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"To fashion grounds, from whence artes might be coyn'd": Commerce and the Postlapsarian State in Greville's Poetry

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Taken together, the literary works of Fulke Greville represent a sustained and frequently provocative analysis of the condition of humanity in an irrevocably postlapsarian world. Working from a largely Calvinist perspective, these works examine the effects of "declination," Greville's label for the process by which an essentially corrupt humanity becomes increasingly alienated from God and from the conditions of an ideal prelapsarian epoch.[1] As Matthew Woodcock notes, there is a "continuity" across Greville's works provided by their "extended meditation upon both the gulf and the connection between the worldly and divine."[2] The idea of "declination" provides a framework for the development of the various political, religious, and legal institutions governing humanity, all of which are affected by the taint of postlapsarian corruption and, however much they might attempt to emulate divine precedents, their claims to embody transcendent truths are ultimately suspect and their authority is undermined by the corrupt reason engendered by the fall. This is embodied most readily by absolute monarchy, which, in the context of Greville's views on "declination," is an institution that continues to fall away from its prelapsarian pattern and its divine precedents. Such a view is summarized in Jonathan Dollimore's observations on the construct of the shadow in Greville's works to represent monarchical authority, according to which "the discrepancy between divine and secular is appalling (and getting worse), [but] we do at least have the opportunity to try and live according to the closest approximation of divine order," an outlook that results in Greville's pragmatic support for absolute monarchy, or "'shaddowed' tyranny," because it is at least "a lesser evil than the tyranny which is not even a shadow of the ideal order."[3] Whilst Dollimore goes on to argue that the inherent paradoxes contained within this political framework act as catalysts for the development of the tragic plot in *Mustapha*, Woodcock observes a similar, yet more positive outlook towards postlapsarian institutions in the later verse treatises, in which "Greville dwells upon the debased form of each subject in hand and charts its 'declination' from prelapsarian perfection before offering his commentary on its positive manifestation and qualities."[4] This schema is realized most extensively in the longest of his verse treatises, the *Treatise of Monarchy*, which begins by looking back nostalgically to the classical golden age in which humanity

[1] The influence of Calvinism on Greville's works is considered in Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 297-300; Elaine Y. L. Ho, "Fulke Greville's *Caelica* and the Calvinist Self," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 32.1 (1992), 35-78; June Dwyer, "Fulke Greville's Aesthetic: Another Perspective," *Studies in Philology* 78.3 (1981), 255-74; and G. F. Waller, "Fulke Greville's Struggle with Calvinism," *Studia Neophilologica* 44.2 (1972), 295-314. Adrian Streete, *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), argues that Greville's work "affords us an insight into how an educated English Calvinist assimilated and grappled with the intellectual challenges presented by the polymath of Geneva" (85). For more general comment on Greville's intellectual outlook, see Ronald A. Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 17-31; and Joan Rees, *Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, 1554-1628: A Critical Biography* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 182-98.
[2] Matthew Woodcock, "'The World is Made for Use': Themes and Form in Fulke Greville's Verse Treatises," *Sidney Journal* 19.1-2 (2001), 143-59: 144.
[3] Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, 3rd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 122-3.
[4] Woodcock, "'The World is Made for Use'," 148.

lived as part of "One republique" before the fall of humanity led to the development of monarchy and its attendant institutions.[5]

One of the key focal points in this analysis is upon the role of economics in relation to the postlapsarian state, a topic that is treated at some length in the *Treatise of Monarchy*.[6] I show in this essay how Greville's analysis of early modern economics relates to a tradition of economic writing that emphasizes the political importance of commerce, a view that informs Greville's pragmatic support for commercial enterprise. Greville's explorations of the political importance of "traffic" also highlights it as a vital source of political stability that undergirds a balance of power, both between nations and between the sovereigns and their subjects. Such ideas are similar to a current of support for free trade and maritime enterprise rooted in natural rights theories, an outlook promulgated most notably by the Dutch jurist, Hugo Grotius. Yet I go on to outline how such views are complicated by the fact that Greville's analyses of the instruments of the early modern state tend to follow a pattern that contrasts the ideal and "natural" prelapsarian incarnations of the various political institutions with their debased equivalents, before outlining their most pragmatic uses as engines of sovereign power in their civil contexts within the postlapsarian state. Greville's representation of the origins of commerce co-exists awkwardly with the classical narrative of the beginnings of postlapsarian politics, as well as underlining how virtuous and industrious commerce must be accommodated by a lapsed humanity and as a bulwark supporting the compromised institution of monarchy. Such emphases in Greville's works provoke a number of ambiguities that arise as he attempts to accommodate economic policy within the framework of "declination" and in his Calvinist-influenced narrative of the development of the postlapsarian political state.

