Modern Britain:
Of Human Bondage

TO BE SOLD. on board the
Ship Bance Island, on tuesday the 6th
of May next, at Aopley Ferry; a choice
cargo of about 250 fine healthy
NEGROES,
just arrived from the
Windward & Rice Coast.
—The utmost care has
already been taken, and
shall be continued, to keep them free from
the least danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
board, and all other communication with
people from Charles-Town prevented.
Aubin, Laurens, & Appleby.

N.B. Full one Half of the above Negroses have had the
SMALL-POX in their own Country.
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- John Newton became captain of his own slave ship.
- His conversion came on a homeward voyage, while he was attempting to steer the ship through a violent storm. He recorded in his journal that when all seemed lost and the ship would surely sink, he exclaimed, “Lord, have mercy upon us.” Later in his cabin he reflected on what he had said and began to believe that God had addressed him through the storm and that grace had begun to work for him.
- In 1760, he was ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln and accepted the curacy of Olney.
- Composed probably between 1760 and 1770 in Olney, “Amazing Grace” was possibly one of the hymns written for a weekly service.
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- Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
  That sav’d a wretch like me!
  I once was lost, but now am found,
  Was blind, but now I see. 'Twas grace that
  taught my heart to fear,
  And grace my fears reliev’d;
  How precious did that grace appear,
  The hour I first believ’d!

- Thro’ many dangers, toils and snares,
  I have already come;
  'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
  And grace will lead me home.

- The Lord has promis’d good to me,
  His word my hope secures;
  He will my shield and portion be,
  As long as life endures.

- Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
  And mortal life shall cease;
  I shall possess, within the veil,
  A life of joy and peace.

- The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
  The sun forbear to shine;
  But God, who call’d me here below,
  Will be forever mine.
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• The Negroes who inhabit the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the southern bounds of Angola, are so far from being the stupid, senseless, brutish, lazy barbarians, the fierce, cruel, perfidious savages they have been described, that, on the contrary, they are represented, by them who have no motive to flatter them, as remarkably sensible, considering the few advantages they have for improving their understanding; as industrious to the highest degree, perhaps more so than any other natives of so warm a climate; as fair, just, and honest in all their dealings, unless where white men have taught them to be otherwise; and as far more mild, friendly, and kind to strangers, than any of our forefathers were.
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- The three origins of the right of slavery assigned by Justinian:
- Slavery is said to arise from captivity in war. The conqueror having a right to the life of his captives, if he spares that, has then a right to deal with them as he pleases.
- Secondly, slavery may begin by one man's selling himself to another.
- Thirdly, that men may be born slaves, by being the children of slaves.
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"But the furnishing us with slaves is necessary for the trade, and wealth, and glory of our nation." Here are several mistakes. For, First, wealth is not necessary to the glory of any nation; but wisdom, virtue, justice, mercy, generosity, public spirit, love of our country. These are necessary to the real glory of a nation; but abundance of wealth is not. Men of understanding allow that the glory of England was full as high in Queen Elizabeth's time as it is now; although our riches and trade were then as much smaller, as our virtue was greater. But, Secondly, it is not clear that we should have either less money or trade, (only less of that detestable trade of man-stealing,) if there was not a Negro in all our islands, or in all English America. “

John Wesley
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- Should this trade be abolished . . . the Town of Liverpool, whose fall, in that case would be as rapid as its Rise has been astounding.
  - James Penny, slave trader
- “There is hardly any Branch of Commerce in which this Nation is concerned that does not derive some advantage from it (slave trading).
  - Committee of Merchants Trading to Africa
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• “This equally concerns every merchant who is engaged in the slave-trade. It is you that induce the African villain to sell his countrymen; and in order thereto, to steal, rob, murder men, women, and children without number, by enabling the English villain to pay him for so doing, whom you overpay for his execrable labour. It is your money that is the spring of all, that empowers him to go on: So that whatever he or the African does in this matter is all your act and deed. And is your conscience quite reconciled to this? Does it never reproach you at all? Has gold entirely blinded your eyes, and stupified your heart? Can you see, can you feel, no harm therein?”

John Wesley
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Slavery’s contribution to British industrial development:

1. Would not have been able to industrialize without it.
2. Britain would have industrialized at roughly the same rate without slavery (or knowledge of the Americas until 1800).
3. While Atlantic slave trade was not necessary for industrialization, it was more important to the British economy between 1750 and 1830 than any other domestic or foreign sector of the economy.
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- How should the cost of human labor factor into the advance of British industrialization?
- Did economic exploitation in the British Peripheries advance the business practices in its Core or was it the opposite?
- As historians should our interest in the Atlantic slave trade reside in its obvious immorality or in its economic importance?
- How could the European idea of “Free Labor” continue to evolve amidst an atmosphere of long-term acceptance of slavery?
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- **Economics:**
- When slaving became the biggest African growth industry it led to the development of African bandit groups, what would a group of marauders do to a local economy?
- When speaking about the export centers on the West African coast, which benefited from the slave trade, what does the term “enclave economy” imply?
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After about 1650, with diminishing exceptions, African production-for-export became a monoculture in human beings. This can be seen to have suffocated economic growth in coastal and near-coastal Africa as surely as the extension of European production-for-export of consumer goods gave the maritime nations of Europe, at the same time, their long lead in economic development.31

The metaphor of “suffocation” is appropriate: the trade stifled the continent’s technological and commercial potentials, preventing Africans from being on the same economic level—the playing field—where they would have been had the Europeans not exploited them so viciously and for so long. Had history unfolded differently, Africans would have realized that the trade was going to benefit Europeans only; they would have collectively and radically opposed the trade in all its forms.

