

**Part 1**

*Two Sciences in Collision:  
The Dismal and the Gay*







## Poets Come, Bringing Death to Friends of the Dismal Science

### An Interpretative Image

In 1893, admirers of that immensely famous cultural critic of capitalism, John Ruskin, who were associated with a Liverpool industrial publication-cum-literary journal, *Cope's Tobacco Plant*, produced *Ruskin on Himself and Things in General*. This numbers thirteen in their attractive series, Smoke-Room Booklets, which was available through both bookstores and tobacconists. Although Ruskin himself had nothing to do with it, and it contains less than sixty pages of extracts from published material with an introduction by William Lewin, the *Cope* volume is interesting enough to have been noticed in the great, thirty-nine-volume, Library Edition of Ruskin's work. It was reprinted at least three times in the 1970s at the beginning of the great Ruskin revival.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps as a visual aid to interpreting these extracts—for those who buy reading matter at tobacco stores may have less time on their hands than those who frequent only bookstores—an interpretative illustration in red, gold, and black is provided on the cover. In the top left-hand corner, we see a caricature of John Ruskin holding a medieval lance and mounted on a snorting horse, jet black with red wings. Ruskin has just killed a dark-skinned human figure—red mouth gaping, setting off the sharp white teeth, uncomprehending eyes wide open—sprawled with arms and head thrown back, face up toward the lower right-hand corner.<sup>2</sup> Although well dressed in spats and a gentlemen's formal attire, Ruskin's enemy seems to be imagined as of a kind other than Ruskin himself.<sup>3</sup> Finding an image of Otherness in this commercial context is perhaps

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1. So says the Library of Congress catalog. The only reprint I have seen lacks the cover image.

2. Royall Brandis (personal communication) queries whether the figure is in fact dead or about to be killed. There is no blood visible. Is there visible blood on the customary dragon?

3. Dark skin seems to be a general purpose indicator of Otherness. For example, Frank Felsenstein describes the representation of a Jewish peddler in Hogarth's *Canvassing for Votes* this way: "Although Hogarth does not dress him in the full-length coat or cloak of continental Jewry, his black beard, pronounced nose, and dark complexion leave us in no doubt of his ethnic origin" (1995, 55).

unsurprising. The Smoke-Room Booklets were a production of *Cope's Tobacco Plant*; the tobacco business in Britain and America had a long history of using racial and ethnic imagery to sell its products.<sup>4</sup>

Let us look carefully at the image. In it, the wild-haired Ruskin with a bearded, thin white face and aquiline nose contrasts vividly with the nearly hairless, dark, broad face and flat nose of the one he has slain. The dark-skinned figure's hands resemble claws, and the serpentlike arabesque of the formal dress tail curls as though to pun with a "tail" of another sort.<sup>5</sup> His teeth are strange and disturbing. In his left hand, he clutches a bag with two labels: the words *Wealth of Nations* appear beneath the symbols "L. S. D." Clearly, the artist, John Wallace (one of *Cope's* regular illustrators), is taking Adam Smith's more abstract title literally—"pounds, shillings and pence." Beside the sprawled figure is a volume, perhaps something he was reading as death overtook him, with the following words on the cover: "The Dismal Science." Armed only with sharp teeth and claws and such insight as might be found in the "Wealth of Nations" or the "Dismal Science," he died alone, with only these abstractions and the now useless L. S. D. as companions.

What might this interpretative image mean? If the dark-skinned human figure caricatures a black person—apelike face, sharp pointed teeth, and the tail of the dangerous subhuman—are we being invited to read a defense of genocide? How is this possible? This is from Liverpool of 1893, not Munich of 1933.<sup>6</sup> Surely that cannot be a right reading of the image if only because the figure's dress and the L. S. D. suggest wealth. How could black people, as slaves emancipated within living memory, be represented that way? Moreover, there are aspects of the figure that seem not right if we take Negro caricature in commercial advertisements as paradigmatic of the Other.<sup>7</sup> Not only is this figure dangerous, with nonhuman teeth, but neither the stereotypical curly hair nor the exaggerated lips are evident.<sup>8</sup> If, on the other hand, the figure repre-

4. There is a discussion in *Cope's* concerning the agreement of Boston tobacconists to abolish the use of the "Little Nigger" statue. See "Tobacconists' Signboards and Advertisements," *Cope's Tobacco Plant* 1 (June 1870): 27.

5. Denise Albanese contributed the reading of the "tail" as serpent and linked this with the St. George image.

6. "In the genealogical tree of the Nazi doctrines such Latins as Sismondi and Georges Sorel, and such Anglo-Saxons as Carlyle, Ruskin and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, were more conspicuous than any German" (Von Mises 1951, 578).

7. The nearest caricature suitable for comparison is only four pages away (Ruskin 1893, viii). This is an advertisement that reproduces in "FacSimile" the label of Cope's Bristol Bird's Eye brand tobacco. Here the head, shoulders, and chest of a dark-skinned, *placid, curly-haired*, broad-faced, flat-nosed figure puffing a pipe appears. The exaggerated lips prominent in many of the caricatures reprinted by James Walvin (1973) are not obvious on the label figure. James Buchanan helped here.

8. Aside from the dangerousness—an odd image with which to sell pipe tobacco—the hair and the teeth seem to be most dramatic difference between the image of Ruskin's enemy and the image on Cope's Bristol Bird's Eye brand.

sents only a personification of economics, Ruskin's ideological *bête noire*, which "The Dismal Science" and "Wealth of Nations" encourage us to believe, why is economics represented with a darker skin and broader face than Ruskin? The otherwise appealing answer—that the image represents a merger of a black person and the discipline of economics—requires that we solve both sets of puzzles at the same time and tell how these aspects unite. Evidence, perhaps, of such a merger can be seen if one covers the red mouth and the nose: another face appears, and the wavy lines on the forehead of the first face become the mouth of the second face.<sup>9</sup>

### Freedom in the "Best Sense" in Death and Slavery

In search of what the image might mean, let us consider what the editor of this volume has to say on the matter of black and white people. In his introductory material, William Lewin quotes the lines about slavery from Ruskin's 1853 chapter in *Stones of Venice*, entitled "The Nature of Gothic," which may bear on our puzzle. Ruskin considers the products of market specialization, which can be seen anywhere in Britain:

Look round this English room of yours, about which you have been proud so often, because the work of it was so good and strong, and the ornaments of it so finished. Examine again all those accurate mouldings, and perfect polishings, and unerring adjustments of the seasoned wood and tempered steel. Many a time you have exulted over them, and thought how great England was, because her slightest work was done so thoroughly. (1893, 4)<sup>10</sup>

For Ruskin, these products provide evidence of the worst form of slavery:

Alas! if read rightly, these perfectnesses are signs of a slavery in our England a thousand times more bitter and more degrading than that of the scourged African, or helot Greek. (4)

There was a nonmetaphorical type of slavery in America as Ruskin wrote these words. Ruskin's words would not suggest to him, as they might to a modern

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9. I owe this reading to David George (2000). He points out that it solves the problem of the missing curly hair. I pass along the question he raises: is the second face Jewish?

10. The text in the Everyman edition is Ruskin 1925, 2:148, and in the most recent Penguin edition Ruskin 1997, 85. Passages that Lewin does not quote make Ruskin's opposition to Adam Smith clear: "We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilised invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men:—Divided into mere segments of men—broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little pieces of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin, or the head of a nail" (1921–27, 2:150–51).

reader, the implication that English “slaves” are fleeing to the New Orleans market for human flesh to sell themselves and improve *their* quality of life. Ruskin would not expect the British slaves to understand their plight. The minds of these slaves have been broken on the wheel of the division of labor, becoming no more than “an animated tool.”<sup>11</sup>

At a technical level, Ruskin’s crusade against economics might be profitably seen as a vast polemic against the economist’s device of imputing value in exchange from the point of view of choosing agents. Value is determined by the outside choice of the Maker “of things and of men,” that great Critic on high.<sup>12</sup> Ruskin asserts that the metric by means of which choosing agents evaluate the consequences of their own choices—by profit or material gain—sums to zero in exchange.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, there cannot be a science of exchange in which gain is involved.<sup>14</sup> It is the role of poet and critic to evaluate the order revealed by different social forms. Exchange occurs just when and only when the critic approves and agrees that there is an *advantage*.<sup>15</sup> And then Ruskin explains just why on his scale of value a black slave’s life and death are of no concern. *These* slaves, safe within a hierarchy, already have freedom in their slavery and their death:

11. The phrase from *Nature of the Gothic* is quoted by Lewin (Ruskin 1893, 4).

12. “The value of a thing, therefore, is independent of opinion, and of quantity. Think what you will of it, gain how much you may of it, the value of the thing itself is neither greater nor less. For ever it avails, or avails not; no estimate can raise, no disdain repress, the power which it holds from the Maker of things and of men” (Ruskin 1903–12, 17:85).

