessary for purposes of security and pros-
perity, the limited attempts by such writers as Pope, Swift and
Bolingbroke to reinstate some view of universal order were rejected

\[336\] Ibid., p. 164.

\[337\] See Schmidt, "Thomas Wilson, Tudor Scholar-Statesman," p. 211 n. See also Eric Voeglin's chapter on "The Gnostic Revolu-
in favor of a spiritual version of the Walpole policy of quieta non movere. 338
CHAPTER IV

THE MATTER OF MEANS

Let it be admitted from the outset, openly and without reservation, that:

'Particular concepts' were 'imperfectly perceived and formulated' by the mercantilists, and it is doubtful that 'any...general conception of the economic process...was present in their writings.' With little of detailed conceptions and nothing of general process, mercantilist theory would seem pretty empty.

... the mercantilists did not fully comprehend the workings of the price mechanism, and that they lacked an adequate conception of economic...process and system.

...'Some modern commentators, in the excesses of their enthusiasm, have exaggerated the mercantilists' intellectual subtlety, analytic ability, and empirical accuracy.'

'Some of the statements [of the mercantilists' defenders]...are difficult to reconcile.'339

Admitting all of that is to admit no more than what George Stigler asked historians of economic thought to concede in his contribution to the first volume of the History of Political Economy.

339 Taken from William R. Allen's "Rearguard Response," History of Political Economy, (1973), pp. 496-497. Allen was responding to (and quoting from) A.W. Coats' article in the same issue on "The Interpretation of Mercantilist Economics: Some Historiographical Problems." Coats, in turn, was commenting on Allen's article on "Modern Defenders of Mercantilist Theory," History of Political Economy, (1970), pp. 381-397. Allen, with Coats conceding, argued that the mercantilists had "no adequate conception of economic order, process and system." I have suggested in Chapter II that the Tudor writers did have a well developed idea of economic order, which formed a part of their general conception of social and world order.
Stigler somehow estimated precisely that

The odds are 30 to 1 that Pigou will be more helpful than Senior to a modern economist interested only in increasing the power of his apparatus, and 100 to 1 that Irving Fisher will be more helpful than all the economics written before 1600.340

...It has not been a purpose of this work to defend the Tudor economic writers against those who have criticized their individual analytical abilities, or even against those who would condemn, in general, the body of positive analysis from the mercantilist period. Very little, if anything, has been suggested that would extend or modify Schumpeter, Johnson, Grampp, Beer, and Chalk's appraisals of the Discourse of the Common Weal; Muchmore341 and De Roover's evaluation of De Malynes; Tawney and Robertson's studies of Wilson and

340George J. Stigler, "Does Economics Have a Useful Past?," History of Political Economy, (1969), p. 218. It should be noted that Stigler acknowledges in the same article (p. 223) that there is a need for studies which examine the relationship between "the intellectual content of a science and the organization and environment of the scientists' world." In that, Stigler is only making the usual claim that history of thought must, as De Roover said in his article on "Gerard De Malynes as an Economic Writer," (p. 366), "not exclusively...award prizes for the 'correct' solution, if there is such a thing, of this or that problem, but to study the genesis of ideas and the evolution of methods." Or, see Coats' list (p. 486) of seven possible questions for historians of thought to examine.

the more religious-oriented Tudor writers; De Roover's work on Gresham; S.T. Bindoff's comments on Armstrong; or even any of the remarks made by the historians--including Zeeveld, Ferguson, and Jones--on Starkey, Crowley, Hales and the many minor writers who filled the Tudor period with economic thought much more fully than is generally recognized. While a few of the writers--Sir Thomas Smith in particular--showed great promise, as economic analysts interested simply in maximizing national income and wealth or in maximizing the sum of the individual English subjects' utility functions taken as a given piece of data, the Tudor writers were, to use Allen's phrase,

342 Most notably, Raymond de Roover, Gresham on Foreign Exchange: An Essay on Early English Mercantilism with the Text of Sir Thomas Gresham's Memorandum for the Understanding of the Exchange, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949). Time has not been kind to Gresham's reputation as an economic thinker. Gresham's "Law" has long been attributed to earlier writers, and the Memorandum on exchange was never as important in the theory of international exchange as the development of the idea of the balance of trade, which began around 1600. (See W.H. Price, "The Origin of the Phrase 'Balance of Trade,' Quarterly Journal of Economics, (1906) pp. 157-167. In any case, there is now also serious, though not conclusive, doubt concerning Gresham's authorship of the memorandum. See Mary Dewar, "The Memorandum 'For the Understanding of the Exchange': Its Authorship and Dating," Economic History Review, 2nd series, (1965); and De Roover's "Gerard De Malynes as an Economic Writer," p. 364. De Roover (pp. 359-360) and Dewar also suggest that Sir Francis Knowles was the author of the 1564 report of the Royal Commission on the Exchanges. Gresham, then, remains clearly as an important figure in English economic history, as the author of several letters to public figures on economic matters, and as the major supporter of the first English Royal Exchange.

"not very able."\textsuperscript{344} How seriously the Tudor writers themselves would have taken such a criticism to be will be discussed in the following chapter.

Here, since so much is being conceded with regard to the shortcomings of the Tudor writers as economic analysts, it will be useful to review briefly current opinion on the talents of three of the major writers from the period, who considered the most pressing economic issues of their day. Then, some more basic points about our present method of evaluating Tudor economic thought will be considered.

The best Tudor economic analysis, by near-unanimous consent, comes in the \textit{Discourse of the Common Weal}. On this work there is still no better evaluation than the two paragraphs Schumpeter devoted to the \textit{Discourse} in his monumental \textit{History of Economic Analysis}:

\begin{quote}
The \textit{Discourse of the Common Weal} contains three dialogues that deal with a wide variety of topics. The author regrets 'that younge studentes be alwases over hastye in utterynge their Judgementes,' and the 'scysme in matter of relygyen'; recommends better training all round, going so far as to consider superiority in 'lernynge' as one of the reasons for Julius Caesar's victory over Pompey; condemns enclosures in so far as they turn arable land into pasture; criticizes the rising business corporations and their monopolistic practices; disapproves of debased currency and of inflation that hurts people whose incomes do not react promptly, such as the laborers, landlords, and even the King's Highness; recommends the fostering of young industries as well as the accumulation of a monetary fund for emergencies ('sodeyne eventes')--money being as it were a 'storehouse of any commodity' and \textit{nervus bellorum}; does not favor the export of raw materials, especially of wool; frowns upon these
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{344}Allen, "Rearguard Action," p. 496.
'straungers' who sell nothing but frivolous stuff that costs them little though the English pay dearly for it, and buy in return good honest English goods, if indeed they do buy anything and do not take 'money current' outright, which they prefer to do of late; feels that foreign commodities should be taxed so that domestic producers might be able to compete; wants to see the nation's money kept in the country and to recover that which has already left it. And so on.

