

Colonization and Emigration

AS A MORAL PHILOSOPHER, MALTHUS OFTEN relied on hypothetical scenarios. What if the island of Great Britain doubled on itself, he asked in a new chapter on emigration published in the 1803 edition of his *Essay on the Principle of Population*. "If a tract of rich land as large as this island were suddenly annexed to it, and sold in small lots, or let out in small farms . . . the amelioration of the state of the common people would be sudden and striking." He was describing the fantastic transformation of ghost acres into contiguous acres. But Malthus's point was that such a benefit could only be a passing one. This additional "Britain" would be tilled and filled, people would be fed, and the price of labor, momentarily rising, would mitigate some poverty and then make it worse. The population would grow and then be limited again, necessarily. Land constraint was Malthus's bottom line, even if Britain were doubled. As with any island, there were always shoreline limits.¹

Malthus well knew that North America *was* the "tract of rich land" that had been annexed, in effect doubling the size of Britain and much more, at least until the American War. And he knew that significant grain was still returning from America, as well as the Baltic, anticipating it shortly to be enough to support about two million Britons. Reliance on imported grain would increase the prosperity of the exporting country, and diminish Britain's "riches, and her power." He worried about North American acres, precisely because the most productive ones were no longer British. Rather, they produced grain that an independent United States could decide to export or withhold. The United States of America was not the straightforward "doubled" Britain at all. Surplus agricultural produce from Britain itself, he considered, was the source of its own future wealth, and at the very end of the *Essay* he argued for Corn Laws to protect just that.²

Still, there was land in North America beyond that claimed, or even desired by, the United States. Great swathes of forest and woodland seemed available for the taking in Upper Canada. Indeed, to settle this land would be to secure it for the British, in the light of the perceived threat from United

States expansion into the Northwest Territories. The War of 1812 between the United States and Britain was in large part fought over this region. With the settlement of borders that year, and with the peace after the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the need to secure Upper Canada through clearing land, creating gardens and fields, planting stock, and building new settlements was on the public agenda.

At the same time, British economists, statesmen, speculators, and colonial reformers began to look afresh at the antipodean penal colonies: New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Might wholly new settlement projects be established on the vast continent that was still known as New Holland? As events unfolded, the Swan River Colony in Western Australia was established in 1829, an enterprise beleaguered by difficulties of cultivation, hunger, and, if anything, too much land. The South Australia Colonisation Act passed in the year of Malthus's death, 1834, ushered in a more successful and liberal endeavor that dictated a society of free settlers only. Indeed any number of new settlement schemes in Upper Canada, Nova Scotia, the South African Cape, South and Western Australia, and slightly later New Zealand, were all outcomes of intense postwar political economy and public policy talk about colonization and emigration. Some thought that state-backed and -funded emigration programs would benefit Britain economically, relieving payments to the poor, creating additional overseas markets, and securing colonial territories for good measure by bringing "waste land" into cultivation. As one of Malthus's discussants put it, "These are questions in the science of public economy, which must be speedily decided." In each case, the amount of territory vis-à-vis the number of people and the value of land vis-à-vis the value of labor—the staples of political economy—were core principles to be argued over in theory, as on the colonial ground. For James Mill, John Ramsay McCulloch, Jeremy Bentham, Nassau Senior, Thomas Robert Malthus, and a score of younger commentators on political economy—Robert Torrens, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Robert Gouger—colonization and emigration were perennial themes after the Napoleonic Wars, effectively exporting and internationalizing the third great British problem of the era: the Poor Law.³

Since settler colonialism and political economy were powerfully fused in these population-driven emigration schemes, it is unsurprising that Malthus's principle was invoked readily and regularly. He was wary of that in 1803, but over the 1820s he became more inclined to support emigration as beneficial for Britain, in political economy terms. Typically, he was too measured,

too undecided, and in a plain way too distracted with East India College business (as well as college scandals), to embark on any political lobbying himself, for or against the multiple emigration schemes that circulated over that decade. That was done by others, who used his work, his words, his principle, and his reputation to some considerable effect. Equally, those who objected to the "redundant population" rationale for emigration, especially colonists themselves, constantly used his name to sully any given scheme. Toward the end of his life, for better or worse, "Malthus" was already a brand. But his role involved far more than "theorization and representation" of the British efforts to colonize the Pacific new world, as his interest has been characterized. Malthus was directly involved in inquiries about emigration and the new colonies.⁴

Indeed, Malthus thought that all these schemes, and all this human movement, constituted an "age of emigration." His commentary and involvement connects him not just to a fresh round of settler colonialism but also to its implications for indigenous people. In 1803 he had not yet imagined continental Australia as the vast new territory available for British settlement that it would become; rather, it had figured for him as a place where savage societies lived in his present. Over the 1820s, however, when he was drawn into debate on emigration and colonization, he became so inclined. That was the decade when pastoral expansion into Aboriginal lands in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land suddenly accelerated. This involved "clearing" both native land and native people, a process directly related to the Scottish and Irish clearances that in part produced the very populations destined for the Pacific new world. In his *Summary View on the Principle of Population* (1830), Malthus himself identified the local impact when emigrants from the "improved parts of the world" moved to those unimproved: "It is obvious that it must involve much war and extermination."⁵

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Schemes for colonization that emerged in the early 1820s did so in a very different domestic and international context from Malthus's first foray into the political economy of colonies composed twenty years earlier. In 1803 Malthus had dedicated a chapter of the new *Essay*, "Of Emigration," to the question of colonization. It began with the common perception that emigration of redundant population was a remedy, where "redundant" for Malthus, like most political economists, signaled able-bodied male laborers who were

out of work. It seemed “natural and obvious” that removing people from cultivated parts of the world to uncultivated and sparsely peopled regions would be beneficial. But in fact, and by experience, he argued in 1803, peopling new countries was little more than “a very weak palliative.”⁶

In his chapter “Of Emigration,” the very places that had served as backdrops for his stadial sweep across “savage” societies were revisited, this time as colonial ventures. But Malthus was no straightforward advocate of settler colonialism. Indeed, he took some trouble in his *Essay* to talk down colonial enterprises and to compose a history that detailed their difficulties rather more than their possibilities. At least for first settlers, conditions of living were typically worse than the circumstances they had left.

He began with the Americas. After damning the Spanish for their treatment, indeed “destruction” of the original “race” of inhabitants, he turned to seventeenth-century English colonization in Virginia, absolved of such destruction in Malthus’s eyes because the indigenous population was far sparser than in Mexico and Peru. Still, the early settlement of Virginia was miserable—“three attempts completely failed,” he took pains to explain—relying upon Burke and Robertson:

Nearly half of the first colony was destroyed by the savages, and the rest consumed and worn down by fatigue and famine, deserted the country, and returned home in despair. The second colony was cut off to a man, in a manner unknown; but they were supposed to be destroyed by the Indians. The third experienced the same dismal fate; and the remains of the fourth, after it had been reduced by famine and disease, in the course of six months from 500 to 60 persons, were returning in a famishing and desperate condition to England, when they were met in the mouth of the Chesapeak bay, by Lord Delaware, with a squadron loaded with provisions, and every thing for their relief and defence.

As for the puritans in New England, there was no Lord Delaware either to rescue or support them, dependent as they were on “private funds.” Malthus called the few settlers “an infant people,” subject to an extreme climate, perishing from scurvy, famine, and cold. Yet they overcame the elements “by their energy of character, and the satisfaction of finding themselves out of the reach of the spiritual arm.” Religious liberty was economically enabling, a claim that betrayed Malthus’s liberal position on religious toleration. In the early New England case, Malthus recounted, after Burke, that energy and character were enough slowly to extract a subsistence and to make the land yield. Or, as he put it, the settlers invested a spirit and effort that slowly “reduced this savage country.”⁷

The French in Guiana in 1663 met equally tough circumstances. Citing Raynal, Malthus recounted a massive instance of depopulation, this time of the colonizers. Twelve thousand men were reduced to two thousand, and the attempt at colonization was aborted completely, 25 million livres wasted in the attempt. Given that government-assisted emigration was already part of British public discourse, it was likely the fiscal as much as the human cost of this venture that was salutary to Malthus and his British readers. Similarly, the more recent settlement at Port Jackson in New Holland was a "melancholy and affecting picture," in which extreme hardships had been suffered. The character of the settlers did not help: convicts were the antithesis to the enterprising New Englanders. (Malthus never acknowledged the sizable presence of convicts, as forced laborers, in the American colonies.) Crops failed; land was unhealthy. Eventually the New South Wales colony's "produce was equal to its support," but not before great resources had been expended in the latest "colonization of savage countries."⁸

Colonial ventures presented in the *Essay* were not limited to European maritime empires. Malthus detailed the same problems that Empress Catherine of Russia seemed to be having, settling people near the Volga. He recounted a resettlement scheme whereby 75,000 Christians were "obliged by Russia" to emigrate to the country abandoned by the "Nogai Tatars" but again climate and environment rendered them into savages, sheltering in "holes dug in the ground" and perishing, the population reducing to 7,000.⁹

This was a history of early settler colonialism that sometimes failed outright, and at other times reduced civilized colonists to barbarians and savages. At the very least, new colonies were expensive. Those that succeeded were propped up with supplies from the home country until they could produce for their own needs, according to the greater or lesser limits of their immediate environment. Settler colonialism too, it turns out, was claimed by Malthus as an empirical instance of his principle of population. Settler populations would reduce in number to match scanty original resources, and increase only when soil was cultivated to produce enough food locally to support more families and settlers. "The frequent failures in the establishment of new colonies tend strongly to show the order of precedence between food and population." A form of acclimatization was required. What Malthus called "moral and mechanical habits" had to readapt from the mother country to the newly settled one. Manners needed to be naturalized, "born and grew up in the country," as he put it.¹⁰

The question for Malthus, and for others in the public debate about emigration, was the extent to which additional and expensive support for new

colonies could or should be provided by government. How could Britain avoid wasting the equivalent of the lost 25,000 livres in Guiana? In what sense, he asked, is funding emigration and colonies incumbent upon any government? Clearly thinking of his own, he concluded that “perhaps it is too much to expect, that except where any particular colonial advantages are proposed, emigration should be actively assisted.” Support offered by individuals or private companies was another matter, and Malthus always thought that this should not be hindered.¹¹

These were old questions, inherited from centuries of debate about the value of colonialism and plantations in Ireland, in America, and in the Caribbean, staples of classical political economy as it had developed over Malthus’s lifetime. Malthus himself thought that before the War of Independence, the American new world had offered “unusually great” advantages, and it was a happy circumstance that Britain had “so comfortable an asylum” for its redundant or surplus population. During the American crisis itself, however, Adam Smith had argued strongly and famously against the possession of colonies, against British commercial monopoly, and for the benefits of free trade. He asked pressing questions about the cost of the colonies, especially the cost of their defense. What, precisely, were the economic benefits? In short, were the American colonies worth it? Unequivocally, he nominated “the futility of all distant dominions” as an answer to this. Malthus pressed his East India College students on this matter in the early nineteenth century: “Why ought Colonies to be considered in the same light as Provinces of the Empire? And if they may be so considered what difference will this view of the subject make in the reasonings of Dr Smith on Colonial Trade?” And: “How does it appear, that most of the arguments which Dr Smith uses against the Exclusive Trade of the Colonies, would apply, with almost equal force, to a Free Trade?”¹²

Jeremy Bentham had also stressed the costs of maintaining, and in particular defending, colonies. He thought the penal colony of New South Wales absurdly costly for British public coffers, attacking the scheme in *Panopticon versus New South Wales* (1812). A classic in penology, Donald Winch has suggested that this pamphlet had a broader anticolonial message and sentiment. But if that is the case, it is clear also that Bentham’s anticolonialism tempered over time. Bentham’s weakening resolve seems to have been grounded, at least in part, in his assessment of population growth in Britain. In 1801, for example, he projected a future in which British domestic soil could not sustain an increasing population and that therefore the colonization of “fresh lands” was both possible and beneficial. This demographic rationale that

made colonization a different prospect was new to Bentham's writing on colonies, according to Philip Schofield, a response "perhaps" to Malthus's *Essay*. As much nineteenth-century as eighteenth-century political economists, near contemporaries Malthus and Bentham lived in a very different world to that of Adam Smith.¹³