13. “Profit, or material gain, is attainable only by construction or by discovery; not by exchange. Whenever material gain follows exchange, for every *plus* there is a precisely equal *minus*. (ibid., 91).

14. “The Science of Exchange, or, as I hear it has been proposed to call it, of ‘Catallactics,’ considered as one of gain, is, therefore, simply nugatory” (ibid., 92).

15. Ruskin asserts that while there is no profit in exchange there can be “advantage.” “Thus, one man, by sowing and reaping, turns one measure of corn into two measures. That is Profit. Another, by digging and forging, turns one spade into two spades. That is Profit. But the man who has two measures of corn wants sometimes to dig; and the man who has two spades wants sometimes to eat:—They exchange the gained grain for the gained tool; and both are the better for the exchange; but though there is much advantage in the transaction, there is no profit. Nothing is constructed or produced” (ibid., 90–91). Just exchange requires mutual advantage: “The general law, then, respecting just or economical exchange, is simply this—There must be advantage on both sides (or if only advantage on one, at least no disadvantage on the other) to the persons exchanging” (93). As I read the argument, *advantage* is Ruskin’s technical term, which includes the notion of “need,” something that the choosing agent may not know. “I have hitherto carefully restricted myself, in speaking of exchange, to use the term ‘advantage’; but that term includes two ideas: the advantage, namely, of getting what we *need*, and that of getting what we *wish for*” (94). J. T. Fain (1982, 210–12), who criticizes attacks on Ruskin’s economics for paying insufficient attention to Ruskin on the mutual “advantage” of exchange, does not explain how “advantage” differs from “gain.” This is my attempt to fill in this gap.

Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain in one sense and the best sense, free. (Ruskin 1893, 4)

What is really important is how the poet on Pegasus views matters; only “slavery” to a machine is real:

But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting polards the suckling branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin which, after the worms’s work on it, is to see God, into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with,—this it is to be slavemasters indeed. (4)

Why would it matter to workers in a hierarchy if their death is ordered on a whim? They are free of the machine and the market,

and there might be more freedom in England, though her feudal lords’ lightest words were worth men’s lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there is while the animation of her multitudes is sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke, and the strength of them is given daily to be wasted into the fineness of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line! (4)<sup>16</sup>

Slavery as freedom in the “best sense” is Carlyle’s doctrine. Here is one of many such declarations from his *Past and Present*, complete with “brass collars, whips and handcuffs”:

Liberty? The true liberty of man, you would say, consisted in his finding out, or being forced to find out the right path, and walk thereon. To learn, or to be taught, what work he actually was able for; and then, by permission, persuasion, and even compulsion, to set about doing of the same! . . . If thou do know better than I what is good and right, I conjure thee in the name of God, force me to do it, were it by never such brass collars, whips and handcuffs, leave me not to walk over precipices! (Carlyle 1965, 211–12)

In fact, black people really were “beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle,” as they really were “slaughtered like summer flies” on the Middle Pas-

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16. “This characteristic passage is worth a digression, for it explains many passages in which Ruskin glorifies slavery and feudal conditions. Many of his contradictions and fantastic beliefs turn out to be merely rhetorical” (Fain 1956, 24). Fain somehow neglects to consider how the Eyre controversy sheds light on the “merely rhetorical” interpretation.

sage to service the demands of the American slave system. And this Ruskin's readers at the time would have known perfectly well. An article in Charles Dickens's magazine testifies that the "horrors of the middle passage" had entered common knowledge.<sup>17</sup> But, in comparison with the white "slaves" of modern Britain, for Ruskin these slaves under a social hierarchy—new-style American slavery or old feudalism or even older Spartan slavery—"remain in one sense and the best sense free."

Against Adam Smith's doctrine that to be human is to exchange freely, Ruskin juxtaposes a doctrine that to be human is to be improved by our betters, those who can make men the way a potter makes pottery. This remaking is where the true "advantage" lies.<sup>18</sup> If it were possible to bring about the liberation of British slaves—to replace slavery to the machine with slavery to their betters—with the deaths of black slaves, how would Ruskin on his high, winged horse value this? Would not their slaughter "like summer flies" be of no account? Their "freedom" in Ruskin's "best sense" would not be altered for the worse because they are already in the care of their betters, that is, us. Whatever we decide for them, however we decide to remake their human clay, even if it means throwing it back into the fire, must be right. In the warm embrace of a hierarchy, their well-being is fixed: there can be no change for the worse. But improving the well-being of whites is an advantage, a plus. A zero added to a plus makes a plus.

But perhaps this exercise is unfair to Ruskin, as it supposes he can make the leap from theoretical assertions to practical matters. The modern authorities have singled out Ruskin's series of letters—*Fors Clavigera*—for special attention as representing the center of his social concerns and literary devices.<sup>19</sup> This text seems appropriate, as the very title suggests violence against enemies. The difficulty of selecting a practical matter for analysis is which one. Let the contemporary discussion captured in the Making of Amer-

17. "There is probably scarcely a full-grown person in this kingdom, who, in connection with the slave trade, has not heard of the 'horrors of the middle passage'" (Hollingshead 1858, 84).

18. "This is Mr. Ruskin's condemnation of our modern social condition; that we manufacture every thing except men. 'We blanch cotton, strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages'" (Lewin in Ruskin 1893, 4).

19. What better evidence can there be than that provided by the first shot in what promises to be an entertaining priority fight? Here John Rosenberg (2000, 32), in his review of Tim Hilton's *Ruskin: The Later Years*: "*Fors Clavigera*, the most daringly original of all of Ruskin's writings, a judgement with which Tim Hilton concurs. I have written at length about *Fors Clavigera*, but Hilton writes as if he believes he has discovered it. I recognize many of my own perceptions in his characterization of the work, but only as an unhappy parent might recognize his own best features blotched in those of his ungainly child." This originality claim is a century off. The selection by Lewin (Ruskin 1893) is mainly from *Fors Clavigera*, as pointed out at Ruskin 1903–12, 38:115.

ica data base select one: Ruskin's analysis of the impact of railroad travel on the worker. Here from letter 44—as quoted in a nineteenth-century American periodical—is Ruskin's discussion of the impact of this agent of industrialization:

In old times, if a Coniston peasant had any business at Ulverstone, he walked to Ulverstone; spent nothing but shoe-leather on the road, drank at the streams, and if he spent a couple of batz when he got to Ulverstone, "it was the end of the world." But now he would never think of doing such a thing! He first walks three miles in a contrary direction to a railroad-station, and then travels by railroad twenty-four miles to Ulverstone, paying two shillings fare. During the twenty-four miles transit, he is idle, dusty, stupid; and either more hot or cold than is pleasant to him. In either case he drinks beer at two or three of the stations, passes his time, between them, with anybody he can find, in talking without having anything to talk of; and such talk always becomes vicious. He arrives at Ulverstone, jaded, half-drunk, and otherwise demoralized, and three shillings, at least, poorer than in the morning. Of that sum a shilling has gone for beer, threepence to a railway shareholder, threepence in coals, and eighteen pence has been spent in employing strong men in the vile mechanical work of making and driving a machine, instead of his own legs, to carry the drunken lout. The results, absolute loss and demoralization to the poor on all sides, and iniquitous gain to the rich. Fancy, if you saw the railway officials actually employed in carrying the countryman bodily on their backs to Ulverstone, what you would think of the business! And because they waste ever so much iron and fuel besides to do it, you think it a profitable one.<sup>20</sup>

In the image of the drunken, demoralized, "idle, dusty, stupid" "drunken lout," the reader has just encountered the contemporary stereotype of the Irish.<sup>21</sup> The wickedness of industrialization comes because it induces racial degeneration: from English to Irish.