From these indications, the reader should be able to draw a picture of our author's economics. Of course, it was popular--preanalytic--economics. But most of it was sound common sense. The 'doctor' of the dialogue was evidently a thoroughly reasonable man and never said anything that would seem absurd to the intelligent layman or politician of today. In one respect, however, he was especially reasonable for his time. He distrusted regulation less than did the liberals of the nineteenth century but more than we do ourselves. He did not like compulsion. He wished to work with and not against the profit motive, which he considered quite essential. Moreover, he sometimes saw below the surface of things. For instance, he saw quite correctly that the encroachment of sheep runs upon the arable land had much to do with the policy that aimed at keeping wheat cheap by means of price fixing and export prohibitions, and thus defeated its purpose by altering the relative profitability of wheat and wool production in favor of the latter. This piece of reasoning (analogous of which are frequently met with in the writings of the Consultant Administrators) goes beyond the obvious. In its implications, it approaches the status of analytic work.\footnote{Joseph A. Schumpeter, History of Economic Analysis, pp. 166-167. Schumpeter's emphasis is given.}

It should be added that in the 1581 edition of the Discourse, a brief section was added to the "Third Dialogue" which praised the Elizabethan recoinage for restoring the fineness of the English currency, and (probably following Bodin) set down as the cause of inflation after the recoinage the influx of treasure from the New World.
On the question of usury, the most important Tudor work is clearly that of Dr. Thomas Wilson who, as seen earlier, was not one to take such matters lightly. Wilson's "analysis" is usually religious, and only incidentally economic. The preacher makes it obvious from the outset of the dialogue that he condemns any agreement which provides for certain gain, even if loans are to be made to men of higher estate who plan to invest money (so that both parties, the borrower and lender, might gain), to old families that have fallen on hard times and need money to maintain their estate, or even to "pitiful cases" such as widows or minors who have some financial capital but no other means of support. In the first of these cases, it was considered acceptable to venture money in a project if potential losses as well as gains were to be shared; in the second, loans at high rates of interest were seen as a major cause of (not remedy for) the decay of old families; and in the third case, no improper means were to be used, no matter how desirable the end. It was claimed that usury inhibits charity, and charity was compared to "spiritual usury" since what was freely lent to the poor in this world would earn "interest" in the next. The merchant, as noted earlier, makes the point that prohibiting interest would lead to massive declines in investment, and thus less employment and business activity in general. The preacher replies that usury does not promote activity, but rather leads honest merchants and bankers who have been engaged in actual production or in risky commercial ventures to a life of idleness and sure reward, requiring no further efforts on their own part. And
because of this idleness and the direct costs of interest payments, usury leads to "dearth," to higher prices. Significantly, the major policy proposal in Wilson's work was to declare and enforce a death penalty for usurers, to be further supported by denying usurers all comforts of the Church. However, the Discourse itself was something of a policy means, designed to lead all men, as the lawyer and merchant are lead in the text, away from usury by threat, reason, and prayer.

Not all of the Tudor writers took up the question of usury, and certainly in practice the prohibitions against usury were weakening. Under Edward VI and Elizabeth (in 1571, by act of Parliament with only two votes—one of them Wilson's—dissenting), moderate interest taking was made legal. Those that did write on usury, however, almost always wrote against interest payments, using arguments very similar to those described by Wilson.

The most important Tudor writer on issues of foreign exchange was Gerard De Malynes. De Malynes, it is well known, has never ranked highly as an economic analyst. The central and recurring theme of his positive thought was aptly described by Spiegel:

...with the blindness and obstinateness of a fanatic believer in conspiracy theories, [Malynes] closed his eyes to the fact that fluctuations of the exchange rate, which give rise to specie exports, reflect commercial operations. Instead, he attributed to the bankers the power to manipulate the rate of exchange for the sake of their own gain, and he denounced them as being responsible for the outflow of specie accompanying a rising foreign exchange. This, to him, was 'the
efficient cause of the disease of the body politic.  

Spiegel's treatment of Malynes is in many ways a mean between the more severe evaluation given by Muchmore, and the somewhat more favorable picture painted by De Roover. All agree that De Malynes' view of usury was similar to that of Thomas Wilson, although De Malynes admitted that a sudden prohibition would in fact have serious short run economic consequences. He therefore favored a policy of gradually restricting interest payments. De Malynes also had some understanding of the relationship between the elasticity of demand for English exports and the revenue effects of price changes of those products. It is not clear, however, that he was even consistent in his assumptions about how elastic the demand for these products truly was.  

This discussion of the positive analysis of Smith, Wilson and De Malynes is neither comprehensive nor original. It serves only to give some flavor of the thought that was directed toward some of the

346 Spiegel, pp. 102-103. Spiegel also points out (p. 101) that, "[Malynes'] ideal was an orderly, static, and well regulated economic universe, in which the desire for gain was always to be restrained by public policy." See also Schumpeter's History of Analysis, p. 344, where De Malynes' proposals for higher import duties, prohibition of bullion exportation, the staple system, and resurrection of the Office of Royal Exchange are said to reflect "more serious theory than has been admitted...."  

347 See Muchmore, pp. 337ff.
major economic issues of the Tudor period. It has been reasonably argued by many that an extensive discussion of the positive thought from the Tudor period would be pointless, or at best antiquarian in nature. Even in this chapter on analysis--on means--it is not the purpose of this study to develop a long catalogue of the analytical ideas and policy recommendations of the Tudor writers.

The major issue in this chapter is to examine briefly how the discussion of the guiding principles of Tudor economic thought which has gone before makes it possible to have something to say about many passages in the primary literature which have been generally neglected in earlier studies, and to see how, based on the sole criterion of internal consistency with the stated ends of Tudor economic thought, the positive thought of the period deserves higher marks than it generally receives.

Some attention has, in fact, been given to this issue by earlier historians of economic thought. In the late nineteenth century, for example, Dean Cunningham pointed out that much of the material in mercantilist literature stressing the desirability of accumulating bullion is defensible if we take seriously the idea that treasure was considered in most of the mercantilist period the *nervi ballorum*,--the sinews of war.348 This idea implied that the prudent ruler would maintain an adequate stock of precious metals to pay for arms, soldiers,
mercenary, armadas, and other such tools of the sixteenth century trade of kingship, and not wait for an invading army or squadron to appear at the palace gate before requesting a new tax from Parliament or the Assembly.

