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Martineau's Man: Fleshing out *Homo Economicus*.

Herbert Spencer's first published work, *Social Statics: or, The Conditions Essential to Human Happiness*, appeared to great acclaim in 1851. Spencer's only deist work, written he was a sub-editor on *The Economist*, the book held as its central premise the demand that humankind recognised and acted upon the "systematic character of the Divine rule" in order that progressive social order was realised.[1] In economic terms this necessitated the overthrow of "idolatrous" protectionist trade regulations, and the realisation of an inclusive free trade community.[2] But how inclusive? Towards the beginning of his work Spencer had written that "every age, every nation, every climate, exhibits a modified form of humanity." With this in mind, he commented on the impossibility of using "one's eyes and ears without learning that mankind vary indefinitely, in instincts, in morals, in opinions, in tastes, in rationality, in everything."[3] However, historical, national and climatic relativity could be put to one side in favour of economic universalism. Spencer was emphatic in asserting that humanity's propensity to exchange transcended all physical and cultural peculiarities:

> Deducible as it is from the law of equal freedom, the right of exchange is as sacred as any other right, and exists as much between members of different nations as between members of the same nation. Morality knows nothing of geographical boundaries, in distinctions of race. You may put men on opposite sides of a river or a chain of mountains; may else part them by a tract of salt water; may give them, if you like, distinct languages; and may even colour their skins differently; but you cannot change their fundamental relationships. Originating as these do in the facts of man's constitution, they are unalterable by the accidents of external condition.

With this similitude established, Spencer could declare, "The moral law is cosmopolite – is no respecter of nationalities: and between men who are the antipodes of each other, either in locality or anything else, there must still exist the same balance of rights as though they were next-door neighbours in all things."[4] The passage is complex: on the one hand it proposed man as constitutionally inclined to exchange, and indicated that a "fundamental relationship" between all men emerged as a result; on the other, it drew a distinction so that in matters economic it was "rights" and not lifestyle which rendered antipodean men "neighbours."

This essay discusses political economy's idealisation of Economic Man as a universal category. It was an idealisation which did not attend to the complexity of Spencer's explication, and allowed that the peoples and nations of the world could be considered as a commercial neighbourhood. Thus, the notion that humanity, in all its various types, was constitutionally inclined to exchange was conflated with the idea that diverse peoples would exchange, which in turn led to the conviction that they would exchange, in mutually beneficial interactions, a body of goods which were relevant to their everyday lives. The reductive nature of this imagined community was sanctioned by the abstract manner in which economic discourse characterised its leading man. Pointing

up the strategies and tropes through which Homo Economicus was sustained, the analysis is concerned to draw attention to the imperial narrative he generated. It concludes with an examination of an attempt by Harriet Martineau, "Life in the Wilds," to give fictional form to the socio-economic logic of capitalism. In fleshing out Homo Economicus, Martineau draws attention to the kinds of historical and cultural qualifications which this abstracted idealisation sought to refuse. In so doing, "Life in the Wilds" reveals the imperial coercion and violence which the universal category attempted to conceal, and undermines the cosmopolitan morality acclaimed by Spencer in his delineation of free trade capitalism.

Political economy from Smith to J.S. Mill, notes Regenia Gagnier, generated a tension: political economists tended to conceive of Economic Man as representing "man as such, that is, universal human nature," but also "a particular kind of man, the product of a particular economic class and race at a particular moment in global market relations."[5] In line with this latter understanding historians such as George Stocking have discussed political economy as a discipline associated with a nineteenth-century desire to distinguish between global peoples, ordering "racial" and cultural difference hierarchically, and concretising an antithesis between savagery and civilisation.[6] It is certainly true to say that political economy was bound up with a geo-historical understanding of societal progress which privileged an increasingly complex division of labour and its associated technological advance. In so doing the discipline gave authoritative substance to the category "civilisation," typically charting a series of socio-economic stages from hunter-gatherer, to pastoral, to agrarian, and finally to commercial society and civilised modernity. However, at the same time it must be borne in mind that political economical discourse, particularly as it was expounded by proponents of free trade, was characterised by an expansive, totalising tendency. Stocking claims that "the arena of free trade in which the pursuit of individual advantage operated automatically for the good of all was quite explicitly the 'universal society of nations throughout the civilized world'."[7] Undoubtedly right to note the Eurocentric character of economic discourse, Stocking's conclusion jars with a body of late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century writing which heralded political economy, and the free trade arena it could be understood to legitimise, in genuinely global terms. Thus, the historian of economic thought G. R. Searle notes that the "'science' often caused offence by implying that human nature was everywhere the same and that little notice need be taken of regional traditions and idiosyncrasies." He continues, "Economic laws (and the principle of utility too) supposedly had a universal validity."[8] If this was a cause for offence in some quarters, it was a cause for celebration in others. And at the heart of this celebration was Economic Man.

