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Title	Geography militant: resistance and the essentialisation of identity in colonial Ireland
Author(s)	Morrissey, John
Publication Date	2004
Publication Information	Morrissey, J. (2004) 'Geography militant: resistance and the essentialisation of identity in colonial Ireland', Irish Geography, 37(2): 166-176
Link to publisher's version	<a href="http://www.ucd.ie/gsi/pdf/37-2/militant.pdf">http://www.ucd.ie/gsi/pdf/37-2/militant.pdf</a>
Item record	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10379/835">http://hdl.handle.net/10379/835</a>

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# **Geography Militant: Resistance and the Essentialisation of Identity in Colonial Ireland**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, a growing recognition of the interconnections (in addition to the conflicts) between the worlds of the coloniser and the colonised has enabled the construction of an enhanced collection of differentiated and nuanced historico-geographical accounts of the spaces and practices of colonialism. Indeed, it has become somewhat fashionable in postcolonial studies to emphasise the fluidity and ‘in-between space’ of ‘colonial’ projects and ‘native’ reaction. This is, however, arguably to the detriment of engaging the enmity and violence frequently an integral part of the colonial enterprise. This paper interrogates the in-between spaces of a colonial Ireland just beginning to be defined in the early seventeenth century and demonstrates how they were delimited ultimately by an essentialised envisioning of a radical settler colonial discourse and a corresponding exclusivism in colonial practice on the ground. By examining the outbreak of the 1641 Rebellion in Munster, the discussion considers the emergence of competing and exclusive Protestant and Catholic identities, and highlights the bounded nature of cultural interaction in early modern Ireland.

**Key Index Words:** Postcolonialism, identity, essentialisation, resistance

## **Introduction**

Postcolonial approaches in geography have been critiqued in various ways, particularly by historical geographers concerned more with traditional empirical work and less so with theoretical debates.<sup>1</sup> Postcolonialism’s wider theoretical and methodological orientation and especially its emphasis on culture and discourse have come in for specific criticism. Harris (2004: 165), for example, has recently charged postcolonial approaches with subsequently obscuring ‘other forms of colonial power while making it impossible to contextualize the cultural argument and assess its salience’. Such a critique echoes what Lester (1998: 2) sees as the tendency of some postcolonial work to be ‘characterised by an unhelpful degree of abstraction’. Like Lester, however, several other geographers working in postcolonial studies have been concerned with these and related issues for some time (Crush, 1994; Gregory, 1994; Jacobs, 1996; Duncan, 1999; Kenny, 1999; Myers, 1999; Wylie, 2000). For example, all of the authors in Blunt and McEwan’s (2002) *Postcolonial Geographies* have responded to the critique that postcolonialism’s discourse analysis is ‘too theoretical and not rooted enough in material contexts’ by demonstrating comprehensively, and in a variety of contexts, that discourse itself is ‘intensely material’ (Blunt and McEwan, 2002: 5).

Postcolonial scholars working outside of geography, particularly literary critics such as Pratt (1992), Young (2001) and of course Said (1994, 2003), have alerted us to the subtle mechanisms of differentiation inherent in colonialism’s multiple forms. However, as Lester (1998) notes, within many of these works, there has been a tendency to over-generalise the colonial activities of former imperial powers and to privilege meta-perspectives from the metropole rather than the periphery. Lester’s (1998: 2) concern that postcolonial perspectives are all too often espoused from a restricted ‘metropolitan focus’ is akin to Harris’ (2004: 166) reflection that:

*'if the aim is to understand colonialism rather than the workings of the imperial mind, then it would seem essential to investigate the sites where colonialism was actually practiced [...] To do so is to position studies of colonialism in the actuality and materiality of colonial experience'.*

Driver (2001: 8), too, reminds us that postcolonial theorising can frequently give way to 'an essentialized model of 'colonial discourse' which obscures the heterogeneous, contingent and conflictual character of imperial projects'.<sup>2</sup> Given such valid caveats, this paper aims to ground an interrogation of the idea of resistance in colonial Ireland in the context of material conditions in the colony itself. Running throughout Said's luminous work on imperialism and colonial relations is a recognition of the importance of geography and the geographical imagination:

*'Imperialism and the culture associated with it affirm both the primacy of geography and an ideology about control of territory. The geographical sense makes projections – imaginative, cartographic, military, economic, historical, or in a general sense cultural. It also makes possible the construction of various kinds of knowledge, all of them in one way or another dependent upon the perceived character and destiny of a particular geography' (Said, 1994: 93).*

A key role which geography can play in postcolonial studies, then, is to demonstrate the import of locating analyses of colonialism in necessarily grounded, differentiated and situated ways.