Two out of the fifteen sections in the *Treatise of Monarchy* are devoted to economic matters (including a section "Of Commerce" and one "Of Croune Revenue"), both of which account for over one hundred of the 664 stanzas of which *Monarchy* is comprised. Such a level of attention to these matters serves to highlight Greville's status as an economic thinker and his recognition of the economy as one of the principal constituents of the early modern state. This outlook aligns his political thinking with that of Jean Bodin, who devotes one of his *Six Bookes of a Common-Weale* (translated into English in 1606) to the various roles of the economy in the early modern commonwealth, as well as placing him as part of a developing tradition of English writers, including Thomas Gresham, Philip Caesar, John Browne, John Wheeler, and Robert Hitchcock, whose works, according to Aaron Kitch, "examined the effects of commodity circulation, currency exchange, and credit on the structure and operation of the English state."[7] The influence of such an outlook is

[5] Fulke Greville, *The Treatise of Monarchy*, stanza 1, in *The Complete Plays and Poems of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (1554-1628)*, ed. G. A. Wilkes, 2 vols. (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008). All further references to the *Treatise*, denoted *TM*, are to this edition and given parenthetically in the text by stanza number.

[6] As is the case with the majority of Greville's works, the dating of the *Treatise of Monarchy* has proved to be a matter of some difficulty. Commentators have generally taken seriously Greville's account of the origins of the *Treatise* in the *Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney*, in which he explains that the material was originally "divided into three parts with intention of the author to be disposed among their fellows into three diverse acts of the tragedies," suggesting he began work on this text during the late 1590s and early 1600s. (Fulke Greville, *A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney*, in *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. John Gouws [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986], 91.) Greville's account in the *Dedication*, along with references to various topical events that took place during the early 1600s, suggests that he continued to revise the *Treatise* during his retirement from the court. For further comment, see Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville*, 325-40; Rees, *Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, 120-2; and *The Complete Plays and Poems of Fulke Greville*, ed. Wilkes, 2:15-16.

[7] Aaron Kitch, *Political Economy and the States of Literature in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 3. Kitch further argues that such analyses represent an embryonic form of what would become the discipline known as "political economy," representing as they do the work of "a range of sixteenth century authors [who] redefined economics as a mode of inquiry that revealed new relations between individuals and

demonstrated in the section on "Croune Revenue," in which Greville labels the "pillars of estate" as "Church, lawes, trade, [and] honour" (*TM*, 433), thus highlighting economic policy as one of the key engines of early modern government in line with the increasing emphasis placed upon trade in political writing during the sixteenth century. As Kitch notes, such a tendency is well illustrated by Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum*, which is notable for the way in which it "adds the figure of the merchant to the conventional triad of the three 'estates' of knights, clergy, and farmers."[8] Such a tradition arose from the growing recognition of the importance of such issues as trade, credit, and taxation, and their relations to early modern political manoeuvring. This has provided the stimulus for a range of critical debates, which have intensified over the last few decades, focusing upon the relationship between early modern texts and economic matters. Laura Caroline Stevenson, for example, discusses the economic changes that took place during Elizabeth's reign, resulting particularly in the rise and growing political significance of an increasingly mobilized mercantile class; this is characterized, particularly, by a profound reconfiguration of "the boundaries of social theory in order to create a place for what, some time later, appeared as commercial self-consciousness."[9] Many similar critical approaches have developed within the theoretical framework of the "new economic criticism," which, according to Linda Woodbridge, works from the premise that "money, commerce, and economics make a good deal of difference to English Renaissance literature."[10] However, unlike the productions of the professional dramatists and pamphleteers upon which such economic criticism most typically focuses, Greville's literary works were largely independent from the pressures of "the market."[11] In the context of the postlapsarian character of the political outlooks informing these works, Greville also occupies an ambiguous position in comparison to the natural law principles underpinning much of the contemporary economic thought. The use of the mythical framework as a vehicle for his postlapsarian Calvinist analysis of early modern politics also sees him develop a framework for his economic thought that bypasses the

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society, as well as between texts and their communities of readers" (ibid.).

[8] Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. Mary Dewar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 9.

[9] Laura Caroline Stevenson, *Praise and Paradox: Merchants and Craftsmen in Elizabethan Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1.

[10] Linda Woodbridge, ed., *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 9. Douglas Bruster, "On a Certain Tendency in Economic Criticism of Shakespeare," in Woodbridge, ed., *Money and the Age of Shakespeare*, provides a useful consideration of the theoretical implications of the New Economic Criticism. A landmark volume in this area is Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, eds., *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Interface of Literature and Economics* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 1999), which includes an introduction outlining some of the key considerations of this methodology. Peter F. Grav, "Taking Stock of Shakespeare and the New Economic Criticism," *Shakespeare* 8.1 (2012), 111-36, provides a useful review that discusses how this methodology has been applied in Shakespearean scholarship, which has obvious bearings on early modern scholarship more broadly. Stephen Deng, *Coinage and State Formation in Early Modern English Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), provides a valuable analysis of the relationship between economics and early modern statecraft.

[11] The majority of the *Treatise of Monarchy* was most probably written following Greville's withdrawal from the court. Margot Heinemann lists Greville as one of the Essexian peers whose exclusion from the court "offered an opportunity to salvage and extend their wealth and power with a degree of independence." ("Rebel Lords, Popular Playwrights, and Political Culture: Notes on the Jacobean Patronage of the Earl of Southampton," in Cedric C. Brown, ed., *Patronage, Politics, and Literary Traditions in England, 1558-1658* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 139). For discussion of the effects of market forces upon early modern literature, see, for example, Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Theodore B. Leinwand, *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and David J. Baker, *On Demand: Writing for the Market in Early Modern England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

contested historiography of the transition from feudalism to capitalism.[12] In these ways, Greville represents a significant and distinctive voice in relation to these contexts.

i.