Adam Smith set out clearly in the *Wealth of Nations* that society "grows to be properly what is a *commercial society*" only once a division of labour has been "thoroughly established," enabling every man to live by exchange, and thus to become "in some measure a merchant."[9] However, if the capacity to live by sophisticated exchange mechanisms was shown to be the result of culturally and historically specific circumstances, the capacity to exchange was not. Thus, Homo Economicus emerged in the *Wealth of Nations* as a figure underwritten by Smith's emphasis upon "a certain propensity in human nature … the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another."[10] Confusingly, Smith went on to propose that this inclination was bound up

with man's "faculties of reason and speech," and was not hard-wired as part of "human nature."[11] Notwithstanding, exchange was linked with both reason and speech, and it was universal; Smith moved immediately to stress that the propensity to exchange was "common to all men, and to be found in no other race of animals."[12]

This commitment to the idea of exchange as a universal became key when Smith examined international economic relations. A "prudent master of a family," he maintained, would never "attempt to make at home what it would cost him more to make than to buy." This model of domestic economy gave way to an invocation of three "neighbours," a tailor, a shoemaker, and a farmer, whose self-interested division of labour ensured rational and prosperous life. It is with these reassuringly sensible figures and transactions in mind that the reader is led immediately to consider the bigger picture. Thus, familial commonsense was couched as transnational rationale, and an example of quotidian village life was extended to the world at large:

> What is prudence in the conduct of every private family, can scarce be folly in that of a great kingdom. If a foreign country can supply us with a commodity cheaper than we ourselves can make it, better buy it of them with some part of the produce of our own industry, employed in a way in which we have some advantage.[13]

Smith set out economies as communities populated by differently advantaged neighbours, all of whom realised the value of commodity exchange and could therefore profit via industrial interdependency.[14] Whilst Smith's celebrated status as the father of liberal economics often simplifies or distorts the range and complexity of his writing, and its relationship with other works of political economy, Richard Teichgraeber remarks that Smith's introduction sets out his intention "to outline a plan for a world economy whose principal object was growth." "At times," Teichgraeber notes, "he spoke of that plan as an 'obvious and simple system of natural liberty.'"[15] This reading of Smith's economic theory furnished a reductive yet compelling account of the world which would become embedded within nineteenth-century British politics and culture; by the early nineteenth century, Smith's work was stripped of its complexities and understood by many as proof positive of the fact that commercial growth and global harmony would be best realised through international free trade.[16]

Advertising its debt of allegiance to the "harmonious and beautiful system" laid out by Smith's work,[17] and insisting that the industrial and technological developments of the nineteenth century consolidated rather than compromised this systematic analysis, J.R. McCulloch's *The Principles of Political Economy* defined its subject-matter as the "science of the laws which regulate the production, accumulation, distribution, and consumption of those articles or products that are necessary, useful, or agreeable to man, and at the same time possess exchangeable value."[18] McCulloch heralded the discipline as applicable to "every instance" and "every state of society," alleging that no other science "comes so directly home to the every-day occupations and business of mankind."[19] Echoing the local to global strategy deployed by Smith, the conceit of humankind's generic home encapsulates the tendency of economic discourse to propose Economic Man as a transnational, cross-cultural character. McCulloch was explicit in defending the expansive nature of this category; political economy, he contended, dealt with "man in the aggregate … with the passions and propensities which actuate the bulk of the human race," and not with "the peculiarities of particular persons." [20] Thus

McCulloch spelt out what Smith's explication of international commerce implied: political economy proposed a community of peoples bound together not simply by a propensity, but by a body of shared needs; it was not enough that Economic Man exchanged, but rather that he exchanged goods "necessary, useful, or agreeable to man." The category Homo Economicus, as it was set out by such economic thought, should be understood not just as a mindset, but as a lifestyle.