One additional aim of the paper is to attempt to transcend the tendency of postcolonial approaches to circumvent an engagement of the more dissonant narratives of conflict and militancy intrinsic to colonialism. The term 'Geography Militant' in the title of the paper comes from Joseph Conrad's 1924 *National Geographic* article 'Geography and some explorers', wherein he describes the phase of geographical exploration marked by a 'militant' and 'acquisitive' drive to conquer the earth (Conrad, 1926: 14).<sup>3</sup> Driver (2001), in his interrogation of the cultures of 'Geography Militant' in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, concludes, like Gregory (2004), that such cultures continue to regenerate in our imagination and experience in, and of, the present. This paper goes on to argue that such imaginings did not begin in the 'high colonialism' of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> It extends further back to the early modern period and considers the outbreak of the 1641 Irish Rebellion in Munster as a colonial moment of resistance whose militancy, essentialisation of identity and aftermath would go on to imagine and define social and cultural interaction in Ireland for centuries to come.

### **Defining difference in colonial Ireland**

The problematic nature of the idea of early modern Ireland as a colony, incorporating notions of Self and Other, has been examined elsewhere (Morrissey, 2003, 2004). Ireland, from the mid-sixteenth century, was characterised by networks of both accommodation and resistance that coexisted and conflicted with each other in various ways. Notwithstanding this point, a constructed English notion of difference was simultaneously evident in political and cultural interaction throughout the early modern period, playing an integral differentiating role in England's Irish colonies from the very beginning. The sense of difference was typically constructed around that of religious, and by extension, civil divergence, which appeared to be confirmed by successive rebellions throughout the colony from the mid-sixteenth century. As Sheehan (1984: 63) notes, 'since hostility to the state so often went under the banner of the counter-reformation, dissent in religious matters became immediately suspect as being dissent in temporal affairs as well'. Many contemporary English writers such as Fynes Moryson, for example, reveal a perennial fear of a 'Catholic

Church militant and triumphant' (Kew, 1998: 8). A succession of other correspondences by prominent officials and writers depict Roman Catholicism as the terrifying embodiment of 'Otherness'. In 1600, for example, Sir George Carew, President of Munster, wrote of the 'traitorly priests' as the 'chiefest firebrands' of 'unnatural treasons' (*Calendar of State Papers of Ireland* (hereafter *Cal. S.P. Ire.*), 1600-1601: 5). The correlation, too, of Catholicism with terrorism and threat from England's continental enemies, particularly Spain, featured consistently in colonial propaganda throughout the early seventeenth century (O'Buachalla, 1996). In 1604, for instance, Sir John Davies warned that Counter-Reformation Jesuits were being planted in Ireland from the Continent to 'withdraw the subject from his allegiance and so serve the turn of Tyrone and the King of Spain' (*Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1603-1606: 162). In 1629, King Charles I instructed his Irish lord deputy, Lord Falkland, to publish a 'proclamation against the Roman priests' and to arrest all 'titulary Bishops' (*Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1625-1632: 458). The perceived association of Catholicism and treason, furthermore, intensified as the 1641 Rebellion approached (*Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1603-1606: 442; *Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1606-1608: 309-310; *Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1611-1614: 429-430; *Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1615-1625: 22).