In his political works, Greville goes beyond theoretical analysis of his subjects and draws upon his own considerable administrative experience. As Ronald A. Rebholz notes, the *Treatise of Monarchy* is a product of his attempts to "generalize his already extensive experience of the court into theoretical statements about government," which he began during the final years of Elizabeth's reign.[13] His various roles, culminating in the early part of his political career with his appointment as Treasurer of the Navy, and his experience of the factionalism at court provide the stimulus for Greville's emphasis upon the expedience of commerce in relation to the political realities facing early modern governors. Early in his career, Greville was also commissioned to produce a report outlining potential sites in which the newly formed East India Company could trade.[14] Rebholz argues that such experiences served to shape "the treatise's curious blend of traditional political idealism, pessimism about achieving that ideal, and emphasis upon practical means of preserving that established order."[15] In this way, the practical and didactic elements of this text are accommodated within the narrative of "declination" which frames the political comment with commerce being presented as originating as a gift from the gods who "tooke compassion" on "mankinds simplicitie" (*TM*, 361) and presented them with a means of negotiating the disorder and brutalization triggered by the end of the golden age.

Contemporary analyses of trade often had a prominent ideological bent. Kitch argues, for instance, that militant Protestant figures promulgated an outlook that equated "vigorous trade with the stability of the Protestant state" with a vision of "a new English empire that would advance trade and Protestant reform simultaneously," for which a strong navy was essential.[16] Such an outlook was, according to Kitch, a shaping influence upon Edmund Spenser's promotion of a current of "heroic commerce" in his poetry.[17] There are a number of instances in which Greville promulgates similar rhetoric by praising England for its maritime skill:

> *England* this little, yet much envied *Ile*,
> By spreading fame, and powre many wayes,
> Admitt the worlde at her land conquests smile,

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[12] One of the key proponents of this historical narrative was Lawrence Stone in his influential monographs, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) and *The Causes of the English Revolution*, *1529-1642* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972). Stone argued for the emergence of a new bourgeois mercantile class that threatened the traditional influences of the aristocracy. Stone's arguments were challenged in a number of influential studies, including Conrad Russell, *Unrevolutionary England, 1602-1649* (London: Hambledon Press, 1990); and Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996). Responses to this contested historiography in relation to literary studies include Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), an Althusserian analysis of a number of works of early modern literature; and Paul Cefalu, *Revisionist Shakespeare: Transitional Ideologies in Texts and Contexts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), which engages with revisionist historiography in order to challenge traditional Whig and Marxist interpretations of Shakespeare's plays.

[13] Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville*, 147.

[14] For a transcription of this report, see John Bruce, ed., *Annals of the Honorable East-India Company* (London: Black, Parry, and Kingsbury, 1810), 121-6.

[15] Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville*, 147.

[16] Kitch, *Political Economy*, 25.

[17] Kitch, *Political Economy,* 19.

Yet is her greatnes reverenc'd by Seas,
The *Ocean* beinge to her both a wall,
And engine to revenge her wronges withall.
(*TM*, 411)

In this stanza, Greville certainly equates nautical prowess with a militaristic nationalism. The importance of seafaring is underlined as a source of England's "greatnes" and a means for the country to be "reverenc'd" by other nations. The sea provides both providential protection to the nation—as "a wall"—and, because of the nation's peculiar ability to traverse the ocean, an "engine" through which national interests can be served. In spite of such rhetoric, though, there is also a potential critique of English foreign policy contained within this stanza. As a militant Protestant frustrated by England's apparently limited intervention to contain the influence of Spanish hegemony overseas, Greville's reference to "land conquests" in this stanza appears somewhat perfunctory, and an implicit acknowledgment that the English nation must be commended for its maritime power—in terms of both the strength of its navy and its commercial power—rather than being measured by military interventions on land.

In spite of such rhetoric, the key focus for Greville's commentary is upon the political expediency of commerce rather than its potential uses as a vehicle for the expression of a heroic Protestant national identity. Greville particularly advocates traffic due to its potential to act as a balancing influence in terms of geopolitical manoeuvring. Such "mutuall traffique" (*TM*, 379) has the potential to foster a culture of interdependency and co-operation between nations:

To ballance theis by equall weights, or measure,
The audyt of our owne must be the guide;
As what for use, for honor, gayne or pleasure,
At home or is, or els might be supplied;
The rest so by exchange to rise, or fall,
As while none loose, wee might yet gaine by all. (*TM*, 380)

Commerce, in its optimum form, has a positive and stabilizing geopolitical influence, with an ability to promote an amicable and mutually beneficial form of international relations.

Such outlooks seem to occupy similar theoretical ground to contemporary natural rights defences of commerce that placed emphasis upon the freedom of nations to engage in maritime trading as a natural human right. This tradition culminated, arguably, with the arguments promulgated by Hugo Grotius. According to Peter Borschberg, Grotius' *Mare Liberum*, highlights "the need for a global trading regime with the free exchange of goods and persons."[18] Such arguments are based upon natural rights by upholding the right of free trade as "something so basic, so fundamental to humankind, that it cannot be rightfully denied, curtailed or impeded."[19] In his analysis of maritime trading, Greville places similar emphasis upon the importance of traffic, advising princes, in particular, that "riches be / The safest gages, to keepe men in peace" (*TM*, 422) and that they should make it their aim to "make all men rich, not minute bound" (*TM*, 423) through their subjects' rights to engage in exploration and maritime trading.