Malthus was also to become increasingly undecided about state-sponsored emigration schemes. In 1803 he conceded that the emigration of a surplus ("redundant") population was of momentary benefit to Britain. There was even a concession that emigration—colonization—was good so far as it went, in the medium term, with a nod to providential replenishing ("as a partial and temporary expedient, and with a view to the more general cultivation of the earth, and the wider spread of civilization, it seems to be both useful and proper.")¹⁴ But then what? Colonies were palliatives, at best, for domestic (British) poverty; the problem always seemed to return. Despite all this colonial venturing, poverty at home had continued apace, he wrote in 1803. In the periods of great emigration to the new world, had distress in Britain been relieved? "The answer, I fear, could not be in the affirmative."¹⁵

In a sentimental paragraph, Malthus wrote emotively of a kind of immigrant experience. Working against emigration and even against "the great plan of providence" was strength of attachment to native soil, to love of parents, kith and kin. Emigration would "snap these cords which nature has wound in close and intricate folds round the human heart." It is hardly the fault of individuals if they fail to seize the opportunities of emigration to better their circumstances, he implied. Malthus felt keenly and emotionally—perhaps one might say Romantically—about hearth and home, and still more so about the separation of emigrants to distant lands: "The sea which they are to pass, appears to them like the separation of death from all their former connexions." This was followed by lines from *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 1: "Make them rather bear the ills they suffer/Than fly to others which they know not of." Historian Eric Richards has written of Malthus's social psychology of emigration. But there was, perhaps, an individual psychology as well, in which such a separation seemed almost incomprehensible, a projection of Malthus's own attachment to family and home.¹⁶

In the end, in his 1803 edition, Malthus seemed torn on the question of emigration and colonization. With respect to poverty at home, he was clear that it was an inadequate solution in the long run, no matter how vast the new world was. Neither colonies nor, famously, the Poor Law was Malthus's remedy for domestic poverty. And yet colonization had other purposes and effects, of which Malthus took some account. It assisted a providential

cultivation of the earth, and in the process it spread civilization. In this sense, colonization was “both useful and proper” and governments should never actively prevent it, he pronounced. Malthus was ultimately so unsure as to contradict himself. If wages for labor kept people in “tolerable comfort,” they would be very unlikely to emigrate. Indeed, he was certain that attachment to home was so strong that emigration would only be prompted by extreme poverty or marked political discontent. However, if wages were too low for comfort, the lower classes should not be prevented from emigrating: “it is cruelty and injustice to detain them.” This would likely be to their own advantage but also “for the advantage of their country.” Here it seems that Malthus conceded the economic benefits of emigration. But he implied emigration of a privately funded kind: it could not be strongly argued, he wrote in 1803, that governments should actively encourage emigration or financially assist it. This ambiguity, evident in Malthus’s earliest views on emigration, endured over the next two decades, as discussion about emigration and pauperism escalated in the public sphere.¹⁷

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With the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and over the years in which Malthus revised his population treatise, 1817–1826, population, pauperism, and colonization were a constant triad in the republic of letters that made up political economy. Plans for the removal of unproductive Britons to other shores broadened from the criminal justice system that had dominated policy and thinking in the 1780s and 1790s, to the poor relief system, which was stretched to breaking point. The decade after 1815 was economically difficult, to say the least. The national debt after the war was astronomical; harvests were poor in 1816 and 1819; 300,000 soldiers and sailors were demobilized, more or less simultaneously, returning to a population that had increased dramatically; the war had lasted long enough for infants born at its outset to now be both entering labor markets and themselves reproducing more laborers. Wages were low, and parish Poor Law expenses were ever greater. “Redundant” and “surplus” population meant, quite strictly, able-bodied laborers out of work. There were too many of them.

In this context there was renewed debate on the Poor Law in the light of population and colonization. Might emigration mitigate parochial costs? Might this make government assistance for emigrant passages to the new world fiscally worthwhile? Might more colonial lands—in Australia and in Canada—be freshly tilled by imported labor? And in the process, might

new markets be created for British-produced goods? In the 1817 edition of the *Essay*, Malthus took account of the extraordinary postwar circumstances, adding a lengthy final paragraph to his chapter on emigration. While fluctuations in population are responses to surfeit or deficit of labor, the response also necessarily lags: "Some time is required to bring more labour into the market . . . and some time to check the supply." Mostly, he claimed, this was a "natural sort of oscillation noticed in an early part of this work . . . a part of the usual course of things." Sometimes, however, circumstances arise that suddenly stimulate population for a decade or so (referring implicitly to the recent war), and then, equally suddenly cease, resulting in a rapid flow of labor into the market that cannot sustain, employ and pay it. Such extraordinary circumstances justified a one-off intervention. "The only real relief in such a case is emigration; and the subject at the present moment is well worthy the attention of the government, both as a matter of humanity and policy." That was Britain's situation in 1816 when Malthus was revising for the 1817 edition. By the time of his final edition, 1826, Malthus saw no reason to amend this statement to his chapter on emigration. Indeed, by that year it had all become formal government business.¹⁸

In 1826 a select committee was called to hear evidence on emigration, poor relief, and economic policy. It was the work of Robert Wilmot Horton, Derbyshire landowner and under-secretary of state for war and the colonies between 1821 and 1828. Wilmot Horton explained to Malthus that he had begun to think through the connection between emigration and poor relief in 1819, opposing radical William Cobbett's proposition that "all the Evils of our Population would cease" with parliamentary reform. Not reform of Parliament, but of the Poor Laws, was needed, argued Wilmot Horton, followed by a "System of Emigration . . . to our own colonies." He outlined to Malthus that it was his experience in the Colonial Department that persuaded him to reverse this formula and to foreground colonization and emigration over Poor Law reform itself.¹⁹ As under-secretary of state he had learned that the "improvement" and "development" of the colonies was retarded because of the thin British population: plenty of land but few hands to work it, and not enough capital for feasible development.²⁰ In that capacity he was intricately engaged with colonists at all levels; in day-to-day work, Malthus's correspondent was almost as close to the colonial ground as he was to his own Derbyshire estate, negotiating land sales, agricultural charters, and the formation of new colonial companies.²¹ In doing so, Wilmot Horton complained to Malthus that he had to battle domestic views that removing able-bodied men, even if they were paupers, entailed removing potential wealth:

“the opinion that Population is wealth.” But in fact—as if Malthus needed persuading on the matter—“population in excess is weakness and poverty.” The substantial correspondence between Malthus and Wilmot Horton over the 1820s offers valuable insight into just how intimately British political economy was tied to new world colonization and emigration.²²

Wilmot Horton consistently hoped to persuade everyone in his political and social sphere that the cost of removal (emigration) of people who were consuming but not producing was over time lower than the cost of maintaining them parochially. He had a working definition of “pauper” that ran through his multiple schemes, and he took time to spell this out specifically in letters to Malthus: “such poor persons as being physically capable of labour, are willing to labour, but can find no possessor of property willing to exchange against their labour, wages sufficient to procure them the average means of subsistence, such possessor being influenced in such exchange, not by charity, but by a sense of his own interest.”²³ His claims were not modest, writing to Malthus in 1828: “I believe that an insular Country, with a redundant population and extensive colonial possessions, may, by a proper system of National Emigration, effectually prevent the existence of poverty altogether.”²⁴ He sought the opinions and advice of all the major political economists—Mill, Torrens, Senior, McCulloch, Ricardo, as well as Malthus—and they discussed his schemes with each other. Many were members of the Political Economy Club, founded in 1821, one of the venues in which Malthus and Wilmot Horton met and talked.²⁵

In 1823 Wilmot Horton took the liberty of sending both Malthus and Ricardo his newly printed *Outline of a Plan of Emigration to Upper Canada*, which had been appended to the *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Employment of the Poor in Ireland*. Here Wilmot Horton set out the initial rendition of a scheme that he was to refine and lobby for over the next decade and on which Malthus commented closely. It entailed able-bodied pauper families receiving free passage, grants of colonial land, and tools and initial provisions for one year, in exchange for any future claim on parish assistance: that is, rights to parish benefits for themselves and their children would be permanently forfeited. The cost of passage and settlement in the colonies would be paid by parishes, the funds loaned from the government on security of a mortgage on the poor rates. In this initial rendition, and in multiple later versions, Wilmot Horton detailed the proposed conditions of loans to parishes, expenses of emigration, and evidence concerning the feasibility and benefits of clearing and settling land, not only but mainly in Upper Canada.²⁶ Horton’s *Outline* followed a similar pamphlet by

a Scottish colonist in Upper Canada, Robert Gourlay (1822), in which the seemingly endless lands of British North America were still a prize to be won by the British, notwithstanding the already rapid expansion of the United States. "The vision of quickly and thickly peopling the earth with our species, brightens in my imagination day after day," wrote Gourlay floridly. Wilmot Horton was more measured. Providential arguments about replenishing the Earth had great purchase emotionally, spiritually, and theologically, but did they work politically and economically? By the 1820s it had become routine for theorists of colonization and colonists themselves to refer to Malthus on population and land. Gourlay, for example, declared himself to be "a steady disciple of Mr Malthus."²⁷

For his part, Wilmot Horton had engaged in correspondence with Malthus since 1823. In their early conversation, Malthus simply repeated to Wilmot Horton what he had set out in his 1803 chapter: "I have always thought it very unjust on the part of Governments, to prohibit, or impede emigration; but I have doubted whether they could reasonably be expected so to promote it." Still, he confessed this to be a doubt rather than a decided opinion. In line with the revisions for his 1817 edition he told Wilmot Horton that "the peculiar circumstances of the times" were beginning to incline him toward a warmer reception of proposals for government assistance for emigration. Indeed, in 1823 he considered Wilmot Horton's plan a reasonable one, even a scheme that held out many advantages. The calculations of expenses he thought sound. Malthus's chief worry was the type, or character, of person most likely to be selected by parishes. Why, he asked, would they send their most able men? The redundant population would not make the most efficient settlers, partly because the "indolence" they had learned from parish assistance may well be carried to the new settlement. In the event, what Malthus called "the present crisis" meant that the benefits of emigration to all parties (parishes, the government, the British economy, the colonies, the emigrants) outweighed any objections, even if momentarily so.²⁸

Wilmot Horton successfully persuaded Parliament that the whole matter, including his own plan, would benefit from the careful scrutiny of formal evidence, and he chaired the Select Committee on Emigration over 1826 and 1827. All the major political economists were asked for their views and, if possible, for their evidence at the inquiry. It took some persuasion to extract a reluctant and disorganized Malthus from duties at the East India College. Perhaps he was disinclined, having sat fairly recently on the Select Committee on Artizans and Machinery. That Committee had considered, among other matters, the laws preventing the emigration of artisans, and some of

those men returned to give evidence to the Select Committee on Emigration. Their presence reveals that pressure to design and implement assisted emigration schemes in these years did not come just from landowners and statesmen such as Wilmot Horton, or from agricultural laborers turned paupers, but also from out-of-work artisans. Communities in Scotland had formed their own emigration societies to press their case. Indeed, the first witness that Wilmot Horton brought before his 1827 select committee spoke for the Glasgow Emigration Society. Operative weaver Joseph Foster explained that about twelve anxious families had turned their attention to emigration to the “North American Provinces.” They had petitioned—without success—the secretary of state for a grant of land in Canada, requesting that “their deep distress may be taken in favourable consideration; that they are starving, and will be ejected from their dwellings in a few days.” They were looking, in part, at the emigration experiments that Wilmot Horton had helped implement earlier in the 1820s, when he first became under-secretary.²⁹