### St. George and the What?

Can this reading be right? Although Lewin quotes Ruskin correctly and the racial degeneration induced by a railroad is plain enough, how can that be what he meant? As nothing escaped the editors of the Library Edition of *The Works*

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20. "Ruskin's 'Fors Clavigera'" (1878, 61).

21. Sandra Peart and David Levy (2000) give the details in terms of the linked contemporary discussion in anthropology and eugenics.

of *John Ruskin*, let us appeal to them for help correcting our misunderstanding of the image's message. After a very thorough technical description of the volume in question, we read:

Issued in brown paper wrappers, with a caricature portrait on the front of Ruskin as St. George. Price 3d.<sup>22</sup>

This is surely part of the puzzle. The sharp teeth, the claws, and the "tail" evoke the dragon, and perhaps the dragon had stolen the wealth of the English nation before he was overtaken by St. George on Pegasus? And if we turn the image upside down we behold human arms morphing into dragon's wings!<sup>23</sup> With the help of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) we can expand upon this reading to ask about the *winged* horse.<sup>24</sup> The OED entry for *Pegasus* clears up this matter:

The winged horse fabled to have sprung from the blood of Medusa when slain by Perseus, and with a stroke of his hoof to have caused the fountain Hippocrene to well forth on Mount Helicon. Hence, by modern writers (first in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* c. 1490), represented as the favourite steed of the Muses, and said allusively to bear poets in the "flights" of poetic genius.

Taking note of "The Dismal Science" in the image and looking up the origin of that phrase—the details in due course—we find Thomas Carlyle juxtaposing a "gay science" against the dismal. Appealing for help on the gay science in the OED, we find it to be poetry.<sup>25</sup> Thus we are to read the image: "John Ruskin, Poet, Slays the Dragon."

The trouble is of course that this is not the standard issue fairy tale dragon. This image, with dark skin juxtaposed against Ruskin's white skin, with broad face contrasting with Ruskin's narrow one, has apelike features. How does St. George's dragon take this form? The editors seem uninterested in helping us

22. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (1912, 38:115). They add the following tantalizing information: "This publication was the subject of proceedings in the Chancery Division before Mr. Justice Stirling on November 24, 1893, Messrs. Cope submitting to an order for a perpetual injunction." This line is quoted by Richard Altick (1951, 344), who gives no further information.

23. Maria Pia Paganelli saw this first.

24. The image of St. George's horse drawn by a very young and very bloodthirsty Ruskin, reprinted in Spear 1984, 131, has no wings. Nor does the horse in the 1885 Charles Murray image, which is reprinted in Casteras 1993, 184–85.

25. "The gay science: a rendering of *gai saber*, the Provençal name for the art of poetry" (*Oxford English Dictionary* [hereafter OED], 1992). Denise Albanese helped me here.

with this puzzle.<sup>26</sup> Nor do they tell us what the bag with “L. S. D.” and “Wealth of Nations” or the book with “The Dismal Science” on it might mean.

Richard Altick, who reports the visual images of other Smoke-Room Booklets carefully<sup>27</sup> and informs the reader that *Tobacco Plant* tolerated Ruskin’s antitobacco views, when he discusses the Ruskin booklet and the Cook-Weddeburn commentary, is silent about the illustration.<sup>28</sup>

### The Rational Silence of the Commentators

Rational choice theory, the standard authorities inform us, is a branch of the mathematics of constrained optimization. Given our desires, it asks: what is the best we can do subject to the constraints we face? That solution is the rational choice. But this rational choice model is not the account that rational choice theorists commonly employ when we need to explain how scholars behave. We are supposed to be truth seekers.<sup>29</sup> And failure to engage in truth seeking is the source of moral outrage (Feigenbaum and Levy 1993). When the economist becomes an expert witness, the truth-seeking model loses all plausibility.<sup>30</sup>

I propose that we leave the moralizing aside and begin to think like empirical economists about the choices of economists and other scholars.<sup>31</sup> Regard-

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26. “Already, thanks to several recent publications from Ruskin manuscripts, the reading public has begun to realize that, as editors, E. T. Cook (later Sir E. T. Cook) and Alexander Weddeburn were highly selective and far from reasonably dispassionate. But no one has as yet suspected that through their imposing array of thirty-nine volumes, they prepared, in actuality, a gigantic trap which not one subsequent biographer of Ruskin has managed to escape” (Viljoen 1956, 3).

27. “The frontispiece of Number Nine (1893) showed a stained-glass triptych, in each of whose panels appeared the figure of the anti-nicotinist who had long since become familiar to the Cope audience through the exertions of the *Tobacco Plant* artist: a clergyman with umbrella, long ulster, gaiter, big feet, and pious mien—the direct forbear of the lugubrious prohibitionists drawn by Rollin Kirby twenty-five years ago” (Altick 1951, 341).

28. *Ibid.*, 344. In footnote 8, Altick cites the Ruskin volume in the Smoke-Room Booklet series and the sentence following the “Ruskin as St. George” interpretation by Cook and Weddeburn.

29. Ruskin coherently supposes pastor-teachers to be truth seekers, who are distinguished from seekers after gain: “And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to *die* for it. . . . The Pastor, rather than teach Falsehood. . . . The Merchant—what is *his* “due occasion” of death?” (1903–12, 17:40).

30. Luke Froeb and Bruce Kobayashi (1996) and Richard Posner (1999) are developing an economics of expert witnessing. The American Statistical Association code of ethics (2000) is designed to constrain the testimony of statistical workers.

31. “[T]he doctrine of Right and Wrong, is perpetually disputed, both by the Pen and the Sword: Whereas the doctrine of Lines, and Figures, is not so; because men care not, in that subject what be truth, as a thing that crosses no mans ambition, profit, or lust. For I doubt not, but if it had been a thing contrary to any mans right of dominion, or to the interest of men that have dominion, *That the three Angles of a Triangle should be equall to two Angles of a Square*; that doctrine should have been, if not disputed, yet by the burning of all books of Geometry, suppressed, as farre as he whom it concerned was able” (Hobbes 1968, 166).

less of how we ought to behave, I propose that the model of the scholar as expert witness is *the* appropriate model to be used upon all occasions when we need to explain how we—we economists, we humanists—do in fact make choices. The problem with moral outrage as an analytical engine is that it gives no prediction as to how behavior changes as constraints change.

Consider the problem facing a scholar offering an interpretation of difficult texts. What might serve as motivation? One goal that seems unproblematic is a desire for completeness, to be able to tie the various aspects together in a manageable whole. But scholars have desires about the direction of the interpretation; they have preferences about outcomes that they affect subject to various constraints (Feigenbaum and Levy 1996).

For simplicity, I shall suppose that a maximally complete interpretation is an unbiased interpretation. That is to say, when all the pieces fit together there will be no disagreement about how the author stands on any issue. The interested scholar forces his author's work in the preferred direction by selectively omitting texts.<sup>32</sup> To model interpretation as a rational choice, we need only specify desires and constraints. This is accomplished in figure 1.

Indifference curves I and II characterize the goals of the scholar over these two goods: completeness and direction. In keeping with the statistical origin of this model of rational choice scholarship, the favored direction is labeled "bias." This is one scholar's desires; presumably, there will be scholars with opposing desires. Figure 1 also recognizes two constraints—the inner, shaded polygon and the outer, unshaded polygon. When the inner polygon serves as the constraint, the interested scholar offers interpretation  $i^*$ ; when the outer polygon serves as the constraint, interpretation  $i^{**}$  is forthcoming. The constraint that we shall explore is the state of common knowledge held by the audience for whom the interpretation is offered. When memory is green,  $i^*$  results; when memory fades,  $i^{**}$  appears. If the image refers even tangentially to real people, the interpretation of a humane Ruskin is ill served by talking about this competing interpretation.<sup>33</sup>

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32. Edward Leamer (1983) and Frank Denton (1985) provide classic discussions of specification search in an econometric context.