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[18] Peter Borschberg, *Hugo Grotius, the Portuguese, and Free Trade in the East Indies* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2011), 1.

[19] Borschberg, *Hugo Grotius,* 1. See also Martine Julia van Ittersum, *Profit and Principle: Hugo Grotius, Natural Rights Theories and the Rise of Dutch Power in the East Indies (1595-1615)* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), for a broader analysis.

However, such idealized visions of co-operation through commercial independence are frequently offset by Greville's rehearsals of the topical realities of trading practices and the abuses of commerce. There is an acknowledgment of the dangers of a participant in a trading agreement capitalizing upon "Advantages of tyme, words, humors, witt": such a "surfett ever brings disease with it, / Which (lyke a torrent) failes not to breake owt, / Leavinge with losse of faith, both states in dowbte" (*TM*, 381). Just as there is the potential for all participants to benefit mutually from cooperative trade, so there is also the possibility of negative consequences should such trading be commenced "Unequallie" (*TM*, 381) between the various parties. One of the main "diseases" wrought by such an imbalance of commercial power takes the form of one party being able to harness their "crafte" and "wytte" in order to "bynde pow're" with "deceaving rates" (*TM*, 382). The actions of the Hanseatic League, a coalition of merchants from Germanic and northern European states, provide a ready example of this. According to Greville, these merchants would take advantage of their commercial power and "sometimes tyrranise / The Northern Princes, in their infancie / Of trade, and commerce" (*TM*, 383).

Such a view is in line with a number of prominent contemporary attitudes towards the Hanseatic League. In the preface to *Principal Navigations* (1599), for example, Richard Hakluyt condemns the "inveterate malice and craftie crueltie of the *Hanse*."[20] Although Greville targets his anti-Hanseatic rhetoric against the League's exploitation of "Northern Princes," he may also be alluding to the League's perceived antagonism towards English national interests. Such an outlook is informed by an incident that took place in 1589, in which the English fleet impounded a number of Hanse vessels carrying supplies to Lisbon. The official declaration justifying this intervention defends the move against potential charges of infringing "the law of Nations, and of the ancient contracts made betwixt the Kings of England and the Hanse marchants" and of being "contemners of the Newtralitie which the said Hanse marchants doe challenge to themselves."[21] The declaration then underlines that the English fleet acted in the national interest, reminding the Hanse merchants that "the king of Spaine is transported with a mortall hatred against the Queenes Majestie of England," and that they have certain responsibilities, given that "all the inhabitants of the Hanse Townes are very good favourers of the reformed Religion, and mortall enemies to the Romish errors."[22] It also asks the pithy rhetorical question of how "men so well instructed, could more respect their private gaine, I will not say their filthie lucre, then their owne securitie, the preservation of their Countrey, and the propagation of true Religion."[23] Relations between England and the Hanseatic League deteriorated even further in 1597 following the expulsion of the Company of Merchant Adventurers from the Hanse city of Stade. Relating this incident in his *Treatise of Commerce* (1601), John Wheeler condemns the "malicious and injurious working of a few of the Hanse Townes, instigated & holpen forward by the King of Spaines ministers."[24] By referring to the apparently injurious actions of the Hanseatic League, Greville highlights the potential dangers of commercial excesses upon international political stability, and underlines the need for princes to be on their guard against being "deceav'd by homage" (*TM*, 383).

Greville also singles out the Ottoman Empire as a threat to the balanced and cooperative trade he advocates. He condemns the "tyrranie / Of that great lorde," the Ottoman

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[20] Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation Made by Sea and Over-land* (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker, 1599), *6^r.

[21] Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, A2^r.

[22] Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations,* A2^v, B1^v.

[23] Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, B1^v.

[24] John Wheeler, *A Treatise of Commerce: Wherein are shewed the commodities arising by a well ordered and ruled Trade, such as that of the Societie of Merchants Adventurers is proved to be* (London: John Harison, 1601), C2^r.

Sultan, who has caused his "vaste wealth" to be "allaid" by centralizing commercial activity upon the three cities of Constantinople, Cairo, and Aleppo (*TM*, 400). Such a course of action has caused these cities to become "greedy ill digesting wombes, / Not treasuries of wealth, but rather toombes" (*TM*, 400), thereby threatening the balance of trade and the potentially beneficial distribution of wealth. By highlighting the example of the Ottoman Empire, Greville warns of the dangers of an economic policy that sees commercial activity concentrated in sites of excessive accumulation and consumption, rather than one that favours distribution of wealth. Through these examples Greville therefore underlines the need for the direct intervention of the sovereign to take action against commercial enterprises that threaten the national interest or have a detrimental effect upon the circulation of wealth. Commerce, at its best, therefore underpins an idealized relationship between nations in which "neyther may the other tyrranise, / But live like twynns owt of one bodie growne" (*TM*, 402). In this way, commercial relationships represent a vital means of guaranteeing peace between nations.

However, in addition to the practical problems besetting these natural rights approaches, these points are affected by the fact that they appear within the postlapsarian political narrative in which they appear. In the remaining sections, I highlight that, whilst Greville points towards natural rights defences of commerce, such arguments are complicated by his austere Calvinist analysis of the effects of declination, and his emphasis upon the disjunction between the natural political liberties enjoyed by an early humanity and the imposition of a corrupted civic culture, of which traffic is both a product and a symbol.

ii.

