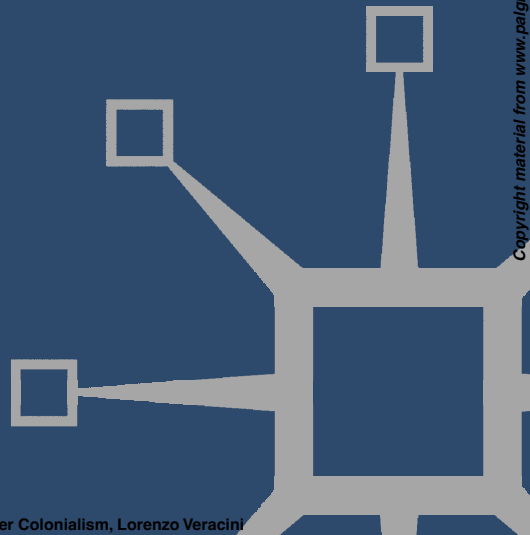palgrave
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Settler Colonialism

A Theoretical Overview

Lorenzo Veracini

Settler Colonialism

Also by Lorenzo Veracini

ISRAEL AND SETTLER SOCIETY

Settler Colonialism

A Theoretical Overview

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Introduction: The Settler Colonial Situation

The expectation that every corner of the globe would eventually become embedded in an expanding network of colonial ties enjoyed widespread currency during the long nineteenth century. A theoretical analysis of what is here defined as the settler colonial situation could perhaps start with Karl Marx and Friederich Engels' remark that the "need of a constantly expanding market for its product chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe", and that it "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere".[1] "Nestle", "settle", "establish connections": Marx and Engels were effectively articulating in 1848 what had become a transnational system of diversified colonial intervention. It was a typology of colonial action that depended on local circumstances and opportunities: there were different colonial empires, and there were different *modes* of empire. Settler colonialism, "the colonies proper", as Engels would put in 1892 underscoring analytical distinction between separate forms, was one such mode of colonial action.[2] Sometimes capable of displacing established colonial traditions, more rarely giving way to other colonial forms, settler colonialism operated autonomously in the context of developing colonial discourse and practice.

Another point of departure for this analysis could be Charles Darwin's voyage, which, as well as an exploration into the evolution of the species, was also a journey into what had become a geographically diversified system of intertwined colonial forms. On the issue of settler colonialism, he had specifically noted in 1832 that the

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Argentinean war of extermination against the Indians, an episode he had personally witnessed during his voyage, was too much.

> The Indians are now so terrified that they offer no resistance in a body, but each flies, neglecting even his wife and children; but when overtaken, like wild animals they fight, against any number to the last moment. [...] This is a dark picture, but how much more shocking is the undeniable fact that all the women who appear above twenty years old are massacred in cold blood! When I exclaimed that this appeared rather inhuman, he [general and temporarily out of office national leader Juan Manuel de Rosas] answered "Why, what can be done? They breed so".[3]

Personal dispositions are often surprising. Whereas one could argue that (especially the later) Marx was not a "Marxist" in suggesting that traditional, indigenous, and colonised societies could follow historical trajectories that did not necessarily reproduce the evolution of the metropolitan cores, at the same time, one could maintain that Darwin was not a (social) "Darwinist" when he regretted the deliberate targeting of the reproductive capabilities of the indigenous community and the horror intrinsic to what was otherwise understood as a globally recurring approach to indigenous policy. In both cases, a colonial imagination had failed to ultimately convince them.

This book is a theoretical reflection on settler colonialism as distinct from colonialism. It suggests that it is a global and genuinely transnational phenomenon, a phenomenon that national and imperial historiographies fail to address as such, and that colonial studies and postcolonial literatures have developed interpretative categories that are not specifically suited for an appraisal of *settler* colonial circumstances.[4] The dynamics of imperial and colonial expansion, a focus on the formation of national structures and on national independence (together with a scholarship identifying the transoceanic movement of people and biota that does not distinguish between settler and other types of migration), have often obscured the presence and operation of a specific pan-European understanding of a settler colonial sovereign capacity. *Settler Colonialism* addresses a scholarly gap.

"Colony" as a term can have two main different connotations. A colony is both a political body that is dominated by an exogenous

agency, and an exogenous entity that reproduces itself in a given environment (in both cases, even if they refer to very different situations, "colony" implies the localised ascendancy of an external element – this is what brings the two meanings together). Settler colonialism as a concept encompasses this fundamental ambiguity. As its compounded designation suggests, it is inherently characterised by both traits. Since both the permanent movement and reproduction of communities and the dominance of an exogenous agency over an indigenous one are necessarily involved, settler colonial phenomena are intimately related to both colonialism and migration. And yet, not all migrations are settler migrations and not all colonialisms are settler colonial: this book argues that settler colonialism should be seen as structurally distinct from both.

Both migrants and settlers move across space and often end up permanently residing in a new locale. Settlers, however, are unique migrants, and, as Mahmood Mamdani has perceptively summarised, settlers "are made by conquest, not just by immigration".[5] Settlers are *founders* of political orders and carry their sovereignty with them (on the contrary, migrants can be seen as *appellants* facing a political order that is already constituted). Migrants can be individually co-opted within settler colonial political regimes, and indeed they often are. They do not, however, enjoy inherent rights and are characterised by a defining lack of sovereign entitlement. It is important that these categories are differentiated analytically: a very different sovereign charge is involved in their respective displacements; not only do settlers and migrants move in inherently different ways, they also move towards very different places. As New Zealand historian James Belich has noted, an "emigrant joined someone else's society, a settler or colonist remade his own".[6] Migrants, by definition, move to *another* country and lead diasporic lives, settlers, on the contrary, move (indeed, as I suggest below, "return") to *their* country. A diaspora is not an ingathering.