33. "In making their selections from the manuscripts, the editors seem to have been guided by two principles. First, nothing should be made public which might reflect adversely, from their point of view, either upon Ruskin or upon any member of his family, although (as a corollary to this first principle) if there was any conflict between the interests of Ruskin and of some member of his family, Ruskin should be favored" (Viljoen 1956, 16). "Cook, as part of his effort to refashion Ruskin as a man of more liberal outlook, stressed the personal relationship of Ruskin and Darwin" (O'Gorman 1999, 37).

As I may be the first to note Altick's silence, let me quote from the final paragraph of his study: "In sum, the publishing activities of the firm of Cope form an honorable little chapter in the history of Victorian journalism. At a time when, in the view of many observers, England was 'shooting Niagara' culturally as well as politically, with the proliferation of cheap newspapers and magazines frankly designed to strike the lowest common denominator of popular taste, the *Tobacco*

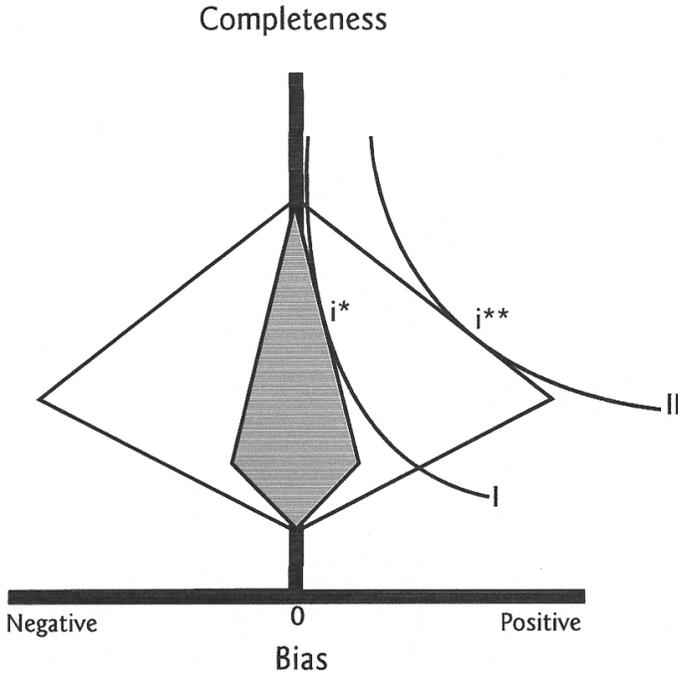


Fig. 1. Optimal interpretation

### The Death of Real People?

For a context that refers to the death of real people, let us read the first two sentences on the first page of the first issue of *Cope's Tobacco Plant* (March 1870) in an article entitled "Why Can't Great Britain Grow Tobacco?"

Most readers will regard this question as though it were equivalent to the good old query—Why can't a man do as he likes? But even the law of perfect liberty, as laid down by the humanitarian jurist, John Stuart Mill . . .<sup>34</sup>

"Humanitarian jurist, John Stuart Mill" refers to what? Mill was, at the time *Cope's* lead type was still hot, the head of the Jamaica Committee, which was attempting to bring charges against John Eyre for his murderous policies in

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*Plant* did its substantial bit to maintain a lively interest in literary topics among ordinary middle-class readers. Seldom, before or since, could an Englishman get as much good reading matter for his twopence" (1951, 350). We shall encounter the Carlyle text about which Altick winks, *Shooting Niagara*, when we come to the Eyre controversy.

34. *Cope's Tobacco Plant* 1 (March 30, 1870): 1.

Jamaica. Although Thomas Carlyle was greatly admired by those who wrote for *Cope's Tobacco Plant*—Smoke-Room Booklet number five is Carlyle's *Table Talk*—there was one aspect of his career that they wished otherwise:

True, he scandalised a good many worthy people by his savage partisanship of Governor Eyre, who flogged the poor blacks of Jamaica—men and women—with piano-forte wire woven into the cats. There we think the old Titan was wrong.<sup>35</sup>

The wire whips used against women as an explicit policy of state terror seemed to most outrage public opinion.<sup>36</sup> A well-informed supporter of Eyre, the driving force behind the most racially charged form of British anthropology, James Hunt judged that Eyre's action was theoretically informed and that of course Carlyle was one of those theorists providing racial insight.<sup>37</sup> And of course Ruskin stood with Carlyle. This is the problem for the liberal interpretation of Ruskin.<sup>38</sup>

Let J. A. Hobson explain much of this in his 1898 *defense* of Ruskin:

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35. "Famous Smokers I: Thomas Carlyle," *Cope's Tobacco Plant* 1 (April 1871): 152. *Cope's* seems more troubled by the controversy than the violence: "Governor Eyre was not worthy of such an illustrious champion, for had he been a governor of the Carlyle stamp, he would have ruled Jamaica with the intrepid and active intelligence which would have effectually prevented that tragical despair, which precipitated the insubordination, which he had to check at last with a bloody and vengeful hand. But even here, in what we must regard as Carlyle's vehement and brutal errors, his doctrine has an element of generous ferocity in it."

The original draft, taken from Carlyle's handwriting, of the statement for the defense of Governor Eyre was published when events in Germany revived discussions of race and state terror. "That after much investatn, it does not appear Govr. Eyre fell into any serious mistake, or committed unknowingly, much less knowingly, any noticeable fault, in dealing with this frightful and immeasurable kindlg of black unutterabilities but trod it out straightway with a clearness of exact discernmt, with a courage and skill and swiftness which seems to us to be of heroic quality" (Olivier 1933, 337).

36. "Holding his political enemy, Gordon, ultimately responsible for instigating the rebellion, Eyre had him arrested and taken to Morant Bay, where, on extraordinarily flimsy evidence, he was found guilty and hanged. When the final tallies of the government's repression were made, they revealed that a terrible vengeance had been unleashed: 439 dead, hundreds flogged, and 1,000 houses burned. . . . Despite orders for restraint, people were flogged with whips made of twisted, knotted wires, and scores were shot or hung after drumhead court-martials. Commanders were quite explicit about the objective of official violence: they intended to instill terror" (Holt 1992, 302).

37. "We were at first not a little astonished at the decisive measures taken by Governor Eyre: measures which could alone have resulted from a most thorough insight into the negro character" (Hunt 1866a, 16). In discussing Robert Knox's doctrine of racial war, Carlyle is brought in as economic prophet: "He [Knox] would have that latest of all ethnological puzzles to some—the present 'insurrection in Jamaica,' an insurrection, however, which he, as we have already seen, foretold on scientific principles, which Carlyle, in his tract on 'The Nigger Question,' hinted at as probable on grounds of social economy" (25–26). This is the R. Knox, the anatomist, whom Ruskin cites approvingly (1921–27, 3:44) in a technical, nonracial context.

38. "Despite widespread genuflexion, Ruskin's influence on the social policies of British socialism remains inadequately explored. Bernard Shaw in 1920 suggestively remarked that a main

Order, reverence, authority, obedience, these words are always on his lips, these ideas always present in his mind. Radical and revolutionary doctrines and movements, as he interprets them, imply the rejection and overthrow of these principles, and are denounced accordingly. Liberty and equality he scornfully repudiates as the negation of order and government. “No liberty, but instant obedience to known law and appointed persons; no equality, but recognition of every betterness and reprobation of every worseness.”

His detestation of liberty and equality brought him into strange company and into strange historic judgements. With Carlyle and the autocratic Tory party of the day he stood for “order and a strong hand” in the Jamaica business, taking a leading part on the Eyre Defence Committee. (202)

Frederic Harrison in 1902 explicitly juxtaposes visions of Ruskin: Ruskin as Judge Lynch ill becomes a Ruskin with “beautiful thoughts”:

In 1865–66 the sanguinary suppression of a negro riot in Jamaica, and the summary execution of Gordon by Governor Eyre, roused fierce indignation, and committees were formed to prosecute—and to defend Mr. Eyre. Carlyle, always on the side of martial law and against the slave, dragged Ruskin into the Eyre defence, which he warmly supported, and to which he subscribed £100. It was startling to some persons to find the author of *Unto this Last*, this “merciful, just and godly” person, on the side of lawless oppression of the weak. But his Tory instincts and the influence of Carlyle may account for this and much more. (119–20)

Nineteenth-century defenders of Ruskin were tightly constrained by common knowledge. One does not easily forget the first imperial administrative massacre. But time passes, and the technology of genocide improves. The state of this art moves from the killing of hundreds to the killing of millions. Early ventures are overshadowed and easily forgotten.<sup>39</sup> The set of feasible interpretations widens as the Eyre controversy falls out of common knowledge.