Smith, Armstrong and De Malynes all used the term nervi bellorum, but the general idea that defense is preferable to opulence, with which Adam Smith defended the Navigation Acts of the seventeenth century, was widely understood and accepted by the Tudor writers. As a matter of economic history there were, of course, Tudor versions of navigation acts. But what is more important here is that the idea behind such acts was clearly understood even by some of the early Tudor writers. Starkey, for example, wanted to train English youths in feats of arms, "the which among the Romans was a common thing, and yet is observed among the Swiss"; but he also proposed that in international trade, "...our own merchants should carry out and bring in with our own vessels, and not use the strangers ships as they do now; by the reason where of our own mariners often times lie idle." Hitchcock was even more explicit in claiming that his proposed fishing villages would provide

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350Starkey, p. 161.

351Ibid., p. 174.
Nine thousand mariners more than now presently there is, to serve in Her Majesty's ships at all times, if need be. ...The towns bordering on the sea coasts, now in ruins and void of English inhabitants, to be peopled and inhabited by Her Majesty's own peculiar subjects; to the great strength of this realm, and terror of the enemy.352

Other than the concession that some protectionist measures may be justified by such "non-economic" concerns as national defense, very little has been written that evaluates Tudor positive economic thought in terms of its consistency with any guiding principles such as those suggested in the preceding chapters. The major exception is in the very broad area of social theories of income distribution. The Tudor ideas that people should receive and spend incomes "according to their degree" have been partially set above the complaints that modern economists might tend to make concerning the expected failure of the Tudor system to provide for a mobile labor force through economic incentives (wages) which approximated the value of individual workers' marginal products. W.E. Minchinton noted that

In discussions of the sixteenth century it is now generally agreed that Tudor governments were more concerned to regulate industry in the name of public order than to establish any unified set of economic objectives. ...In such an ordered society the regulation of wages has its place.353

Tawney suggested much the same thing in 1913:

352 Reprinted in Arber, II., pp. 141-142.
...a fuller appreciation of the objects and conceptions of the statesmen of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has modified the standpoint from which their economic policy is regarded. The age of 'Tudor despotism' is no longer contrasted with that of constitutional government as darkness with light. Its tendencies are seen to have been in some respects popular, and its attention to the administrative supervision of economic conditions is congenial to modern historians, who are constantly confronted in their own age with the task of securing what Tudor statesmen called 'good order' in industrial matters. In particular it is realized that the assessment of wages cannot be treated, in the manner of [J.E.T.] Rogers, as though it were something unique, instead of being, what it really was, one part of the absolute monarchy's general system of economic regulation. 354

In a more abstract passage, Irving Kristol has agreed that in a traditionally ordered society, "...you did not need a free market or a free society to maximize individual happiness..."355 and that

Even the very principles of individual opportunity and social mobility, which originally made the bourgeois-liberal idea so attractive, end up--once the spirit of religion is weakened--by creating an enormous problem for bourgeois society. This is the problem of publicly establishing an acceptable set of rules of distributive justice. 356

In another article, Kristol noted that

A distribution of income according to one's contribution to the society--to the 'common good'--requires that this society have a powerful consensus as to what the 'common good' is, and that it also have institutions with the authority to give specific meaning and application to this consensus on


356Ibid., p. 11.
all occasions. Now, when you have such a consensus, and such authoritative institutions, you do not have—a liberal society as we understand it. It can certainly be a good society (if the values behind the consensus are good); but it will not be a liberal society. The authorities which represent the common good, and which distribute income in accordance with their conception of the common good, will— with a clear conscience—surely discriminate against those who are subversive of this 'common good.' They may, if they are broadminded, tolerate dissidents; but they will never concede to them equal rights—even if equality is a prime social value. The dissidents, after all, may be those who believe in inequality.357

In sum and in short; the distribution of income under liberal capitalism is 'fair' if—and only if—you think that liberty is, or ought to be, the most important political value. If not, then not.358

This will not, of course, excuse all passages in the Tudor literature which sought to increase or maintain returns to some occupations while restricting and limiting expansion in others. Nor will appeals to national security ever justify all of the proposals made for extending protective tariffs and quotas, in either the sixteenth or the twentieth centuries. Still, the tendency has been to uniformly condemn all mercantilist analysis in these areas, without making any allowances for the "extenuating" nature of the stated ends of some of the writers from the pre-classical period. That tendency has not


358Ibid., p. 7.
greatly distorted the picture that most economists would draw of the usefulness of Tudor economic thought to those interested only in improving the power of their analytical apparatus; but as Stigler has told us, that question was never in any great doubt. What has happened is that our historical picture of the analytical abilities of the Tudor writers has become somewhat inaccurate, erring on the side of over-severity; and, more importantly, the improper basis of the poor marks given to the Tudor writers in areas of positive analysis has made it excusable to either ignore, or accept gross distortions of, the Tudor writers' ideas on the ends of economic thought, and their accompanying ideas on the appropriate methodology of economic thought. This second point represents an important violation of the proper tasks of historians of economic thought, as set down by such authorities as Stigler and De Roover.359

Some additional, though relatively minor points may be made concerning Tudor positive analysis once the ends of the writers have been considered. First, as De Roover and Robertson have pointed out, because the ends of Tudor thought were in many essential points similar to and compatible with the ends of medieval thought, some key areas of analysis were changed very little by the Tudor writers. Commenting on the continuation of traditional attitudes toward usury in sixteenth century England, Robertson notes that

359 See p. 161, at n. 339 above.
It was no part of the social policy of any of the Protestant Churches in England to secure the right of taking payment for a loan. English Protestantism, to which supporters of the Protestant = capitalist equation attach so much importance, was very slow to sanction the fundamental condition of a whole-heartedly capitalistic organization of society--freedom in the disposal of capital--on which the credit system depends. 360

It cannot be claimed that Protestantism, for good or for ill, brought about any sudden change in the Christian attitude towards usury. It was not an individualising movement which pretended to make the usury question a personal one. 361

De Roover pointed out that, although the early mercantilist writers placed "greater reliance on mechanical causation" 362 than the Scholastics, and even made "very slow" 363 progress in developing their analytical tools, they had "little interest in price theory," and often "only repeated a doctrine generally accepted by[their] Scholastic predecessors." 364

The Tudor imperial theme, which was essentially a continuation of a medieval idea, similarly led to no fundamentally new questions of analysis, but only to modifications which made national rulers responsible for duties formerly held by the Pope or the Christian Emperors.