Indeed, an analytical distinction could also be made between settler colonial and other resettlements. Imperial, national, and colonising (including internally colonising) states frequently promote "settlement" with the aim of permanently securing their hold on specific locales. On the contrary, the political traditions *Settler Colonialism* focuses on concentrate on autonomous collectives that claim both a special sovereign charge and a regenerative capacity.

Settlers, unlike other migrants, "remove" to establish a better polity, either by setting up an ideal social body or by constituting an exemplary model of social organisation. Of course, even if I propose to see them as analytically distinct, colonialism with settlers and settler colonialism intertwine, interact, and overlap.

Ultimately, whereas migration operates in accordance with a register of difference, settler migration operates in accordance with a register of sameness, and one result of this dissimilarity is that policy in a settler colonial setting is crucially dedicated to enable settlers while neutralising migrants (real life, however, defies these attempts, with settlers recurrently failing to establish the regenerated communities they are supposed to create, and migrants radically transforming the body politic despite sustained efforts to contain and manage their difference).[7] In this context, refugees – the most unwilling of migrants – can thus be seen as occupying the opposite end of a spectrum of possibilities ranging between a move that can be construed as entirely volitional – the settlers' – and a displacement that is premised on an absolute lack of choice (on a settler need to produce refugees as a way to assert their self-identity, see below, "Ethnic Transfer", p. 35).

At the same time, settler colonialism is not colonialism. This is a distinction that is often stated but rarely investigated. And yet, we should differentiate between these categories as well: while it acknowledges that colonial and settler colonial forms routinely coexist and reciprocally define each other, *Settler Colonialism* explores a number of structuring contrasts. In a seminal 1951 article – a piece that in many ways initiated colonial studies as a distinct field of scholarly endeavour – Georges Balandier had defined the colonial "situation" as primarily characterised by exogenous domination and a specific demographic balance:

> the domination imposed by a foreign minority, racially (or ethnically) and culturally different, acting in the name of a racial (or ethnic) and cultural superiority dogmatically affirmed, and imposing itself on an indigenous population constituting a numerical majority but inferior to the dominant group from a material point of view.[8]

Balandier's definition remains influential.[9] Jürgen Osterhammel's more recent and frequently quoted definition of colonialism, for

example, also insists on foreign rule over a colonised demographic majority. In his outline, colonialism is

> a relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and of their ordained mandate to rule.[10]

Historian of British imperialism A. G. Hopkins's definition of settler colonialism as distinct from colonialism is also premised on demography: "Where white settlers became numerically pre-dominant, colonial rule made peoples out of new states; where indigenous societies remained the basis of government, the state was fashioned from existing peoples", he concludes.[11] Similarly, D. K. Fieldhouse's seminal classification had also privileged demography. He had placed "mixed", "plantation", and "pure settlements" colonies on an interpretative continuum: in the "mixed" colonies, settlers had encountered a resilient and sizeable indigenous population and asserted their ascendancy while relying on an indigenous workforce; in the "plantation" colonies, settlers relied on imported and unfree workers; and in the "pure settlement" colonies, the white settlers had eradicated and/or marginalised the indigenous population.[12]

Settler colonial phenomena, however, radically defy these classificatory approaches. As it is premised on the domination of a majority that has become indigenous (settlers are made by conquest *and* by immigration), external domination exercised by a metropolitan core and a skewed demographic balance are less relevant definitory traits. According to these characterisations, colonisers cease being colonisers if and when they become the majority of the population. Conversely, and even more perplexingly, indigenous people only need to become a minority in order to cease being colonised.

At the same time, while Osterhammel's interpretative framework emphasises the antagonisms pitting colonising metropole and colonised periphery, settler colonial phenomena, as I argue in

Chapter 1, complicate this dyad by establishing a fundamentally triangular system of relationships, a system comprising metropolitan, settler, and indigenous agencies. But there are other structuring distinctions. For example, whereas settler colonialism constitutes a circumstance where the colonising effort is exercised from *within* the bounds of a settler colonising political entity, colonialism is driven by an expanding metropole that remains permanently distinct from it. And again: as settlers, by definition, stay, in specific contradistinction, colonial sojourners – administrators, missionaries, military personnel, entrepreneurs, and adventurers – return.[13]

And yet, while the "colonial situation" is not the settler colonial one, and as *Settler Colonialism* programmatically explores a systemic divide between the two, the political traditions outlined in this book are contained *within* the space defined by the extension of Europe's colonial domain. Even if they defy it by espousing a type of sovereignty that is autonomous of the colonising metropole, this book focuses mainly on *European* settlers.[14] I do not want to suggest, though, that non-Europeans have not been, or cannot be, settlers. If settler colonialism is defined as a "situation", it is not necessarily restricted to a specific group, location or period (or, as I emphasise throughout the book, to the past).