Let us consider what late-twentieth-century Ruskin commentators make of the Eyre episode. My impression is that they choose not to mention it.<sup>40</sup>

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cause of the weakness of Marxism in Britain was that those within the socialist movement who were inclined to violence and state terror had no need of Marx; they already had their prophet in Ruskin” (Harris 1999, 27). George Orwell (1968, 1:119) describes Shaw’s opinions as “Carlyle & water.”

39. “What had seemed so extraordinary to John Stuart Mill and his comrades—administrative massacre, rule by terror—has become a commonplace in the imperial history of our century” (Semmel 1962, 178).

40. Consider the claim by Spear (1984, 150): “Ruskin’s attack on the labor theory of value and the nature of his substitute for it is a signal instance of his uncanny ability to arrive at progressive conclusions by regressive methods.” Justifying a racial massacre is “progressive” just how? I do not believe that I have seen a wonderful instance of optimal silence except that evidenced in Spear’s reading Carlyle’s exterminationism as just talk.

However, we can be more precise than that. In George Cate's 1988 *John Ruskin: A Reference Guide*, which contains annotations on well over three hundred scholarly works, Eyre is mentioned precisely *once*.<sup>41</sup> And this occurs in the comforting context of an article retelling the story that Carlyle dragged Ruskin into the controversy over Eyre's "vigorously suppressing" a riot.<sup>42</sup> The fact that the standard work on the British debates comprising the Governor Eyre controversy—Semmel (1962)—is not mentioned is deeply suggestive of how the relaxation of the constraint imposed by common knowledge can be exploited by those hawking pleasing interpretations.

Perhaps the new century will see a change. For, behold, the most recent full-length life of Ruskin (Hilton 2000, 105–7) discusses his "poor cause" in the Eyre case with a reasonable amount of care and usefully links Carlyle's *Shooting Niagara* to Ruskin's *Time and Tide*.<sup>43</sup> But even after reading Hilton one might come away thinking that Ruskin had no more to do with Eyre than the other Victorian sages.

Against all these assertions, it bears repeating what Semmel emphasizes: it was Ruskin himself who, first among the sages, alerted his peers to Eyre's importance to their common cause.<sup>44</sup> Ruskin's 1865 letter to the *Daily Telegraph* repays more careful reading than it generally receives.

In this letter, Ruskin opens with compliments to J. S. Mill and Thomas Hughes. He declares himself to be a "King's man" in opposition to the "Mob's men" and then gets down to the business at hand. That business is slavery in America and slavery in Europe. As we read what Ruskin wrote in the early 1850s about life and death for slaves real and metaphorical, let us consider what he says now when the death of black people is real:

41. George Cate's (1988, 138) index entry for "Eyre" refers to one 1948 article, although in Cate 1982 (120), Semmel (1962) is authoritative.

42. Cate (1988, 59) describes Eyre as "vigorously suppressing an uprising against his rule." "Vigorously"—wire whips and judicial lynch. A literature in which "St. George and the Negro" is an unproblematic image will find this a comfort. Cate continues: "Ruskin did much work as an especial favor to his mentor and close friend Thomas Carlyle, who chaired the committee. Tennyson and Dickens were also members of the committee" (59)

43. Here is my reservation. Hilton (2000, 106) describes the anti-Eyre and pro-Eyre groups. "It is significant that the main movers of these groups were largely outside Parliament." Then Hilton recites the names of the moving spirits of the Jamaica Committee, which include J. S. Mill and John Bright. Hilton does not recognize that they are members of Parliament. Semmel (1962) would have cleared this up.

44. "Ruskin had thus been the first of the literary men to come to the defence of Governor Eyre. It was even possible that the noted critic, very close to Carlyle at this period, had helped Jane to interest her husband in the Eyre affair" (Semmel 1962, 109). On April 10, 1866, Jane Carlyle (1883, 325) writes about a conversation that went like this. She responds to the challenge "But no *man* living could stand up for Eyre now!" with the "I hope Mr. Carlyle does," I said. 'I haven't had an opportunity of asking him; but I should be surprised and grieved if I found him sentimentalising over a pack of black brutes!' The Carlyle-Ruskin letters about Eyre date from September 1866 (Cate 1982, 119–23).

Not that I like slavery, or object to the emancipation of any kind or number of blacks in due place and time. (1903–12, 18:551)<sup>45</sup>

The letter is dated December 20, 1865. An agreement of April 9, 1865, at the Appomattox Court House, settled one dispute about slavery, regardless of whether the time and place was right, a thought to which we shall return. Ruskin continues charging that those objecting to Eyre's actions are unaware of the full dimensions of "slavery." This gives some context to the "due place and time":

But I understand something more by "slavery" than either Mr. J. S. Mill or Mr. Hughes; and believe that white emancipation not only ought to precede, but must by law of all fate precede, black emancipation. (551)<sup>46</sup>

The "law of all fate" is of course the standard Carlylean appeal to as-if divine revelation. Then, perhaps conscious of the need to address the unbelievers in his audience, Ruskin launches an argument by means of parallel construction:

I much dislike the slavery, to man, of an African labourer, with a spade on his shoulder; but I more dislike the slavery, to the devil, of a Calabrian robber with a gun on his shoulder. (551)

African slaves have men with spades as masters, men no different than other men. There are other forms of slavery in which one serves the devil himself. Now we compare America and England:

I dislike the American serf-economy, which separates, occasionally, man and wife; but I more dislike the English serf-economy, which prevents men being able to have wives at all. (551)

What kind of an attack on British capitalism is the argument that "English serfs" do not have wives?<sup>47</sup> And in any event how are we to read "occasionally"?

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45. This was reprinted earlier in Ruskin 1880, 2:31–32.

46. Ruskin racialized the history of architecture with kindred insight: "But it may be incidentally observed, that if the Greeks did indeed receive the Doric from Egypt, then the three families of the earth have each contributed their part of its noblest architecture; and Ham, the servant of the others, furnishes the sustaining or bearing member, the shaft; Japheth the arch; Shem the spiritualisation of both" (1921–27, 1:13).

47. To a sensible scholar like Bernard Semmel, this line must make no sense whatsoever. He does not quote it (1962, 108–9). Let me thank Wendy Motooka, who provided a bracing correction for my temptation to rely upon even this best of all secondary sources! The Malthusian controversy dealt with the necessity of delaying marriage (Levy 1999b). The neo-Malthusians—Francis Place through Mill himself—defended contraception as a way to allow poor people to afford early marriage.

Are an American husband and wife upon occasion temporarily separated or is it upon occasion that an American husband and wife are permanently separated by their master's interests. We continue, reading about Eliza pursued by dogs, carrying little Harry across the ice, in juxtaposition to something:<sup>48</sup>

I dislike the slavery which obliges women (if it does) to carry their children over frozen rivers; but I more dislike the slavery which makes them throw their children into wells. (551)

Then Ruskin reveals his contempt for market exchange: the kidnapping and serial rape of black girls—prostitution compelled by the lash<sup>49</sup>—is less of a moral issue for him than white girls prostituting themselves for money.

I would willingly hinder the selling of girls on the Gold Coast: but primarily, if I might, would the selling of them in Mayfair. (551)

Ruskin, it should be as clear as can be, views black slavery and “white slavery” this way: black slaves have men as masters to make them better; white slaves lack this boon, subject as they are to “devils” and the machine. And white English people are “fated” to be more important than black people. By defending Eyre's actions with these arguments, Ruskin reveals that for him the deaths of distant black people in the interests of nearby white people are advantageous. His political actions in the mid-1860s on behalf of Eyre are in accord with our reading of his words of 1853.