In post-Reformation England, as Marotti (1997: 37) points out, lay a constructed notion of anti-Catholicism at the heart of an emerging sense of English nationalism:

*'In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries English identity was defined as Protestant, so Roman Catholicism, especially in its post-Tridentine, Jesuit manifestations was cast as the hated and dangerous antagonist, most fearfully embodied in a papacy that claimed the right to depose monarchs'.*

But, how did such differentiating religious and intellectual currents affect the administration of the Irish colonies on the ground? To begin with, a powerful New English colonial discourse of difference (what Said (2003) calls the geographical imaginings of the imperial powers) reconstituted the Gaelic-Irish and Old English quest for accommodation – occurring throughout Ireland in complicated and varying capacities since the mid-sixteenth century – as a polarised struggle between the essentialised groups of 'Irish Papist' and 'English Protestant'. This neat distinction was increasingly made in an official capacity from the early 1600s in the *State Papers*. It was also the basic ethnic delineation of the later *Civil Survey* of the mid-seventeenth century. In effect, contemporary senses of identity, however hybrid and overlapping between Gaelic and Anglo worlds, as argued elsewhere (Morrissey, 2005a), were being essentialised by the purposeful imaginings of colonial power.<sup>5</sup> Second, such differentiation manifested itself in very real material contexts, including discrimination against both Gaelic-Irish and Old English Catholics holding civic and legal offices (Carte, *History of Duke of Ormond, 1610-1688* (hereafter Carte, *Ormond*), Vol. 2: 263. See also: Corish, 1976; Canny, 1986; Kenny, 1987; Carroll, 2003). In Munster, for example, government administration became increasingly exclusivist in the early decades of the seventeenth-century as New English control became more centralised (*Egmont Manuscripts* (hereafter *Egmont MSS*), Vol. 1(1): 47). The subsequent decades witnessed a resolute government consolidation of political and administrative control in the hands of a New English Protestant elite throughout Munster, who, by 1640, had succeeded in contriving a Protestant representative majority in parliament (MacCarthy-Morrogh, 1986: 273-284). Finally, outright dispossession, or the prospect of such, was frequently the endgame of differentiation, as seen in the plantation of escheated and church lands throughout the island in the early decades of the seventeenth century. Specific Crown directives, such as the following, were regularly received by the New English administration:

*'Papist tenants shall be evicted if possible from the episcopal lands and they shall be settled with British tenants' – 1629 decree from King Charles I to Lord Deputy Falkland (Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-1632: 458).*

New English beliefs in the necessity of colonial differentiation and governmental exclusiveness are evident from a diversity of sources for the pre-1641 period. Correspondences in the *Egmont Manuscripts*,<sup>6</sup> for example, between Sir William St. Leger (President of Munster, 1627-1642) and the landed adventurer Sir Philip Percivall (based in Burton in north County Cork) divulge the extent of functioning differentiation integral to New English administration of the province (*Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 148-150; see also British Library Manuscripts Collection Add MS 46925). As tension mounted throughout Munster in the late 1630s and early 1640s, with the prospect of further plantation and the perceived grievances of former landholders from the earlier Munster Plantation, loyal Catholic Old English and Gaelic-Irish elites were being used by the government to control the localities. St. Leger, however, was appalled at such a partial incorporation of Catholics, and by the time the 1641 Rebellion had begun in Ulster (the rebellion had commenced there over two months before it eventually swept through Munster in late December, 1641), the essentialisation of identity appeared complete:

*'had I arms, I could draw together three or four thousand good protestants, on whom we might have relied; but to put all our strength of arms into the hands of another religion, religion being the pretence of the war, is a thing, I confess, beyond my understanding'* (*Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 148).

In effect, St. Leger's concerns revolved around 'putting the King's arms into the *Papists*' hands' instead of 'safe[ly] in the hands of honest *Englishmen*' (*Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 150 (author's emphases)). Other prominent figures of the Protestant ascendancy in Munster, such as Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork, and Sir Valentine Browne in County Kerry, similarly betrayed a prejudiced planter discourse that was underpinned by what MacCarthy-Morrogh (1986: 283) observes as 'the dark fears of a classic embattled settler', terrified of a Catholic Other which their own 'side' had imagined and defined.