Even though they placed colonialism and settler colonialism within the same analytical frame, reflections on colonial orders and their historiographies have traditionally acknowledged the distinction between colonies of settlement and colonies of exploitation and between "internal" and "external" colonialisms.[15] Classificatory attempts have repeatedly emphasised this separation. For example, Ronald Horvath's analytical definition of colonialism distinguished between "colonialism" and "imperialism" on the basis of a settler presence, Moses I. Finley's argued against the use of "colony" and associated terms when referring to the act of settling new lands; George M. Fredrickson's distinguished between "occupation colonies", "plantation colonies", "mixed colonies", and "settler colonies"; and Jürgen Osterhammel's identified a unique "New England type" of colonial endeavour.[16] Despite this acknowledgement, however – indeed, one result of this acknowledgement – settler colonial phenomena have been generally seen as a subset, albeit a distinct one, of colonial ones.[17] Alternatively, an approach dedicated to highlighting the transcolonial circulation of ideas and practices

has placed the colonies of exploitation and settlement – as well as the metropole itself – in the same analytical frame.[18] The notion that colonial and settler colonial forms actually operate in dialectical tension and in specific contradistinction has not yet been fully articulated.

In the 1960s, Louis Hartz's *The Founding of New Societies* proposed a theory of "fragment extrication" (that is, the founding of a new society out of a fragment of the old one) that was entirely unconcerned with colonial and imperial phenomena. Hartz insisted on the separate development of the "fragments", a development that detached them from, rather than subordinated them to, the colonising core: when it came to the founding of new societies, settler colonialism, like the indigenous peoples it had been assaulting, disappeared entirely.[19] Later, in a 1972 article for the *New Left Review*, Arghiri Emmanuel convincingly criticised available theories of imperialism by identifying settler colonialism as an irreducible "third force" that could not be subsumed into neatly construed oppositions. He defined settlers as an "uncomfortable 'third element' in the noble formulas of the 'people's struggle against financial imperialism'", and called for the elaboration of dedicated categories of analysis.[20] Conflicts involving settlers demanded that traditional approaches to understanding colonial and imperial phenomena be revised and integrated. Even in a call to account for an intractable specificity, however, the settlers and their particular agency were detected only as they operated *within* a colonial system of relationships: when it came to the actions of settlers, it was the settler societies that disappeared entirely. The settlers were entering the analytical frame but not settler colonialism; the two terms could not yet be compounded.

Nonetheless (also as a result of the renewed global visibility of indigenous struggles), calls for the study of settler colonialism were repeatedly issued during the following decades. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Donald Denoon called for a systematic exploration of the specificities characterising settler economic development as structurally opposed to the dynamics of colonial de-development. There is "something distinctive about settler societies, marking them off from metropolitan societies on the one hand, and the rest of the 'third world' on the other", he concluded.[21] Denoon was placing Anglophone and non-Anglophone and developed and developing countries in the same analytical frame: as his analysis encompassed

colonial and settler colonial settings, this was a crucial passage in the development of a truly global focus. Without concentrating specifically on the development of a settler economy, but still insisting on an intractable systemic specificity, David Prochaska similarly concluded in 1990 that "settler colonialism is a discrete form of colonialism in its own right", and that it should be recognised "as an important and legitimate subtype of imperialism and colonialism".[22] Presenting settler colonialism as a discrete category (even if a subtype), Denoon and Prochaska emphasised again the need to develop dedicated interpretative categories.

In 1990 Alan Lawson proposed the notion of the "Second World", a category equally distinct from the colonising European metropoles and the colonised and formerly colonised Third World (indeed, during these years, a particular branch of postcolonial studies focused on the specific circumstances of settler colonial subjectivities).[23] In line with this interpretative trajectory, Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval Davis have also emphasised in their 1995 comparative overview that settler societies complicate the dichotomy typical of colonial and postcolonial studies between Europe and the rest of the world.[24]

However, these insights have more recently been the subject of sustained analysis. Patrick Wolfe's 1998 definition of settler colonialism distinguished structurally between colonial and settler colonial formations. Wolfe drew a crucial interpretative distinction: settler colonialism *is not* a master–servant relationship "marked by ethnic difference" (as Osterhammel, for example, has argued restating a crucial discursive trait of a long interpretative tradition); settler colonialism *is not* a relationship primarily characterised by the *indispensability* of colonised people.[25] On the contrary, Wolfe emphasised the *dispensability* of the indigenous person in a settler colonial context.

> The primary object of settler-colonization is the land itself rather than the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labour with it. Though, in practice, Indigenous labour was indispensable to Europeans, settler-colonization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement. The logic of this project, a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population, informs a range of

historical practices that might otherwise appear distinct – invasion is a structure not an event.[26]

Wolfe's *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* could thus be seen as a crucial moment in the "extrication" of settler colonial studies from colonial (and postcolonial) scholarly endeavours: no longer a subset category within colonialism, settler colonialism was now understood as an antitype category. As such, settler colonial phenomena required the development of a dedicated interpretative field, a move that would account for a structuring dissimilarity.