New forms of analysis and new policy proposals were usually developed in sixteenth century thought where Renaissance-oriented

360Robertson, p. 127.
361Ibid., p. 131.
363Ibid., p. 358.
364Ibid., p. 351.
guiding principles replaced medieval ends. In England, this only affected some of the lesser guiding principles, and not the overall view of social order that laid behind the idea of the Great Chain of Being. But the revisions which were made did change the Tudor writers' understanding of many basic economic problems, and often led writers to suggest that direct policy measures could and should be developed by governmental bodies. Poverty, for example, instead of a cross that most men were expected to bear patiently, was seen even by such writers as De Malynes and Starkey as a danger to the soul. Starkey wrote that

...though it be so that man, being here in this life present troubled with all worldly adversity, may undoubtedly, by patient suffrance of the same, in the life hereafter attain to the most high felicity, yet, seeing that by no worldly prosperity he is excluded from the same, it may not be doubted but that the most prosperous state of man stands in the virtues of the mind coupled with worldly prosperity.365

To fight poverty, monarchs were asked to develop employment programs and find new means of expanding and directing charity. De Malynes' well known suggestion that low-denomination copper coins be minted to increase almsgiving was apparently tried on a very limited scale, but found wanting.

In every instance where new forms of individual activity were promoted or even tolerated, changes in the methods of analysis developed, though often very slowly. Smith and Hitchcock took self-interest not only as a given fact of nature, but also as a tool to be used in guiding men's activity toward desirable social outcomes, and

365Starkey, pp. 43-44.
as a keystone in their most famous policy proposals. Certainly the Tudor writers still saw that "Overmuch regard of private weal, pleasure and profit is the manifest destruction of all good, public and just common policy." But as Robertson points out, in discussing such basic concepts as market structures, "It was not from greed that the new individualism attacked the restrictions on forestalling and regrating. It was because it believed that free competition would see the market better and more cheaply supplied."

Policies designed to increase production and consumption opportunities and expand the economy of comfort, delight, and diversity were condoned by all but the most Puritan-like Tudor writers. Approved, that is, so long as Sir John Cheke's warning, "For what is unordered plenty, but a wasteful spoil, whereof the inconvenience is so great..., and brings in more hardness of living, greater dearth of all things, and occasions many causes of disease?" was remembered. And so Smith recommended that corporate and guild restrictions on newcomers and even "foreigners" should be suspended so that, "when a singular good workman in any mystery comes, which by his good knowledge might both instruct them of the town, being of the same faculty, and also bring into the town much commodity beside...." In some cases, Smith felt it

366Ibid., p. 65.
367Robertson, p. 212.
368Cheke, reprinted in Holinshed, III., p. 999.
was even worthwhile to lure skilled craftsmen into decaying towns by, "offering them their freedom, yea, their house rent free or some stock lent them of the common stock of such towns." 370

The Tudor writers generally preferred the active life to the life of pure contemplation, with the proper course between an extreme adherence to either position likened to proper sailing. Starkey wrote that

...like as he that, in great tempest and troubled time, governs well his ship and conveys it at the last to the haven and place appointed of his course, is called a good and excellent mariner, and much more praiseworthy, than he which for fear and dread keeps himself in the haven still; so he which in dangerous prosperity, so full of so many occasions of errors and doing amiss, governs his mind well, and keeps it upright, is justly to be called most perfect and wise man; yea, and much more deserves and of much more praise is worthy than he which, for fear of the same dangers, runs in to a religious house, there as in a haven quietly to rest, without so much trouble and disquietness.

...(W)hen prosperity is well used, it is a mean to set man's mind in that state, whereby he shall attain higher felicity. 371

Starkey and the author of Cyvile and Uncyvile Life went on to suggest ways of inducing or requiring gentlemen to live in cities; means of properly educating citizens about their duties; and ways to maintain an appropriate number of soldiers, servingmen, and scholars in the realm. They were willing, if necessary, to simply legislate and enforce any necessary provisions, though they both recognized the practical problems involved with such programs.

370 Ibid.

371 Starkey, p. 43.
Conclusions

A discussion of the positive analysis of the Tudor economic writers soon enters the area of diminishing returns. It is of little value to the modern theorist as a training device, and even the discussion of institutional matters is generally outdated and irrelevant to current problems. There is some material of interest for the pure historian; but for the historian of economic thought there are only a few basic points to be examined, most of which have been covered by earlier writers.

In many areas, Tudor analysis simply took over the medieval body of thought, and the medieval methodology. Where changes in positive methods or conclusions developed, a more fundamental change in ends had usually preceded. In all cases, some very basic analysis and policy proposals were put forward to implement and maintain the Tudor ideas on how society, and economic affairs, should be ordered. The Tudor economic writers did not think of themselves as Utopian thinkers--how utopian Sir Thomas More was is even open to serious question.

One key point remains clear. To understand why the Tudor economic writers wrote what they did, why they influenced--or did not influence--later economic thinkers, and what would be gained or lost by reviving some of the basic tenets of Tudor economic thought, the modern historian of economic thought must understand, explain, and finally evaluate the general world view and the associated lesser
guiding principles of the Tudor thinkers, and the role that economic questions played in that body of thought.
CHAPTER V

THE DEMISE OF TUDOR ECONOMIC THOUGHT, AND WHAT WE HAVE LOST

At the end of Chapter II it was suggested that the Tudor world view, and the Tudor era in general, began to fade even before the death of Elizabeth. The last of the Tudor Englishmen themselves often expressed the feeling that the world they had known was ending—being replaced by "new men" living in a new world of larger geographical extent and perhaps even greater material wealth, but somehow more limited in scope and uncertain in purpose than the world of the English Renaissance.

Those who continued to represent the Tudor age through its last throes, before the age had become merely a glorious myth in English history, rarely took up an active defense of the old world view. Instead they turned inward, disillusioned and almost despairing. If they lived too long into the end of the old period and the beginning of the new, they became, like Ben Jonson, anachronistic and mute. G.B. Harrison has explained that

The main causes of this feeling of disillusionment are much the same as those which Dean Inge expresses in his essay on The Victorian Age. The great men who for so long had been associated with the glories of Elizabeth's reign were passing away and the new generation seemed to possess all their vices and none of their virtues. Hamlet sums it all up in his soliloquy on Death:

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin?
These evils are very general: they exist in most
communities, but at this particular time they were very
vividly realized. Added to these, was a revulsion of
feeling against sensuality. In the full tide of the
Renaissance, Englishmen had unbridled their passions:
with surfeit, they grew ashamed.\[^{372}\]

As the Puritan movement gained strength in England, those who
attacked or rejected the Tudor world view did so openly and with more
conviction. In *Comus* John Milton, the most articulate citizen of
English society from the death of Shakespeare to the Restoration,
presented an enactment of "the cultural change that came over England
in the seventeenth century."\[^{373}\] Comus asked what more reputable
characters did in poems which were written by lesser authors who were
not Puritans:

\[^{372}\] From Harrison's "Introduction" to Marston, pp. x-xi.

\[^{373}\] Laurence Lerner, *The Uses of Nostalgia: Studies in Pastoral
Poetry*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), p. 177. Lerner also comments
on the problem that Milton faced personally in writing *Comus*, noting that,
(p. 164), "That Milton was both Puritan and Humanist has become a
textbook commonplace: for him it was no commonplace, but a long struggle
between the deepest elements of his being."
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loyns
She hutch'd the all-worshipp'd ore, and precious gems,
To store her children with: if all the world
Should in a pot of temperance feed on Pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but Frieze,
Th'all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd,
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth;
And live like Natures bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility;
Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark't with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their Lords,
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and th'unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the Deep
And so bestudd with Stars, that they below
Would grow inur'd to light, and com at last
To gaze upon the Sun with shameless brows.

