individual actors, both Africans as well as Europeans, who were involved with the trade and she uses these sources to highlight new examples of African agency and involvement with the RAC. Thus, she provides students of the subject with an example of the muddled nature of history that should allow for fruitful class discussions. With such a strong focus on source materials, this reading would also be useful in methodology classes. Students of history at all levels, those interested in global trade and specialists in Atlantic and African history and the early modern world all stand to gain by reading this book.

doi:10.1017/S0165115319000457 Timothy Nicholson, *Farmingdale State College*

Lorenzo Veracini. *The Settler Colonial Present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2015. 160 pp. ISBN: 9781137372475. $42.02.

Vercini proposes to use Spinoza's method of *omnis determinatio est negatio* (23) as a "heuristic" to explore what the colonial settler present *is not*. But reading the book leaves one wondering both what it is, *and* what it is not. The Introduction is pithy, grabbing the reader's attention, but the rest of the book is disappointing but not without merit. Firstly, it helped me to understand why the term "indigenous" is in vogue, although this was unintentional. In Canadian public discourse, the word usurped the hard-fought constitutional concept "Aboriginal Peoples" for example. In many university setting, there are things like "Canadian Studies" but fewer programs using the specific name such as Mi'kmaq Studies, for example. Arguably "indigenous" dilutes the real claims of particular groups in particular locations creating an opportunity people who may not fall under the international Doctrine of Aboriginal Title to be includes—an international law that Veracini ignores entirely. Secondly, he importantly affirms that "settler colonialism" is a process rather than an event and many of the same arguments to justify settler colonialism "then" are still made today in prestigious scholarly and media venues in the form of thinly veiled neo-Malthusianism (12) and Eugenics (13-15). Finally, although he also contradicts this through the book, he explores the proposition that a post-imperial or post-colonial world is moot.

Now, to the weaknesses. A theme running through the book is that there is a need to decolonize settler colonialism. Unfortunately, Vericini's arguments serve to confuse matters rather than create understandings and solutions. In his first adventure with heurism, he invokes Hobson's unapologetic comparison of imperialism to a virus and simultaneously critiques it. Doing so, unwittingly or not, he reproduces the virgin soil theory of disease (55-6) and an endorsement of the lucrative magic bullet pseudo-solutions to health such as vaccines to "boost immunity" (19), quarantine as "effective" (19) and "antiviral drugs" (20). In each of these cases, he erases the relationship between immunity and stable access to food, shelter, and the means to these. He reifies lucrative biotech pseudo-solutions and simultaneously minimizes the virulent surveillance and market logic of international/global health approaches that have been, and continue to be, forced on the multitudes of people he is writing about for the past century. Odder still, he later cites Bashford, who revealed the sinister side of quarantine in Australia, in a different chapter but on a separate topic (33). Later in the book, when he argues that "settlers are not migrants", he raises another classic, Crosby's Ecological Imperialism, but dismisses it in a strawman-like manner.

He obscures matters further by arguing that although these are "two" different things, in fact "virus and bacteria, like colonialism and settler colonialism, may actually be related" (27) but

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that the analytical distinction here between colonial and settler forms should be distinguished as colonialism produces an unequal relationship whereas settler colonialism reproduces a biopolitical entity (27). Noting that these classifications are merely analytical categorizations and not necessarily phenomena existing in reality, he argues that the "sovereign right to be inconsistent is one important element of settler discourse" but concludes that this inconsistency is "not yet a crisis" (39), thereby erasing the horrors experienced by generations of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada alone.