Similarly, in 2000, Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson conceptualised a specifically *settler* form of postcolonial theory. "There are always two kinds of authority and always two kinds of authenticity that the settler subject is (con)signed to desire and disavow", they noted (i.e., the authentic imperial culture from which he is separated and an indigenous authenticity that he desires as a marker of his legitimacy). "The crucial theoretical move to be made is", they argued,

> to see the 'settler' as uneasily occupying a place caught between two First Worlds, two origins of authority and authenticity. One of these is the originating world of Europe, the Imperium – the source of its principal cultural authority. Its 'other' First World is that of the First Nations whose authority they not only replaced and effaced but also desired.[27]

Following a similar trend, during the subsequent decade, a growing number of scholars have approached settler colonialism as a distinct category of analytical inquiry. "Settler" and "colonialism" were now routinely compounded. One tendency was to comparatively appraise legal history, international law, land tenure, judicial institutions, and environmental histories.[28] Edited collections of essays and monographs exploring comparatively specific issues characterising the history of the settler colonial polities (with particular attention dedicated to indigenous–settler interactions) have also appeared.[29] International academic conferences dedicated to settler colonialism in 2007 and 2008 and a special issue of an academic journal published in 2008 confirm that "settler colonial studies" may be consolidating into a distinct field of enquiry.[30]

Besides comparative approaches, in recent years, scholarly activity has continued to focus on the need to distinguish between colonial and settler colonial phenomena. One line of inquiry has placed an emphasis on settler colonialism's inherently transnational character.[31] As settlers and ideas about settlement bypassed the imperial centres and travelled and communicated directly, settler colonialism requires, as suggested by Alan Lester, a "networked" frame of analysis: an approach that inevitably displaces the metropole–periphery hierarchical paradigm that had previously underpinned the evolution of colonial studies.[32] Marilyn Lake drew attention in 2003 to the imaginative coherence of settler colonial formations and emphasised the inadequacy of definitory approaches based on demography. The "defensive project of the 'white man's country' ", she argued,

> was shared by places as demographically diverse as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Kenya, South Africa, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Australia. Clearly their strategies of government were different – ranging from indirect rule to democratic self-government – but a spatial politics of exclusion and segregation was common to them all and the 'white man' always ruled the 'natives'. In this framework, immigration restriction was merely 'segregation on a large scale' as Stoddard observed in *The Rising Tide of Colour*. 'Nothing is more striking', he added, 'than the instinctive solidarity which binds together Australian and Afrikanders, Californians and Canadians into a "sacred union" '.[33]

Lake also focused on the conflict between settler national projects and their insistence on racial exclusion and imperial demands regarding the freedom of movement of British subjects within the Empire, a conflict crucially pitting colonial and settler colonial sensitivities against each other (a topic that she would later develop further with Henry Reynolds in *Drawing the Global Colour Line*).[34]

Two years later, Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen's theoretical definition of settler colonialism emphasised institutionalised settler privilege (especially as it relates to land allocation practices) and a binary settler–native distinction in legal and social structures (especially as it relates to a settler capacity to dominate government).[35] In the introduction to their edited collection they distinguished

between twentieth-century "state-oriented expansionism", which was undertaken by "imperial latecomers", and nineteenth-century "settler-oriented semiautonomy", which was typical of colonies where settlement had happened earlier. Deploying a genuinely global perspective, Elkins and Pedersen produced an analysis that was ultimately inclusive of all the settings where settler projects had been operative at one stage or another. Settler colonial forms, they argued, had a global history, a history that could not be limited to the white settler societies or to the settler minorities that had inhabited colonial environments.[36] A further passage in this globalising trend was a new way of implicating the metropolitan core in the history of settler colonialism. In *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (2008), Robert Young suggested that the very notion of an English ethnicity is actually premised on settler colonial endeavours in an expanding British world.[37]

Finally, Belich's 2009 *Replenishing the Earth* outlined a "settler revolution" that had comprehensively transformed colonial practice. Enabling technological changes and a crucial shift in attitudes to migration had created the conditions for "explosive settlement". Without a crucial shift that allowed for the possibility of thinking about life in the settler locale as actually preferable to (and more important than) life in the metropole, this would have been impossible.[38] An awareness of the settler "transition" could in turn sustain an understanding of the relationships between settler peripheries and metropolitan cores that emphasised the immediate sovereign independence of the multiplying settler entities (Belich calls this phenomenon "cloning"). This was a transformation that had crucially *upturned* – not merely complicated in the context of a networked pattern of relationships – the hierarchical relationship between centre and periphery that is intrinsic to colonialism. Settler colonialism had turned colonialism upside down.

Settler Colonialism engages with this literature and aims to integrate it (indeed, as well as an attempt to define settler colonial phenomena and a call to establish settler colonial studies as an independent scholarly field, this book is intended as an entry point to a number of literatures, and in the endnotes I engage extensively with the work of others). Its aim is not so much to confirm a conceptual distinction, but, rather, to emphasise dialectical opposition: colonial and settler colonial forms should not only be seen as separate but also construed

as antithetical. The aim is not to construct a coherent narrative, even less so to focus on specific locations. *Settler Colonialism* focuses on settler colonial imaginaries and *forms*; extraordinarily different circumstances are here juxtaposed on the basis of morphological contiguity. In an attempt to analytically disentangle what should be seen as discrete fields, and relying on very diverse sources and literatures, each of the chapters in this book thus deals with a specific aspect of the divide separating colonial and settler colonial phenomena.