(705-736)

The chaste Lady of the poem, representing the seventeenth century version of otherworldliness, does not respond to Comus with any great poetry. She rejects him totally, making no distinction between his arguments in defense of materialism and those which he used to persuade her to give up her virginity. She calls him a "worldling," perhaps the greatest insult a Puritan lady could honorably use. She offers no higher cultural alternative—instead, "...there is this one superb moment of rejection and then we sink back to a simple contrast between the beauty and the moral."374 And the problem is that not only does the beautiful poetry of the masque belong, for the most part, to the world Comus has represented, but so too does the old world order. 375

374 Ibid., p. 180.
375 Ibid., pp. 177ff.
Shakespeare, Marston, and Milton delivered the epitaphs for the Great Chain of Being, the life of civic activity, and the Tudor version of the economy of delight. All that remained was an individualism (which was truly undirected until *The Wealth of Nations*, or at least *The Fable of the Bees*), and the idea of imperial duty (which was first placed in the less-than-competent hands of the Stuarts, and then in the iron grasp of Cromwell). The imperial theme hardly survived the Restoration with any basic principles intact similar to those developed and maintained in the Tudor period.

Purely economic problems played a major part in the demise of the Tudor age. Soon after the exultation of the victory over the Spanish armada, and the news that a second armada had been severely weakened and disbanded even before leaving Spain, a series of bad harvests in England and on the Continent forced agricultural prices up steeply and at the same time led many English families to abandon their holdings of land. The problems of inflation (dearth), poverty, underemployment, and even unemployment were again cause for serious concern in terms of social disruption as well as individual discomfort and expense. Plagues seemed to strike with greater than usual intensity and regularity. Renewed complaints against enclosures were heard, and policies which had given some limited support to enclosures in the middle years of Elizabeth's reign when economic conditions had somewhat improved were closely reviewed. Patterns of land ownership

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continued to change, forming a trend which was most evident in periods of dislocation and unrest.

Tawney has suggested that, "Observers became conscious, in the later years of Elizabeth, of an alteration in the balance of social forces." He singled out one famous observer, Sir Walter Raleigh, as particularly astute:

The man who saw deepest into the moral of it all was primarily neither a theorist nor a politician, though he had the gifts of both. He was a great man of action, perhaps the greatest of his age. The doctrine that political stability depends on the maintenance of that Balance of Property, which was later to become a term of art, was not, in essence, novel. It was implicit in the conception of society as an organism, requiring the maintenance of a due proportion between its different members, which was a part of the medieval legacy. But it is one thing to repeat a formula, another to apply it. Raleigh..., in 1615, just after the central crisis of James' reign, was the first...to state the relevance of that conception to the changing circumstances of his day, and to deduce from it the need, not for mere conservatism, but for reform. ...The center of social gravity has shifted; political power is shifting with it. ...The commons to-day command most of the wealth, and all the weapons. It is they, not the heirs of the feudal past, who hold the keys of the future. It is with them; with their natural leaders, the gentry; with the House of Commons, which is their organ, that the monarchy, if it is wise, will hasten to make its peace. 378

Robert Cecil's Great Contract, which would have traded certain Crown prerogatives for an annual grant from Parliament, was in many ways an attempt to make peace with the House of Commons. The proposal was, significantly, rejected not by Parliament, but by the Crown; but

378 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
then James also executed Raleigh. Politically, the Stuarts, if they did in fact want to continue the Tudor view of order, proved inept and also simply unlucky. Henry Stuart, the first Stuart Prince of Wales, was far and away also the most Elizabethan of the Stuarts. Prince Henry was well liked by the English public. He had openly supported Raleigh, and in fact had sharply criticized his father's treatment of the great Elizabethan man of action. When Henry died in 1612, there was great public lamenting and rumours spread that his death had been arranged by some conspiracy of persons in high places. When James interceded to end the rumours, some believed that the King himself feared the disclosure of awkward facts.\footnote{379 See the Dictionary of National Biography article on Sir Edward Coke.} In any event, Henry's death cleared the way for the accession of Charles I, and for further movement away from Tudor social order.

\textbf{What We Have Lost}

It has been conceded that the demise of the Tudor era, and more specifically the demise of Tudor economic thought, did not seriously inhibit the further development of the positive tools of economic analysis. Furthermore, let it be clearly understood that the Tudor writers themselves would certainly have envied the package of analytical tools which modern economists have at their disposal. Regardless of how successful or unsuccessful the Tudor writers were in tracing out problems of economic cause and effect, they were in fact explicitly seeking for such theoretical and even empirical relationships.
There is no reason to believe that, despite their general concern for moral and spiritual questions, the Tudor writers could not have appreciated the distinction between positive and normative thought, and been willing to adopt any system of models in their positive analysis--individual utility functions and free capital markets not excluded--which yielded good predictions and/or pertinent information on policy variables. The Tudor writers did not develop such tools, and therefore they did not use them. That is the one major point to be made about all positive economic thought before 1600 or so, and in fact it is the point that is generally made.

That is not, however, the end of the story on how the Tudor writers would have responded to modern economic thought. Undoubtedly the Tudor writers would have agreed with E.F. Schumacher's complaint that modern economics, since it consciously limits its scope to areas of positive analysis, is unnecessarily and improperly fragmentary:

Society, or a group or an individual within society, may decide to hang on to an activity or asset for non-economic reasons--social, aesthetic, moral or political--but this does in no way alter its uneconomic character. The judgement of economics, in other words, is an extremely fragmentary judgement....

And, no less surely, the Tudors would have traced the source of this unwarranted fragmentation to the same methodological base that Schumacher describes--"...the absurd ideal of making their [economists']
'science' as scientific and precise as physics, as if there were no qualitative difference between mindless atoms and men made in the image of God."