Greville's postlapsarian narrative of politics is underlined from the outset of the *Treatise of Monarchy*, which begins with a representation of the classical idea of the golden age:

> There was a tyme, before the tymes of story,
> When nature raign'd, in stead of lawes, or artes:
> And mortall Goddes with men made upp the glory
> Of one republique, by united heartes.
> Earth was the common seat, their conversation
> In saving love, and ours in adoration. (*TM*, 1)

As Freya Sierhuis points out, Greville's representation of the golden age is not one that is defined by "an absence of hierarchy or order," and the "mortall Goddes" are portrayed "as kings even though, significantly, it relegates the institution of sovereignty to a later, less perfect age."[25] The purity of this epoch is instead predicated upon its absence of "lawes, or artes," which have such a corrupting effect upon the institutions related to postlapsarian politics. By contrast, the golden age represents an epoch in which nature flourishes without the need for such institutions. Indeed, Greville further characterizes it as an age in which "Both Kinge, and people seem'd conjoyn'd in one," bound together by "natures chaines," requiring "no other artes" than "good dealing, to obtaine good heartes" (*TM*, 2). Greville's use of the term "artes" throughout these stanzas makes it synonymous with the kinds of political manoeuvring that characterize the corrupt postlapsarian politics. However, such a

[25] Freya Sierhuis, "The Idol of the Heart: Liberty, Tyranny, and Idolatry in the Work of Fulke Greville," *The Modern Language Review* 106.3 (2011), 625-46: 631.

definition is qualified and complicated in the following stanza as Greville goes on to depict the golden age as one in which "Pow're then manynetayn'd it self even by those artes, / By which it grewe; as justice, labour, love" (*TM*, 3). Just as this age contained a hierarchical system, so too did it accommodate the "artes" of political power, albeit in forms untainted by human corruption.

Such an idealized conception of politics proves untenable, though, following the fall of humanity, the withdrawal of the gods, and the onset of the process of declination. It is from this process, according to Greville's narrative, that the system of monarchy originated:

> In which confused state of Declination,
> Left by these Gods, mankinde was forc't to trust
> Those light thoughtes, which were mouldes of his privation,
> And scorning equalles, raise a Soveraigne must:
>   For frailty with it self growen discontent,
>   Ward-like must lyve in others government. (*TM*, 24)

Declination means that humanity is falling away from the ideals embodied in the golden age and, as a result, loses the capacity to exist within the idealized "republique" (*TM*, 1) of rule under the gods, and must instead subject itself to servitude under a monarch. Greville also combines the Ovidian fall narrative with the Judaeo-Christian tradition by alluding to the biblical account of the Israelites' choice to be governed by an absolute monarch, in spite of the warning that "on human winges / … inequality once rais'd, still gathers" (*TM*, 25). The beginnings of monarchy are therefore tied up inextricably with the process of declination. A similar narrative is applied to the establishment of temporal laws when Greville relates how "mankindes hard, and thanckles heart / Had banisht mylde *Astrea* from the earth" (*TM*, 242). As a result, earthly justice comes to be characterized by its increasingly fallen nature: "Falling from lawes of heav'n-like harmony, / To mans lawes, which, but corrupt reason be" (*TM*, 242). In spite of their divine precedents, humanity's temporal laws suffer from the taint of declination and the "corrupt reason" from which postlapsarian humanity must inevitably suffer. John Witte, Jr. has outlined ways in which intellectual Calvinist thinkers continually emphasized political rights, rooted in Calvin's own emphasis upon virtuous service to the commonwealth and obedience to sovereigns. In this view, such "God-given duties and limits define not only the political office but also the political liberty of Christian believers in the earthly kingdom."[26] Whilst political service could, for Calvin, have the potential to foreground earthly liberties and political agency—in which model, even endurance of tyrannical excesses or political corruption could be beneficial as tests of faith—Greville shows here that he is far more pessimistic about the status of temporal institutions.

Whilst the practices of commerce are similarly rooted in Greville's narrative of declination, they are remarkably distinct from the representation of the development of such institutions as monarchy and the law due to the broadly positive terms in which their origins are portrayed. The opening of the section on commerce takes place following the fall of humanity and the retreat of the gods, who "tooke compassion" upon the dejected and fallen state of the humans formerly in their care, "and from heaven sent / Their spiritts, who did handiecraftes invent" (*TM*, 361). Similarly divine benevolence is shown through the creation of the geographical conditions in which international trade can flourish:

> Whence in the world they publisht that every Zone,
> Created needefull was of neighboure clymes;

[26] John Witte Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 49.

And for, they must corrupt, that needed none,
God made them subject both to want, and tymes,
That art, and nature clinging each with other,
Might nurse all nations, like a common mother. (*TM*, 369)

These actions are motivated by the view that pride and wealth were conditions which would be "Apte to conspire against the wayes of right" (*TM*, 368). It is also significant that Greville uses the singular "God" to evoke the Judaeo-Christian story of creation and mingle it with the Ovidian narrative of fall and creation. In both cases, the conditions favouring co-operation and trade between nations is an act of divine benevolence that provides a rationale for Greville's vision of geopolitical stability predicated upon a system of mutual dependence between nations, with a balance of trade ensuring a balance of political power and influence. Whilst Greville's idealized view seems again to be pointing towards natural rights defences of trading, his continual emphasis upon the role of "art" as a pivotal element in humanity's development serves to complicate the apparent nostalgic idealization of nature.