### The Death of a Discipline?

As we have learned much from Cook and Wedderburn's commentary on *Cope's* image, we should attend to what else they have to teach. Here they

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48. Cook and Wedderburn (in Ruskin 1903–12, 18: 551) and the editor of *Arrows of the Chace* (Ruskin 1880, 2:345) both give *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as references. Is there a novel, an *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the “English serfs,” to which Ruskin is referring? The line in Ruskin's letter that Semmel does not quote—English serfs without wives—seems to me to make sense in and only in the context provided by Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, an argument to which I shall return. Stephen and Rachael are doomed by Dickens's plot to pass their lives in separate bedrooms. Ruskin's inability to distinguish the real world from characters in books has been pointed out: “[Patmore's poem] *The Angel in the House* would reappear in *Sesame and Lilies*, the book written expressly for Rose La Touche at the height of Ruskin's love for her. It is a poem that contributed to his disastrous assumptions about the girl he wished to wed” (Hilton 1985, 212).

49. A convenient example is found in the article by George Stephens that is included in Lord Denman's republished attack on Dickens's views on slavery: “The national conscience was awakened to inquiry, and inquiry soon produced conviction. Could it be otherwise than a sin to enslave the soul by enchaining the body? Could it be otherwise than sinful to compel prostitution by the lash?” (Denman 1853, 56).

describe the relationship between Carlyle and Ruskin and their battle with the common foe, giving useful information in their note, which I embed within their text:

Ever since Ruskin had entered the field against “the dismal science,” [Note: Carlyle’s favourite phrase for Political Economy was first used by him in *The Nigger Question* (1853) . . . ] his relations with Carlyle had grown more and more intimate and affectionate. As each new shaft was hurled by Ruskin, Carlyle applauded and exhorted the younger man to fresh onslaughts.<sup>50</sup>

There is an error in this text, although it is of little consequence. The term *dismal science* did not originate in Carlyle’s 1853 booklet *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*, it originated in an 1849 essay in *Fraser’s* entitled “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question.”<sup>51</sup>

Before we read this article for ourselves, let James Froude, Carlyle’s great and inexorably candid biographer, explain the importance of the article and booklet. They attack the role of economics in the emancipation of British slaves:

A paper on the Negro or Nigger question, properly the first of the “Latter-day Pamphlets,” was Carlyle’s declaration of war against modern Radicalism. . . . His objection was to the cant of Radicalism; the philosophy of it, “bred of philanthropy and the Dismal Science,” the purport of which was to cast the atoms of human society adrift, mocked with the name of liberty, to sink or swim as they could. Negro emancipation had been the special boast and glory of the new theory of universal happiness. The *twenty million of indemnity* and the free West Indies had been chanted and celebrated for a quarter of a century from press and platform. (1885, 2:14–15; emphasis added)

The “twenty million of indemnity,” which I have emphasized, will turn out to be important for my reading of the puzzle posed by the image. But first we turn to the first appearance of the “dismal science” in the English language. We find an older “gay” science and a newer dismal science in contrast. We have learned the gay science is poetry. And how might we read the dismal science economics?

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50. Cook and Wedderburn in Ruskin 1903–12, 18:xlvi.

51. The standard edition of the 1853 pamphlet, which is paired with Mill’s response to the 1849 article, is by Eugene August (Carlyle 1971). The OED entry for *dismal* has the date right but the title wrong: “1849 Carlyle *Nigger Question*, *Misc. Ess.* (1872) VII. 84 ‘The Social Science—not a ‘gay science’, but a rueful,—which finds the secret of this Universe in ‘supply and demand’ what we might call, by way of eminence, the *dismal science*.’”

Truly, my philanthropic friends, Exeter Hall Philanthropy is wonderful: and the Social Science—not a “gay science,” but a rueful—which finds the secret of this universe in “supply-and-demand,” and reduces the duty of human governors to that of letting men alone, is also wonderful. Not a “gay science,” I should say, like some we have heard of; no, a dreary, desolate, and indeed quite abject and distressing one: what we might call, by way of eminence, the *dismal science*. These two, Exeter Hall Philanthropy and the Dismal Science, led by any sacred cause of Black Emancipation, or the like, to fall in love and make a wedding of it,—will give birth to progenies and prodigies; dark extensive moon-calves, unnameable abortions, wide-coiled monstrosities, such as the world has not seen hitherto! (Carlyle 1849, 672–73)

Can we read dismal science as the “Negro science?”<sup>52</sup> And perhaps we might pay attention to the possibility of “wide-coiled monstrosities” resulting from the marriage of economics and the cause of black emancipation.

Foreshadowing their roles two decades later, John Stuart Mill responded (Mill 1850). Then, in what I read as Carlyle’s response to Mill, he adds to this, the familiar doctrine of emancipation through slavery, the consideration that when slavery fails, genocide is justified. The reader who has never thought of racial extermination as a policy option might wish to read carefully.<sup>53</sup> As the “Negro Question” is the report of a speech, here is another speech:

—Work, was I saying? My indigent unguided friends, I should think some work might be discoverable for you. Enlist, stand drill; become, from a nomadic Banditti of Idleness, Soldiers of Industry! I will lead you to the Irish Bogs, to the vacant desolations of Connaught now falling into Cannibalism. . . .

To each of you I will then say: Here is work for you; strike into it with manlike, soldierlike obedience and heartiness, according to the methods here prescribed,—wages follow for you without difficulty; all manner of just remuneration, and at length emancipation itself follows. Refuse to strike into it; shirk the heavy labour, disobey the rules,—I will admonish and endeavour to incite you; if in vain, I will flog you; if still in vain, I will at last shoot you,—and make God’s Earth, and the forlorn-hope in God’s Battle, free of you. (Carlyle 1850b, 54–55)

52. Stephen Darwall gave me this reading years before either of us had seen the *Cope’s* image!

53. “Like the other calls to order in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, the violence of the prime minister’s speech is an impotent violence. It is impotent not because of some psychological failing on Carlyle’s part, but because, as the context of the speech makes clear, Carlyle has little hope that the speech will be given, let alone action taken” (Spear 1984, 111). Governor Eyre’s actions must have been seen as heaven-sent confirmation of the policy, which, instructively enough, Spear never mentions.

Now we begin to make sense of *Cope's* image: the death of Negroes and the death of a science are linked because what we call classical economics is from Carlyle's point of view the "Negro science." And perhaps Carlyle is right here, just as he is right about many other things about the doctrines of those he opposed.

But *Cope's* image is of Ruskin not of Carlyle. Moreover, the Carlyle entry in the Smoke-Room Booklet series (Carlyle 1890), has a simple cameo on the cover. The division of labor in the death of classical economics between Carlyle and Ruskin is explained by Harrison:

Such was the man who, in the pages of the *Cornhill Magazine*, then edited by his friend Thackeray, undertook, with all the sublime faith in himself of the Knight of La Mancha, to demolish the solid array of what had held the field for two generations as Political Economy, *i.e.* the consolidated and rigid doctrine of Ricardo, Malthus, and M'Culloch. Ruskin's assault was not quite strictly original. Carlyle, whom he called his master, had continually poured forth his epigrams, sarcasm, and nicknames about the "dismal science" and its professors. Dickens, Kingsley, and other romancers, had fiercely inveighed against the Gradgrind philosophy of labour and the moral and social curse it involved. . . . Ruskin was thus not by any means the first to throw doubts over the gospel of Ricardo and M'Culloch. But he was no doubt the first to open fire on the very creed and decalogue of that gospel, and he certainly was the first to put those doubts and criticisms into trenchant literary form such as long stirred the general public as with a trumpet note. (1902, 96–7)

But the reference in the *Cope's* image is "Wealth of Nations" not "Principles of Political Economy and Taxation" or "Population." The reference is to a work of an eighteenth-century economist, not a nineteenth-century one. How do we read this?

### The Image of Wealth

The bag that the figure of the slain Other clasps has two lines written on it. The first is "L. S. D."; the second is "Wealth of Nations." Not only is the bag surely meant to represent monetary wealth (in addition to the book title) but the clothing represents considerable riches. How is this consistent with our supposed reading of the human figure with Negro characteristics?