Again, as a useful tool, a means, neither Schumacher nor the Tudor writers would condemn modern positive economics. But it would have seemed even more heretical to the Tudor writers than it did to Schumacher to state, as Keynes did, that only at some future state of material progress would economists "once more value ends above means and prefer the good to the useful." Or that

For at least another hundred years we must pretend that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our Gods for a little longer still. After all, the Tudor writers might have seen where the "fair is foul" illusion had led Macbeth.

The modern methodology implies, Schumacher claimed, that the development of means will dictate the choice of ends. And regarding the ends which are thus dictated, Schumacher wrote that

381 Ibid., p. 7.
383 Ibid.
384 Ibid., p. 51.
The religion of economics has its own code of ethics, and the First Commandment is to behave 'economically'— in any case when you are producing, selling, or buying. It is only when the bargain hunter has gone home and becomes a consumer that the First Commandment no longer applies: he is then encouraged to 'enjoy himself' in any way he pleases. As far as the religion of economics is concerned, the consumer is extra-territorial. 385

It is more than mere coincidence that Schumacher set before the beginning of his book the following quotation from Tawney's Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, which contrasted the basis of modern economic thought with earlier views on the proper ends and methods of economic thought:

Few can contemplate without a sense of exhilaration the splendid achievements of practical energy and technical skill, which, from the latter part of the seventeenth century, were transforming the face of material civilization, and of which England was the daring, if not too scrupulous, pioneer. If, however, economic ambitions are good servants, they are bad masters.

The most obvious facts are the most easily forgotten. Both the existing economic order and too many of the projects advanced for reconstructing it break down through their neglect of the truism that, since even quite common men have souls, no increase in material wealth will compensate them for arrangements which insult their self-respect and impair their freedom. A reasonable estimate of economic organisation must allow for the fact that, unless industry is to be paralysed by recurrent revolts on the part of outraged human nature, it must satisfy criteria which are not purely economic. 386

385 Ibid., p. 45.

386 Ibid., p. v.
Schumacher might just as easily have quoted from The Acquisitive Society, where Tawney made a very similar comparison:

The famous lines in which Piccarda explains to Dante the order of Paradise are a description of a complex and multi-form society which is united by mastering devotion to a common end. By that end all stations are assigned and all activities are valued.

...Such a combination of unity and diversity is possible only to a society which subordinates its activities to the principle of purpose. For what that principle offers is not merely a standard for determining the relations of different classes and groups of producers, but a scale of moral values. Above all, it assigns to economic activity itself its proper place as the servant, not the master, of society. The burden of our civilization is not merely, as many suppose, that the product of industry is ill-distributed, or its conduct tyrannical, or its operation interrupted by embittered disagreements. It is that industry itself has come to hold a position of exclusive predominance among human interests, which no single interest, and least of all the provision of the material means of existence, is fit to occupy. Like a hypochondriac who is so absorbed in the process of his own digestion that he goes to his grave before he has begun to live, industrialized communities neglect the very objects for which it is worth while to acquire riches in their feverish preoccupation with the means by which riches can be acquired.387

Or as a Tudor writer might have said more briefly, but no better, modern society and modern economics as practiced by both market and socialist economists pay too much attention, or rather pay attention only to questions of the stomach, the body, and at best the pleasure center of the mind. The spirit and the mind, taken as a whole, are neglected—neglected in terms of any hierarchy or scale of values even if the argument is accepted that spiritual and aesthetic
satisfaction enter into individual utility functions, where they must be taken as qualitatively no different from physical comforts and pleasures. For having once entered into the utility function and onto indifference curves, there is nothing more the modern economist can say about the relative merits of different forms of pleasure and happiness. Individual utility functions and indifference curves are methodologically sacrosanct, regardless of the social consequences.

On those consequences, Theodore Roszak says in his "Introduction" to *Small Is Beautiful*.

It is as Schumacher tells us: 'When the available 'spiritual space' is not filled by some higher motivations, then it will necessarily be filled by something lower--by the small, mean, calculating attitude to life which is rationalized in the economic calculus.'

If that is so, then we need a nobler economics that is not afraid to discuss spirit and conscience, moral purpose and the meaning of life, an economics that aims to educate and elevate people, not merely to measure their low-grade behavior. 388

Roszak claims that Schumacher's economics is that nobler economics. In fact, Schumacher and Tawney (who proposed a nobler economics of his own in *The Acquisitive Society* and *Equality*), both realized that many of their ideas were not new, but rather very standard versions of ancient and Christian social thought. (Schumacher preferred to see his inspiration in "Buddhist Economics," but his essential

388 Schumacher, p. 9.
points on the ends of social and economic thought are hardly different from Tawney's.)

The noble economics of these (and other) dissenting twentieth-century economic writers can potentially be of some use in studies on earlier forms of noble economics. Here, to see more fully how the Tudor writers would have responded to modern economic thought, all that must be done is to review comments on current economic thought made by writers who have known modern economics, but have claimed that the ends of economics should still be the ends which the Tudor writers held, or at least very similar to those ends. Such material is not wanting. In fact, it is a little surprising to see how frequently such complaints have been heard in recent years from professional economists and respected social commentators--i.e., from those who generally understand and accept the tasks and tools of positive economic analysis. Even a handful of examples is useful in showing the current extent of the desire to broaden economic thought, the diversity of backgrounds of those who have voiced such opinions, and the general sort of complaints that those writers who expect social thought to have moral as well as analytical content make concerning modern thought.

In a recent article entitled "Second Thoughts on the Human

389 It is not wanting even in sources taken from popular magazines. For example, Henry Kissinger recently said that both the United States and Western Europe, "have become so obsessed with economics that perhaps there has been a spiritual undernourishment, and we should see that it is a problem that goes beyond communism." Neil Hickey, "Henry Kissinger's Shuttle Diplomacy," TV Guide, (Jan. 7, 1978), p. 5.
Prospect," Robert Heilbroner writes that

Material advance, the most profoundly distinguishing attribute of industrial capitalism and socialism alike, has proved unable to satisfy the human spirit. Not only the quest for profit but the cult of efficiency have shown themselves ultimately corrosive for human well-being. A society dominated by the machine process, dependent on factory and office routine, celebrating itself in the act of individual consumption, is finally insufficient to retain our loyalty.390

Irving Kristol has pointed out that

One of the keystones of modern economic thought is that it is impossible to have an a priori knowledge of what constitutes happiness for other people; that such knowledge is incorporated in an individual's 'utility schedules'; and this knowledge, in turn, is revealed by the choices the individual makes in a free market. This is not merely the keystone of modern economic thought--it is also the keystone of modern, liberal, secular society itself. This belief is so deeply ingrained in us that we are inclined to explain any deviation from it as perverse and pathological. Yet it is a fact that for several millennia, until the advent of modernity, people did not believe any such thing--would, indeed, have found such a belief to be itself shockingly pathological and perverse.