All of Malthus’s work concerned the value of land relative to the value of labor, and this was precisely what was under discussion in the mechanics of settler colonialism. Wilmot Horton’s *Outline of a Plan of Emigration to Upper Canada* appended, for example, a detailed report from Colonel Thomas Talbot, younger son of an Irish baron, who had been granted five thousand Canadian acres in 1803 on the shores of Lake Erie. From 1809 Talbot himself granted land to settlers, acres that had until that time “appeared an impenetrable wilderness.” Wilmot Horton tabled material that itemized the intricate political economy of clearing: brushwood was cut first and piled, and young trees were cut into short lengths and piled atop the brushwood; large trees were to be cut at five feet from the root and then stems cut into lengths of eleven feet. Piles were then dried—taking perhaps a fortnight—and burned. If a potash work was nearby, this might cover the expense of clearing. Logging then took place, with a yoke of oxen, after which the land was ready for fencing and then sowing. All of this labor, Talbot made sure to emphasize, was performed on Crown land granted in perpetuity to the settler. “His labour, therefore, is wholly expended upon his own property.” Likewise, the appendix of the 1826 report to which Malthus provided evidence included summary tables for calculating labor required for clearing land in New South Wales (for which convict labor proved useful): the felling of forty trees in one acre took one week of one man’s labor; the burning of eighty perches (the antique unit for height and volume still in occasional use) took one man one week; and so on for hoeing and breaking up new land, for planting, reaping, and fencing; and for raising new dwellings—sawing, shingling, brickmaking. This was the work of colonial clearance.³⁰

Letters from settlers were reprinted in parliamentary documents, perhaps the best propaganda possible to support Wilmot Horton's schemes. Everything in Upper Canada seemed to be turning from waste into produce. Andrew Angus wrote to his parents that after they felled the woods, his new land in Upper Canada grew potatoes well, in addition to Indian corn and wheat. Although the land had been settled for little more than three years, and although many families had left Scotland with nothing, he recounted that they now had up to eighteen head of cattle, besides sheep and hogs.³¹ Unhappily for Malthus, this settler was insistent that the larger the emigrant family, the more chance they had of doing well. This was also something that had been stressed in Wilmot Horton's 1822 *Outline*, which Malthus read and commented on. Large families of children were not a burden, the report from Upper Canada had stated, but contributed greatly in the process of clearing and cultivation. And with that, advancement of a settlement was demographically and agriculturally rapid; the Talbot Settlement on Lake Erie had collected 12,000 souls over ten years. They arrived as "persons of the very poorest description" and they were now "as independent, as contented, and as happy a body of yeomanry, as any in the world." That was the demographic news from the ground in those new world places in Upper Canada, now called Lanark or Dalhousie or Port Talbot.³²

Other settlements were explicitly based on Malthus's evidence that new world populations increased rapidly. Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk (who introduced Malthus to the parliamentary abolition debate), had successfully negotiated to send 800 Scottish highlanders to Prince Edward Island in 1803. The next year he settled 102 Scottish men and women near Windsor, Upper Canada, to prepare an estate for sheep breeding, but between malaria and war, that colony crumbled. Later Selkirk attempted colonization of Red River in western Canada. Throughout all of these ventures, he relied explicitly on Malthus's principle to justify his own settlement and colonization plans:

From the principles so clearly laid down by Mr. Malthus, it will be easily understood that in a Colony where an original nucleus of population has been planted, that population increasing at a certain rate, will be capable of carrying forward the improvement of the country with a proportional degree of rapidity—a rapidity increasing like the population in a geometrical proportion.³³

Indeed, colonizers and speculators used Malthus's material on new world population growth constantly in support of their ventures. They did so even when they recognized that Malthus was not a straightforward supporter of emigration, and even in places located outside the British Empire. Settlers in Sydney, for example, read that even though Malthus did not approve of

emigration in general, he nonetheless endorsed “the more general cultivation of the earth and the wider extension of civilization” as “both useful and proper.” Why not consider the colonization of the extensive and fertile island of Borneo alongside the new colonization plans for Canada, the Cape, and New Holland?³⁴

Wilmot Horton himself insisted that his scheme was applicable to any colony. The first report of his select committee included detailed papers on various plans for emigration to New South Wales and the Cape of Good Hope, as well as British North America. Papers submitted by New South Wales colonists announced—ambitiously—that every able-bodied pauper in England “may be established as an independent free-holder.” The soil of New South Wales was so rich that crops of wheat, maize, and barley had been continuous for thirty years in some cases, “without manure and without rest.” The climate of New South Wales was so health-inducing that “not one single case” of smallpox was known, ignoring the 1789 epidemic among Aboriginal people about which Malthus and a hundred others had written. Finally, tens of thousands of convict laborers, and more each year, stood ready to clear land for settlers at government expense. This would offset the common problem that pauper (but free) emigrants lacked the capacity to buy enough labor to clear land, when their own labor was insufficient. Indeed the evidence tabled by this colonist was so optimistic as to be irresponsible. Colonizing the antipodes might extinguish not just pauperism but the poor rate itself, and that “at no very distant period.” On the face of it, it was easy to render colonies into solutions to multiple problems in both the old world and new. The devil was in the detail.³⁵

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Although many of the early schemes involved Scottish emigration, Wilmot Horton’s plans were almost obsessively about Ireland, and had long been so. It is unsurprising, then, that when he sat down to preside over the Select Committee on Emigration on Saturday, May 5, 1827, his opening question was to ask his star political economy witness whether he had ever been to Ireland. A short visit in 1817, witness Malthus replied. Ireland was distinct in the population-emigration complex that was under discussion after the Napoleonic Wars, in part because there was no parish poor relief, no poor law equivalent to that of England and Wales. (This also meant, Malthus noted with regret in his *Essay*, no parochial records to speak of that could help with mortality, birth, and marriage rates.) Wilmot Horton had an Ireland-specific

variation on his emigration scheme, proposing that government loans could be secured by private subscription fund, rather than by parishes, as was his English plan.³⁶ In the case of the Irish laborer, he explained in a letter to Malthus, "colonization is entirely a gratuitous benefit," while in the case of the English pauper it was an "exchange," settlement in a colony in lieu of settlement in an English parish.³⁷

Ireland was also distinct because of its demographic circumstances. As Malthus and Wilmot Horton spoke, the population of Scotland was about 2 million, England and Wales, about 13.3 million. But it was Irish population that was most troubling, because of its rate of increase. Malthus had been thinking about this in recent years. Perhaps prompted by his discussion with Wilmot Horton, he added a short section to the 1826 edition of the *Essay* on Irish numbers. While in 1821 it was counted at 6,801,827, in 1695 it had only been 1,034,000. This was the most rapid increase anywhere in Europe, a claim he repeated at the Select Committee on Emigration.³⁸ At that point, 1827, he estimated 7.5 million Irish, calculating the rate of increase from Beaufort's baseline in 1792 (which Malthus reported to the Committee was 4,680,000), against the census undertaken in 1821.³⁹ Malthus projected a doubling of the Irish population in about forty years, more rapid than the forty-eight-year doubling noted in the 1826 edition of the *Essay*. Yet the report produced by the select committee suggested an even more alarming rate, in the light of Sir Henry Parnell's evidence: the Irish population may well have doubled in the preceding thirty years. In both the *Essay* and his evidence, Malthus was eager to record that the Irish circumstance was unique, not just because of the rate of increase but because that increase had been so sustained. Where other European populations might grow over one or two generations, and then become stationary or even decline, the Irish seemed to have been increasing steadily since South's first population estimates in 1695.⁴⁰

Rapidly doubling populations in the new world were one thing. In old world Ireland it was quite another, compounding distress and poverty, according to Malthus, and unless mitigated leading toward a crisis-level "check." The whole circumstance was of some interest to Malthus theoretically. *Why* was population increasing so rapidly, and in such a sustained way? Wilmot Horton also wondered aloud to Malthus why the Irish population, already in such distress, was still increasing its numbers. Deploying Malthus's own principle, why had not the population become stationary if resources were so thin? Ireland was no ordinary case. Malthus was not alone in suggesting that part of the problem was reliance on a peculiar staple, the potato. Able

to be grown in small plots of land, any surplus had almost no value. Potatoes could not be exchanged for anything.⁴¹

Malthus had insisted in his *Essay* that population growth typically accompanied the availability of fresh land with a good dose of “liberty”: the American case. While there was precious little liberty in Ireland—a problem for Malthus, as we shall see—there was some “waste land.” Malthus thought that population was increasing because there were still parts of Ireland to be freshly cultivated, but he also thought that as a response there would eventually, even soon, manifest as a great increase in what he called premature mortality. Thus, while some in the 1820s recommended that Ireland’s “redundant”—out-of-work—population be relocated onto the island’s wastelands, Malthus himself considered that a shortsighted policy: one or two generations later the population will have grown and there would be even greater “redundancy of population than before.” Better to remove the out-of-work population, introduce changes in land and estate management, and inculcate prudence among laborers through education “and better habits of respecting themselves.”⁴²

Ireland was, in many senses, the actual “doubled” Britain with which Malthus opened his chapter on emigration. The Acts of Union in 1801 had made it so, forming the new United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. But what a precarious union it was. The proximate cause—the 1798 uprising of Irish republicans with the support of French troops—followed several centuries of colonization bedded down by a suite of sectarian laws, the Catholic Code or the Penal Code. By the time Malthus wrote his *Essay* at the end of the eighteenth century, Catholic ownership of land had dropped to about 5 percent. It had been 20 percent a hundred years earlier, and 90 percent in 1603. For many years the Penal Code excluded Catholic merchants from local government, disqualified Catholics from voting (until 1793), and from sitting in Parliament (until Catholic Emancipation in 1829). The laws dictated that Catholic estates be divided among all sons, unless a son converted, in which case he would inherit the whole estate. For Irish peasants, the tithes collected on small potato fields were a grievance raised again and again in Parliament, without resolution.⁴³

English and Irish commentators at the time assessed the Union as unashamed colonial rule. In 1829 Malthus read Parnell’s fierce statements on English colonialism in Ireland: “We dispose of the lives of brutes, and the liberty of negroes, with very little compunction; it was in the same spirit that it was lawful to kill a wild Irishman; and that neither his property, nor

his person, was thought worthy of the protection of the common law." It is no wonder that Irish political agitators and disaffected laborers looked to France, and even to Napoleon, for liberation, if not liberty. Malthus himself thought as much and, quite remarkably, said so in 1808, even as the British were fighting Napoleon's army in Spain and Portugal.⁴⁴

The Union meant that one hundred representatives of Ireland now sat in Westminster. They were all Protestant. Partly because of this stark fact, Catholic emancipation was high on political agendas, not least for the Whigs, with whom Malthus associated and identified. The memory of both Irish republicanism and the recent war was still fresh, still playing out; the Union needed to be secured. Ireland needed to be brought into the fold, but poverty and disaffection made that difficult, and this was the important context for the suite of select committees and inquiries into Irish poverty, as well as emigration and poor laws, that peppered the decades after 1815. Malthus contributed in person to some of these, while all of them mentioned his principle of population, one way or another. The aspiration to what Wilmot Horton called "tranquillity and security" in Ireland was directly connected to population, emigration, and colonization.⁴⁵

Malthus worried to Wilmot Horton that plans to send Scottish and English laborers to the new world would simply result in an influx of labor from Dublin to Liverpool, undermining all potential benefits.⁴⁶ Malthus was unequivocal: population increase in Ireland would be "most fatal to the happiness of the labouring classes in England," since increasing emigration from Ireland to England would lower wages for labor. Thus, ongoing emigration across the Irish Sea would undermine "the good effects arising from the superior prudence of the labouring classes in this country"—clearly a matter close to Malthus's heart. It would have the net effect of increasing the number of English paupers.⁴⁷ He wrote to Wilmot Horton in 1827 that diminishing—or even possibly preventing—movement from Ireland to England and Scotland would be an "incalculable" advantage to both.⁴⁸ Wilmot Horton worried back to Malthus about his "deepest conviction": whatever else happened, there would be no advantage unless the out-of-work Irish poor found an outlet other than England or Scotland. If not, the laboring class across Great Britain would be brought "to a uniform state of degradation and misery."⁴⁹

They spoke with one voice on Ireland. "The focus of mischief, in every point of view, is there,"⁵⁰ wrote Malthus to Wilmot Horton in 1827, a sentiment repeated in the select committee's second report:

The great increase of population in Ireland has so much outrun the increase in the funds for employing it, as to occasion the almost universal prevalence of the most squalid and abject poverty, and to justify an opinion, that a check to the further progress of population has begun to have operation by emigrations to Great Britain, and by increased mortality, arising from the inability of the people to obtain such supplies of the coarsest and cheapest food as are necessary to support their existence.