### **Catholic Ireland reacts**

Catholic Ireland emerged as an inevitable, reactionary entity to New English exclusivism. Preceding the eventual insurrection in 1641, closer relations between the two Catholic heritages (Gaelic-Irish and Old English) were induced by an exclusionary colonial politics of leading Crown representatives, who envisioned contemporary Ireland more as a colony than a kingdom. These included foremost members of government administration such as the afore-mentioned Sir William St. Leger in Munster and Sir Thomas Wentworth, Lord Deputy of Ireland from 1633 to 1641. As argued elsewhere, Wentworth's policies – which included extensive confiscation and plantation plans – and his dismissive handling of the Catholic landed classes were hugely divisive to the security and peace of the country, and to the interconnections and common ground negotiated between planter and pre-existing elites in preceding decades (Morrissey, 2003). The Wentworth administration not only bounded these shared spaces, however; it also effectively reconstituted the evolving complexity of cultural interaction in a simplified and polarised manner, which treated 'Irish Catholics as a homogeneous group of doubtful loyalty', and thereby 'helped to create such a group' (Barnard, 1975: 3).

At this juncture, self-representation of a common culture and history was acknowledged by both the Gaelic-Irish and Old English as a key vehicle of self-preservation in the face of New English exclusivism. A number of important texts emerged in the decade prior to 1641, most notably the *Annals of the Four Masters* and *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (Foundation of Knowledge on Ireland) depicting purposeful interpretations of a Catholic Irish history that exuded a

strong sense of both antiquity and legitimacy. The *Annals* were compiled by Micheál Ó Cléirigh and his fellow Franciscan monks in Donegal from 1632 to 1636. At the same time (c.1634), Geoffrey Keating was writing in Tipperary the history of Catholic Ireland on Old English and Gaelic-Irish terms, in defiance of what he saw as the unrightful and uncivilised invasion of New Englishmen. His visioning of an 'Irish' Ireland and Irish 'Catholic' consciousness and identity enjoyed wide appeal throughout the country and contributed to the fostering of a nascent Catholic Irish nationality. His narrative account of the Irish past also managed to successfully incorporate the Old English into Gaelic national myth (Cunningham, 2000). Keating had studied on the Continent in the Irish Catholic College in Bordeaux at the height of the Counter-Reformation, and his work is unsurprisingly characterised by the contemporary struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism that prompted emerging senses of nationalism throughout Europe. His writings also divulge, however, a strong awareness of the mechanisms of New English colonial discourse (he cites the works of Spenser and Davies, particularly) and therefore the importance of contesting colonial visioning through alternative self-representations. His text *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* is an excellent early colonial example of what Pratt (1992, 1994) calls 'autoethnography', which is the intentional, strategic 'collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or conqueror [and merging] with indigenous idioms to create self-representations' (Pratt, 1994: 28). Catholic Ireland's 'self-' interpretation and representation served to reinforce the emerging, exclusive and essentialised identities of colonial Ireland, and particularly so as 1641 approached.

Prior to open rebellion in 1641, Gaelic-Irish and Old English elites throughout Ireland forged a 'politicised Irish Catholic national consciousness in direct ideological opposition to the aspirations of the protestant British political ascendancy' (Caball, 1998: 138). Collective efforts to assert a legitimate national Irish polity in the face of emerging New English hegemony had been occurring in various capacities since the mid-Tudor period (Bradshaw, 1979). These frequently involved the use of English constitutional and legal mechanisms to promote the equal application of the common law throughout Ireland for both loyal Catholics as well as Protestants. Connections also involved close discussions on attempts to assert a unified polity, as happened in County Tipperary in 1641 (Carte, *Ormond*, Vol. 2: 264-265). Contact between the Gaelic-Irish and Old English had been long established in the aftermath of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman colonisation.<sup>7</sup> As Gillespie (1986) and Lennon (1986) point out, major political, social and cultural tensions within Catholic Ireland were to remain even during the 1641 Rebellion, but ultimately the external pressure of New English hegemony continued to drive the idea of Catholic Ireland, perhaps even more than the Gaelic-Irish and Old English themselves.