...Now, we know from our experience of central economic planning that this pre-modern approach is fallacious--but if, and only if, you define 'happiness' and 'satisfaction' in terms of material production and material consumption of commodities. If you do not define 'happiness' or 'satisfaction' in this way, if you refuse to 'think economically', then the pre-modern view is more plausible than not. It is, after all, one thing to say that there is no authentically superior wisdom about people's tastes and preferences in commodities; it is quite another thing to deny that there is a superior wisdom about the spiritual dimensions of a good life. Even today, that last proposition does not sound entirely ridiculous to us. And if you believe that man's spiritual life is infinitely more important than his trivial

and transient adventures in the marketplace, then you may tolerate a free market for practical reasons, within narrow limits, but you certainly will have no compunctions about overriding it if you think the free market is interfering with more important things. 391

Tibor Scitovsky, searching for reasons "for our increasing frustration with our freely chosen lives" in his recent book entitled, significantly, The Joyless Economy, asks

Could it not be that we seek our satisfaction in the wrong things, or in the wrong way, and are then dissatisfied with the outcome? ... It is a difficult question to deal with because we are accustomed to blaming the system or the economy and have gotten out of the habit of seeking the causes of our trouble in ourselves. That was an approach popular in past, more religious, ages....

Economists today... accept unquestionably the consumer's judgment of what is best for him, his tastes as the outcome of that judgment, and his market behavior as the reflection of his tastes. Economists will not analyze the motivation of consumer behavior, claiming that that would be beyond their competence and that it would inevitably involve an improper judgment: that of judging one man's way of making the best of his life by another man's standards....

That approach overlooks the fact that tastes are highly variable, easily influenced by example, custom, and suggestion, constantly changed by the accumulation of experience, and modified by changing prices and the availability of some satisfactions and the unavailability of others. ... In short, the economists' standard procedure of postulating that each consumer knows best what is good for him and trusting the consumer's behavior to reflect that knowledge seems to be unscientific. 392

In a later article, Scitovsky suggests that, "Economists have rightly been reluctant to engage in social engineering and tamper with consumer preferences"; but nevertheless he sets out to develop the


"early stage" of a policy which would induce the public, "to change its expenditure patterns in ways that would reduce resource costs without reducing consumer satisfaction." That is to be accomplished by educating the public in ways designed to increase "consumption skills," instead of concentrating solely on production skills.

Guy Routh used the first chapter of his recent work on The Origin of Economic Ideas to present past and present criticisms of orthodox economics made by dissatisfied economists. The general tone of many of these complaints, Routh notes, was that "the orthodox apparatus was by its nature ill-fitted for identifying or serving the needs of humanity." Routh also complains that, within the paradigm of orthodox economics, "the economic-technician should be no more concerned with moral values than the motor mechanic with the route of the bus he is required to repair."

It should also be noted that at least a part of the recent literature on the limits to economic growth explicitly criticizes orthodox economic thought for neglecting spiritual and moral issues while basing utility, demand, and ultimately growth theory on the assumed end of unlimited physical wants. The spiritual desirability of finite economic growth is also claimed explicitly in the no-growth

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395 Ibid., p. 27.
literature. For example, in the famous Club of Rome report it was explained that

Population and capital are the only quantities that need be constant in the equilibrium state. Any human activity that does not require a large flow of irreplaceable resources or produce severe environmental degradation might continue to grow indefinitely. In particular, those pursuits that many people would list as the most desirable and satisfying activities of man--education, art, music, religion, basic scientific research, athletics, and social interactions--could flourish.396

In a recent book on the economics of the steady-state, some "underlying value assumptions" were openly stated to suggest that the benefits of economic growth and increasing levels of material wealth are limited and finite, subject to ranges of diminishing and even negative returns:

Nearly all traditional religions teach man to conform his soul to reality by knowledge, self-discipline, and restraint on the multiplication of desires, as well as on the lengths to which he will go to satisfy some desire. The modern religious attitudes of technological scientism and growthmania seek, after the manner of magic, to subjugate reality and bend it to the will and whim of some men, usually to the unmeasured detriment of other men. ... For the traditional religious attitude, there is such a thing as material sufficiency, and beyond that admittedly vague and historically changing amount, the goal of life becomes wisdom, enjoyment, cultivation of the mind and soul, and community.397


There are obviously some vestiges of the Tudor desire to maintain economic thought as a subordinate, yet at least moral (and usually teleological) system of social analysis. As Tawney wrote some fifty years ago,

...it is evident that the whole body of regulation, by which modern societies set limits to the free play of economic self-interest, implies the acceptance, whether deliberate or unconscious, of moral standards, by reference to which certain kinds of economic conduct are pronounced illegitimate. On the other hand, there are indications that religious thought is no longer content to dismiss the transactions of business and the institutions of society as matters irrelevant to the spirit.398

It must be better to examine these moral standards openly, both in terms of their effect on economic organization and the effects of economic organization on them, than to use them "unconsciously" and haphazardly. And if economists begin to discuss such standards openly, it seems unlikely that questions of means will be allowed to continue to dictate the ends and method of economic thought--or if they are, the position must be defended and consciously maintained, and so the analysis will at least have ethical and spiritual rigour as well as mathematical and geometrical consistency.

When such questions are taken up, the usefulness of Tudor economic thought takes on new dimensions, different in nature from the usual questions of purely historical interest. As Tawney noted,

398 Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, pp. 11-12.
The attempt to judge economic activity by ethical criteria raises problems which are eternal, and it is possible that a study of the thought of an age when that attempt was made, if with little success, at least with conviction and persistence, may prove, even today, not wholly without instruction.399

Again, that does not mean that we are to literally take over whole sections of Tudor economic thought without careful analysis and evaluation, or that we are to write off modern positive economic analysis. Tawney saw clearly that, "the appeal of the hard-headed Tudor statesmen to traditional sanctions...(is) bad evidence for practice, but good evidence for thought."400 It may well be found that a good economic order can exist without the use of such Tudor practices as wage regulations, import restrictions, sumptuary laws, or even torturing usurers and errant ministers of religion and state. But the foundation of Tudor economic thought must be taken more seriously, and the potential implications of that thought for very basic economic institutions must be understood. Tawney saw that Tudor economic thought and policy measures almost always

\[...\] rest on the assumption that the institution of property, the transactions of the marketplace, the whole fabric of society and the whole range of its activities,

399 Ibid., p. 11. Contrast this with Muchmore, p. 358, who claims that, "[Malynes'] works deserve examination only because they are valid representatives of the 'mercantile age,' and because they demonstrate the murky origins of the economic discipline."

