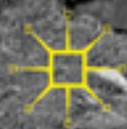


Studies in
SETTLER
COLONIALISM

Edited by
Finona Bateman and
Lionel Pilkington



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Studies in Settler Colonialism

Politics, Identity and Culture

Edited By

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First published 2011 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited,
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke,
Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN 978-0-230-23877-0

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully
managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing
processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the
country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Studies in settler colonialism: politics, identity and culture /
edited by Fiona Bateman, Lionel Pilkington.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-230-23877-0 (hardback)

1. Colonization—History. 2. Colonies—History. I. Bateman, Fiona.

II. Pilkington, Lionel, 1956– III. Title.

JV105.S795 2011

325'.3—dc22

2011004882

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

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Introduction

Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington

This book, *Studies in Settler Colonialism*, arises from a conviction that a policy of expansion based on the notion of ‘unoccupied’ or ‘virgin’ territories is also founded on a commitment to annihilate native or indigenous peoples. In focusing on the territory in settler colonial contexts, the confrontation and extreme violence necessary to create these empty spaces of the colonialists’ imagination is frequently obscured. The discourse of settler colonialism describes how, fortified by modernizing narratives and ideology, a population from the metropole moves to occupy a territory and fashion a new society in a space conceptualized as vacant and free: as available for the taking. Typically, such colonial settlements mask their annihilating drive by drawing on the societal structures and culture of the homeland and renaming territory after familiar places or figureheads. With placenames like Sydney, New York, Victoria, Melbourne, Johannesburg, and Kingston, the language is that of the homeland, and every aspect of settler colonial society modelled on the distant, yet controlling, metropole.

There was, and there still is, a brutal side to this nostalgia. As ‘natives’ were considered inferior, scarcely human – closer to animals than to civilized people – their presence was ignored, treated as a minor inconvenience, walled off from view or physical intrusion, or made the subject of genocidal projects. In Palestine, Hawai‘i, Canada, southern Africa, Ireland, and Australasia ‘indigenous peoples’ were seen, and in some cases still are seen, as dispensable. They are portrayed as roaming the land, flitting nomadically among impermanent settlements, ignorant or wasteful of a colony’s natural resources, or – as in Gaza – as potential terrorists and outsiders. Such populations are not considered to truly ‘inhabit’ the land, and certainly not in any worthwhile and perdurable sense.

2 Introduction

In territories where the native population's attachment to the land had a fundamentally unfamiliar form, and where there was a lack of written, legal documentation, land was perceived to be 'available' to the colonizing power. While settlers view the land's potential as the basis for exploitation in the name of agriculture, industry, and commerce and this is supported by law, the indigenes' relationship with the land tends to take the form of a connection, often incomprehensible to the colonizer, which is spiritual and cultural, as well as economic. Indigenous people, assumed to be backward, lacking in culture and civilization, and incapable of owning land were treated as animals, either herded to inferior land or systematically eliminated, so that a civilized population could be 'planted' or 'settled' on the territory. Enforced physical displacement often meant extreme poverty and degradation. Another aspect of the separation of the native population from the land was an intellectual alienation; a splitting of the spiritual and cultural elements of existence from the practical aspects of life, which resulted in a fragmentation of indigenous social structures.

In more densely populated territories, where the climate and land itself was unsuitable or not so valuable for agriculture, and the logistics of clearing the terrain too difficult, colonialism took a different form. Rather than settle a new population in the colony, the indigenous population was used as a workforce to exploit the natural resources. As the age of imperialism faded, the colonies of exploitation gradually gained independence and, while the natural resources had in many cases been exhausted, the indigenous populations regained control of their own territory. However, by the time independence was achieved for many settler colonies the indigenous populations (greatly reduced in numbers by various projects of control and elimination) had been marginalized, disempowered, and disinherited of their ancestral lands. Their culture and history had been undermined if not irreparably damaged.

As conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Middle East remind us – not to mention the many incidents of uprising and resistance that have taken place in Hawai'i, Canada, South Africa and Australia – it is misleading to refer to settler colonialism in the past tense. Although the settler colonial projects were instigated in previous centuries, the effects are permanent and the process is still current. The settlers, now often second or third generation, consider themselves to belong to the country in which they were born, and attempts by indigenous peoples to reclaim land or assert prior ownership of resources and territory leads to conflict and resentment. As a widespread historical and contemporary political phenomenon, settler colonialism continues to

exercise a profound effect on an extensive range of societies. In the words of Patrick Wolfe, 'indigenous people's colonizers never went home' and in countries like Australia and Canada where remnants of the indigenous population survive, these vestiges of the indigenous are too frequently treated as second-class citizens and suffer from economic, social, and cultural disadvantage. Even in the context of a growing awareness of the injustices of the past, there is still a struggle to meet the needs of those most damaged by the process – the indigenous, as well as another population now dealing with the consequences, the descendents of the original settlers, who have inherited the blame, and possibly the guilt, but have no alternative identity, no other homeland.

In addition to the classic sites of European settler colonialism (Ireland, the Americas, Africa, Australasia), settler colonialism structures relationships as historically and culturally diverse as those between Chinese and Tibetans, Indonesians and Papuans, 'Americans' and Hawai'ians, and Israelis and Palestinians. *Studies in Settler Colonialism* assesses the distinctive features of settler colonialism, and discusses its political, sociological, economic and cultural consequences across continents and historical contexts. In identifying the shared histories and parallel experiences of settler colonies, in various temporal, geographical, and cultural circumstances, this multi-disciplinary collection of essays raises questions and initiates discussion about the character and consistency of settler colonialism as a phenomenon, about resistance, and about the extent to which analysis of historical occurrences of settler colonialism informs our understanding of current situations of conflict and injustice.

The volume begins with Tadhg Foley's discussion of the key nineteenth-century debates around British colonization and colonialism – debates that have a powerful bearing on contemporary conceptualizations of settler colonialism. This was the period when the new 'science' of political economy was used to theorize and justify colonization in economic terms; indigenous peoples were seen variously as natural hazards, impediments to the march of empire, potential labour, or candidates to be rescued from barbarity or saved from paganism. 'A colony', wrote G.C. Lewis in his *Essay on the Government of Dependencies* (1841), 'properly denotes a body of persons belonging to one country and political community, who, having abandoned that country and community, form a new and separate society, independent or dependent, in some district which is wholly or nearly uninhabited, or from which they expel the ancient inhabitants'. Charter colonies, mercantile depots and dependencies of various kinds were excluded from this definition. Foley's argument is that for the nineteenth century the only proper colonies

were settler colonies and this profoundly affected the official understanding of colonization and the relationships between the imperial centre and the colonies.

Chapters 2 and 3 (by Daniel Carey and John Patrick Montano) consider specific instances of settler colonialism from the perspective of sixteenth-century Ireland and the rhetorical strategies that assert the rationale and logic of the process. Carey's argument is that Samuel Purchas – an English writer-cleric and editor of travel accounts in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century – created an immediate relationship between the landscape of Virginia and its new English occupants that effectively elided the native presence. For the poet Edmund Spenser, on the other hand, the occlusion of the 'native' population in Ireland was impossible; nevertheless Spenser's complex poetic engagement with the country suggests an intention not only to discredit the indigenous population but also to remythologize its landscape. Extending the volume's discussion of settler colonialism and representation to the early modern period, Carey's chapter reveals how indigeneity functions as an important site of interest and contestation.

Complimenting this perspective is John Patrick Montano's discussion of the extent to which Ireland was viewed as a blank space to be filled in by the civilizing influence of English colonialism. For English settlers in late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ireland the building of houses was regarded as establishing a legal right to settlement. In Montano's account, the indigenous Irish recognized that the efforts of the colonizer to assert control over the territory effectively undermined their traditional relationship to the land, and developed strategies of resistance accordingly.