Given the abstracted nature of the man, the environment in which he dwelt, and the commodities he consumed, Economic Man could be found everywhere. In 1846, as Peel's government repealed the Corn Laws, Richard Cobden, alongside John Bright the leader of the Manchester School, and the face of Victorian free trade politics, was able to claim confidently:

> We wish it to be distinctly understood that we apply this maxim [free trade] without reserve to every country, to every circumstance, and to every age. Whatever may be the condition of a country, we maintain that free trade is better than restriction. Show me any point on the surface of the globe, whether it be of fertility as unlimited as that of Egypt, or a barren rock like Malta – let it be placed under the tropical sun, or near the polar – I think I can demonstrate that it is the interest of the inhabitants to keep up the most unrestricted communications with their brethren spread over the earth.[21]

Cobden's figuration of global peoples in fraternal terms is at once typical and significant; it allowed that the amoral capitalist principles of competition, which Adam Smith had so clearly maintained formed the basis of dynamic socio-economic organisation, could be recast in the moral (and Christian) terms of mutual respect and concern for universal welfare. But it also added weight to the idea of fundamental human similitude consistently played upon by representations of free trade's world order, underscoring the notion that peoples everywhere could come together consensually and pacifically through trade.

Gagnier has defined late Victorian Economic Man in terms of his subjective, insatiable wants. Tracing a shift in economic thinking from the 1870s on, she notes that "value no longer inhered in goods themselves," and thus ceased to be "comparable across persons." What had allowed for such a comparison to be made was an emphasis upon supposedly basic, objective needs; an emphasis which privileged in general terms the human body, and downplayed the notion that consumer demand might change over space and time. In that it let go the idea of such finite and universal needs, and refocused instead upon the idea of infinite, unpredictable and specific tastes, Gagnier argues "the theory of economics became more psychological than sociological."[22] In contrast, early to mid-Victorian economic discourse evidenced a clear commitment to a sociological understanding of economic life. Underpinning its conceptualisation of Economic Man as a cosmopolitan agent was not simply the propensity to exchange, but more pointedly, the propensity to satisfy common wants through the exchange of mutually-useful goods. Spencer's argument that the rights between global peoples could be conceptualised analogously, "as though they were next-door neighbours in all things," was a refinement of the local-global move which Smith made when he explicated international commerce. Refusing or at least downplaying Spencer's distinction between rights and lifestyle, free trade proponents such as McCulloch or Cobden were drawn towards the idea that there existed fundamental similarities in the way different peoples lived their lives.

Free trade's imagined community was thus dependent upon more than the notion of self-interest as a means to social harmony. Man the exchanger was privileged as a means of naturalising competition at an international level; nations would trade because peoples were inclined towards a capitalist mode of organisation. But this intellectual propensity, one bound up with reason and speech, carried with it a somatic universalism; there can be discerned a stress upon the similitude of men's bodies, as well as their minds. Whilst Adam Smith asserted in the *Wealth of Nations* that after food, "clothing and lodging are the two great wants of mankind,"[23] he also acknowledged that humankind aspired to more than the fulfilment of such basic wants. Set against the desire for food, which was limited "by the narrow capacity of the human stomach," Smith noted the "altogether endless" desires which took over once the appetite was sated.[24] In establishing that global peoples constituted a single economic community, and thus downplaying the notion of either cultural or historical differences, proponents of free trade in the nineteenth century tended to ignore Smith's elaboration; the human body, and the idea of utile goods associated with generic but limited wants, were brought to the fore.