400 Ibid., p. 4.
stand by no absolute title, but must justify themselves at the bar of religion. They insist that Christianity has no more deadly foe than the *appetitus divitiarum infinitus*, the unbridled indulgence of the acquisitive appetite.\(^{401}\)

Even if it is clear that Tudor economic thought could prove useful in such pursuits, some basic questions remain. Why should economists consider themselves obligated (and competent) to discuss moral and spiritual ends of economic organization, and the ethical implications of their analysis and policy proposals? Or in stronger words, do not the concepts of specialization and division of labor restrict economists from such discussions? It must be admitted that if most economists are to contribute to such discussions, they will need additional instruction in their training programs on the admittedly difficult subject of economics as a moral science.\(^{402}\)

But whether modern economists are currently competent in such fields or not, calls on them to contribute in these areas are no less pressing. Specialization has been a many-edged sword; and because modern philosophers, religious leaders, politicians, and even other social theorists generally have a limited knowledge of economic theory and

\(^{401}\)Ibid.

evidence, it is often more dangerous for economists to avoid these troublesome areas than to participate in them with all appropriate humility and understandings of the limits of their knowledge.

And in fact, a very basic part of the economists' training does prepare them to evaluate moral issues and implications. It prepares them with an appropriate method to use in discussing questions of ends, as well as means, if they will only use that method. A recent introductory economics textbook begins with, and is titled after, Keynes' description of economics. According to Keynes,

> The Theory of Economics does not furnish a body of settled conclusions immediately applicable to policy. It is a method rather than a doctrine, an apparatus of mind, a technique of thinking which helps its possessor to draw correct conclusions.\(^\text{403}\)

To have a professional body of scholars with extensive training in such a method not consider and discuss questions of spiritual ends and models of moral and ethical behavior is a tragic waste of resources. To have them not discuss at least the ethical issues which naturally intrude on many of their studies is to deny a large part of what economics was long considered to be, and to allow means to dictate ends. The pure theoretician or econometrician should realize that such a method is unsound; the historian of economic thought should be reminded of Cardinal Newman's statement, "Political economy is...a

science at the same time dangerous and leading to occasions of sin."\(^{404}\)

Taking this discussion to heart, one final task remains for this study. Scitovsky entered an "early stage" of developing a policy to change consumers' tastes and preferences with the important objective of conserving energy resources. An "early stage" of evaluating the spiritual and ethical content of Tudor economic thought will be briefly presented below--for without such an evaluation, especially in studies of "pre-analytic" economic thought, to use Schumpeter's phrase, there is no way of fully appreciating what we have lost with the demise of that body of thought.

Fortunately the task is not a difficult one as far as most aspects of Tudor economic thought are concerned. The general ideas of the Chain of Being and the body politic are purely traditional and Christian in nature, and as such are taken by many commentators as yielding true and meaningful statements on the proper ends of man's activity and his social organization. The same is true for the Tudor version of the imperial theme. The ideas of the Tudor economy of delight and the rise of economic individualism were also kept, at least by orthodox Tudor writers, in line with the ancient and Christian ideas of moderation, including the concern over the proper uses and ways of seeking after wealth.

What remains is the Tudor concept of civic activity, and the

associated idea of moving down the Great Chain of Being--approximating
the divine through the process of *imitatio dei*, by adding to the
"orderly variousness" of this world. Many, it is clear, will find the
active life less satisfying than the more traditional goal of the
contemplative life. Similarly, some have claimed that the great
literature of the English Renaissance eloquently supports and describes
an inferior philosophy. These challenges are serious, and can be taken
up only if it is appreciated how widely and how deeply the Tudor concern
over order ran. Chaos followed where order was taken away; virtue,
security and prosperity came where order was maintained and extended.
Temporal rulers and magistrates were asked to carefully observe and
regulate men's activity in economic, political and spiritual matters
alike to insure that order prevailed. All men were to produce and
consume according to their degree. Any man could disrupt social and
world order; but all men could serve in achieving greater order--though
not always by pursuing their own economic self-interest. The active
life and the idea of moving down the Great Chain of Being, properly
conceived, suggest very different modes of approximation than the
ideas of contemplation and assimilation, but are not as different in
intent (and perhaps even result) as might be expected. Any use of the
Great Chain of Being image, it is clear, has in mind a definite system
of order, including a truly organic view of society. That sense of
order and holism is not a feature of modern society, or of modern
economic thought. There is some reason to think that that speaks
poorly for the present.
Conclusions

The loss associated with the demise of Tudor economic thought was, and is, substantial. As Irving Kristol has noted,

For well over a hundred and fifty years now, social critics have been warning us that bourgeois society was living off the accumulated moral capital of traditional religion and traditional moral philosophy, and that once this capital was depleted, bourgeois society would find its legitimacy even more questionable. These critics were never, in their lifetime, either popular or persuasive. The educated classes of liberal-bourgeois society simply could not bring themselves to believe that religion or philosophy was that important to a polity. They could live with religion or morality as a purely private affair, and they could not see why everyone else—after a proper secular education, of course—could not do likewise. Well, I think it is becoming clear that religion, and a moral philosophy associated with religion, is far more important politically than the philosophy of liberal individualism admits.\(^{405}\)

Schumpeter saw the same problem:

In breaking down the pre-capitalist framework of society, capitalism thus broke not only the barriers that impeded its progress but also flying buttresses that prevented its collapse. That process, impressive in its relentless necessity, was not merely a matter of removing institutional deadwood, but of removing partners of the capitalist stratum, symbiosis with whom was an essential element of the capitalist schema.\(^{406}\)

It has been suggested here that spiritual and ethical concerns were important much later in the history of economic thought than is generally realized—important even in a time when such economic problems and developments as inflation, unemployment, expanding

\(^{405}\) Kristol, "Capitalism, Socialism and Nihilism," p. 12. Kristol's emphasis is given.

\(^{406}\) Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, p. 139.
commerce, industrialization, and even social analysis were taking on modern proportions. It was suggested that for some time questions of ends shaped the development of economic analysis; and it may even be conceded that the demise of the traditional system of ends in many ways freed the analytical thinkers to develop their tools more rapidly than would otherwise have been possible--that is not an essential point.

Modern economic thought is unnecessarily mute on questions of social and individual ends. The Tudor system of ends--of an end, with lesser guiding principles--deserves to be considered by modern social thinkers, including economists; and where possible our analysis and policy should be directed towards ends at least very similar to those discussed by the Tudor writers. There is no hope of achieving a broad social consensus on policies designed to deal with such problems as poverty, economic development, or even revenues for governmental bodies, unless it is widely believed that economic society and economic thought are directed toward the provision of more good, as well as more goods.
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E.H.R. - English Historical Review.

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Approved:

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