Let us first consider the book that is so titled. The most outrageous claim in the *Wealth of Nations*, from the Carlyle-Ruskin point of view, is the hardest rational choice doctrine and the equivalent analytical egalitarianism. Why are these equivalent? In Smith's version of rational choice theory, the physical differences among people are trivial. Race does not matter; there are only incentives and history:

The difference of natural talents in different men is, in reality, much less than we are aware of; and the very different genius which appears to distinguish men of different professions, when grown up to maturity, is not upon many occasions so much the cause, as the effect of the division of labour. The difference between the most dissimilar characters, between a philosopher and a common street porter, for example, seems to arise not so much from nature as from habit, custom, and education. When they came into the world, and for the first six or eight years of their existence, they were, perhaps, very much alike, and neither their parents nor play-fellows could perceive any remarkable difference. About that age, or soon after, they come to be employed in very different occupations. The difference of talents comes then to be taken notice of, and widens by degrees, till at last the vanity of the philosopher is willing to acknowledge scarce any resemblance. But without the disposition to truck, barter, and exchange, every man must have procured to himself every necessary and conveniency of life which he wanted. All must have had the same duties to perform, and the same work to do, and there could have been no such difference of employment as could alone give occasion to any great difference of talents. (1976a, 28–29)

Here is Ruskin's hierarchical alternative wrapped up with portents of life and death:

[I]f there be any one point insisted on throughout my works more frequently than another, that one point is the impossibility of Equality. My continual aim has been to show the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of man to all others; and to show also the advisability of appointing such persons or person to guide, to lead, or on occasion even to compel and subdue, their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will. My principles of Political Economy were all involved in a single phrase spoken three years ago at Manchester: "Soldiers of the Ploughshare as well as Soldiers of the Sword": and they were all summed in a single sentence in the last volume of *Modern Painters*—"Government and co-operation are in all things the Laws of Life; Anarchy and competition the Laws of Death." (1903–12, 17:74–75)

Here is how Froude explains Carlyle's social policy as it was put forward in the "Negro Question." The trope that characterizes the Carlylean position is that racial slavery is an instance of Teutonic feudalism:

He did not mean that the "Niggers" should have been kept as cattle, and sold as cattle at their owners' pleasure. He did mean that they ought to have been treated as human beings, for whose souls and bodies the whites

were responsible; that they should have been placed in a position suited to their capacity, like that of the English serfs under the Plantagenets. (1885, 2:15)

This should make clear both Ruskin's views of good slavery as they were expressed in his "Nature of the Gothic," which Lewin quoted, as well as the line in Ruskin's letter on Eyre about black emancipation in "due place and time." This presumably means when slavery turns Negroes white. Given sufficient time and sexual usage, this might not be an idle thought.

What about the "L. S. D." on the bag and the rich clothing? West Indian emancipation—as Froude noted—required a payment by the British taxpayer of 20 million pounds.<sup>54</sup> If the 20 million is the basis of this aspect of the image, then the spats and fancy dress surely signify that the Negro is an undeserving recipient. Safe within an understandable hierarchy, the black slave was better off than the "white slaves" from whom the 20 million was taken. Perhaps this parliamentary deal is viewed as robbery and so the homicide is justifiable?

That the transfer was undeserving is an assertion one finds in Carlyle's 1844 *Past and Present*:

O Anti-Slavery Convention, loud-sounding long-eared Exeter-Hall—But in thee too is a kind of instinct towards justice, and I will complain of nothing. Only, black Quashee over the seas being once sufficiently attended to, wilt thou not perhaps open thy dull sodden eyes to the "sixty-thousand valets in London itself who are yearly dismissed to the streets, to be what they can, when the season ends;"—or to the hungerstricken, pallid, yellow-coloured "Free Labourers" in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Buckinghamshire, and all other shires! These Yellow-coloured, for the present, absorb all my sympathies: if I had a Twenty Millions, with Model-Farms and Niger Expeditions, it is to these that I would give it! Quashee has already victuals, clothing; Quashee is not dying of such despair as the yellow-coloured pale man's. Quashee, it must be owned, is hitherto a kind of blockhead. The Haiti Duke of Marmalade, educated now for almost half a century, seems to have next to no sense in him. Why, in one of those Lancashire Weavers, dying of hunger, there is more thought and heart, a greater arithmetical

54. "In 1833 the great Act passed, emancipating all the negro slaves in British Colonies and decreeing payment of twenty million in compensation to the slave-owner" (Morley 1851, 402). The deal was very complicated. Even with the money and a tariff, the slaves needed to endure a seven-year period of transition, what was called an "apprenticeship." A very young T. B. Macaulay, then in Parliament, seems to have effected a reduction from the initial offer of twelve years to seven with one speech. The Jamaica crisis, which produced Carlyle's "Negro Question," was partly caused by the renegeing on the tariff (Denman 1853). Macaulay in midcentury debates stands for more than a pungent stylist and the "Whig" historian: he was the last link connected by memory to Wilberforce himself. Macaulay's remarkable analysis of anti-Semitism juxtaposed against Robert Southey's position is studied in Felsenstein 1995, 250–52.

amount of misery and desperation, than in whole gangs of Quashees. It must be owned, thy eyes are of the sodden sort; and with thy emancipations, and thy twenty-millionings and long-eared clamourings, thou, like Robespierre with his pasteboard *Être Suprême*, threatenest to become a bore to us. (1965, 275)

Here is a passage from Carlyle's 1849 "Negro Question," in which the 20 million pounds are also mentioned, with the unobtrusive suggestion as to why they might have been better spent elsewhere:

Exeter Hall, my philanthropic friends, has had its way in this matter. The Twenty Millions, a mere trifle despatched with a single dash of the pen, are paid; and far over the sea, we have a few black persons rendered extremely "free" indeed. Sitting yonder with their beautiful muzzles up to the ears in pumpkins, imbibing sweet pulps and juices; the grinder and incisor teeth ready for every new work, and the pumpkins cheap as grass in those rich climates: while the sugar-crops rot round them uncut, because labour cannot be hired, so cheap are the pumpkins;—and at home we are but required to rasp from the breakfast loaves of our own English labourers some slight "differential sugar-duties," and lend a poor half-million or a few poor millions now and then, to keep that beautiful state of matters going on. (671)

If we read the image through the Carlylean worldview, we can understand why newly emancipated slaves would be supposed to have stolen from white people. This would also explain the seeming anomaly in dress. We do not think of newly emancipated slaves this way, but the Carlyleans did.

### Miscegenation and the "Nigger Philanthropist"

We began with a puzzle as how to read John Wallace's image. Clearly, it is an image of the war between economics and poetry. The juxtaposition of Ruskin on Pegasus with "The Dismal Science" suffices for this identification.

But still we have not confronted the problem of who Ruskin's enemy is. Is the enemy supposed to be a real person, someone of an apelike race? The best evidence for this reading is Ruskin's activity on behalf of Governor Eyre. This tells us that his 1853 words about the irrelevance of the death of black slaves is more than cheap talk. Is Ruskin's enemy supposed to be a personification of economic science? The best evidence for this reading is that the Carlyle-Ruskin emphasis on hierarchy in opposition to markets had a clear racial dimension. "The Dismal Science" can be read as the "Negro Science."

But there is another possible reading, which mixes both of these. Let us

return to the text in which Carlyle coins the term *dismal science* and reread the next line:

These two, Exeter Hall Philanthropy and the Dismal Science, led by any sacred cause of Black Emancipation, or the like, to fall in love and make a wedding of it,—will give birth to progenies and prodigies; dark extensive moon-calves, unnameable abortions, wide-coiled monstrosities, such as the world has not seen hitherto! (1849, 672–73)

Perhaps this gives us our third possibility. If the figure represents the union between “Black Emancipation” and “The Dismal Science,” they have indeed had a wedding, and from this miscegenation a “dark extensive moon-calf,” a “wide-coiled monstrosity,” has been born. And it grew and grew until it was dispatched by Ruskin. This is the reading I should prefer.