Writing in 1867, Marx wrote that "moderate though he is," the experiences of Robinson Crusoe provided political economists with a "favourite theme." Marx's use of the term "moderate" is instructive; it suggests both a temperance and a middling quality which sit well with the "aggregate" economic character sketched out and celebrated by political economy. In discussing Crusoe's moderation, Marx highlighted "the several needs he has to satisfy." These needs, Marx detailed, were met by "a little useful work of various sorts, such as making tools and furniture, taming goats, fishing and hunting." Elaborating upon the attraction of the castaway for economic theorists, Marx commented that, "like a true-born Briton," Crusoe began book-keeping:

> His stock-book contains a list of the useful objects that he possesses, of the operations necessary for their production, and lastly, of the labour-time that definite quantities of those objects have, on average, cost him. All the relations between Robinson and the objects that form this wealth of his own creation are here so simple and clear as to be intelligible without exertion.[25]

For the most part of Defoe's novel Crusoe is isolated and thus unable to implement an exchange nexus. Notwithstanding, Marx's analysis draws attention to political economy's simplistic understanding of humanity's needs, desires and motivations. Removed from his home to a tropical island, and able to catalogue with precision and brevity his industrial endeavours and bodily needs, Crusoe appears representative of precisely that trans-historical, cross-cultural global citizen privileged by economic thought; *Robinson Crusoe*, in other words, furnished the nineteenth century discourse of political economy with just the type of environment and man it was looking for.

However, Crusoe was also an imperialist; "the true symbol of British conquest," in the words of James Joyce.[26] The link observed by Marx between political economy and the novel can be used in order to open up the way in which Homo Economicus served hegemonic ends, concealing the inequality, coercion and violence which characterised industrial capitalist expansion in the world.

Terry Eagleton notes Crusoe is both "average and exceptional," but stresses that the character is in no way divorced from his own space and time. Indeed, quite the opposite: "Crusoe […] potters about his island rather as though he were somewhere in the

Home Counties, which constitutes something of a compliment to Western reason. […] We enjoy seeing Crusoe's sturdy English practicality made to look less prosaic and more heroic, just as we enjoy watching a tropical island being gradually made to look a little more like Dorking."[27] For the most part of the novel, though, what characterises Crusoe is his complete inability to realise that his way of doing things is anything other than universal. This is as true of his encounter with the savage whom he saves from pursuing cannibals as it is of his overall subduing of his island territory. Confronted by the savage, who is terrified having witnessed the white man's elimination of his enemies, Crusoe indulges himself with what might justly be called imperialism's most potent literary fantasy:

> At last he lays his head flat upon the ground, close to my foot, and sets my other foot upon his head, as he had done before; and after this made all the signs to me of subjection, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me know how he would serve me so long as he lived. I understood him in many things, and let him know I was very well pleased with him. In a little time I began to speak to him; and teach him to speak to me: and first, I let him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life: I called him so for the memory of the time. I likewise taught him to say Master; and then let him know that was to be my name: I likewise taught him to say Yes and No and to know the meaning of them.[28]

The savage's gratitude is understandable. What is somewhat more difficult to accept is Crusoe's monologic account of the non-verbal process of exchange by which the white man is possessed of a slave for life. And Crusoe's (mis)interpretation of gestures allows for the further imposition of his culture at the expense of the savage's. Thus it is that Crusoe's rescuee/victim undergoes in the above passage a process which sees him rendered *tabula rasa*, born anew and secured within an alien and disempowering socio-linguistic order.

The Crusoe myth prevailed throughout nineteenth-century British culture, with over two hundred editions of the novel having appeared by the century's end.[29] In 1851, the same year that Spencer published *Social Statics*, the novel's popular appeal was figured in expansionist terms:

> [*Robinson Crusoe* is] a book which has exerted over the minds of Englishmen an influence certainly greater than any other of modern times – which has been in most people's hands, and with the contents of which even those who cannot read are to a certain extent acquainted […] a book, moreover, to which, from the hardy deeds it narrates, and the spirit of strange and romantic enterprise it tends to awaken, England owes many of her astonishing discoveries both by sea and land.[30]

By the mid-nineteenth century such transglobal inspiration was precisely what Britain required. "The need of a constantly expanding market for its products," wrote Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, "chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere." Driven by the need to extend markets, and exploit fully the potential for economic growth afforded by manufacturing and communication technologies, "civilized nations," Britain foremost amongst them, were transforming the way the world worked. And this transformation was loaded in the favour of the powerful; it was a programme

which positioned "backward" terrains and peoples as commercial satellites to metropolitan centres. Thus, as self-sufficient, industrially indigenous economic seclusion was supplanted by transglobal networks of exchange, so the needs of the industrially advanced nations forcefully shaped the economies of those unable to resist economic, political and/or military coercion:

