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**Richard Price.** ***Empire and Indigeneity: Histories and Legacies.*** London: Routledge, 2021. 372 pp. $44.95, e-book, ISBN 978-1-00-309844-7.

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Scholarship on Britain's "settler colonies" (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa) has exploded in the last two decades, invigorated in part by the twin theoretical assertions of settler colonial studies: that the settler colonialisms of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries are distinct from earlier colonialisms, and that colonial life was negotiated not within a two-part metropole-colony but within a triangle of metropole-settlers-Indigenous peoples (see Lorenzo Veracini's ***Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*** [2010]). Richard Price is not new to this scene, with his 2008 ***Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa*** offering an analysis of the triangular relations between metropole, settlers, and the Xhosa in early nineteenth-century South Africa. In ***Empire and Indigeneity***, Price moves his gaze from South Africa to Australasia to explore the centrality of Indigenous peoples to settler colonial policies and the contingency of settler colonialism on earlier metropolitan discourses.

***Empire and Indigeneity***'s overarching argument is that the twentieth-century world of settler states and "white men's countries" was neither inevitable nor even imaginable in the early nineteenth century. Instead, Price argues that the British colonies of the early nineteenth century were defined by a dependence on Indigenous agency, a belief in the possibility of an empire based on racial cooperation, and a social and political fluidity that defy a teleological assumption that the foundations of settler colonialism were being laid. Aside from the most obvious signs like the power of early Indigenous interlocutors (chapter 1), Price primarily finds evidence for this fluid and cooperative world within the humanitarian discourses and policies of the period. Pointing first to how ideas of the universality of human nature and human sociability required early humanitarian discourses to believe in the possibility of a united and peaceful empire (chapter 2), Price goes on to trace how this mentality guided colonial policies of conciliation, protection, amalgamation, and native law that were specifically devised to prevent the violence and oppression that characterize settler colonialism and to bring about a racially cooperative and collaborative world (chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7). To reconcile his narrative of early nineteenth-century cooperation with late nineteenth-century oppression, Price argues that the humanitarian notions that had formerly animated imperial policies were appropriated and reconfigured by settler society. This process turned humanitarianism on its head, changing it from a discourse to

bring about racial cooperation into a discourse to legitimize racial marginalization (chapters 6 and 8).

*Empire and Indigeneity* is, on the whole, a work of synthesis rather than a novel historical argument. It is certainly grounded in primary sources: every chapter combines theoretical overviews with historical examples from the archive. Yet the book has difficulty establishing a unique voice within an increasingly crowded room, and the two interventions that the book claims to make are not convincingly demonstrated. The first proposed intervention is that *Empire and Indigeneity* resists the teleology of "the Foucauldian notion of governmentality," which, Price contends, treats the use of humanitarian discourses to govern Indigenous peoples in the twentieth century as an inevitable continuity from the early nineteenth century (p. 7). This would seem to differentiate it from such books as Amanda Nettelbeck's ***Indigenous Rights and Colonial Subjecthood: Protection and Reform in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire*** (2019) or Alan Lester and Fae Dussart's ***Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance: Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-Century British Empire*** (2014), both of which similarly focus on the evolution of humanitarian discourses in Australasia over the nineteenth century. Yet throughout his analysis of early nineteenth-century humanitarianism, Price argues that there were fragilities, ambiguities, and contradictions that, when proved through experience to be unsustainable, drove the evolution of humanitarian discourse from conciliation to governance. By arguing that the seeds for the transition toward governance were present in humanitarian discourse from the beginning and therefore suggesting that transition *was* to an extent inevitable, Price somewhat undermines the scale of the intervention he proposes and struggles to significantly differentiate his point from those of Nettelbeck, Lester and Dussart, and others.

The second proposed intervention is that *Empire and Indigeneity* resists the teleology of the "logic of elimination," which, Price contends, treats the eliminationist policies of twentieth-century settler colonialism as an inevitable continuity from the early nineteenth century. This would, again, seem to differentiate the book from yet other studies of Australasian settler society, like Anne Curthoy and Jessie Mitchell's ***Taking Liberty: Indigenous Rights and Settler Self-Government in Colonial Australia, 1830–1890*** (2018) and Angela Woollacott's ***Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture*** (2015). But while Price does convincingly argue for the lack of eliminationist tendencies in early nineteenth-century Australasia, he also acknowledges that the vision of "racial cooperation" that animated this period was itself inherently eliminationist, in that the ultimate end point was the assimilation of the "less civilized" societies into British society. Early nineteenth-century policies may have involved less violence than those of the late nineteenth century (although Price also acknowledges that coercion and conciliation went hand in hand in both periods), but if elimination had been the intended outcome from the beginning than it becomes hard to identify the significance of the anti-teleological argument. And so the two historiographical interventions that Price proposes appear more like slight historiographical alterations, and for the most part *Empire and Indigeneity* reiterates themes that have been explored elsewhere.

That being said, Price successfully brings together a wide range of secondary sources along with illustrative episodes from primary sources to form a well-written and cohesive narrative of the contingency of early nineteenth-century Australasian society and the centrality of Indigenous people to colonial life, and I highly recommend it as a starting point for anyone venturing into the subject, a textbook for undergraduate students studying settler colonialism, or a state-of-the-field refresher for more seasoned academics.

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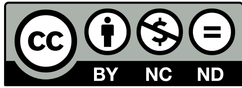

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