In this narrative, commerce originates from the benevolence of the gods, who grant humanity the manual skill and industry to elevate them from their fallen state. This benevolent act is provoked by the gods' witnessing of humanity's debased "simplicitie" following the fall, and seeing them "Wander with beastes, as fellowes in creation; / To both their thirsts alike the water free, / Acornes their food, earth bed, and habitation" (*TM*, 361). The condition of humanity immediately following the fall is one in which they are defined by their "simplicitie," having been reduced to the level of the beasts with whom they are "fellowes," or equals, "in creation." Like the beasts, they are also reduced to surviving in the wild and living off the very barest offerings of the earth. At this point, there is little prospect of humanity's progressing towards civilization without the gods granting them the mastery of handicrafts:

Which misteries the slowenesse of mans witt,
In manie yeeres, could els not have attaind,
That as men grewe, so they might learne to fitt
Nature with arte, to be by them maintaind;
And on the earth finde hearbs for foode, and health,
As well as underneath it, mynes for wealth. (*TM*, 362)

Here, the early humans are granted the skills to elevate their existence above their initial "simplicitie" and a way of life that is driven purely by the satisfaction of basic natural needs. The achievement of this condition is predicated upon realizing their abilities "to fit / Nature with arte." As we have seen, at many points throughout the *Treatise* the term "art" has decidedly negative connotations, associated as it often tends to be with the underhand political manoeuvring designed to retain sovereign power. Here, however, it is used in a more positive context, promulgating what Jess Edwards describes as "a notion of art as 'natural refinement': the civil improvement of human life through principles derived paradoxically from human life itself."[27] This synthesis between art and nature comes to be embodied most positively in the commercial enterprise, which Greville promotes.

In his emphasis upon this synthesis between art and nature, Greville's promotion of commerce is comparable to that of John Wheeler, according to whom:

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[27] Jess Edwards, *Writing, Geometry and Space in Seventeenth-Century England and America: Circles in the Sand* (London: Routledge, 2006), 52.

> there is nothing in the world so ordinarie, and naturall unto men, as to contract, truck, merchandise, and traffike one with an other, so that it is almost unpossible for three persons to converse together two houres, but they wil fal into talk of one bargaine or another, chopping, changing, or some some other kinde of contract. Children, assoone as ever their tongues are at libertie, doe season their sportes with some merchandise, or other: and when they goe to schoole, nothing is so common among them as to change, rechange, buy and sell of that, which they bring home with them. The Prince with his subjects, the Maister with his servants, one friend and acquaintance with another, the Captaine with his souldiers, the Husband with his wife, Women with and among themselves, and in a word, all the world choppeth and changeth, runneth & raveth after Marts, Markets and Merchandising, so that all thinges come into Commerce, and passe into traffique.[28]

Wheeler here argues that commerce is the crystallization of a number of *natural* impulses that underpin social, political, and domestic relations. For Wheeler, institutionalized commerce is the culmination of humanity's instinctive tendencies towards dealing, bargaining, and negotiation, as a result of which "all thinges come into Commerce, and passe into traffique." Such commercial arguments are complicated in Greville's treatise by the inclusion of the postlapsarian framework, which sees him cast a different light on humanity's inclination towards commercial enterprise. Whilst he acknowledges that "traffique is a quintessence, confected / Of mixt complection, in all lyving creatures" (*TM*, 375), he still places an emphasis upon humanity's unique ability to transcend the status of other "lyving creatures" thanks to the gods' gift of the "arts," which allows humanity to go beyond satisfying basic animal needs. In this way, he comes to complicate such natural rights defences of commercial activity.

By highlighting industry and manual skill as the key lynchpins of humanity's surmounting of its bestial origins, Greville departs significantly from early modern humanist emphases upon learning, reason, and eloquence. In particular, this focal point in Greville's analysis distances itself from the influential Ciceronian view of eloquence as the key distinguishing feature between humanity and beasts, as outlined in his *De Oratore*:

> what other power could have been strong enough either to gather scattered humanity into one place, or to lead it out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up to our present condition of civilization as men and as citizens, or, after the establishment of social communities, to give shape to laws, tribunals, and civic rights?[29]

Greville's emphasis upon the acquisition of commercial impulses rather than eloquence as the key foundation of civic culture represents a distinct intervention in relation to humanist defences of reason, learning, and eloquence as means of minimizing the effects of the fall. Whilst such authorities as Sir Philip Sidney and Francis Bacon looked towards ways in which eloquence and poetry could transcend the effects of the fall, Greville's outlook is more complicated.[30] Brian Cummings outlines in Greville's poetic theory a profound scepticism in

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[28] Wheeler, *A Treatise of Commerce*, A3^{v}.

[29] Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton, 2 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1967), 1:33-4.