The “mischief” that concerned them was both the actual distress in Ireland and the emigration to England and Scotland that that distress created. Ireland continually threatened to export its poverty, as far as Malthus and Wilmot Horton were concerned.⁵¹

Prompted by strong and leading questions from Wilmot Horton, Malthus was clear in the select committee that a one-off large-scale emigration would bring about a beneficial change in the demographic and economic future of Ireland, and that the dividend justified a “great pecuniary sacrifice” on the part of government, as an emergency measure. He was equally sure that emigration needed to be accompanied by sustained reform of Irish estates, the only way to effect permanent relief. Malthus thought that any emigration scheme—from Ireland, Scotland, or England—needed to be accompanied by measures that would prevent the vacuum left behind from simply refilling. Farms that had been cleared of people, as leases ended, should stay cleared. How? The cottages of departed Irish emigrants might be pulled down. Destroying cottages was at one level a symbolic response, since the process of enumeration in Ireland (and elsewhere) had long been pursued by “hearth”; population was estimated as much in stone fireplaces as in people. It is as if, by obliterating domestic spaces the negative pressure of the vacuum would be minimized, but at the same time agricultural space would still remain void and vacant, to be populated not with people but with stock.⁵²

The measure was a harsh response for a people already living in great poverty. It may come as a surprise, then, that Malthus had earlier pronounced himself a fierce critic of oppressive English laws and strongly in favor of Irish Catholic emancipation. In 1808 and 1809 he wrote two articles for the *Edinburgh Review*, nominally assessing three recent publications on Ireland, but actually using the opportunity to put down his thoughts on just how and why English oppression had produced Irish distress. Malthus’s contribution was prompted by contact with the *Edinburgh Review*’s founder Francis Horner, who had earlier discarded his own plan to write a book about population after reading Malthus’s *Essay* (“the new world which *Malthus* has

discovered," resentment betrayed, perhaps, by his emphasis). Endlessly procrastinating, Horner dropped his plan to write even a review of the *Essay* (the editor writing to Horner in 1804, "for our sake, for my sake, for your own sake, and for God's sake, do set about Malthus immediately"). The connection with Horner signals Malthus's political alignment, including his broad commitment to religious toleration, of both Catholics and dissenters.⁵³

Malthus had written very little indeed on Ireland in his revised *Essay*, but he made a point of noting just this in his anonymous review. Commenting on "the doctrines which Mr. Malthus has advanced in his late *Essay* on Population," he feigned surprise that "he did not enter into it more in detail." John Pullen has suggested that in these articles Malthus showed "sympathy for the plight of the Irish, and argued strongly for Irish emancipation." But this is an understatement. Malthus's 1808 articles displayed less sympathy than outrage. If the strength of the written word is our measure, Malthus was more resolute about Catholic emancipation, including its effect on Irish laborers, than any other political matter.⁵⁴

The Catholic Code was his target, "the disgraceful code under which the Catholics had been so long oppressed." Those who did not consider Irish Catholics as "fellow Christians worshipping the same God, and fellow subjects entitled to the same civil privileges," were both bigoted and ignorant, the terms he used in 1808. They "are not only violating the genuine spirit of Christianity, but blindly endangering their own security, and risking the subjugation or dismemberment of the empire." Malthus meant the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, Ireland being "the fourth part of the empire." At one level Malthus wrote of a kind of imperial federation. At another level he saw colonization manifesting as the Irish "oppressed," his own word. Civil distinctions between Catholics and Protestants had to be disbanded by the legislature, thereby removing the cause of Catholic disaffection; diminishing argument and agitation toward the political separation of Ireland; and, especially, removing any attraction for Bonapartist rule that would only seem attractive or possible to Irish Catholics if the British retained civil distinctions.⁵⁵

Thus, while population in Ireland was an interesting economic case, that was nowhere near the extent of Malthus's interest. Population growth there was also a political and security problem, one that Malthus thought would be ignored at the peril of the Union. The rapid increase of population was disproportionately Catholic (four to one, he thought), and thus constituted a growing "physical force." "Every year fifty thousand youths rise to the military age in Ireland," a number certainly not offset by men growing old or dying. But his point was that a contest of numbers and force needed to be

exchanged for a process of conciliation. Thus, he was forthright in 1808: while Croker's *Sketch of the State of Ireland* (which he was nominally reviewing), located "Irish misery" with the ignorance and poverty of the laborers, Malthus thought it sprang first and foremost from the penal code. Anti-Catholic laws were not incidentally problematic for Malthus; he claimed they had *produced* the "political debasement of the inferior orders" and "the present moral and political degradation of the mass of the Irish poor."⁵⁶

It is important to stress this because Malthus's principle of population is often interpreted as having naturalized the phenomenon of distress, of poverty, and even of famine. Patrick Brantlinger, for example, understands Malthus's comments on Irish distress in the *Essay* as evidence of "divine wisdom expressed through nature's laws." Others see his work as setting in place the idea that poverty and distress were somehow biologically determined, prefacing the mid-nineteenth-century uptake of Malthus by Wallace and Darwin and onward to eugenics. But Malthus's whole point in this focused piece on Ireland written at the beginning of the century was to insist on a political cause that required a political response. The poverty of the Irish was an "evil," the remedy for which ("the only possible relief") was the abolition of the Catholic code.⁵⁷

Malthus's detailed consideration of Ireland in these two articles contained no mention of emigration as a source of relief. The articles did, however, enumerate the numbers of Irish who had annually departed for America, averaging four thousand per year over the last half of the eighteenth century.⁵⁸ His passing point was that such emigrations added to the habit of early marriages. Twenty years later, emigration was the precise context within which he was asked for his views on the Irish poor. Something of the substance but little of the outrage emerged in his evidence. In 1827 Malthus was still directly critical of the government of Ireland—"it has tended to degrade the general mass of the people"—and this oppression inculcated nothing other than an expectation of a very low standard of living, "the very lowest degree of comfort." One of Ireland's greatest faults, he concluded, was that the laboring classes were treated "as if they were a degraded people." Living thus, Irish laborers and families married early, reproduced rapidly, and on the whole expected little more than "being able to get potatoes for themselves and their children." Such circumstances prevented them "looking forward and acquiring habits of prudence." This would and should change, Malthus commented. The poor in Ireland needed to be treated with greater respect by their superiors. With the introduction of civil and political liberties, and especially with education, people who respected themselves more and

expected higher comforts for themselves and their children would marry later. Ireland, then, was the first case of what came to be termed *development*.⁵⁹

Patricia James wondered in her biography how Malthus's Evangelical friends and acquaintances among the Clapham sect might have assessed his forthright views on Catholic emancipation and his statements about augmenting Catholic population in Ireland. They were less religiously tolerant than the Whigs in Holland House, certainly less tolerant than Malthus. Nonetheless, there is a link between Malthus's views on conciliating Irish Catholics and his views on religious toleration in general. Malthus's unpublished pamphlet, "The Crisis" (1796), had dealt in part with "the policy of religious exclusions." Problematically, nonconformists had been rendered more or less "professed enemies to the State as well as the Church," despite their historical connection to the constitution. But if, historically, the tests had been removed and nonconformists had been treated as civically equivalent—had they been drawn in and not excluded—they "should never have seen the present violent opposition from them to the established government." Malthus's logic was conciliatory, but it was also assimilationist. The "slight shades of difference in their religious tenets" should have been tolerated because soon enough they would have been absorbed by the dominant view and, indeed, eliminated: since politics and religion is not innate (not "born with men"), "the next generation . . . would quickly be lost and undistinguished in the great mass of the community." Malthus never suggested or sought the conversion and assimilation of Catholics in this way, but he was writing within a tradition of demographic-assimilative thought on Ireland. Political union could sometimes be effected by reproductive union. Soon enough just this kind of intergenerational assimilation would become Aboriginal policy in the Canadian and Australian colonies.⁶⁰

Malthus's ideas on Irish conciliation and intergenerational assimilation may well have their source with his seventeenth-century predecessor, William Petty. Petty's famous *Political Arithemittick* stemmed from work in and on Ireland; the Down survey, and his *Political Anatomy of Ireland*, was a thesis on Irish plantation. The books that Malthus reviewed in 1808—Newenham and Croker—had their intellectual and political provenance here. Petty aired plans for resolving not just English-Irish differences but actual difference, not by force but by intermarriage. "Declining all Military means of settling and securing *Ireland* in peace and plenty, what we offer shall tend to the transmuting one people into the other, and the thorough union of Interests upon natural and lasting Principles." The union between England and Ireland that Malthus's seventeenth-century predecessor had dreamed of was

certainly political, but the key was a union of the population, a “transmutation” of the Irish into English custom, economy, and improvement, if not religion, building from the elements of domestic economy. Unmarried English women would be transplanted to Ireland, there to marry local men and raise children in English customs in English-like households. In Petty’s plan, 200,000 Irish men might be brought to England, dispersed, and absorbed. The exchange of population, writes Ted McCormick, “would transmute Irish society from within.” Petty, like Malthus, imagined a neutralization of Irish political agitation and disaffection less through the expectation of religious conversion than through a combination of religious tolerance and cultural assimilation. Political arithmetic, Ted McCormick has written, “turned government into a kind of demographic alchemy.”⁶¹

If contact with native Americans offered “savagery” to stadial theory, it was the history of colonialism in Ireland that offered instances of contemporary “barbarity.” Gaelic land, property, and inheritance practices did not naturally incline to improvement; Ireland was marked by its lack of commerce. But Petty and his intellectual successors in political arithmetic tended to comprehend Irish “barbarism” as reformable rather than fixed. Hence the possibility of “transmutation.” This in many ways characterized the possibility of civilization in stadial theory and in Malthus’s expectation that different cultures might adapt, improve, progress; that they might civilize in economic terms. For the Irish, Malthus thought, like Petty, this did not necessarily require conversion. Quite the contrary, productive union required religious tolerance on the part of the English. The problem for Malthus was the time that this would take, and the demographics of decline (in numbers) against which gradual “improvement” was pitted.