When arguing that settlers are not migrants, he dehumanizes "migrants" by referring to their families as "sociopolitical units" and erases the care they have within them by arguing that they do not migrate to enhance the lives of these objectified "sociopolitical units" but rather for "sustaining better livelihoods" (43). In contrast, noting that settlers generally move in "family units" and with their property (42), he emphasizes that they move to *their* country, while migrants move to someone else's land and without their kin. First, on what basis does he use the present tense here? And what does he mean by "their"? Secondly, if migrants do not move with their families, he ignores the fact that the liberal bourgeois states they migrate to, create laws (as Cecil Rhodes also did by 1870 in South Africa) to control their mobility. In Canada, the long-standing agricultural worker program that targets Mexican married men, or the live-in caregiver programs which force women to migrate solo are two cases in point. Further to this, when considering Aboriginal Peoples on Canada, long back the Jay Treaty saw to it that if they wanted to pass Canada US borders, they could do so so long as they did not have any surplus commodities with them-hence legally undermining their economic and political sovereignty. The Canadian Indian Act itself also forces ascribed identities and has erased or separated families of Aboriginal peoples up till now. He further wrongly notes that "indigenous people are generally not seen in the settler cities" (52)—for in Canada of course "indigenous peoples" are, of course, also in the cities. It was the Indian Act that is rooted in assimilating people when they left their "reserves" hence why many lost status when they did leave the reserves. Let us also not forget that the Canadian Indian Act and Reserve system was so successful that South African officials asked Canada guidance on managing their indigenous populations. Forcing migratory gatherer-hunter people in Nova Scotia (Canada) to become farmers, recording them as "farmers, laborers, spinsters, Anglican, German, British, Scottish" in their national census, and Indian Agents leaving people off their "lists", helped reduce the aboriginal peoples in Canada from the paper trail. Here Veracini argues for a liberal form of assimilation as indigenous entrepreneurs when "indigenous" economic forms ran on the principles of gifting and negative or generalized reciprocity when he advocates for indigenous "institutional entrepreneurs" or weakening the state to types of "different government practice" (104-105) which are all practices rather than "solutions" (109).

With mirth, he notes that colonial settler studies have gone global (57) and even has a colonial settler "app" (56) and with contempt invokes the category of "African colon states" (57). Acknowledging the internationalization of indigeneity (57), he misses the point why Canada New Zealand, Australia US, and Canada votes against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (57). Specifically, these are the only nations where the Doctrine of Aboriginal Title got successfully invoked, but he does not even mention the international law—instead vaguely asserting that they somehow "remain primarily settler colonial polities" (58). Worse still, he claims that "today, of course, there are no empty lands" (49 and 98) and thereby implies that there *were terra nullis* even though he later carefully points out that argument has been used extensively though "Africa" (my quotation marks) (63).

An additional problematic claim is that "emancipation and anticolonial independence often fail in their attempt to supersede colonial patterns of subjection" (20). Veracini neglects the ways that

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capital and the state collude for various forms of well-funded counterinsurgency, something that marred Southern Africa as the bastion of capitalism in the efforts to curb the spread of communism and to perpetuate western liberal governance (and facilitate smooth capital circulation across national borders) for a very long time. The most significant overarching weakness (or was this a conscious contribution?) of the book is the way that capitalism and imperialism get erased as prime movers of the colonial settler present. Bacteria do not need living cells to reproduce, he argues, and likewise, settler collectives do not need "indigenous others" (22). It goes without saying that if one examines South African segregation and apartheid, Cecil Rhodes, and other capitalists, needed local indigenous peoples for the maximum surplus production. Rhodes's vision was to control African migration and criminalizing their lives, something that occurred well before the legalized apartheid that was the crisis mode of capitalism trying to keep a dying system together. He misses this entirely noting that "peoples under settler colonialism are typically forced into reservations, not selling their labor; their labor is a secondary consideration" (92) again forgetting South Africa and Palestine histories. He does finally write about South Africa, in oscillating spurts yet with a tendency to conflate South Africa with "The whole of Africa" (55) as being shaped by settler colonialism. However, by conflating this giant continent, he is guilty of the same homogenization as the Europeans who colonized "Africa". Although he has the image of the Grahamstown monument on the book cover, he does not seem to understand how the system was rooted in capitalism and then imperialism, instead of arguing that in settler colonial polities the demand for racial homogeneity was "eventually discontinued" (24). It is not that simple. Furthermore, there is a powerful endorsement of Mandela in this book, yet Mandela's legacy is not that clear-cut in South Africa. There is a (formidable) literature on all this that he neglects.