> The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image."[31]

The work of another German political economist, Friedrich List, sheds light upon the process of global redefinition outlined by Marx and Engels. Interested in the emergence and consolidation of the nation-state, rather than the realisation of a socialist destiny, List attacked his discipline's catholicism, dismissing the generic assumptions of what he termed "cosmopolitical economy." Without rejecting "the idea of a universal confederation" built around commercial interchange, List emphasised in *The National System of Political Economy* (1841) that classical economists, principally Francois Quesnay and Adam Smith, ignored the fact that "the [human] race is still separated into distinct nationalities each held together by common powers and interests."[32] For List, a proper commercial union of nations was dependent upon "a large number of nationalities" attaining similar "levels of industry and civilisation, political cultivation, and power."[33] Such a state would be reached not via free trade, but by emerging nations, such as Germany or America, adopting protectionist policies until such time that their economies could compete on an equal footing with older European powers, particularly Britain. Apologists of free trade, he insisted, "*assumed as being actually in existence a state of things which has yet to come into existence* [original emphasis]."[34] Thus, whereas they promised a naturally occurring union resulting in mutual benefit, List saw a coercive process resulting in "a universal subjection of the less advanced nations to the supremacy of the predominant manufacturing, commercial, and naval power."[35]

List's critique of free trade power relations is pointed; in the proceeding analysis of economic discourse, the idea of the exertion of power characterising the process of exchange has been notable only for its absence. But List is important not simply because he recognised free trade was a system loaded in the favour of particular nations, but also for his attention to the way in which political economists tended to efface national differences as a means of concealing power relations. In an earlier work, *Outlines of American Political Economy* (1827), List poured scorn on the title of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Having neglected to take into "consideration the different state of power, constitution, wants and culture of the different nations," Smith's work, List argued, was no more than "a mere treatise on the question: How the economy of individuals and of mankind would stand, if the human race were not separated into nations, but united by a general law and by an equal culture of mind?"[36] As noted, List's point was really to stress that certain nations needed to progress before free trade could be equitably instituted; his

work did not challenge the basic validity of the bourgeois mode of production. However, his comments make clear the reductive nature of economic discourse in its widest sense, and bring into sharper focus precisely the mode of thought with which this essay is been concerned. The liberal capitalist fantasy of the world's populace lying at the heart of the material considered sought to establish similitude and consensus, and disengaged from aspects of human life which might upset this vision. Thus it was that exchange, as a scientifically valid law and a cultural universal, could be invoked in a manner which conflated Spencer's distinction between rights and lifestyle, and sanctioned the consideration of humankind as one.

In her essay "Narrating Imperialism: Nostromo's Dystopia," Benita Parry defines "imperialism" as a term which designates "the radically altered forms to capitalism's accelerated penetration of the non-capitalist world." As part of this penetrative process, which in line with the *Manifesto's* analysis she links to the second-half of the nineteenth century, Parry remarks upon the deployment of "tropological ruses to validate a global reterritorialisating project."[37] Economic Man was far more than a "tropological ruse." But he was characterised by free trade ideology in a manner which naturalised and pacified the way in which this project of transcontinental reterritorialisation could be presented. Where Marx saw imposition and exploitation, then, advocates of free trade imagined only consent and mutual benefit. Homo Economicus, or rather the consensus gentium he was made to stand for, guaranteed that the peoples of the world saw the advantages of entering freely into industrial capitalist divisions of labour. Political economy was thus able to tell the same consensual story about industrial capitalist global expansion as was Crusoe about his island encounter with the savage. As the nineteenth-century process of globalisation created a world after its own image, a narrative emerged which served to conceal its ideological motivation and material impact. The universalism of cosmopolitical economy masked culturally and historically values and beliefs, and occluded the institutionalisation of particular power relations. If Crusoe provided political economists with a favourite theme, then, it might have been because he too ushered peoples and their territories into exploitative relationships on the claimed basis of consent. Like Crusoe, the industrial capitalist powers who spun this story were more than happy to use the gun in order that their wishes were realised.