* * *

In writing up his reports from the Select Committee on Emigration in 1826–1827, Wilmot Horton used the authority of Malthus’s name at every opportunity. He made it clear that the testimony of multiple “practical witnesses” was confirmed by his star theoretical witness and, conversely, that Malthus’s principles aligned with the facts and evidence brought before the committee by men on the ground. It was with reference to Malthus specifically that assurances were given that removing laborers who were out of work was not a loss to the wealth of the home country, despite common perceptions; on the contrary, such redundant laborers are a “tax upon the community.” Therefore, “Mr. Malthus admits that if it can be shown that the

expense of removing such labourers by Emigration is less than that of maintaining them at home, no doubt can exist of the expediency of so removing them." Malthus, the committee's final report pronounced, thought that the increase in Irish population was a dire problem not just for the starving Irish but also for English and Scottish laborers, whose wages would decrease with Irish immigration to their shores. Malthus's evidence was repeated verbatim. And he was directly deployed in the report to affirm the connection between redundant population, colonization, and the wealth of the British Empire.⁶² In writing Malthus so strongly into the final report, Wilmot Horton went to the trouble of checking Malthus's evidence with other political economists, Thomas Tooke, Thomas Chalmers, Robert Torrens. He did so because the "queries put to Mr Malthus embrace the whole principle of the Reports." Torrens corrected Malthus on some matters but overall lent his endorsement to Wilmot Horton's plans: "It is morally and physically certain, that unless an Extensive plan of Emigration be carried into effect, the labouring classes in England must become what in Ireland they are." Chalmers, by contrast, thought emigration plans a misplaced solution to pauperism, but that did not deter Wilmot Horton. Speaking to the extended Enquiry on Emigration in Parliament in 1827, Wilmot Horton again authorized it all via Malthus: "Mr. Malthus was of opinion, that unless emigration was extensively resorted to, an alteration of the poor-laws would speedily be found necessary. The opinions held by Mr. Malthus on the subject of emigration were, he was happy to find, adopted by many persons in this country, and in the colonies themselves."⁶³

As a way of wrapping up the whole issue of colonization and prosperity, Wilmot Horton curiously underscored Malthus's assessment of colonization and emigration with that of William Penn's *Benefit of Plantations or Colonies*, signaling the longevity of the significance of new world land for British populations: "I deny the vulgar opinion against plantations, that they weaken England; they have manifestly enriched, and so strengthened her, which I briefly evidence thus: *those that go into a foreign plantation, their industry there is worth more than if they staid at home.*" It was a peculiar bid to authorize his schemes for colonization, an antiquated instance from another economic and political world. Nonetheless, Wilmot Horton announced that his own proposition, that of his select committee, was "precisely similar": that a laborer out of work in Great Britain was more valuable in work in the colonies. This was the justification for appropriating public funds for emigration.⁶⁴ Wilmot Horton was looking back to the early modern new world just when others were looking forward to colonial reform. It was a sign, perhaps, that

he had had his day. Fresh plans to put old world populations and new world land together were engaging public and government attention, plans that developed from Wilmot Horton's Malthus-inspired lobbying decade but departed from it as well.

* * *

In the new decade, February 1830, Malthus asked Wilmot Horton if he had heard anything about the new plans for emigration to Australasia. He was referring either (or possibly both) to Edward Gibbon Wakefield's anonymous *Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australasia* (1829) or, more likely, the version of it that was published as *A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia, together with the outline of a system of colonization*. The so-called *Letter from Sydney* (Wakefield was in fact in Newgate prison, having abducted a fifteen-year-old heiress) had appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* and in this new pamphlet format was compiled and published as edited by Robert Gouger, the philanthropically interested son of a prosperous city merchant, soon to drive plans for a South Australian colony and eventually to become its colonial secretary. Wakefield, born in 1796, and Gouger, born in 1802, were young and energetic, with a suite of new ideas. They were talking to a middle-aged Wilmot Horton (born 1784), who was about to become governor of Ceylon, and an even older Malthus (born 1766), who was not aging particularly well. Wakefield and Gouger left the eighteenth century, and for that matter William Penn's seventeenth century, well and truly behind.⁶⁵

The new proposal for colonizing Australasia was inspired, Wakefield said, both by Wilmot Horton's *Reports on Emigration* and by Malthus's general theory that lay behind it. Both Ireland and economy ran in Wakefield's blood. His father, Edward Wakefield, had written *Ireland, Statistical and Political* (1812), another tract in the Petty tradition. His Quaker grandmother, Priscilla Wakefield, had deployed Adam Smith to write her *Reflection on the Present Condition of the Female Sex, with Suggestions for its Improvement*, another of the radical publications that ran off Joseph Johnson's press in 1798. Cousin of another Quaker activist, Elizabeth Fry, Edward Gibbon Wakefield was surrounded by both theorists and practitioners of political and moral reform.⁶⁶

The Australasian plans that alerted Malthus started with population, prompted by an article, "On the State and Prospects of the Country," in the *Quarterly Review*: "Population has, for at least fifteen or twenty years, been increasing at a rate for which no improvement in agriculture or manufactures could afford employment." Like the "excess" barbarians of Europe's past who

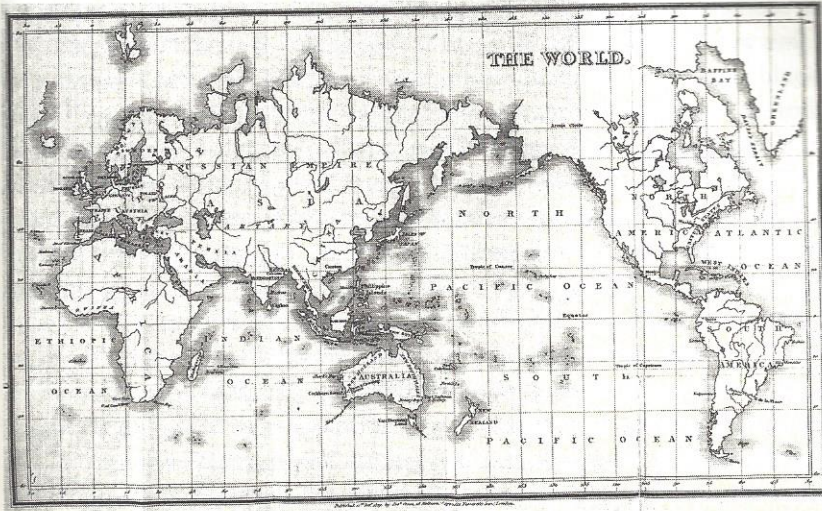


Figure 7.1. Map showing the world c. 1829, including New Holland (west), Australia and New South Wales (east), United States (east), North America, and Owhyee in the Pacific Ocean. Unattributed, from Robert Gouger (ed.), *A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia, together with the Outline of a System of Colonization*, (London: J. Cross, 1829). Reproduced by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

swarmed south, England's population should travel over the seas, to the great land in the south, the western half of which Wakefield and Gouger still called New Holland. New South Wales was the eastern half of the continent, while by "Australasia" they meant the surrounding large and small islands, including Van Diemen's Land.⁶⁷

The younger men doffed their hats to their elders, in discursive moves that at once acknowledged and dismissed them. For example, if an Englishman ("Mr Wilmot Horton, for instance") were offered one wish to bring about the greatest good for the country, for what would he ask? The destruction of his natural enemy, the French? For an earthquake to swallow up troublesome Ireland? No. He would wish for "the power to increase the territory of Britain according to the wants of the people." "Behold your wish accomplished!" the writers continued, inviting readers to imagine the wasteland of South Africa or Australasia removed and attached to the coast of Britain. Readers, of course, had been asked to imagine just this by Malthus, thirty years earlier. Gouger and Wakefield, like Wilmot Horton and Malthus, thought

the mother country might well think of the colonies “as so many extensions of her own territory.” But what value would that land acquire? What role should government play in creating that value? And what was the value of labor in such a colonial extension of territory? Wakefield and Gouger’s point was to suggest that this land, like the colonial wastelands that were the property of the Crown, should not be given away, but sold to the highest bidder. The first point of political economy that the fictional writer of the “letter from Sydney” made was that thousands of acres could be purchased for very little but were accordingly hard to sell. Its value was low: “There are millions upon millions of acres, as fertile as mine, to be had for nothing.” Labor, on the other hand, scarce in the colonies, was worth a lot—enough to create entirely different social orders, upside down and back to front, in that antipodean way. Agricultural laborers were of more value than “literary men,” for example. “Sir Walter Scott, Sir Humphry Davy, and Mr Malthus, would not earn as much in this colony as three brawny experienced ploughmen.” The generational dismissal was as clear as the new assessment of the value of land and labor in the colonies.⁶⁸

It is not apparent whether Malthus met Wakefield, but Malthus and Gouger certainly became acquainted, and between February and August 1830 talked over colonization and emigration in some detail. Malthus was not enough persuaded to respond to Gouger’s announcement in April 1830 of a public meeting to establish what was to be called the National Colonization Society. Wilmot Horton, by contrast, chaired the meeting that successfully formed the society in June of that year.⁶⁹ In the committee room in the British Coffee House, Cockspur Street, Gouger had prepared the *Statement of the Principles and Objects of a Proposed National Society for the Cure and Prevention of Pauperism, by Means of Systematic Colonization*. It acknowledged Wilmot Horton by name and Malthus by principle:

From the moment when, in consequence of the zealous exertions of Mr Wilmot Horton, emigration was seriously contemplated with a view to the cure and prevention of pauperism in Britain, philosophers and statesmen have acknowledged the importance of the question; but those, almost without exception, who have carefully examined the whole subject, insist on two *conditions* as indispensable to any good practical measure . . . 1st. That the vacuum created by emigration, should not be filled up by an increase of people, arising from that tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence, which, alone, class for emigration. 2ndly, That the cost of emigration should *inevitably*, be less than that of maintaining the excess of people.⁷⁰

What was Wakefield and Gouger's "systematic colonization," and how did it differ from Wilmot Horton's plan? The architects worked from a definition of "colonization" where implicitly unoccupied land was the first principle: "the creation of everything but land where nothing but land exists." With this definition in mind, he claimed that "the North Americans are the most extensive *colonizers* (in the strict and proper sense of the word) that ever existed." First, then, this Crown-owned land would be bought for cash, without exception, not granted free ("for the execution of this provision, the *mode* of selling waste land in North America would furnish a useful model"). Second, rent from land would be taxed, and the proceeds of that tax, together with sales of land, would form an emigration fund to bring British laborers, free of cost, to the colony. Third, the specific emigration of young couples was sought: "an absolute preference be given to young persons, and that no excess of males be conveyed to the colony free of cost." And finally, they sought a concentration of settlement, not its dispersal. This would be effected by keeping the price of land high enough that emigrants could not purchase it immediately, thus retaining a labor force for some time, in closer settlements in which there would, additionally, be some division of labor.⁷¹

"Concentration" was Wakefield and Gouger's signature argument. Dispersed populations brought no particular value; dense colonial populations did. America was very much their key instance here as well. They looked historically, like Malthus, to early colonial ventures. The pamphlet described the Dutch colonization of New York where settlers were profitably hemmed in, kept dense. In the Dutch Cape Colony, by comparison, early settlers dispersed "and, by degrees, they became half savages." According to this view, too much land with too few people was a problem, the downfall of the precarious Swan River Colony in Western Australia (1829). Concentration of people *is* civilization in this account, recalling Malthus's stadial theory that aligned density with economic development, thinness with native economies in New Holland and North America, and higher density with agriculture and commerce. Over 1831, Gouger and Robert Torrens developed a plan to request a charter similar to seventeenth-century North American charters, in the name of the South Australian Land Company. Put to the Colonial Office in July 1832, this initial version of a newly planned antipodean colony was rejected.⁷²

This new world lesson of concentration was quite different from Wilmot Horton's aspirations for British North America, something he discussed with Malthus. The great advantage of North America, he wrote, was the easy diffusion of people right across it—"population can spread itself . . .

the excess would always be drained off imperceptibly”—and into the long-distant future. No one ever complained of excess population in the United States, agreed Wilmot Horton, but who does not complain of it in the United Kingdom? In America, if population presses on subsistence, it has “nothing to do but to retire to the outer circle of present civilization, and to form a circle of still larger area, which the unlimited extension of territory renders possible and easy.” For insular Britain, there was nowhere to go, and the lower classes inevitably suffered—unless, of course, the colonies themselves were considered Britain’s larger area. In comparing America and Britain, Wilmot-Horton parroted Malthus’s own ideas back to him.⁷³

Malthus responded that British colonists might just as easily flow from Canada to the United States; in fact, “there is a considerable chance of its being taken by the ‘United States’,” an entity he still put in inverted commas.⁷⁴ Malthus had warned that this was one risk in contemplating expensive government-assisted schemes. Indeed, in their conversation at the Select Committee on Emigration, Malthus agreed that while accession of population to British North America would turn land currently “in a state of desert” into fertile land, the fact remained that that land may not always belong to the British Empire. Why so, asked Wilmot Horton? Why would they want to separate? “There might not,” Malthus responded, “be a particular wish on the part of the colonies to separate; but they may be conquered by the United States.” Both men agreed that the greater the British emigrant population in British North America, the more secure the colonies would be against such an outcome.⁷⁵