Chapter 1 proposes a framework for the interpretation of the structural differences between the population economies of colonial and settler colonial formations. Chapter 2 outlines the specific nature of a settler colonial understanding of sovereignty, a political tradition that is crucially and immediately autonomous of colonial and imperial ones. Chapter 3 approaches the settler colonial mindset, a set of psychic states that are structurally distinct from those operating under colonial circumstances. Finally, Chapter 4 focuses on the different narrative forms underpinning colonial and settler colonial phenomena.

Identifying two separate forms, of course, does not mean that they should not be seen as regularly coexisting on the ground: reality is inevitably complex, and, as I repeatedly note throughout the book, colonial and settler colonial forms constantly interpenetrate each other and overlap in a variety of ways. On the contrary, as the foremost aim of the book is to develop an interpretative framework and language as a starting point for further, more thickly contextualised, research, *Settler Colonialism* is inevitably more programmatic and suggestive than conclusive. With these two crucial disclaimers in mind, the general argument that is developed throughout the book is as follows: on the one hand, the settler colonial situation is characterised by a settler capacity to control the population economy as a marker of a substantive type of sovereignty (Chapters 1 and 2); on the other hand, this situation is associated with a particular state of mind and a specific narrative form (Chapters 3 and 4). Under these circumstances, the possibility of ultimately discontinuing/decolonising settler colonial forms remains problematic.

Of course, even if it has not been the subject of sustained theorisation, the analysis of phenomena that characterise the settler colonial situation in one way or another has been approached from

very different perspectives. Traditionally, there was an emphasis on geographical determination; climatic determinism had a significant and long-lasting impact. It was generally assumed that Europeans, and especially Anglo-Saxons, could only truly flourish in temperate zones. Other literatures have emphasised the gradual development of separate identities, focused on pioneering "frontier" activities and their effects, on racial exclusion, and concentrated on white conquering men and their body politics (in specific contradistinction against other colonisers and their habit of reproducing with colonised Others). Language has also been a traditionally emphasised feature, together with the gradual establishment of specifically European institutional and constitutional patterns and associated political institutions.[39] Alternatively, settler colonialism has been approached on the basis of its ultimate success: the eventual foundation of stable settler national polities.[40]

Settler colonialism has also been approached via a focus on a specific positioning in world trade patterns (settler economies operate in "areas of recent settlement" and concentrate on a limited number of "staple" commodities), the comparative analysis of the development of "settler capitalism", the transformation of local biota and landscapes, and a specific demography, where indigenous peoples are swamped by invading Europeans, and other migrations.[41] Specific patterns of land tenure, appropriation and distribution, a predominance of individual initiative over state-centred activities, and, conversely, state promotion and organisation of the settler enterprise have also been emphasised. Yet, other approaches have placed an emphasis on the coloniser's permanence (as opposed to expatriate colonisers and their ultimate departure), on particular spatial politics of exclusion, on specific reproductive regimes (the possibility of reproducing familial patterns is one fundamental defining feature of settler colonial regimes), and on a structural "logic of elimination" (of course, as mentioned, there was always the option of placing an accent on colonialism and conflating settler colonial phenomena within the context of Europe's expansion).[42]

Settler Colonialism argues that the study of settler colonialism should be framed *beside* the study of migrations, colonialisms, comparative economics, environmental transformation, "transplanted" European institutional patterns, "frontier" circumstances, and national formation. Obviously, scholarly debate surrounding

these themes has been sustained and intense for generations – these literatures are massive. And yet, *settler colonialism as a specific formation* has not yet been the subject of dedicated systematic analysis. How can this neglect be explained?

Settler Colonialism suggests that settler colonial phenomena possess a mimetic character, and that a recurrent need to disavow produces a circumstance where the actual operation of settler colonial practices is concealed behind other occurrences (see Chapter 3). The settler hides behind the metropolitan coloniser (the settler is not sovereign, it is argued; "he is not responsible for colonialism" and its excesses), behind the activity of settlers elsewhere, behind the persecuted, the migrant, even the refugee (the settler has suffered elsewhere and "is seeking refuge in a new land"). The settler hides behind his labour and hardship (the settler does not dispossess anyone; he "wrestles with the land to sustain his family").[43] Most importantly, the peaceful settler hides behind the ethnic cleanser (colonisation is an inherently non-violent activity; the settler enters a "new, empty land to start a new life"; indigenous people naturally and inevitably "vanish"; it is not settlers that displace them – in Australia, for example, it is the "ruthless convicts" that were traditionally blamed for settler colonialism's dirty work).[44] Settler colonialism obscures the conditions of its own production.

A traditional distinction between "colonialism", as exercised over colonised peoples, and "colonisation", as exercised over a colonised land, for example, is a long-lasting and recurring feature of settler colonial representations, and a trait that contributes significantly to remove settler colonialism from view. While this differentiation is premised on the systematic disavowal of any indigenous presence, recurrently representing "colonialism" as something done by someone else and "colonisation" as an act that is exercised exclusively over the land sustains fantasies of "pristine wilderness" and innocent "pioneering endeavour". Moreover, the very shape of the various national historiographies contributes to making settler colonialism difficult to detect. If, in metropolitan historiographies, the "settlers" are undistinguishable from the "emigrants", and these terms are used interchangeably, in the various national settler historiographies, the settlers are the inhabitants of a polity *to come*: proto-Americans, proto-Australians, and so on. In both instances, the settler can hide behind the emigrant and the future citizen, and the transfer of a

specific type of political sovereignty is blocked out by a failure to adopt a transnational perspective.