By way of a conclusion this essay turns to Harriet Martineau's "Life in the Wilds," the first in an extensive series of fictitious narratives which Martineau published between 1832 and 1834 in order to popularise political economical science. In her preface to the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, Martineau highlighted both the "utility and beauty" of a science indebted to the work of Adam Smith.[38] In fact the appeal of the discipline is seen to be the result of its universal utilitarianism. Emphasising that political economy concerned "the interests of mankind at large," Martineau defined wealth as consisting of "such commodities as are useful – that is, necessary or agreeable to mankind," and posed the rhetorical question of whether "there is anyone breathing to whom it is of no concern whether the production of food and clothing and the million articles of human consumption goes on or ceases?"[39] The preface went on to detail that the "scene of the first tale is laid in a distant land" in order that it might address specific issues of labour detached from those of capital. However, in a broader sense, the focus of "Life in the Wilds" is representative of political economy's tendency to downplay cultural and historical specificity, and privilege the "moderate" wants of humankind.

Following an attack from "savage" indigenous inhabitants, a colonial community in South Africa finds itself cut off from the outside world. Surveying their situation one character remarks,

> When I look round this place and think of all that I have seen and done since morning, I can scarcely believe that we are the same people, living in the same age of the world as yesterday. We seem to have gone back in the course of a night from a state of advanced civilization to a primitive condition of society.[40]

His companion's answer would seem to confirm that such a primitive environment was well-suited to political economical discourse. Remarking that their situation furnished "too good an opportunity to be lost of observing what the real wealth of society consists of," he expanded upon the nature of wealth:

> Give a man, who has not a shilling, a room well-stocked with meat, and bread, and beer, and he has wealth enough to maintain him for a week or a fortnight, or as long as his provision lasts. And this is a test which holds good all the world over.[41]

With this key point established, the remainder of "Life in the Wilds" is an elaboration of the Crusoe myth: the colonial community set about subduing their environment, and developing the socio-economic structure and technological innovations which will best allow them to fulfil their basic needs. In so doing, Martineau's tale seems to establish political economy, with its moderate leading man Homo Economicus, as a science which did indeed hold "good all the world over."

Except that the reductive and motivated nature of such economic thought is apparent throughout "Life in the Wilds." Removed in terms of time and space from the nineteenth-century British metropolis, the protagonists of Martineau's tale are nevertheless deeply entrenched in the specific logic of their home. Thus, in explicating the benefits of a division of labour, one character is led to conclude that "many a [foreign] sovereign" would "give the wealth of his kingdom … for any thing so good as a plum-pudding, or a Dorsetshire pie, or a breakfast of tea and toast."[42] Given fictional form, and pulling on the cultural garb which the abstractions of economic discourse would seemingly deny him, Homo Economicus is here transformed into a citizen of the world with a propensity for plum-pudding, and not simply the exchange of utilitarian goods.[43] Set alongside this ridiculous image is the unseen presence of the savage "bushmen" who encircle the colonialists' camp throughout the tale. The liminal position of these figures is instructive; in pushing this "race of men, more fierce than wild beasts, and full of cunning," to the margins of her story, Martineau's tale introduces a racial problematic to the universalist imperative which the tale endorses.

As Martineau's characters attempt to introduce some form of civilised order to the wilds in which they find themselves, they create a world after the metropolitan image of their home. And in so doing they signal a process of industrial capitalist expansion which, through formal colonial annexation or informal imperial pressure (economic, political, military), would see such "backward" global terrains as South Africa subsumed within an exploitative world order. If such networks of exchange did not quite institute inequalities along the lines of a kingdom's wealth for some tea and toast, they did establish commodity chains which realised what Immanuel Wallerstein has termed "the hierarchization of space […] an ever greater polarization between the core and peripheral