America was always the key instance, always the benchmark for the possibilities and pitfalls of colonization, even for the new generation of colonial reformers who still saw wealth in terms of relations between humans and land, even if much of the produce was returning to Lancashire cotton mills. Indeed, *England and America* (1833) was Wakefield’s next major publication.⁷⁶ One curious element of Wakefield’s work that distinguished it from Malthus’s was its forthright treatment of slavery. An economic advantage of slavery, Wakefield wrote, was that it kept people in one concentrated spot and efficiently divided labor to produce exchangeable commodities. “If there were no slaves in America, if slaves were allowed to appropriate and exhaust new land, every one of them doing almost everything for himself, who would produce those exchangeable commodities?” Gouger and Wakefield did not want to “dwell on the advantages, not to mention the terrible evils, which America has derived from slavery.” (And, in another register, they stated that slave labor is less profitable than free labor). But they did want to ask, “What

might Washington and Jefferson have been, if their father had not been slave owners?—a sort of wild men of the woods!” The slavery analysis in these documents is little remarked upon but is quite remarkable, not least because Britain’s Slavery Abolition Act was just around the corner, 1833. Slavery, for Gouger and Wakefield, was a historical object lesson in the benefits of concentration and accumulation. In colonial circumstances where colonists and laborers were dispersed over free or cheap land, “the want of power to accumulate soon removes the desire whereby civilized men are converted into semi-barbarians.” This was the unfortunate, degenerative fate of the French in Lower Canada and the Spanish in Buenos Aires.⁷⁷

Malthus considered the work of the National Colonization Society and the plans for systematic colonization closely, in correspondence with Wilmot Horton. He had a few difficulties with it. Malthus explained that his inclination toward the Wakefield-Gouger scheme was precisely because—in theory—it was not going to cost the British government anything and therefore might be attempted with little risk.⁷⁸ But he was not convinced that funds could be raised for emigration solely by the sale of land by the New South Wales government. He did not think that young couples would volunteer to emigrate if the price of land was high “such as would render an independent settlement comparatively difficult . . . particularly if they could obtain greater advantages by the higher wages of labour and the greater facility of settling in the Canadas or the United States.” And then Malthus offered not a principle of population but a “principle of colonization”: that multiple settlements were needed, not just one “concentration around a single town,” so that new markets for produce could emerge. “There is certainly danger of defeating the great object of colonization by prematurely forcing concentration.” While he agreed that “artificial concentration” of population has its advantages, the means for effecting this—through the price of land—should be kept as low as possible. “I always also expressed my opinion that the lowest price of land talked of was too high rather than too low.” In fact, the upper limit of the price of land should be that which “*would not prevent the greatest possible increase of people.*” In the manner of his principle of population, this principle might derive from observation of “long experience.” Running counter to its own deployment of US history, the National Colonization Society would do well here to observe the great experience of the United States that had not forced concentrations. In the end, Malthus saw the new systematic colonization plans as vainly attempting to combine irreconcilable elements, and he described them to Gouger thus: “namely the advantages of cultivating a new and fertile territory involving a very high

reward for labour, and a constant succession of settlers from the labouring classes, with the advantages derived from a concentrated population, cheaper labour, and the employment of capitals of a more mercantile character.”⁷⁹

They discussed it all in the context of a detailed emigration bill that Wilmot Horton had written and was—still—gathering information and opinions on. Nassau Senior was asked for extensive commentary that Wilmot Horton, typically, was to publish in his endless round of consultation. Malthus returned forensically detailed and itemized responses, both to Wilmot Horton’s plan and Senior’s view of it.⁸⁰ He took a draft away with him to Great Malvern, on a short tour in June 1830 “by way of change of air,” since both he and his wife were unwell.⁸¹ From the Malvern Hills he still pressed his concerns that the vacuum produced by emigration would simply be filled. How could sufficient numbers be removed to prevent or offset this? “It would be a contradiction to all theory and all past experience to deny the strong tendency of population to recover lost numbers.” They talked over all the elements again: Ireland, redundance, potatoes, labor, voids, wages, and the cost of colonization. In the end, he “quite approve[d]” of the Bill. But Malthus also brought Wilmot Horton back to the core agenda: relief for the poor. “I think you have not dwelt sufficiently on the duty of the higher classes to make every exertion that is likely to be effectual to improve the physical conditions and moral habits of the labouring classes. . . . We are bound to remedy as far as we can the evil we have inflicted.” And then, signaling final persuasion after years of discussion: “Unquestionably the best first step is a plan of emigration.”⁸² Again, on August 23 Malthus affirmed Wilmot Horton. “I am convinced that it is emigration alone which, in the present state of things, can present any fair prospect of an essential improvement in the condition of the labouring classes, consistently with humanity and good policy. And should it be determined by Parliament to introduce Poor Laws into Ireland, it appears to me, I own, that a large previous emigration would be absolutely necessary as a preliminary step.”⁸³ Such a statement shows how Malthus had rethought his own position on emigration over a thirty-year period.

The intricate discussion between aging men was poignant, however. As events turned out, the House of Commons had heard enough from the endlessly consulting Wilmot Horton, and for too long. The session closed for the summer of 1830 without even discussing the matter. Over the next few years it was not Wilmot Horton’s emigration bill but the energetic new systematic colonization that garnered attention.

Wilmot Horton’s reports on emigration nonetheless prompted responses from many different quarters, and often because they featured Malthus’s con-

tribution. The first and longest came from Thomas Sadler, Tory MP. Quick off the mark, he attacked Malthus's views on Irish emigration in an anonymous pamphlet, *Ireland: Its Evils and their Remedies, being a refutation of the errors of the Emigration Committee and others*. But that was not all. He prefaced his commentary on Ireland with a synopsis of "an original treatise about to be published in the Law of Population developing the real principle on which it is universally regulated." It was an attack on Malthus that was soon after boldly published in long version, announcing not merely a *principle*, but a *Law of Population* (1830). A "strange work," Malthus called it, privately, a restrained assessment since in public Sadler had called Malthus's principle an "utter fallacy," "pernicious dogmas," a "false theory," "an indelible disgrace to the age," and "equally injurious to man and derogatory to his Maker." Sadler's work prompted a long response from Wilmot Horton on which both Senior and Malthus commented. More importantly, it was reason for Malthus to publish his own *Summary View of the Principle of Population*, a reprint of the earlier entry on population in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Appearing in 1830, this was his final attempt to clarify his principle and to clear up long-accumulating misunderstandings. The new 1830 preface to this pamphlet suggested that misinterpretations had arisen from people pronouncing on the *Essay* without having read it but also that the quarto edition was less available than it should have been because of its length, size, and therefore its expense. Something shorter was warranted.⁸⁴

And there was the new world again, driving Malthus's central proposition. His whole endeavor was "to answer the question, generally, which had been applied, particularly, to New Holland by Captain Cook, namely, 'By what means is the population of this country kept down to the number which it can subsist?'" The clearest question to which his principle was an answer, came by Malthus's own admission not from his own pen, but from that of Cook.⁸⁵

By the time Malthus rewrote his *Summary View* he was an old hand at deflecting criticism. There was a lot of it. One of the predictable responses to his work was that it ignored vast parts of the world still uninhabited and uncultivated; that he underplayed how much of the Earth remained to be claimed and peopled. "This is unquestionably true," he conceded. Many parts of the Earth were "very thinly peopled." There might in theory be population growth for a time, enabled by a great increase in the cultivation of that part of the Earth. But, he asked himself as much as the reader, how could this cultivation be put fully into operation? How was civilization and improvement—economically considered—to be brought to thinly peopled

regions? One option was for local—indigenous—economies and societies to develop new methods and means of cultivation. “If it is to be accomplished by the improvement of the actual inhabitants of the different parts of the earth in knowledge, in government, in industry, in arts, and in morals, it is scarcely possible to say how it ought to be commenced with the best prospect of success, or to form a conjecture as to the time which it could be effected.” Malthus simply did not know how this indigenous improvement might happen. On the other hand, improvement might be effected by emigration from the already-improved parts of the world. This also had Malthus puzzling: new settlements had always been attended with great difficulties; people were always unwilling to leave their own country. And what happened to the indigenous people driven back? This would entail either war or extermination, or both, he wrote in his *Summary View*.⁸⁶

* * *

Over the 1820s and early 1830s, when Malthus was so engaged with the questions of emigration, a number of new antipodean agricultural and colonization companies were chartered. The Van Diemen’s Land Company, the South Australian Company, and, slightly later, the Wakefield-inspired New Zealand Land Company. These were decades of significant territorial expansion in the colonies, as previously coastal maritime entrepôts became bases for a commercial pastoral economy. The new agricultural companies explored, surveyed, and cleared great new regions of Aboriginal land that had previously been left more or less alone. As significant in terms of impact on Aboriginal people in New South Wales were the so-called squatters, who neither bought nor were granted land that lay beyond the formal limits of settlement but who nevertheless moved their stock and their laborers onto it. They simply took it. Many were soon to become very wealthy indeed, benefiting from the displacement of locals. In this process of land taking, both within and without British law, Aboriginal inhabitants were sometimes moved on, sometimes incorporated into the pastoral and agricultural industries, and sometimes killed. In short, these were crisis years.

When Malthus nominated war as one outcome of British effort to improve the unimproved land of the world, he may well have had Van Diemen’s Land in mind; it is not entirely clear. What was called at the time the Black War was waged between Aborigines and British settlers between 1824 and 1831, later labeled by Tasmanian historian N. J. B. Plomley a “Seven Years War.” Major new agricultural ventures saw first surveyors, then sheep and shepherds, and then settlers and convicts move onto land that Aboriginal groups

traditionally crossed seasonally. Aboriginal people resisted this rapid change, raiding settlements, stealing stock, wounding and killing settlers. Hostilities escalated dramatically, on both sides, from 1824. Huts were burned, convict laborers and settlers were speared, sheep were stolen, Aboriginal men, women, and children killed in reprisal attacks. "All is terror and dismay in this part of the Colony," wrote one colonist in 1831.⁸⁷

The sudden change in the mid-1820s from relatively peaceful to warring relations between Indigenous people and British settlers was partly at the hand of Robert Wilmot Horton. On behalf of Secretary of State Bathurst, Wilmot Horton directly negotiated the formation of the Van Diemen's Land Company, which was granted (and indeed still holds) much of the north-western portion of the island. It was Van Diemen's Land Company laborers who carried out some of the most notorious killings on some of the most contested ground and whose actions were later subject to official inquiry.⁸⁸

The company was formed "for the cultivation and improvement of waste lands in His Majesty's island of Van Diemen's Land." But did this "waste land" belong to the Crown in the first place? Clearly Aboriginal people did not think so. The claim that it was "His Majesty's Island," to be surveyed, distributed, improved, sold, and settled was in dispute. Unlike a small number of instances in the history of North American colonization, there had been no official treating in New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land. This was unusual, and even by its own measure British sovereignty over Aboriginal land and people was by no means a settled matter. This war raised the very question of British right of occupation, something that David Collins had simply presumed on his arrival in 1804 but that had become increasingly scrutinized by the Colonial Office. To the Aboriginal people in Van Diemen's Land, the British were invaders, outsiders in law and custom. But it was not only Aboriginal people who thought this, one settler observing, as the violence escalated, "We are at war with them; they look upon us as enemies—as invaders as their oppressors and persecutors—they resist our invasion." Wilmot Horton's own Colonial Department issued instructions to the governor about how Aborigines were to be treated when they attacked British property, stock, and people: "When such disturbances cannot be presented or allayed by less vigorous measures, to oppose force by force, and to repel such Aggressions in the same manner, as if they proceeded from subjects of any accredited State." Troops were mobilized, and, albeit reluctantly, the governor proclaimed that Aborigines who attacked the British were to be treated "as open Enemies." Action against the Aborigines was unequivocally military, as indicated in the 1831 House of Commons paper, *Military Operations lately carried on against the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land*. There was,

indeed, a war over the land that Wilmot Horton and Malthus agreed should be settled, cultivated, and improved with British capital and British public funds for the benefit of redundant Irish, Scottish, and English paupers.⁸⁹