Awareness of a resilient mimetic quality, on the other hand, can help explaining why settler colonialism remains currently most invisible where a settler colonial order is most unreconstructed (e.g., Israel and the United States).[45] In these instances, early settler independence ensured that the establishment of a settler colonial order would not need to contend with competing and distorting forms of imperial and colonial interference. And yet, it is in these two polities where (relative to public debate in other settler societies) the very invisibility of settler colonialism is most entrenched. The more it goes without saying, the better it covers its tracks.[46]

It is important that we focus on the settlers, on what they do, and how they think about what they do. True, they have been the traditional subject of historical inquiry, and only recently the experience of indigenous people in settler contexts has been the subject of extensive scholarly activity. And yet, there are also risks intrinsic in focusing primarily on indigenous peoples and their experience. In a seminal essay, and in another context, but underlying a similar dynamic, Ava Baron noted that if we only investigate women, "man" "remains the universal subject against which women are defined in their particularity".[47] We should heed this advice, and similarly focus on settlers as well in order to avoid the possibility that, despite attempts to decolonise our gaze, we continue understanding the settler as normative.[48]

A focus on the global history of settler colonial forms can sustain genuinely transnational approaches (and provide an antidote against parochialising national and state-centred histories).[49] A number of transnational paradigms have been proposed: Atlantic, North Atlantic, mid-Atlantic, continental, hemispheric, oceanic, colonial, comparative, neo-Imperial, and so on.[50] As settler colonialism is constitutively transnational, being essentially about the establishment and consolidation of an exogenous political community following a foundative displacement, establishing settler colonial studies as a distinct scholarly field would provide an inclusive direction for new research.

Notes

Introduction: The Settler Colonial Situation

1. Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 39.
2. Quoted in Moses I. Finley, "Colonies", p. 186.
3. Charles Darwin, *Voyage of the Beagle*, pp. 110–111.
4. The reverse is also true: the interpretative categories that are developed to make sense of settler colonial settings are not always applicable to colonial and postcolonial environments. This argument is put forward, for example, by Paulomi Chakraborty in "Framing 'Always Indigenize' beyond the Settler-Colony".
5. Mahmood Mamdani, "When Does a Settler Become a Native?".
6. James Belich, "The Rise of the Angloworld", p. 53.
7. The scholarly literature dedicated to ethnic difference and associated conflicts has rarely drawn the analytic distinction between settlers and other migrants and often uses these terms interchangeably. For an example of this failure, see Stanley L. Engerman and Jacob Metzer (eds), *Land Rights, Ethno-Nationality and Sovereignty in History*. Framing theoretically their collection of essays, these authors conclude that people move in the expectation of material gain, which seems incontestable but is somewhat inoperative: mass displacements have rarely been spurred by the individual and collective expectation of material loss.
8. Georges Balandier, "The Colonial Situation", p. 54.
9. An international conference marking the 50th anniversary of this article's initial publication and a special issue of an academic journal confirm this longevity. See Frederick Cooper, "Decolonizing Situations: The Rise, Fall, and Rise of Colonial Studies". Fifty years later, settler colonialism remained out of sight.
10. Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism*, pp. 16–17.
11. A. G. Hopkins, "Back to the Future", p. 215.
12. D. K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires*, pp. 11–12.
13. A constitutive distinction between these two groups is a long-lasting feature of reflections on colonialism. Puritan administrator of Massachusetts William Bradford, for example, already lamented in the 1630s that there were "many in this land, who without either patent or license, order or government, live, trade, and truck, not with any intent to plant, but rather to forage the country, and get what they can, whether by right or wrong, and then be gone". Quoted in Adam J. Hirsch, "The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England", p. 1195.
14. Thomas Paine noted that "the parent country of America" was "Europe, and not England": that colonisation was an all European feat made sense – indeed, it made *Common Sense*. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 84.

15. Separating "internal" and "external" colonialisms, however, erases the distinction between metropoles and settler societies. By treating the "Old" and "New" Worlds as essentially alike, this move thus effaces settler colonialism as it ostensibly recognises its difference from colonialism.

16. See Ronald J. Horvath, "A Definition of Colonialism"; Moses I. Finley, "Colonies"; George M. Fredrickson, "Colonialism and Racism", pp. 216–235, especially p. 221; and Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism*, especially p. 7.

17. For an organised reading of the literature on settler colonialism, see, for example, Udo Krautwurst, "What is Settler Colonialism?", especially pp. 59–60. Krautwurst downplays the distinction between colonial and settler colonial phenomena on the basis of the intuition that every colonist is "a *potential* permanent resident or settler" and that settler societies "are simultaneously colonial societies and vice versa" (pp. 58, 63). Sure, colonial and settler colonial forms inevitably interpenetrate each other, but why should this imply that they cannot be considered as distinct?

18. For examples of this interpretative tradition, see Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*; and Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony" (Stoler and Cooper explicitly argue, p. 4, that metropole and colony should be appraised within a "single analytical field"). Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease's *Cultures of United States Imperialism* also analysed internal and external US colonialisms within the same frame and saw them as co-determining each other and dialectically related.