zones of the world economy."[44] Trapped within such networks, the indigenous inhabitants of these peripheral zones suffered as their colonial or metropolitan masters prospered.[45] Spencer insisted that morality, the term with which he signalled free trade capitalism, cared nothing for biological or cultural difference. Wallerstein, however, points out that capitalism cared everything for racial distinctions, and that its universalist imperative was loaded: "There was a catch to universalism. It did not make its way as a free-floating ideology but as one propagated by those who held economic and political power in the world system of historical capitalism. Universalism was offered to the world as a gift of the powerful to the weak. *Timeo Danaos at dona ferentes*!"[46] This gift harboured racism, by which Wallerstein means "the hierarchization of the work-force and its highly unequal distributions of reward."[47] But if racism informed the way in which diverse peoples were included within industrial capitalism's world order, it also authorised their deliberate and violent exclusion.[48] In heralding political economy as a science which "held good the world over," but excluding South Africa's indigenous "bushman," "Life in the Wilds" gives the lie to the idealisation of Economic Man as universal category.

In May 1851, the month which saw the opening of London's Great Exhibition, *The Economist* featured an article entitled "Some Moral Aspects of the Great Exhibition." In line with the display's governing rationale, and its own political bent, Spencer's journal explicated the Exhibition in terms of international free trade; it was, the article claimed, "a part of the general system of society – the result of those general laws which govern the industry of mankind, and determine the production and distribution of wealth. It is cosmopolitan."[49] But the journal included a significant qualification concerning the supposedly cosmopolitan world order with which it associated the display. "When we have savages for our neighbours as in Caffreland," the article noted, "we seem to have no other alternative than to keep them at bay, or exterminate them. They have nothing to give us in exchange for our commodities, and we can get nothing from them."[50] Set against political economy's celebration of Homo Economicus as a figure which transcended human difference, this was a chilling counter to the inclusive morality heralded by Spencer's *Social Statics*. Speaking rather to a construction of alterity which would find systematic articulation in Spencerian Social Darwinism, the article, like Martineau's tale, registered that in the creation of a world after their own image, industrial capitalist powers embarked upon programmes of genocide. Confronted by cannibals, even Robinson Crusoe was led to question "what authority or call I had, to pretend to be the judge and executioner upon these men as criminals."[51] When the fraternal neighbour of Smithian economics was fleshed out instead as the Caffreland "savage," no such moral compunction was afforded.

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[1] Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics: or, The Conditions Essential to Human Happiness* (London: John Chapman, 1851), p. 40.
[2] Spencer, p. 300.
[3] Spencer, p. 34.
[4] Spencer, pp. 296-97.
[5] Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), p. 19.
[6] George Stocking. *Victorian Anthropology* (London: The Free Press, 1987). Particularly pp 32 – 36.
[7] Stocking, p. 32.
[8] G.R. Searle. *Morality and the Market in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 32-33.

[9] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), ed. by Andrew Skinner, 2 vols (London: Penguin, 1999), I: 126.
[10] Smith, I: 117.
[11] Noel Parker remarks that it is unclear as to whether the propensity to exchange was "an original feature of human nature, or the first consequence of human culture." Noel Parker, "Look, No Hidden Hands: How Smith Understands Historical Progress and Societal Values," in *Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: New Interdisciplinary Essays* ed. by Stephen Copley and Kathryn Sutherland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 13.
[12] Smith, I: 117-18.
[13] Smith, II: 33.
[14] In fact Smith went on from the above passage to discuss international commerce with relation to the mutually beneficial trading relationships which existed between England, Scotland, Ireland, France and Holland. If it is certainly not the case that Europe constituted the world in Smith's eyes, these examples might be understood to register an awareness on his part of the need for a degree of cultural and historical specificity. However, Smith's work did not always display such sensitivity. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly in terms of this essay, neither did that of those nineteenth-century writers who popularised his work.
[15] Richard Teichgraeber, 'Adam Smith and Tradition: The *Wealth of Nations* Before Malthus' in *Economy, Polity, and Society: British Intellectual History 1750-1950*, ed. by Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 90.
[16] Keith Tribe, 'Natural Liberty and *Laissez-faire*: How Adam Smith Became a Free Trade Ideologue' in *Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: New Interdisciplinary Essays* ed. by Stephen Copley and Kathryn Sutherland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 25.
[17] McCulloch is a useful political economist to consider, since his work was motivated to disseminate Smithian ideas to a non-specialist nineteenth-century audience, and placed a particular emphasis upon the universal applicability of free trade. As well as producing an edition of the *Wealth of Nations* which appeared consistently during the Victorian period, McCulloch's *The Principles of Political Economy* (1825) was re-published throughout the nineteenth century. In part McCulloch was concerned to recuperate a positive image of political economy following Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), with its claim that the growth of the population could outstrip its capacity to produce food.
[18] J.R. McCulloch, *The Principles of Political Economy: With Some Inquiries Respecting their Application, and a Sketch of the Rise and the Progress of the Science*, 4th edn. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1849), p. 54. Note: Please treat these page references to McCulloch with caution (there was a computer crash and I lost information – sorry!
[19] McCulloch, p. 7. Etymologically this strategy makes sense; the word "economy" stems from the Greek "oikos," meaning house, and "nomos," meaning law.
[20] McCulloch, pp. 15-17.
[21] *The Manchester Guardian*, 9 September 1846, p. 6.
[22] Gagnier, p. 4.
[23] Smith, I: 266.
[24] Smith, I: 269.
[25] Karl Marx, from *Capital* I (1867), in *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, edited by T. B. Bottomore and Maximillian Rubel (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1979), p. 117.
26 James Joyce. Lecture on "Daniel Defoe" (1912). Cited in Linda Colley. *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850* (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 1.
[27] Terry Eagleton. *The English Novel: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 37-8.
[28] Daniel Defoe. *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719), (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: 1985), p. 209.
[29] Richard Phillips. *Mapping Men and Empire: Geography and Adventure* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 22.
[30] George Borrow. *Lavengro; The Scholar – The Gypsy – The Priest* (London: John Murray, 1851), p. 39.
[31] "The Communist Manifesto" (1848), in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 221-47, (pp. 224-25).