This reading suggests that the Victorian “sages” read friends of the dismal science out of the white race. Is there any nonoblique textual evidence for this? From his most famous 1867 statement on the Eyre controversy, *Shooting Niagara*, here is Carlyle’s description of the Jamaica Committee: “a small loud group, small as now appears, and nothing but a group or knot of rabid Nigger-Philanthropists, barking furiously in the gutter” (14).<sup>55</sup> Of course, this can be read as implying that the Jamaica Committee has left the white race, that it is simply crusading on behalf of nonwhites, or both. What forces the reading to be *both* of these possibilities is the word *knot*, which, when describing a group of people, has a special connotation in contemporary discussions. It has an Irish reference:

The native Irish, who had been reduced to the condition of labourers, would club together and establish co-operative societies, or “Knots,” of from ten to twenty families. (Sigerson 1870, 476)<sup>56</sup>

As we shall see, Carlyle proposes the common identity of black people and Irish. Thus, he has read the “Nigger-Philanthropists” out the white race.

But this in turn reveals a deeper puzzle. One does not need to have seen the image on the Smoke Room Booklet to know all about Carlyle’s and Ruskin’s

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55. This paragraph is the result of Peart and Levy 2000, which argues for the importance of *Shooting Niagara*. Its link to *Time and Tide*, noted by Hilton (2000, 107), shows when Ruskin continues the mad dog image (1903–12, 17:437): “And it is a curious thing to me to see Mr. J. S. Mill foaming at the mouth . . .” See also page 445, where writing political economy is a far worse crime than “boldly to sign warrant for the sudden death of one man, known to be an agitator.” Shaw (1921) gets the violence in Ruskin right.

56. The usage is not explicitly defined in the OED’s definition of *knot*, even though one of the quotations illustrating *knot* as a group of people has an Irish context.

views on racial slavery. On the contrary, the image can be read because we know all too well what they thought about such matters.<sup>57</sup> What is so attractive about hierarchical order that modern scholars, who present the Victorian sages as guides for their time if not ours, “overlook” the facts that the theorized alternative to markets pressed by the nineteenth-century literary sages was racial slavery? And for these theorists the judicial murder of people of color was a policy option?<sup>58</sup>

### **Appendix: Ruskin v. Cope Bros.**

As noticed previously, the highest authorities on matters concerning Ruskin, the editors of the great Library Edition, and on matters concerning *Cope's Tobacco Plant*, Richard Altick, have called attention to the case *Ruskin v. Cope Bros.* over the booklet which bears the image reproduced on the cover of this book.<sup>59</sup> What was the issue at the suit that led to the rapid withdrawal of the thirteenth of the Smoke Room Booklets? Perhaps those legally responsible for Ruskin, who was then incapacitated, were outraged by the cover image and appealed to the court to distance him from this sort of representation? Here these authorities do not speak.

In 1957 the University of Liverpool acquired the magnificent book collection and the papers of John Fraser who edited and printed both *Cope's Tobacco Plant* and the Smoke Room Booklets. In these papers there is a transcription of the court reporter's shorthand report of the trial held November 24, 1893 (Fraser 667).

In the transcript we can read the statement from Mr. Buckley who represents Ruskin's interests. After some pleasantries noting the fame of the contending parties, he describes the booklet to the Court:

The subject of the application is an advertisement as I suppose I must call it which the Defendants have thought proper to put forward of their goods which is almost in its Entirety if not absolutely a bare faced & impudent reproduction of Mr. Ruskin's publication. A copy of the production should be handed to your Lordship and I will ask your Lordship to look at it. (Fraser 667, 1–2)

57. “You would imagine that no human being could ever have been under the slightest delusion as to what Ruskin meant and was driving at” (Shaw 1921, 8).

58. “After the events of 1865 English racial antagonisms crystallized more clearly than at any time since the collapse of the slave lobby. Eyre found enormous support for his legalized savagery, notably from Ruskin, Tennyson, Kingsley, Dickens and Carlyle. Their public utterances and those from sympathetic newspapers revived the very worst English attitudes towards the Negro” (Walvin 1973, 172).

59. This section, written after Chapter 2, owes its existence to Katy Hooper of the Library of the University of Liverpool who made the arrangements for my visit and who constructed the guide upon which I depended to the Cope material in the Fraser Collection.

He begins with the cover:

It bears upon the face of it, outside, a representation of a horseman mounted on a horse, and from the features which it bears I suppose it is meant to represent Mr Ruskin, and he is impaling a figure at the bottom holding a bag which bears upon it the words "L.S.D. Wealth of Nations." (Fraser 667, 2)

And what do we make of this?

I suppose that must be a representation of Mr. Ruskin's well known antipathy to political economy. (Fraser 667, 2)

It is interesting that the identification of anti-economics is made from the *Wealth of Nations* reference and not the "Dismal Science."

And the impaled figure? Nothing further is said. The silence seems to confirm Walter Bagehot's sneer that no one in his heart grieved for the death of a political economist.

After discussing various Cope's advertisements and Walter Lewin's preface, about which no objections were made, the body of the text is described:

From page 7 to page 57—that is to say the whole of the body of the work—it is proved that those are simply verbatim reprints of passages from "Fors Clavigera" and they contain many of the most prominent and well known passages which are often referred to in that well known book. In fact it is about as gross an infringement of the authors rights as can be conceived. (Fraser 667, 3–4)

Then the argument sharpens:

Then I will ask your Lordship to look at pages 58 & 59 because there is evidence of bad faith, in this sense. I shall tell your Lordship that Mr George Allen is Mr John Ruskin's publisher; and your Lordship will see upon page 58 a list of 6 books given and those are all books written by Mr Ruskin and which are published by Mr George Allen, Orpington Kent as his publisher; and your Lordship will find there is a note at the foot of page 58 which states that to be so, and upon the top of page 59 your Lordship will find "Ruskin on himself and things in general with an introductory notice by Walter Lewin Copes smokeroom booklets no 13 threepence." That is the booklet or pamphlet or whatever it is called the subject of the present application.

Then follow two other works “Studies in Ruskin by Edward J. Cook” which is published by George Allen and another work “John Ruskin a Bibliographical biography by William E. A. Axon reprinted from Volume 5 of the papers of the Manchester Literary Club 1879.” From the form in which that is put forward the unwary reader would be induced to think that this thing is a thing issued by Mr George Allen, because here is the publishers circular at the end of the book showing the things that he publishes. At the foot of page 58 you find “Mr George Allen publisher” placed before the interpolation of this little book and between them “Studies in Ruskin some aspects of the work and teaching of John Ruskin by E. J. Cook” intending I should have thought to have led to the conclusion that this is a book which had Mr Ruskin’s authority. (Fraser 667, 4–5)

Thus we read Ruskin’s attorney objecting to the authentic look of the booklet—beginning with the cover and ending with the bibliography. The case over the booklet was not because it was a misrepresentation of Ruskin’s views; rather, it was too close a representation.

There are three factual matters which were claimed by the Cope attorney. First, in spite of the fact that there is a price marked on the cover, the booklets were given away so Cope’s was not profiting from the sales. Second, *Cope’s Tobacco Plant* had been assiduously calling attention to Ruskin’s views since April 1875. Third, the booklet was if anything something which would increase the sales of Ruskin’s own books, not take away sales. Ruskin’s views (other than his views on tobacco!) and Cope’s products were tied together. Cope’s response raises a wonderful problem. Why was a commercial venture using antimarket ideology as a public relations device?

In a letter to Cope’s attorney, the booklet’s editor Walter Lewin seems to claim that if Ruskin had been in his right mind there would have been no suit, that this was a mutually beneficial form of advertising:

Poor old Ruskin, I suppose, has nothing to do with it—only observe as dummy for a dull secretary or publisher, who had not the sense to leave a good advertisement alone. Not one person could have been prevented from buying Ruskin’s books, by reading the Booklet, but I doubt not many were led on by it, to them. I suspect that suggestion that the sale had increased, went home. (Fraser 667 (Lewin letter) 1–2)<sup>60</sup>

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60. The role of Cope’s words and images in the attack on economics is something which Sandra Peart and I are considering.