19. Louis Hartz, "A Theory of the Development of the New Societies". Hartz's conclusions were comprehensively criticised; and yet, his critics generally shared with Hartz the perception of a simplified Europe (they crucially disagreed, however, on the causes of this phenomenon). Of course, if it is about the reproduction of fragmented or otherwise derivative European forms, settler colonialism as a distinctive "situation" disappears. For criticism of Hartz's thesis, see, for example, Cole Harris, "The Simplification of Europe Overseas".

20. Arghiri Emmanuel, "White–Settler Colonialism and the Myth of Investment Imperialism", p. 40.

21. Donald Denoon, "Understanding Settler Societies", p. 511. See also Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism*.

22. See David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, pp. 9, 7.

23. Alan Lawson, "A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World". See also, for example, Stephen Slemon, "Unsettling the Empire"; Alan Lawson, "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject"; Penelope Ingram, "Can the Settler Speak?"; Penelope Ingram, "Racializing Babylon".

24. Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval–Davis (eds), *Unsettling Settler Societies*, p. 1. On the contrary, some postcolonial scholars downplay the distance between colonial and settler colonial forms. Defining the notion

of "postcolonial literature", Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin have noted that "the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all post-colonial literatures" and that the "literature or the USA should also be placed in this category. Perhaps because of its current position of power, and the neo-colonizing role it has played, its post-colonial nature has not been generally recognized. But its relationship with the metropolitan centre as it evolved over the last two centuries has been paradigmatic for Post-colonial literatures everywhere. What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial". Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, p. 2.

25. Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism*, p. 108. In *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* Jean Paul Sartre, for example, had formulated this notion when writing on the Algerian conflict: "in his rage, [the settler] sometimes dreams of genocide. But it is pure fantasy. He knows it, he is aware of his dependence". Jean Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, p. 75.

26. Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*, p. 163.

27. Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson, "Settler Colonies", p. 369.

28. See, for examples, A. R. Buck, John McLaren, and Nancy E. Wright (eds), *Land and Freedom*; P. G. McHugh, *Aboriginal Societies and the Common Law*; Peter Karsten, *Between Law and Custom*; John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World*; A. R. Buck, John McLaren, and Nancy E. Wright (eds), *Despotic Dominion*; Hamar Foster, Benjamin L. Berger, and A. R. Buck (eds), *The Grand Experiment*; Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific* and *How the Indians Lost their Land*; and Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty*. On the comparative environmental history of settler contexts see, for example, Thomas R. Dunlap, *Nature and the English Diaspora* and Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (eds), *Ecology and Empire*.

29. See, for examples, Lynette Russell (ed.), *Colonial Frontiers*; Julie Evans, Patricia Grimshaw, David Philips, and Shurlee Swain, *Equal Subjects, Unequal Rights*; David Trigger and Gareth Griffiths (eds), *Disputed Territories*; Annie Coombes (ed.), *Rethinking Settler Colonialism*; Larissa Behrendt, Tracey Lindberg, Robert J. Miller, and Jacinta Ruru (eds), *Discovering Indigenous Lands*; and Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*.

30. Fifth Galway Conference on Colonialism: Settler Colonialism, National University of Ireland, Galway, June 2007, Conditions of Settler Colonialism Symposium, Chicago University, April 2008, and Alyosha Goldstein and Alex Lubin (eds), "Settler Colonialism". The *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial Studies* had published a special issue dedicated

to "White Settler Colonialisms and the Colonial Turn" in 2003. However, compared to the edited issue published by *South Atlantic Quarterly*, this was a very different exercise. The 2003 collection is about ways in which a gender aware analysis can help understanding transnational settler colonialisms in the aftermath of the "colonial turn", the 2009 collection is about the ways in which a settler colonial paradigm *in its own right* can help understanding transnational phenomena. See Fiona Paisley, "Introduction".

31. See, for example, David Thelen, "The Nation and Beyond" and Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake (eds), *Connected Worlds*.
32. See, for example, Alan Lester, "Colonial Settlers and the Metropole".
33. Marilyn Lake, "White Man's Country", p. 352.
34. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*.
35. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, "Settler Colonialism", especially pp. 8–15.
36. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, "Settler Colonialism", pp. 6–7. A convincing call to look for settler colonialism in colonies rarely associated with settler colonial endeavours is also presented in Penny Edwards, "On Home Ground".
37. Robert J. C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity*.
38. See James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, especially pp. 145–176.
39. For classical examples of this type of comparative constitutional history, see Alexander Brady, *Democracy in the Dominions*, and John Manning Ward, *Colonial self-Government*.
40. On the development of settler colonial nationalisms within the British Empire, see, for example, John Eddy and Deryck Schreuder (eds), *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism*.
41. On the comparative economics of the "*areas nuevas*", see D. C. M. Platt and Guido di Tella (eds), *Argentina, Australia, and Canada*; J. W. McCarthy, "Australia as a Region of Recent Settlement in the Nineteenth Century"; Carl E. Solberg, *The Prairies and the Pampas*; Jeremy Adelman, *Frontier Development*. For a comparative analysis of class development and labour relations, see Gary Cross, "Labour in Settler State Democracies", and Bryan D. Palmer, "Nineteenth-Century Canada and Australia". An overview of the comparative historical geography of settler societies is presented in Graeme Wynn, "Settler Societies in Geographical Focus". On environmental history and settler colonialism, see Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, and Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.
42. On the reproductive regimes of settler colonialism, see Richard Phillips, "Settler Colonialism and the Nuclear Family"; on settler colonialism's "logic of elimination", see Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native".
43. For an example of settler colonialism's ongoing invisibility, see Peter Pels, "The Anthropology of Colonialism", pp. 172–174. This sophisticated article contains a section on settlers, but does not talk about them! One paragraph is dedicated to the "*marxisant*" historiography of the plantation economies, one to 1980s feminist contributions on the experience

of white women in colonial settings, one to the contradictions between settler demands for cheap labour and the "administrative interest in a colony's strategic stability" (and the opposition between the "ethnocidal policies of settler colonies" and the need for "salvage ethnography"), and one more on the need to further develop the study of colonial culture at large.