[32] Friedrich List, *The National System of Political Economy* (1841), (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966), p. 123, p. 121.
[33] List, *The National System*, p. 127.
[34] List, *The National System*, p. 126.
[35] List, *The National System*, p. 126.
[36] Frederick List. *Outlines of American Political Economy* (Philadelphia: Samuel Parker, 1827), p. 7.
[37] Benita Parry. "Narrating Imperialism: Nostromo's Dystopia." *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History*. Ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Parry and Judith Squires. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1997. 227-46, (p. 230).
[38] Harriet Martineau. *Illustrations of Political Economy*, 9 vols. (London: 1834), p. viii.
[39] Martineau, p. x, p. xix, p. xv.
[40] Martineau, p. 22.
[41] Martineau, p. 23.
[42] Martineau, pp. 82-3.
[43] The trope of the plum pudding is interesting with relation to the Victorian process of globalisation. See Paul Young. "Empire, Economy, Extermination: The Christmas Pudding, the Crystal Palace, and the Narrative of Capitalist Progress." *Literature & History*. 14/1 Spring 2005. 14-30.
[44] Immanuel Wallerstein. *Historical Capitalism* with *Capitalist Civilization* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 30.
[45] Mike Davis' *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001) is a recent analysis of the way in which free trade economics, industrial capitalism and climate combined in order to decimate tropical humanity and create the third world.
[46] Wallerstein, p. 85.
[47] Wallerstein, p. 78.
[48] In fact Wallerstein draws a distinction between racism as an exploitative ideological strategy of capitalist expansion, and xenophobia, a mode of thought which resists capitalism's drive to incorporate in order to exploit (78). I am not at all convinced by this argument; taxonomies informed by genetic and/or cultural traits have been deployed in different ways according to particular ideological, historical and/or material pressures. Wallerstein's inclusion/exclusion antithesis might be better conceived of in dialectical terms. Thus Kurtz's cry "Exterminate all the brutes" (Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness* (1902), (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1989), p. 87) comes from the man whose job it was to include these people's within the Company's system. Again, Mike Davis' *Late Victorian Holocausts* demonstrates the way in which economic inclusion could lead to deliberate and systematic annihilation.
[49] "Some Moral Aspects of the Great Exhibition." *The Economist, Weekly Commercial Times, Bankers' Gazette, and Railway Monitor: A Political, Literary, and General Newspaper*. 17 May 1851. Vol. 9. (London, 1852), pp. 531-32, (p. 532).
[50] "Some Moral Aspects," p. 532.
[51] Defoe, p. 177.