[30] Ake Bergvall, in particular, highlights Sidney's efforts to achieve a synthesis between Reformation and humanist views on the potential of human reason. He notes that the perceived gulf between these two schools of thought is a "forced dichotomy": ("Reason in Luther, Calvin, and Sidney," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23.1 [1992], 115-27: 116.)

response to Sidneian and Baconian views on the capacities for poetry and eloquence to transcend humanity's limitations and the influences of postlapsarian corrupt reason.[31]

Whilst differing in their emphases, the respective narratives of human development outlined by Cicero and Greville both underline the contrast between the natural and the civil in a way that complicates theories of natural law. In his discussion of the influential Ciceronian paradigm, Richard Tuck highlights that this picture of human transition from a brutish existence is defined by "a contempt for untutored nature, and this contempt left little scope for any traditional theory of the natural law as revealing the necessary precepts of morality to all men."[32] In his view of humanity's surmounting of these conditions, Greville places a similar emphasis upon the importance of the tenets of civil society as a pragmatic *modus vivendi* compensating for the loss of an irrecoverable golden age. Such ideas complement a broader ambiguity in the development of Greville's views on nature throughout his work. In his reading of *Mustapha*, Rebholz argues that the play's tragedy is triggered by an increasingly complicated relationship between nature and reason that becomes tainted by the forces of self-interest and "opinion."[33] Such tensions are encapsulated most readily in the oft-quoted *Chorus Sacerdotum*, which, for Rebholz, "sees creative nature as responsible both for natural law—man's innate sense of what is good—and for a psychological and physiological determinism which necessitates disobedience to that law."[34] Such points represent a significant departure by Greville from the earlier position advocated in the *Letter to an Honourable Lady*, which "argued that it was easy to abide by the dictates of the natural moral law, discovered through reason, and hence easy to follow nature unto grace."[35] Whilst the *Treatise of Monarchy* may not present nature as such a benign force, it still presents a more optimistic view of humanity's potential to complement nature with the skills, or "arts," unique to humans. Such points are reinforced further in *A Treatie of Warres*, which opens with an idealized vision of peacetime as "the Harvest of mans rich Creation," predicated upon "fruictfull industrie."[36] The role of "Artes" is similarly emphasized as a means for peacetime to act as a period of productivity and "elevation," during which it "improves / The earth" in ways that are "Beyond th'intent of nature" (*TW,* 1). Once again, human industry is viewed as a means of elevating mankind above the confines of nature alone. In *A Treatie of Warres*, Greville also emphasizes that commerce is not only a product of peacetime but is also a means of sustaining it, identifying in particular "Exchange" as the language that "speakes to all; / Yet least confusion feeles of *Babels* fall" (*TW*, 2). Greville goes on to highlight peace as a period in which "Artes beget on Nature like a lover" (*TW,* 2) and that:

> When she hath wrought on earth, she man improves;
> A shoppe of Artes, a ritch, an endelesse mine;
> Worckes by his labor, witte, his feare, and love;
> And in refininge him, all else refines:
> Nature yeildes but the matter, man the forme;
> Which makes the world a manifold returne. (*TW*, 4)

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[31] Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation*, 273-4.
[32] Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Developments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 34.
[33] Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville*, 104-7.
[34] Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville*, 105.
[35] Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville*, 104.
[36] Fulke Greville, *A Treatie of Warres*, stanza 1, in *The Complete Plays and Poems of Fulke Greville*, ed. Wilkes. All further references to *A Treatie of Warres*, denoted *TW*, are to this edition and given parenthetically in the text by stanza number.

Peace thus has an overwhelmingly positive effect upon humanity by "refininge" the products of various human impulses. Again, the commercial enterprise, which "makes the world a manifold returne," is rooted in the ideal synthesis between art and nature, with nature providing the "matter" and humanity, through their exercising of arts, the "forme." War, on the other hand, is represented as a time in which such values are inverted and "as mens vices beastes cheife vertues are: / So be the shames of peace the pride of warre" (*TW*, 7). Wartime becomes defined as a period in which the key elements that elevate humanity above the level of beasts become compromised:

> Here books are burnt, fayre monumentes of minde;
> Here ignorance doth on all Artes tyrannise,
> Vertue no other moulde but courage findes,
> All other beinge in her beinge dies;
> Wisdome of times growes infancie againe,
> Beastes rule in Man, and Men doe Beastlie raigne. (*TW*, 10)

War, therefore, provokes a crisis for the progress of human industry and culture. It leads, according to Greville, to conditions in which "books are burnt," and in which "ignorance" prevails and "doth on all Artes tyrannise." Human endeavours and achievements are reversed and reduced to a condition of "infancie againe." All these developments combine and result in a situation in which humanity is reduced to the level of beasts, and "Men doe Beastlie raigne." Wartime thus emerges as the absolute antithesis to peacetime, which is presented as a period in which human industry— characterized by the deployment of arts in order to harness the bounty of nature—is embodied in the commercial enterprise which typically flourishes during times of peace.