44. On the connection between settlement and ethnic cleansing (and its disavowal), see Grant Farred, "The Unsettler". Appreciating an unavoidable link between the two, however, is certainly not new and was not lost, for example, on Francis Bacon: "I like a plantation in a pure soil; that is, where people are not displaced to the end to plant in others. For else it is rather an extirpation than a plantation". Quoted, for example, in Sarah Irving, "In a Pure Soil", p. 258.

45. On this point, see, for example, Amy Kaplan, "Left Alone With America", which outlines "the ways in which imperialism has been simultaneously *formative* and *disavowed* in the foundational discourse of American studies" (p. 5, my emphasis). See also Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society*.

46. Giovanni Arrighi recently referred to Gareth Stedman Jones' contention that the United States did not initiate settler colonial traditions overseas because *it was* a settler colonial order. "American historians who speak complacently of the absence of the settler-type colonialism characteristic of the European powers merely conceal the fact that the whole *internal* history of United States imperialism was one vast process of territorial seizure and occupation. The absence of territorialism 'abroad' was founded on an unprecedented territorialism 'at home'". Quoted in Giovanni Arrighi, "Hegemony Unravelling – II", p. 103, n. 40 (emphasis in original).

47. Ava Baron, "On Looking at Men", p. 150.

48. Ruth Frankenberg has similarly argued for sustained critical engagement with "whiteness". Failing to do so entails "a continued failure to displace the 'unmarked marker' status of whiteness, a continued inability to 'color' the seeming transparency of white positionings", she notes. To "leave whiteness unexamined is to perpetuate a kind of asymmetry that has marred even many critical analyses of racial formation and cultural practice. Here the modes of alterity of everyone-but-the-white-people are subjected to ever more meticulous scrutiny, celebratory or not, while whiteness remains unexamined – unqualified, essential, homogeneous, seemingly self-fashioned, and apparently unmarked by history or practice". There are risks, I argue, also in not focusing on settler colonialism as a specific formation. We should focus on "settlerness" in order to unsettle the "unmarked marker" status of being a settler in a settler society (and to produce a critique of the "seeming transparency" of settler positionings). Frankenberg calls for the " 'revealing' of the unnamed – the exposure of whiteness masquerading as universal". We should operate similarly with regards to settlers: settler colonialism is not normal or natural. It is made

so in a settler colonial context. Ruth Frankenberg, "Local Whitenesses, Localizing Whiteness", pp. 1, 3.
49. See Frederick E. Hoxie, "Retrieving the Red Continent".
50. For examples of transnational scholarship involving the history of the United States, see Max Savelle, *Empires to Nations*; Alan Taylor, *American Colonies*; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*; and Anthony DePalma, *Here*. For a history of the notion of "Atlantic history", including an appraisal of its links with post-Second World War transatlantic relations, see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History*.

1   Population

1. On "protection" as a global colonial form, see, for example, Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, "Trajectories of Protection". Lester and Dussart trace the global trajectory of "protection" from the British Caribbean colony of Trinidad to the Cape and Australasian colonies. "Protection", however, was an ancient colonial form that the British had adopted from Spanish practice (Trinidad had been a Spanish colony).
2. For a survey of various technologies of indigenous governance and a sustained call for sharing administrative expertise between settler polities, see A. Grenfell Price, *White Settlers and Native Peoples*.
3. Indeed, the political traditions of settler colonialism routinely auto-define themselves by way of a series of successive negations: settler colonialism is not the "Old World", and not a "colonial" world; not what is displaced by the establishment of a colonial order (i.e., a "despotic" Asiatic tyranny), and not what is displaced by the establishment of a settler colonial order (i.e., an indigenous "republic"). Finally, settlers also define their endeavours in specific contradistinction against alternative settler orders. No wonder that stubborn recurring notions of inherent exceptionalism retain extraordinary strength in settler contexts! On exceptionalist intellectual traditions in two settler societies, see, for example, Gary Cross, "Comparative Exceptionalism".
4. Quoted in John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions*, pp. 24–25.
5. A triangular interpretative framework reproduces sociologist David Pearson's rendition of community relations in "British" settler societies. Pearson suggests that "settler and post-settler society citizenship is best conceptualized and described by examining the linked processes of [. . .] the aboriginalization (of aboriginal minorities), the ethnification (of immigrant minorities) and the indigenization (of settler majorities)". David Pearson, "Theorizing Citizenship in British Settler Societies", p. 990. See also David Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Societies*. Pearson's approach was recently criticised by Hawaiian scholar Candace Fujikane, who, on the contrary, noting that *all* non-natives partake of the advantages of a particular colonial regime, emphasised the indigenous/non-indigenous divide. See Candace Fujikane, "Introduction".