Our book then moves on to consider the fundamentally transnational nature of settler colonialism across a variety of contexts. In Chapter 4 Dermot Dix discusses the implications of the loss of the prized American colonies of settlement on Lord Cornwallis's thinking on India and on Ireland. Cornwallis spent seven years in India as Governor-General, rode the storm of Ireland's 1798 Rebellion and steered the Act of Union through the doomed Irish Parliament in 1800. His letters contain revealing opinions: disillusioned with both of America's divided settler groups (Loyalists and Patriots alike), he also held a generally poor view of European groups in British India and, later, of Irish Protestants for what he saw as their misguided treatment of Ireland's Catholic population. Dix's argument is that those at the heart of the empire in the eighteenth century adapted and revised their strategies of settler colonialism to particular situations, but fundamentally envisioned the empire as

having a unity, with common policies designed to serve the various elements.

But if imperialism has a unity, so too, it can be argued, do the anti-colonial struggles that oppose it. Thus, Robert J.C. Young considers Irish Fenianism and the internationalization of violent anti-colonial struggle in nineteenth-century North America. Young focuses on the case of Irish settler populations in North America. Relative indifference by the British government towards Irish dissent and the conditions in Ireland in the 1840s changed significantly in 1858 when James Stephens founded the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Dublin, committed to win Irish independence through violent insurrection, and John Mahoney established a branch of the Fenians in New York the following year. This marked for the first time the internationalization of violent anti-colonial struggle, as a result of which Irish populations in North America and Australasia began to threaten the British government with a global colonial alliance. Young's essay examines the international activities of the Fenians, particularly the Fenian invasions of Canada in the 1860s in order to demonstrate the ways in which Irish anti-colonial struggle conducted on an international basis impacted on British political perspectives and offered a new model of anti-colonial strategy.

In Ben Silverstein's essay, the transfer of ideas concerning the colonial policy of indirect rule from the plantation and franchise colony of Nigeria to the settler colony of Australia provides another instance where the transnational nature of settler colonialism is evident. Silverstein suggests that the process of translating these ideas from one very different colonial situation to another helps to foreground key points of settler colonial difference. Examining the influence of the policy of indirect rule on activities of the Adelaide-based Aborigines' Protection League (APL) and on the Victorian Aboriginal Group (VAG), based in Melbourne, Silverstein argues that indirect rule, a policy famously developed by Sir Frederick Lugard (1858–1945), developed in Australia into a form of rights for indigenous people which then ended up as a policy of assimilation. The apogee of indirect rule in Australia, Silverstein concludes, was integrationist to its core; it did not displace, therefore, but rather rendered more pervasive a philosophy of assimilation.

Chapters 7 and 8, by Claire McLisky and Jane Carey respectively, consider the ideological and specifically gender implications of settler colonialism for indigenous peoples at different moments in Australian social history. It is notable that the status of both the indigenous and the settler populations are drawn into these debates, and that a new territory is perceived as a new beginning, an opportunity to develop a

population which is both healthy and Christian. Historically, settler colonies have sought to eliminate indigenous peoples, replacing them on the land with settlers; thus, missionary efforts to Christianize and integrate the indigenous populations often promoted a policy at odds with the colonial project by endorsing reproduction regulated within marriage, and assimilation of indigenous populations to European norms. Exploring the experience of two settler missionaries, McLisky argues that their mission – like so many ‘humanitarian’ projects – ultimately worked to entrench, rather than to undermine, the imperialist and eliminative logic of settler colonialism and its genocidal effects on the indigenous peoples of Australia. Jane Carey’s chapter focuses on the roles being claimed by white women in the settler colonial project in Australia in the early twentieth century. Concentrating on the activities of Australia’s largest women’s group, the National Council of Women, Carey explores how the desire for a strong white population animated many of these projects. Elite women appropriated racial discourses in order to support their reforming campaigns as well as to argue for a larger public role for themselves. Indigenous people were rigorously excluded. Campaigns for kindergartens, domestic science, sex education, public health services and even general hygiene, all emphasized the importance of white racial improvement for national progress. Jane Carey argues that these discussions have a significance that lies beyond the history of the women’s movement alone since they point to the ways in which discourses of whiteness formed a major field of racial discussion in Australia more broadly. This chapter demonstrates that racialized thinking is a key legacy of settler colonialism and that it has moved beyond the spheres of political rhetoric and scientific theorizing to influence the way in which white Australians construct themselves and their role in national progress.