Commerce thus becomes one of the principal embodiments of humanity's ability to elevate itself above the conditions of nature. Commerce or, more precisely, the ability to draw on skills or "arts," is at the centre of an outlook that can be related to ideas of "human exceptionalism." In her influential reading of *King Lear*, Laurie Shannon characterizes human exceptionalism as a view that:

> encloses the vast and diverse remainder of non-plant life forms within what may well be the most extreme categorical compression in our thought: "the animal." Animals are "animal," in this logic, by their lack of that attribute chosen to singularize humanity. In human exceptionalist thought, "animals" thus share what we might call a signature animal deficit. Measured by that shortfall, they are grouped by a negative or privative method.[37]

Such exceptionalism is often predicated upon the view that humans can be "distinguished by the possession of a unique, hierarchizing attribute (most often an immortal soul or the use of reason)."[38] In his verse treatises, particularly in the commentary upon the uses of art to bring humanity above the level of beasts, Greville points towards such a "unique, hierarchizing attribute" to distinguish humanity from the rest of the natural world. The key element of this kind of distinction between humanity and beasts is predicated upon humanity's acquisition of the manual skills that form the basis for commercial exchange.

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[37] Laurie Shannon, "Poor, Bare, Forked: Animal Sovereignty, Human Negative Exceptionalism, and the Natural History of *King Lear*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60.2 (2009), 168-96: 171.

[38] Shannon, "Poor, Bare, Forked," 171.

In the *Treatise of Monarchy* and *A Treatie of Warres*, then, Greville emphasises the importance of international commerce both as a means of ensuring peace, and as one of the fundamental conditions of peacetime. Greville also makes use of commerce as both an expression of human exceptionalism and as one of its key products, thereby marking it out as a distinct feature in relation to the postlapsarianism represented in his political poetry by allowing humanity to overcome its debased condition following the fall. Yet commerce remains an ambiguous presence in the development of the society outlined in the *Treatise of Monarchy*. Whilst it elevates humanity above its debased "natural" condition, it is also identified explicitly as an institution designed specifically for navigating the postlapsarian world. The origins of commerce are rooted, in Greville's mythical narrative, in the gods' exercising of "Compassion" in response to humanity's postlapsarian "simplicitie" (*TM*, 361). By doing so, Greville's adaptation of the mythical origins of manual labour is aligned with the Calvinist view that mastery of the "manual and liberal arts," through which "the full force of human acuteness is displayed," should be regarded as "a gratuitous gift" of God's "beneficence."[39] However, as a means of negotiating the postlapsarian state of humanity, commerce itself is also subject to the effects of the corruption and "declination" with which humanity has become tainted. Such effects of declination are most apparent in the disparity between the use values and exchange values of goods, most notably in the luxury items flooding the market. Greville complains that this is particularly problematic when it comes to trading with the Dutch, who,

> To worcke toyes for the vanitie of us,
> And in exchange our cloth to them wee yeelde,
> Wyse men, and fooles even serve each other thus;
>   The standerd of the whole world being synne,
>   To furnish hers, by carrienge owt, and in.
>   (*TM*, 395)

Such parity between the use value of the exported cloth and the apparently frivolous imported "toyes," serves to encourage overindulgence in luxury, and thus perpetuates a traffic in "synne" between the "Wyse men" and "fooles." As Edwards points out, "Greville is far from able to dissociate from improvement the taint of luxury; of the unnecessary and effeminate toys upon which prodigal sons waste their fathers' wealth."[40] Such a process thus threatens to taint the divine foundations on which traffic between nations is based by tempting humanity towards luxury and impulses founded upon corrupt reason. In this view, Greville again aligns his outlook with that of Calvin, who, following Augustine, argues that,

> as the gratuitous gifts bestowed on man were withdrawn, so the natural gifts which remained were corrupted after the fall. Not that they can be polluted in themselves in so far as they proceed from God, but that they have ceased to be pure to polluted man, lest he should by their means obtain any praise.[41]

By identifying the skill and industry that lead to the development of commerce as products of the fall, Greville similarly characterizes such gifts as vulnerable to corruption under the influence of a fallen humanity. As Cummings observes, Calvin's view is that the "arts and sciences in themselves are perfect but the understanding which apprehends them is not. In

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[39] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (London: James Clarke, 1962), 2.2.14.
[40] Edwards, *Writing, Geometry and Space*, 53.
[41] Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.16.

this sense human knowledge, too, is imperfect."[42] Greville thus adopts a similar line to Calvin by highlighting that, in spite of their divine origins, the divine gifts that culminated in the establishment of trade are subject to the corrupting influences of their use by humans who are tainted by declination.

Commerce therefore occupies an ambiguous position in relation to Greville's meditations on postlapsarian politics in his verse treatises. We have seen that Greville makes an extensive case for the benefits of an international trade that is rooted in practicality and political pragmatism. However, the mythical framework he establishes in the treatises means that his analysis of commerce extends beyond practicalities and contemporary political realities alone and presents the skills underpinning such enterprise as divine gifts. Edwards argues that Greville's promotion of commerce as a key element of the postlapsarian state takes the form of "an anxious argument, hedged around by anxieties about the possibility of reconciling virtue with commerce."[43] Yet I have argued that there is a further element of ambiguity in Greville's analysis of commerce, particularly in its ability to elevate the state of humanity above that of beasts, and in its potential to counter, or at least act as an alternative to, the most debasing effects of corrupt temporal institutions. Whilst the synthesis between art and nature, emblematized by commercial enterprise, comes to be a defining feature of humanity, Greville is forced to confront the fact that, in the very act of doing so, it becomes subject to the corruption in which human endeavours are inextricably caught as part of the process of declination.

[42] Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation*, 269.
[43] Edwards, *Writing, Geometry and Space*, 54.