• Is the metaphor of “suffocating the African economy” accurate and appropriate?
• Does the author offer any proof of the last statement?
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• **Politics:**
  
  Did Europeans create an African political Darwinism in which Africans turned into wolves devouring other Africans?

  What sort of relationship had been developed between the African governed and the governing?

  What did inter-marriage create in the populations of the major slave trading enclaves?
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• Social:
  • Describe the Eugenicist theory put forward about the impact of the Atlantic trade on Africa.
  • As a result of the Atlantic trade, what happened to African social networks?
  • Was the wealth derived from the Trade available to all Africans?
  • What was the demographic effect of the Atlantic Trade?
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- When Daniel O’Connell (right) speaks of having “no party motives or for any party objects,” to what is he referring?
- Why does he feel compelled to explain that the calamity is not due to some default of the Irish people?
- Should he have said “the rural population and especially the agricultural labourers are as has been stated in a report to the house, almost always on the verge of famine?”
- What can you read into his reference to the report on how Britain’s black population decreased during slavery?
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- *The Discovery of the Potato Blight in Ireland*, Daniel McDonald, c. 1847.
- “*The Irish Question*” from the *Times* of London, 1847
- What do you think of the editorial’s first sentence, “Every day the Irish question is becoming more oppressive. Stale it has been for a long time.”
- What is the *Times*’ attitude towards the Act of Union (1801) between Britain and Ireland?
- What constitutes the “bullying” that so annoys John Bull?
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- Although you do not know the particulars, What do you think of this statement, “Irish property should pay for Irish poverty.” and what is its import?
- What does the Times imply by this statement, “For no man could confer a greater blessing on that unhappy country, than by introducing into a body of proprietors, who at the same time practised the virtues of prudence and good management, and acknowledged the duties of their position.”
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• *Narrative of a Recent Journey of Six Weeks in Ireland*
• William Bennett (1847)
• When you read William Bennett’s account of his trip through Ireland how do you react to his descriptions?
• Which of his depictions most touched you?
• How did the agricultural poor react to the disintegration of families brought about by Famine starvation?
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- *Summer of Sorrows*, 1847, Gerald Keegan (published 1895).
- From Keegan’s early account, can you reconstruct the issues of the conversation between the landlord and his uncle?
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• Interpret these circumstances, “The people did not own the land, but they owned the improvements they had made on it, and had a right to be compensated for them. I knew my uncle when a boy had rented a piece of worthless bog and by the labor of himself, and afterward of his wife and children, had converted it into a profitable field. Should I advise him to give it up for a receipt for back rent a free passage to Canada?”

• What did you think of Keegan’s choice?
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- (Left) Famine ships
- How do you think people so poor that they had to be clothed in dresses made out of biscuit bags got the money to make a transatlantic passage?
- When you read Keegan’s instructions to Father Tom O’Hare, “Save the book; it will tell to those now unborn what Irish men and women have suffered in this summer of sorrow.” how would you expect such widespread experiences to affect the relationship between the bulk of the Irish population and the British core in London?
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• *Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine*
  – Is modernization always accompanied by a decline in formal religious practices
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- The caption for this photo reads: "Men, woman and children forced to flee the country in the face of terrible hardship."

- **Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine**
  - What factors precipitated a reaction in Ireland that saw people embrace a new religious fervor?
  - What did modernization in Ireland constitute?
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• The caption of this photo reads: "One of the poignant scenes from the famine (1870s) as police evict tenants from their modest home."

• *Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine*
  – Was it the cataclysm of the famine or the following dislocation of native Gaelic culture that brought about Ireland’s devotional revolution?
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- (Left) Victims of famine: destitute family.
- *Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine*
- In return for their adherence to the new church doctrine and discipline, which included repression of sexual appetites, Irish peasants got the Catholic Church’s support in their pursuit of reform of land laws and finally reacquire a legal attachment to the land. Consider the circumstances there and ask yourself if you would you have made the same exchange?
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“The Great Hunger” (1942)
Patrick Kavanagh

(Part II)
Maguire was faithful to death:
He stayed with his mother till she died
At the age of ninety-one.
She stayed too long,
Wife and mother in one.
When she died
The knuckle-bones were cutting the skin of her son's backside
And he was sixty-five.
O he loved his mother
Above all others.
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O he loved his ploughs
And he loved his cows
And his happiest dream
Was to clean his arse
With perennial grass
On the bank of some summer stream;
To smoke his pipe
In a sheltered gripe
In the middle of July.
His face in a mist
And two stones in his fist
And an impotent worm on his thigh.
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• But his passion became a plague
  For he grew feeble bringing the vague
  Women of his mind to lust nearness,
  Once a week at least flesh must make an appearance.
  So Maguire got tired
  Of the no-target gun fired
  And returned to his headland of carrots and cabbage
  To the fields once again
  Where eunuchs can be men
  And life is more lousy than savage.