In Chapter 9 Laura E. Lyons demonstrates the continuing and pervasive consequences of settler colonialism in contemporary Hawai‘i, and the continuing implications for different population groupings, specifically in relation to land ownership, land use, and homelessness. In this essay Lyons compares media coverage of the 2006 closing of the Del Monte pineapple operations in Hawai‘i with media coverage of the state’s attempts to deal with homeless peoples on Hawaiian beaches and parks. Such a comparison reveals how one of the tenets of settler colonialism – namely, that rights accrue to those deemed to make the land productive in the most crass capitalist terms – continues in remarkably bald forms. The different treatment afforded the pineapple workers and the homeless demonstrates the privileges still afforded

to agricultural labour and the devastating results settler colonialism continues to have on Native Hawaiians.

Also focusing on Hawai'i is Karen K. Kosasa's chapter examining the role of museums in telling, or avoiding the telling of, the story of colonialism. Kosasa points out that Hawai'i is rarely discussed under the heading of settler colonialism and that ignorance of this 'other' history is a way for settlers to maintain a false innocence by clinging to a white-washed history in which Hawaiians are misrepresented as embracing American culture and a Western lifestyle. But, Kosasa claims, while museums may be preeminent sites of hegemony, they also have the capacity to represent alternative views and challenge accepted ways of understanding historical truth.

Chapters 11 and 12 address the fraught subject of Israeli-Palestinian relations, with John Collins and Salah D. Hassan arguing that Palestine is another outstanding contemporary context in which the territorial, transnational and genocidal character of settler colonialism is made manifest. Collins considers the Palestinian catastrophe (or *nakba*) of 1947–48 as an example of settler colonial success. Specifically, his essay examines the Palestinian catastrophe alongside two political-military logics: that of deterrence and of decolonization. His argument is that the Palestinian experience was prophetic with the post-*nakba* saga of the Palestinians appearing as a microcosm of a much wider global process through which the logic of deterrence came to eclipse the practice of politics. The blurring of the line between militarism and humanitarianism has its roots in the emergence of a regime for which the Palestinian refugee 'problem' was an early test case. In this sense, Collins concludes, the postwar international security order of 'mutually assured destruction' combined with the economic power of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, ensured that while the racial underclass of the United States was having its dreams deferred, the peoples of the 'third world' were having their dreams deterred.

Salah D. Hassan's chapter focuses specifically on Israel's creation of a Palestinian refugee community and the emergence of Palestinian right of return politics. Exploring the ways that this right of return has been displaced by theories of diaspora, Hassan argues that the future dilemma facing Israel is either to embrace the growing Palestinian population and its bi-national character or undertake, once again, the massive ethnic-cleansing of Palestinians.

How the ideological legacies of settler colonialism play out in various kinds of narrative is a crucial theoretical question for Lorenzo Veracini in Chapter 13, where he argues that the narrative of settler colonialism

is unlike any other colonial narrative form. He suggests that a settler sensibility envisages a particular set of narrative refrains and a specific understanding of history where 'progress' is typically understood as a measure of indigenous displacement and ultimate erasure, and not merely displacement with permanent subordination. Veracini concludes that in settler colonial contexts withdrawing from colonial practices of indigenous dispossession can only be perceived as a 'backward' movement signalling a demise of original settler colonial claims and their legitimacies.