None of this was immaterial to British political economy. Two of Malthus's circle—Robert Torrens and Robert Gouger—were as wholly embroiled in the question of land, colonization, and indigenous sovereignty as it was possible to be. Torrens in particular, who had founded the Political Economy Club with Malthus and others, was deeply engaged in debate with the Colonial Office over the relationship between land, Aboriginal people, and the proposed new settlement in South Australia. George Grey wrote to Torrens questioning the Colonisation Commission's plans, asking him to remember that "numerous tribes of people whose proprietary title to the soil we have not the slightest ground for disputing." And: "Before His Majesty can be advised to transfer to his subjects the property of the land of Australia he must have at least some reasonable assurance that he is not about to sanction any act of injustice towards the Aboriginal natives of that part of the globe." Nobody wanted in South Australia the kind of war with Aborigines that had been going on in Van Diemen's Land since the mid-1820s. Some of those who wanted war least were political economists in Malthus's club who doubled as colonial speculators.⁹⁰

In 1830, then, Malthus nominated both "war and extermination" as an effect of emigration and colonization, developing his longstanding anxiety about natives being removed, driven into a corner. That year the so-called Black Line in Van Diemen's Land was executed. One colonist called it "a war of extermination," using Malthus's own terms. The governor organized a military operation, enlisting civilian men, convict and free, as well as his troops, to sweep across the settled districts of the island as a human chain, aiming to drive the remaining Aboriginal tribes into the southeastern corner, across a narrow isthmus and onto a peninsula that would be reserved for them and where they would be theoretically free from settler violence. The expensive manoeuvre failed, however, and the governor turned to more diplomatic efforts, eventually persuading Aboriginal people to surrender and to relocate to a protected reserve. In 1834, the year Malthus died, 134 Aboriginal people were removed to Flinders Island in the Bass Strait, where government hoped they would be civilized and christianized. It was a humanitarian response to just the kind of anxiety about extermination that Malthus himself had expressed, one that was shortly to take institutional form as the Aborigines Protection Society. The moral implication of "driving natives into a corner where they might starve" was perhaps solved by protecting them in that corner and supplying food and

good shelter. A decade later, however, only 47 people survived. The survivors of the Black War did starve, less from hunger—they were amply provided with food—than from the dispossession of life-giving land. That same land gave life, and more, to the rapidly doubling population of settlers.⁹¹

The two related meanings of extermination were thus playing out. “Extermination” meant removal to another place, an older, spatial meaning closer to the Latin root. It is to the point—if ironically so—that the word was sometimes used in this period to describe the removal of Scottish Highlanders. In 1820, for example, the *Scotsman* described a “system of extermination”: “nearly 600 souls to be removed, without a place of residence provided for one of them—not knowing under the canopy of heaven where to go.” The second sense of extermination—utter destruction or elimination—was also current in the early nineteenth century. One use, for example, was the Jennerian Society for the Extermination of the Small-pox, established in 1803, a context in which Malthus also used the term. There was thus an ambiguous or perhaps double sense in which Malthus described what might happen to native people driven into a corner. One kind of extermination became another, and the removal of Van Diemen’s Land Aborigines was the most precise, and already famous, contemporary instance.⁹²

Over a thirty-year period—just over one generation after David Collins’s original settlement—the indigenous population had been reduced by an estimated 90 percent. During the warring 1820s, the British population grew from only 5,400 in 1820 to 24,000 in 1830. While the numbers of Aboriginal people are unknown in 1820, by the end of the Black War they were enumerated precisely: 350 in 1831. As a colonist later observed in a statement that had Franklin and Malthus’s work behind it, “A change so rapid in the relations of a people to the soil, will scarcely find a parallel in this world’s history.” This colonist was certainly not alone in noting the depopulation of one people and the rapid repopulation by another. Just two years after Malthus’s death, the young Charles Darwin visited Van Diemen’s Land, taking note in his diary: “The Aboriginal blacks are all removed & kept (in reality as prisoners) in a Promontory, the neck of which is guarded. I believe it was not possible to avoid this cruel step; although without doubt the misconduct of the Whites first led to the Necessity.” He speculated on the reproduction of human populations, Franklin style: “Thirty years is a short period, in which to have banished the last aboriginal from his native island,—and that island nearly as large as Ireland. I do not know a more striking instance of the comparative rate of increase of a civilized over a savage people.” Darwin shared Malthus’s misgivings: “I fear from what I heard at Hobart Town, that they are

very far from being contented: some even think the race will soon become extinct." This was not, ultimately, the case. Nonetheless, it was certainly the case that British population increase over the nineteenth century was very largely enabled by what was grown on new world land; "ghost acres" that were never ghostly to start with.⁹³

The removal of the Irish and Scottish poor with which Malthus was so engaged, their transformation into "emigrants" and "colonists" and "settlers," connected old world clearances with new world clearances of both land and people. These Scots and Irish even became landowners themselves, an outcome inconceivable in their old world context. The Irish and Scottish "clearances" that so exercised Malthus are thus profitably brought into the same frame as the simultaneous (indeed, in some ways the consequential) colonial clearances in the Australian colonies. The very emigration, agricultural, and pastoral endeavors that Wilmot Horton's Colonial Office and the colonial reformers proposed *were* the reason indigenous occupants were being removed, "exterminated," and with some vigor in the 1820s and 1830s. Malthus's *Essay*, so fundamentally concerned with land improvement across the globe, serves to highlight this truth of settler colonialism, at once connecting land and people (depopulating the Aboriginal estate, to enlarge the settler farm and agricultural company) and connecting old world clearance of people and land, with a different order of new world clearances, so as to turn seeming wastelands into something apparently more productive. This "age of emigration," as Malthus called it, was one in which the old world and the new clashed violently.⁹⁴

49. "Summary of Politics—Proceedings in Parliament," *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, March 7, 1807, 361.
50. Mayhew, *Malthus*.
51. For Malthus and Whig circles, see James, *Population Malthus*, 50–51, 81–86. He was on friendly and casual terms with Scottish lawyer Henry Brougham, co-founder of the *Edinburgh Review*, liberal abolitionist, and lord chancellor toward the end of the Malthus's life (1830–34).
52. Marshall, *Bengal*, 137–79; Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 100–32, 217–47.
53. Mr. Roscoe, February 23, 1807, House of Commons, *Hansard*, ser. 1, vol. 9.
54. East India Sugar; Clarkson, *Thoughts*, 47–48. Macaulay *East and West India Sugar*. On the connections between abolition, humanitarianism, and India, see Laidlaw, "Justice to India"; Naidis, "Abolitionists and Indian Slavery"; Major, "Slavery of East and West."
55. Malthus acceptance of Professorship of General History, July 10, 1805, J/1/19/468–69, India Office Records, BL; Embree, *Charles Grant and British Rule*; James, *Population Malthus*, 223–24.
56. George Frederick Symes's certificates from the Forces of the United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies (1813, 1818, 1825) were kept with other Malthus family documents, original in Kanto Gakuen University Malthus Collection, copies in BL RP 3269.
57. "A Preliminary View of the Establishment of the Honourable East India Company in Hertfordshire for the Education of Young Persons appointed to the Civil Service in India" (1806), J/2/1 ff. 75–87, India Office Records, BL; Examination Papers of the Principal and Professors of the East India College, 1808, Bodleian Library; Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (1786), vol. 2, 394.
58. Malthus, *Principles of Political Economy*; Malthus, *An Essay* (1826), vol. 1, 150.
59. Select Committee, House of Lords, 1832, quoted in Higman, *Slave Populations*, 99. Macaulay, Ministerial Plan for the Abolition of Slavery, House of Commons, July 24, 1833, *Hansard*, ser. 3, vol. 19; *Political Economy Club*, 22. For the later use of Malthus's arguments see Drescher, *Mighty Experiment*, 49.
60. *Courier*, December 31, 1834.
61. On the East India Company and abolition, see Drescher, *Abolition*, 205–41.

CHAPTER 7: COLONIZATION AND EMIGRATION

1. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 393.
2. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 464, 468.
3. *A Statement of the Principles*, 67.
4. "When British settlers made a property of land in Australia and New Zealand, Malthus and Darwin had parts to play in the theorization and representation of their efforts." Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 8.
5. TRM to William Whewell, February 28, 1831, quoted in Marchi and Sturges, "Malthus and Ricardo's Inductivist Critics," 389; Malthus, *A Summary View*, 29.
6. Malthus *An Essay* (1803), 387.
7. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 388–89.

8. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 389–90.
9. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 390.
10. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 391.
11. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 392.
12. Smith to Sir John Sinclair, October 14, 1782, quoted in Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, 20; Examination Papers of the Principal and Professors of the East India College, 1808, Bodleian Library.
13. Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, 35. For *Panopticon versus New South Wales*, see Gascoigne, *Enlightenment*, 123–31; Schofield, *Utility and Democracy*, 216, n. 60.
14. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 394–5.
15. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 392.
16. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 392–5. A very similar passage appears near the beginning of *Statement of the Principles*, 4–5. Richards, “Malthus and the Uses of British Emigration,” 46–47.
17. Malthus, *An Essay* (1803), 395.
18. Malthus, *An Essay* (1826), vol. 2, 61–2.
19. Wilmot Horton to TRM, September 3, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, ff. 80–81, WHP, DRO, original emphasis. In this letter, Wilmot Horton extracted and quoted the 1819 parliamentary debate with Cobbett. Note that WH/2843 are clerks copies of originals in WH/2842, WHP, DRO.
20. Wilmot Horton to TRM, [n.d.], 1828, D3155/WH/2843, ff. 2–3, WHP, DRO.
21. See Wilmot Horton’s dispatches in Watson, ed. *Historical Records of Australia*, ser. 1, vol. 7.
22. Wilmot Horton to TRM, [n.d.], 1828, D3155/WH/2843, f. 3, WHP, DRO. Wilmot Horton sought to gather and publish this correspondence after Malthus’s death, a means by which his own position—by then overtaken and overturned by Edward Gibbon Wakefield—might be vindicated. A preliminary note on the transcribed correspondence between Wilmot Horton and Malthus reads: “I publish these letters without note or comment.” But he also noted that Malthus’s “*fame* will be of a future day.” D3155/WH/2843, WHP, DRO.
23. Wilmot Horton to TRM, July 24, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, f. 52, WHP, DRO.
24. Wilmot Horton to TRM, [n.d.] 1828, D3155/WH/2843, f. 13, WHP, DRO.
25. For example, TRM to Nassau William Senior, May 24, 1829, working together through a set of Wilmot Horton’s questions, D3155/WH/2843, ff. 22–23, WHP, DRO; TRM to Wilmot Horton, February 22, 1830, D 3155/WH/2843, ff. 28–29, WHP, DRO. For comments of Chalmers, Thomas, Tooke, and Torrens, see D3155/WH/2291, WHP, DRO. See also Ghosh, “Colonization Controversy.” Malthus was one of twenty original members of the Political Economy Club, including Ricardo, James Mill, and Robert Torrens. Later members included Wilmot Horton, McCulloch, Nassau Senior. See Pullen “Introduction,” liv. Political Economy Club, 358.
26. Wilmot Horton, *Outline of a Plan of Emigration*; TRM to Wilmot Horton, February 21, 1823, D3155/WH/2841, WHP, DRO. See James, *Population Malthus*, 390.
27. Gourlay, *General Introduction*, cii, cccxxvii. Gourlay was also cited at length in *Statement of the Principles*, 25.