Further to this, without noting where, and without considering the rise of fascist movements around the world such as in Ukraine, he notes that "far right" European nations have adopted the language of indigeneity, yet he does not indicate any dates. If he is referring to recent events, he neglects to mention the array of Ukrainian billionaires helping this process come to fruition (see 59). In this regard, let us not forget that Cecil Rhodes bequeathed his will several times to the perpetuation of the "British race"; later euphemized into the sanctified proliferation of liberal political philosophy.

Oddly too, Veracini conflates Lenin's dialectical materialist definition of imperialism with that of Wallerstein's Hegelian "world system" approach and the simplistic "Global North/Global South" something Lenin never promulgated (40). Another strawman, perhaps? Here it ascribes behaviors onto diffuse people stating that "settlers systematically disavow or deny the indigenous sovereignties they encounter, either by signing treaties they do not intend to honor or by asserting different versions of the *terra nullis* doctrine, migrants need to recognize the sovereignties they come across" (41). Again, by removing, or obscuring political economy (and the industrial class that dominates global arrangements), he puts the blame on "settlers" in general, who may have always lacked power to oppose these macro arrangements, and whose compliance is only used so long as it suits the interests of the capitalist class—South Africa, again, being a critical case in point. When it suited their interests, the capitalist class tolerated the narrow *Afrikaaner* nationalism that expanded on the racist structures that preexisted itself and which had been established by Rhodes and other British segregation era imperialists. When it no longer served their interests, they embraced the liberal versions of African nationalism, which allowed them to perpetuate the interests of the financial oligarchy. But consistent to his heuristic approach, two pages later, he concedes that distinctions between identities are in the "eyes of the beholder … reality is complex" (42).

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It is in Chapter 4 that he finally really addresses the matter at hand: The *settler colonial present*- something I wanted to encounter throughout the entire book but only did in minor or marginal ways for the most part. Here he does show how some forms of public media (books, games) have the settler-colonial present embedded within them. This work is necessary, but, unfortunately, he only does it for a few pages in this short chapter. Exposing those elements, as well as the political-economic cause of the perpetuation of the colonial settler present, would have also been the antidote to opposing them. He also notes about the Occupy Movement as only weakly supporting "indigenous" struggles (83) yet seems oblivious to the source of funding and ideological alignments in philosophical liberalism in this movement. Interestingly, in this chapter, he addresses the idea of the internet as a new colonial frontier and the grab for domains (85). I am not sure if I agree with this given that land remains at the heart of matters in a book about the colonial settler present (no matter how much effort goes into obscuring this), but it did get me laughing after a lot of grimacing.

Here he finally notes that "authenticity" is ascribed by the state as to who is in or outside of the indigenous checkbox (88). But then also propounds the bizarre idea that the "need for an industrial reserve army is no longer as strategic as it used to be" (92) and then contradicts what he says earlier about how indigenous peoples were not used for labour (90-93) without noting where. In Chapter 4, he argues that Palestine is an example of the colonial settler present (90-91). However, he earlier mildly criticizes this connection (56). Indeed, in this chapter, he does seem to fall back on his earlier critique of the idea that colonialism is the real process at hand, and that imperialism is at its root (94).

