

WILLIAM STANLEY JEVONS AND THE MAKING OF MODERN ECONOMICS



HARRO MAAS
University of Amsterdam



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations xiii

Abbreviations xv

Preface xvii

Acknowledgements xix

- 1 The Prying Eyes of the Natural Scientist 1**
 - Jevons's place in the history of economics 3
 - The distinction between mind and matter in Victorian Britain 9
 - Mechanical reasoning 13
 - Mixed mathematics in Victorian Britain 18
 - Formal logic and the mechanics of utility and self-interest 22
 - Outline of the book 24
- 2 William Stanley Jevons: Victorian Polymath 26**
- 3 The Black Arts of Induction 37**
 - Dugald Stewart: history and political economy as induction by reflection 37
 - John Stuart Mill: shielding political economy from history 41
 - Cambridge opposition to Ricardianism 44
 - Richard Jones on Ricardian theory 46
 - Whewell and Jones on the method of political economy 50
 - "This poor word metaphysics" 51
 - Saving the phenomena 54
 - Political economy as an inductive science 59

	Section F of the BAAS and the Statistical Society of London	64
	Coda	70
4	Mimetic Experiments	72
	Humboldtian science	72
	Naming the clouds	74
	Mimicking nature	77
	Jevons's experiments on the formation of clouds	80
	Artificial clouds, real clouds, and clouds "on an average"	88
	Jevons's uniform approach to the sciences	94
5	Engines of Discovery	96
	Babbage and his calculating engines	98
	God is a programmer	105
	An intelligent machine	108
	Is the mind a reasoning machine?	111
6	The Machinery of the Mind	123
	The Logical Abacus	124
	The Logical Machine	128
	The machine mind	137
	"Induction – the inverse of deduction"	141
	"To decide what things <i>are</i> similar"	146
7	The Private Laboratory of the Mind	151
	Jevons between Jones and Mill	153
	The association psychology and freedom of will	155
	"A vexed question in psychology"	159
	"Thought – a secretion of the brain"	162
	Carpenter's "correlation of forces"	164
	The physical groundwork of economics	169
	Free will is simply chance	173
	The private laboratory of the mind	176
8	The Laws of Human Enjoyment	181
	The factory system and the division of labour	184
	Ruskin's aesthetic-driven criticism of the factory system	189
	Mill and the "gospel of work"	194
	Work and fatigue	196

	Jevons's experiments on the exertion of muscular force	200
	Maximising utility while minimising painful exertion	205
	Amusements of the people	209
	"Of Kings' Treasuries"	213
9	Timing History	217
	Tables, graphs, and history	217
	Timing history	220
	Mapping history in graphs	224
	Images of laws of the phenomena	230
	Data, phenomena, and the graphical method	233
	Jevons's expression for the King Davenant "law"	237
	Jevons's standardising and timing of events	243
	Time-series graphs take hold in economics	248
	Logical and historical time	250
10	Balancing Acts	254
	The balance as a tool of analysis	257
	The balance as a measuring instrument	261
	Balancing disturbing causes: "a serious fall in the value of gold ascertained"	264
	Balancing pleasure and pain	270
	Conclusions	276
11	The Image of Economics	278
	Bridging the natural and the social	278
	Mechanical dreams	280
	Economics as a natural science	285
	<i>Bibliography</i>	291
	<i>Index</i>	319