Two chapters, by David Attwell, who discusses the South African novelist J.M. Coetzee, and Saree Makdisi's revisionist study of Amos Oz's *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (2005), provide an opportunity to consider reading settler colonialism in literary texts. In Chapter 14 Attwell reflects on the ways in which the ideological legacies of settler colonialism play out in literary representations of Africa and argues that Coetzee subjects Africa and the African subject to a process of 'occultation'. 'Occultation', or partial obscuring, is deployed not as a strategy of avoidance but in order to bestow on the African subject an ethically disturbing aesthetic power. In a trenchant critique of what Saree Makdisi terms 'softcore' or 'postcolonial' Zionism, Chapter 15 offers a critical re-reading of the writings of the celebrated Israeli novelist Amos Oz. For Makdisi, Oz's literary representations of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict not only denies the settler colonial ideology of Zionism but also glosses over the extent to which the policy of displacement or forced expulsion had been deliberately prepared for over the previous decades. His essay is a passionate insistence on settler colonialism as the perspective through which the issue of the destruction of Palestine must be considered.

Our volume concludes with an essay by Elleke Boehmer on Nelson Mandela and the battle for indigeneity, and one by Patrick Wolfe on the role of racial discourse in seeking to eliminate the perspective of the native. In Chapter 16 Boehmer offers an important theorization and case study of what happens when two competing claims to indigeneity (in this case, African and Afrikaner) come into contact. Instead of the annihilating violence that Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* predicts as inevitable to the decolonizing process for settler colonial countries, she posits that Nelson Mandela's political career in South Africa points to a decolonizing model that avoids bloodbath and is politically productive.

In our final chapter Patrick Wolfe argues that, despite considerable regional variations and historical specificities, settler colonialism exhibits an important degree of cross-cultural consistency. This is strikingly manifest in the treatment of indigenous peoples including territorial removal

and/or confinement, the imposition of regimes of private property, discourses of miscegenation, child abduction, institutional surveillance and religious conversion. Wolfe contends that the cross-cultural consistency of settler colonialism stems from its primarily territorial character, and an ongoing desire to achieve the social death of the native. Surveying the treatment of native peoples in the United States and in Australia, Wolfe shows how settler colonialism's emphasis on expropriating native land is evident in the striking contrast between the stigma of miscegenation in relation to black populations and the blood quantum rule that means that any trace of white blood eliminates native status. Wolfe's concern in this chapter is with the ways in which the unequal social relations that are produced by settler colonialism are encoded and reproduced through different processes of racialization, and how this constitutes settler colonialism's distinctive feature.

The essays in this book explore and discuss the process, the effects, strategies of resistance, and possibilities of resolution and reconciliation in relation to settler colonialism. Reflecting upon settler colonialism in such diverse settings, including in places which might not traditionally be considered under that rubric, increases awareness and may generate opportunities to develop strategies to challenge, change, and resist. We suggest that knowledge of the distinctiveness of settler colonialism is vital to resisting imperialism in its old and new forms, hence the importance of knowing settler colonialism in all its manifestations and from all perspectives.

While imperialism concerns expansion and gaining control of territory, acknowledging the human cost of settler colonialism provides another focus for critical debate and a retelling of history, or indeed a reframing of contemporary events, from the perspective of the indigenous. If we recognize the confiscation of land from the Aboriginal population in Australia as cruel and unjustified, how can we refuse to comment on the destruction that has been inflicted on the Palestinian people in present day Gaza? If the destruction of buildings and walls by the Irish in the sixteenth century is accepted as valid resistance to the imposition of settler colonialism, can we simply dismiss attacks on military installations in territories which may be perceived as 'occupied' in the twentieth century as terrorism? Perhaps an awareness of the genocidal tendencies of settler colonialism towards the indigenous might temper our critical awareness of the phenomenon, and influence our ability to find means of resistance and, indeed, a space for the negotiation of indigeneity.