In his concluding chapter, he asks whether colonial settler studies is a "scholarly useful endeavor"? (100). Veracini argues that no, it does not provide any practical answers. It is a good question. But he advocates his heuristic approach is a possible way forward in experiments of "settler non-sovereign transformation" (107). For example, by arguing that "decolonizing this world would require reshaping relations … unlearning their privileges" (103), and to "questioning the very concept of the 'commons'"(Ibid.), he sees that settlers could learn from indigenous teachers, and that indigenous people could vaguely "access sovereign self-determining capacities that are autonomous of settler structures, but not to turn settlers into refugees" (Ibid.). He had earlier affirmed, that "we no longer live in a decolonizing world" (36) begging the question why is there a need to decolonize settler relations anyway? He here includes arguments best addressed in the beginning (e.g., introducing the "metaphors we live by" (102), and the need to decolonize these metaphors [103]). Veracini sadly leaves the reader with little idea what these are. While quite usefully critiquing the nuances of "neo-racist politics of autochthony" (47) and the purported neglect of indigenous peoples, he positions himself seemingly to argue for a need for settler decolonization, but he does not coherently answer why is it required at this time. I wonder whether *this* was intentional. Arguing that "we need to develop a theory of settler decolonization that is capable of sustaining a coherent anti-settler colonial practice, a theory that would allow envisaging indigenous assertions of a localized sovereignty as well as migrant defiance of settler colonial regularity migration regimes" (48); this again begs the question of "why"? If it is not because of the shifting constellations of the global bourgeoisie wanting to get their teeth into settler lands and break up these old colonial entitlements, then what? Settler colonialism is not that useful to capitalism anymore. Opening up the territories for the newly emergent non-European bourgeoisie is in progress, and the old settler entitlements are being questioned. Veracini himself notes that "settler colonial ways of belonging are not inevitable or natural; they are merely on possibility among many" (107). Unfortunately, the book does not help answer "how" to decolonize settler colonialism even though

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it pays a lot of lip service to its importance. Its sum contribution seems to further obscure "indigenous" peoples, erase the Doctrine of Aboriginal Title, stigmatize poor "migrants" and most of all, obscure capitalism and imperialism as driving forces of settler colonialism and its transformation. As such, one has to assume that the analysis serves to help these processes along.

doi:10.1017/S0165115319000469 Robin Oakley, *Dalhousie University*

L.H. Roper. *Advancing Empire: English Interests and Overseas Expansion, 1613–1688*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 302 pp. ISBN: 9781107545052. $39.99.

L.H. Roper's *Advancing Empire* offers a critical analysis of the complex nature of English overseas endeavors globally in the tumultuous seventeenth-century. Principally, Roper argues that the roots of English colonialism and trans-oceanic trade are to be found not in a powerful and centralized state but rather within a network of remarkably ambitious private interests. Moreover, Roper contends that neither the English Civil War nor the Restoration significantly changed the power of personal interests and the relatively limited influence of the state. The advancement of England's empire was not the product of centralized state policy, but rather it was derived through individuals seeking to advance their socio-political status through overseas ventures and colonization. Due to the enormous costs (and the equally considerable risks) involved, even the wealthiest of London-based entrepreneurs sought out partners and, occasionally, state support in the form of charters or monopoly rights. However, the efficacy and importance of such state sponsorship in the seventeenth century are regularly called into question by Roper; it was often the case that merchants and financiers operating in the Atlantic or Indian Oceans sought out support from the Crown or Parliament only when it suited them.

After putting forth the broad strokes of his argument in Chapter 1, Roper goes on to survey the specific workings of private English interests in the Americas, Guinea, and Asia, which constitute Chapters 2-4. His analysis of the Americas and Africa delves into the origins of the English slave trade as well as the ability of private capital to move readily from one hemisphere to the next. These chapters give an in-depth history of how the English overseas empire came to be, and it is made to look a wholly organic process rather than a coherent and coordinated project. It is in these opening chapters that the reader witnesses the birth of an empire from the private capital networks of dozens of merchants, entrepreneurs, settlers, and financiers.

After establishing the beginnings and rough contours of England's nascent empire, Chapter 5 pushes ahead to addresses the extent to which the English Civil War impacted affairs—which is to say, not much. To call the Civil War a revolution in imperial overseas operations is, to Roper, misguided. In so many ways, it was business as usual for the myriad private interests that constituted the lifeblood of the growing English overseas empire. Chapter 6 continues this line of reasoning by showing the extent to which the Interregnum government took a backseat to private merchant capitalists just as its predecessor government had. "The state became involved in overseas trade and colonization", writes Roper, "only when the promulgators of those activities solicited its involvement" (149). Roper's revisionism of the Civil War period culminates in Chapter 7, wherein he argues (again, contrary to established narratives) that the Restoration did *not* mark the beginning of some fundamentally new age to the English empire. While the state may have rejuvenated, it was no more capable a government when it came to the business of empire. Nor was the Restoration a

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