28. TRM to Wilmot Horton, February 21, 1823.
29. TRM to Wilmot Horton, April 8, 1827 and April 22, 1827, D3155/WH/2841, WHP, DRO; Minutes of Evidence and Petition of Glasgow Tradesmen, *Second Report, Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom*, February 20, 1827, 9–10; *Third Report*, 1827, app., 507.
30. Wilmot Horton, “Remarks on the Province of Upper Canada, by the Founder of the ‘Talbot Settlement’,” app. B, *Outline of a Plan of Emigration*, xi–xv; Outline of a Plan for the Conveyance and Settlement of Paupers at New South Wales, *First Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, April 27, 1826, 238.
31. Andrew Angus to his parents [January 12, 1822, June 2, 1824], in Minutes of Evidence, *Second Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, March 20, 1827, 128–29.
32. Wilmot Horton, “Remarks on the Province of Upper Canada, by the Founder of the ‘Talbot Settlement’,” app. B, *Outline of a Plan of Emigration*, xiv–xv.
33. Quoted in Bumsted, *Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk*, vol. 1, 53.
34. Editor, *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, December 20, 1822, 3.
35. “Outline of a Plan for the Conveyance and Settlement of Paupers at New South Wales,” *First Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, 1826, app., 237–38.
36. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 311; Malthus, *An Essay* (1826), vol. 1, 470; Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, 52–53. See also Mills, *Colonization of Australia*.
37. Wilmot Horton to TRM, July 24, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, f. 58, WHP, DRO.
38. Malthus, *An Essay* (1826), vol. 1, 470. For Irish population, see Connell, “Population of Ireland”; Mokyr, “Malthusian Models and Irish History.” 6.
39. Malthus was citing Daniel Augustus Beaufort, *Memoir of a Map of Ireland* (1792); Abstract of the Answers and Returns Made Pursuant to . . . *An Act to Provide for Taking Account of the Population of Ireland* (House of Commons, London, 1823), 378.
40. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 327; Minutes of Evidence, *Second Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, March 27, 1827, 166–67.
41. TRM to Wilmot Horton, June 9, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, f. 47, WHP, DRO.
42. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 319–21.
43. Nally, *Human Encumbrances*, 31–33.
44. [Parnell], *An Inquiry into the Causes of Popular Discontents in Ireland*, 6. The Malthus library copy of this pamphlet was bound as “Tracts of Ireland and the West Indies,” with Lowe, *An Inquiry*. [Malthus], “Newenham and others,” 351.
45. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 320.
46. TRM to Wilmot Horton, March 8, 1827, D3155/WH/2841, WHP, DRO. See also Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 325.
47. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 312.
48. TRM to Wilmot Horton, March 8, 1827, D3155/WH/2841, WHP, DRO.

49. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 312; *Report*, 41.
50. TRM to Wilmot Horton, March 8, 1827, D3155/WH/2841, WHP, DRO.
51. Minutes of Evidence, *Second Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, March 27, 1827, 167.
52. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 319, 315.
53. [Malthus] "Newenham and Others," 336–55; [Malthus], "Newenham on the State of Ireland," 151–70. The review was of recently published work on Ireland: Newenham, *A Statistical and Historical Inquiry into the Progress and Magnitude of the Population of Ireland* (1805); Dudley, *A Short Address* (1808); Croker, *A Sketch of the State of Ireland, Past and Present* (1808). Malthus's reviews are inappropriately diminished in Irish historiography, perhaps because of the political difficulty in reconciling Malthus with support of the Catholic cause. See for example, Ó Gráda, *Ireland before and after the Famine*, 1. Francis Horner to Richard Sharp, 29 March 1806, Francis Jeffrey to Francis Horner, 5 August 1804, in Bourne and Taylor, *Horner Papers*, 410, 341.
54. [Malthus], "Newenham and Others," 339; Pullen, "Introduction," xx.
55. [Malthus], "Newenham and Others," 342, 336, 351.
56. [Malthus], "Newenham and Others," 349–350, 353.
57. Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 106. Nally, *Human Encumbrances*, 88; [Malthus], "Newenham and Others," 353–54.
58. [Malthus], "Newenham and Others," 342. These were Newenham's figures.
59. Minutes of Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 326, 319.
60. James, *Population Malthus*, 154; [Malthus], "The Crisis" quoted in Empson, "Life, Writing, and Character", 479–83.
61. Petty, *Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 29. For Petty and the transmutation of the Irish, see McCormick, *William Petty*, 168–208, 193, 194, 207. For the economy of the family as an assimilationist project in Petty's manuscript, "About Exchanging of Women," (1674), see McCormick, *William Petty*, 201–202.
62. "He was of opinion that the general wealth of the empire would be increased by an accession of population in the Colonies, independently of the advantageous consequences resulting to this country from the abstraction of that population which is here in redundancy; and that the introduction of English population into those colonies would tend to furnish a very valuable market for the labourers of this country, even if they were not to continue to belong to the British Empire." *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, June 29, 1827, 9, 38–9.
63. Torrens to Wilmot Horton, May 22, 1827, D3155/WH/2991, and Thomas Chalmers "On Emigration," June 12, 1827, D3155/WH/2991, WHP, DRO; Wilmot Horton, House of Commons, 4 March 1828, *Hansard*, ser. 2, vol. 18.
64. *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, June 29, 1827, 39.
65. TRM to Wilmot Horton, February 22, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, f. 29; [Wakefield], *Sketch of a Proposal*; Gouger, ed. *Letter from Sydney*. For the *Letter from Sydney*, see Ballantyne, "Remaking the Empire."

66. For Wilmot Horton and Malthus's inspiration of Wakefield, see Ghosh, "Colonization Controversy," 390.
67. "On the State and Prospects of the Country". Malthus's indecision about emigration was noted, but also that ultimately "he expresses himself strongly as to the occasional expediency of emigration," (388). Gouger, ed. *Letter from Sydney*, v-x.
68. Gouger, ed., *Letter from Sydney*, 180-81, 201, 6, 40.
69. TRM to Wilmot Horton, August 17, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, f. 63, WHP, DRO; *Statement of the Principles*.
70. *Statement of the Principles*, 66.
71. *Statement of the Principles*, 66, 1, 4; Gouger, ed., *Letter from Sydney*, app., "Outline of a System of Colonization," i-xxiv.
72. *Statement of the Principles*, 26-29; For Robert Torrens and the Colonial Office, see Attwood, "Returning to the Past," 54-55. The Swan Hill Colony (1829) saw the dispersal of the colonists, with large grants of land. Huge grants were allocated: by 1832 one million acres was granted, much of its unsurveyed. But the colony was almost stagnant, the population as late as 1849 still below 4,500. See Hartwell, "Pastoral Ascendancy," 46-97.
73. Wilmot Horton to TRM, n.d. [1828], D3155/WH/2843, f. 4, WHP, DRO.
74. TRM to Wilmot Horton, n.d. [1828], D3155/WH/2843, f. 21, WHP, DRO.
75. Evidence, *Third Report, Select Committee on Emigration*, May 5, 1827, 318.
76. [Wakefield], *England and America*.
77. *Statement of the Principles*, 37.
78. TRM to Wilmot Horton, August 17, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, f. 63, WHP, DRO.
79. TRM to Wilmot Horton, August 25, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, ff. 74-79, WHP, DRO.
80. TRM to Wilmot Horton, June 9, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, ff. 41-48, WHP, DRO.
81. TRM to Wilmot Horton, May 31, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, f. 31, WHP, DRO.
82. TRM to Wilmot Horton, June 9, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, ff. 41-46, WHP, DRO.
83. TRM to Wilmot Horton, August 23, 1830, D3155/WH/2843, ff. 68-69, WHP, DRO.
84. Sadler, *Ireland*, vol. 1, ix-xv, vol. 2, 621; TRM to Macvey Napier, January 18, 1830, BL; Malthus, *A Summary View*, 28.
85. Malthus, *A Summary View*, 44.
86. Malthus, *A Summary View*, 29, 31.
87. Plomley, *Aboriginal-Settler Clash*, 6. "An Emigrant" to the Editor, *The Tasmanian*, April 8, 1931, 6.
88. On 10 February 1828 about thirty Aborigines were killed in reprisal, and an Aboriginal woman was murdered at Emu Bay on August 21, 1829. "The sad story of Company race relations saw at least two white men and possibly 36 Aborigines killed." Lennox, "Van Diemen's Land Company."
89. Bathurst to Edward Curr, April 15, 1825, *Minutes of the Intended Arrangements*, 7; "J. E.," *Launceston Advertiser*, September 26, 1831, quoted in Reynolds, *History of Tasmania*, 64-65; Earl Bathurst to Governor Darling, July 14, 1825, Watson, *Historical Records of Australia*, ser. 1, vol. 12, 21; *Military Operations Against the Aboriginal Inhabitants*, 5-7. Henry Reynolds persuasively argues that at the end of the Black War the Van Diemen's Land Aborigines came to the governor, and

- were permitted to do so, both armed and unshackled, that is, surrendering as prisoners of war, not as rebels or criminals. Reynolds, *History of Tasmania*, 63–64. For treaties, see Attwood, *Possession*. For sovereignty in the 1820s and 30s, see Ford, *Settler Sovereignty*.
90. Grey to Torrens, December 15, 1835, CO13/3, TNA. See Attwood, “Returning to the Past,” 64; Reynolds, *Law of the Land*, 105–6.
 91. “Public Meeting,” *Colonial Times* (Hobart), September 24, 1830, 3. For the diplomatic mission and Flinders Island (Wybalenna) Reserve, see Johnston and Rolls, *Reading Robinson*; Ryan, *Aboriginal Tasmanians*; Lawson, *Last Man*.
 92. Macbean, “Late Riots in Ross-Shire.” In that context, *extermination* was also linked to *extirpation*, “to pull up by the roots,” “to abolish and totally destroy,” “to eliminate.” Thus the method of Highland clearances was described in *The Times*: “[T]he proprietor has hit upon a novel expedient of carrying out ‘the principle’ of extermination . . . to *turn away two families every year, until the complement of cotters is extirpated.*” *The Times*, October 22, 1846, quoted in Richards, *Highland Clearances* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), 28. In Scotland, the term “clearance” became common late in the Highland process. The contemporary term, as Eric Richards shows, tended to be “removal.” Richards, *Highland Clearances*, 6. For Malthus, extermination and smallpox, see Malthus, *An Essay* (1826), vol. 2, 306–7: “Dr. Haygarth, in the Sketch of his benevolent plan for the extermination of the casual small-pox, draws a frightful picture of the mortality which has been occasioned by this distemper, attributes to it the slow progress of population, and makes some curious calculations on the favourable effects which would be produced in this respect by its extermination.”
 93. West, *History of Tasmania* (1852), quoted in Reynolds, *History of Tasmania*, 47. For demographic decline, see Reynolds, *History of Tasmania*, 57. Darwin, *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages*, vol. 3, 533–34. Browne, *Charles Darwin*, 386–68. For Malthus and Darwin, see also McCalman, *Darwin’s Armada*, 72–73. For Darwin’s further reference to Van Diemen’s Land, see Darwin, *Descent of Man*.
 94. Lyndall Ryan put the Black Line in the context of Scottish clearances in “Black Line in Tasmania.” See also Connor, “British Warfare Logistics and the ‘Black Line,’ Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania), 1830,” 43–158. For “age of emigration,” see TRM to William Whewell, February 28, 1831, Marchi and Sturges, “Malthus and Ricardo’s Inductivist Critics,” 389.

CHAPTER 8: THE ESSAY IN NEW WORLDS

1. Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 30–36.
2. Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book*; Howsam and Raven, “Introduction”; McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 191–92; Gibson, *Americans versus Malthus*; Smith, “Reception of Malthus’ Essay,” 551. The reception history of the *Essay* within Malthus’s lifetime has been overwhelmingly focused on Great Britain; see Huzel, *Popularization of Malthus*; Mayhew, *Malthus*. Exceptions to this Eurocentric pattern appear in notes below.
3. Finkelstein, “Globalization of the Book, 329, 331–34.