### **Radical settler discourse and the bounding of identity: 1641 and beyond**

Cairns and Richards (1988: 7) discuss at length in their seminal postcolonial work on Ireland's cultures of colonialism and nationalism how the early modern New English administrative strategy was underpinned by a specific and purposeful imagining of colonial politics and power relations, whose aim was to 'draw cultural and religious indicators together to efface in their own minds the differences separating Old English and Native Irish and to lump them together as 'other''. Catholic Ireland's very designation led to its development as a meaningful entity in reality. As Baudrillard (1993: 79) remarks, names 'thrive on an intense collective exchange' and 'claim the radical exclusivity of the clan, gang [...] group or ethnicity'. Regardless of the complex social and cultural differences 'within' Catholic Ireland, its essentialised bounding and representation as 'Other' immediately assumed a powerful signifying practice. On the ground, the Catholic Other was posited as a collective of increasingly questionable loyalty by powerful members of the Protestant ascendancy like Wentworth and St. Leger. Such men were key 'actors' of colonial differentiation in

practice. They possessed both the forums of representation and the power to make their specific depictions of the Other consequential. Informed by an essentialised New English discourse of difference, their specific planter discourse was even more extreme (Carroll (2003: 70) sees it as a ‘proto-racialist discourse’), particularly as rebellion loomed in 1641 (*Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 143, 149-154; Carte, *Ormond*, Vol. 2: 264-266).<sup>8</sup>

Wentworth’s plans as Lord Deputy included a substantial plantation of Connacht in the later 1630s, and Catholic landholders elsewhere in the country – Gaelic-Irish and Old English alike – were also faced with the prospect of further plantation (*Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1625-1632: 536; *Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1647-1660, Addenda: 160). Inevitable fear and uncertainty ensued in the Catholic communities in the late 1630s and early 1640s. By late 1641, rising frictions in Munster had precipitated a general collapse in social and economic order with the outbreak of a wave of crop-spoiling, robbery and retention of rents on settler lands, which was intensified as rebellion broke out in Ulster in October of that year (*Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 143-157). At this point, deep-rooted fears and a distinctive siege-like mentality emerged in the Protestant settler community. The perceived terror lurking in Catholic Ireland subsequently legitimised and fuelled the violence that would characterise the New English response (*Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 142-143; 148-157). St. Leger, as president of Munster, dealt with the outbreak of disorder in the province by hastily dispatching colonial troops and pursuing a war on, and by, terror and executing several scores of Catholics, frequently indiscriminately, as testified by Thomas Carte, biographer of the first Duke of Ormond, and St. Leger himself (Carte, *Ormond*, Vol. 2: 264-266; *Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 143, 149-154). The president not only legitimised the number of killings but, in fact, lamented that the Catholics had not been sufficiently ‘roughly handled’ (*Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 154).

Despite the severe conduct of the garrison under St. Leger’s command, Catholic Munster remained loyal in the immediate aftermath through the continued assertion of allegiance from the landowning classes. Even in Tipperary, for example, where many of the executions of Catholic subjects had taken place, the leading Gaelic-Irish and Old English gentry presented themselves as faithful subjects of the Crown and servants of the New English provincial administration.<sup>9</sup> In late December 1641, they travelled together to Clonmel to meet St. Leger and make clear to him that:

*‘they waited upon his Lordship to be informed how affairs stood, and that they coveted nothing more than to serve his Majesty, and preserve the peace; and desired that he would be pleased to qualify them for it with authority and arms, in which case they would not fail to suppress the rabble, and secure the peace of the County’* (Carte, *Ormond*, Vol. 2: 265-266).

The president’s reply mirrored the endgame of his proto-racialist New English government in Munster:

*‘[he] did not receive their representation and offer, in the manner they expected; but in a hasty furious manner answered them, that they were all Rebels and he would not trust one soul of them, but thought it more prudent to hang the best of them’* (Carte, *Ormond*, Vol. 2: 266).

St. Leger’s radical colonial settler discourse marked firmly the authoritarian and doctrinaire ‘Othering’ of the Catholic Irish by the New English administration and inevitably guaranteed the outbreak of the 1641 Rebellion in the province. He had ignored the earlier advice of a more moderate colleague in securing the peace:

‘use those Lords and gentlemen very courteously, extolling the merits of that province [...] and the great confidence his majesty hath of their loyalty, whereof in the last wars they gave good testimony’ (*Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1647-1660, Addenda: 308 – letter from Sir John Bath to St. Leger, c.1633).

The alienation of the Catholic gentry of Munster ensured consequently their imagining that ‘distrusting of their loyalty, and destroying of their reputations, was the preface to a design of taking away their lives’ (Carte, *Ormond*, Vol. 2: 266). After their unsuccessful attempt to reassert their allegiance to the Crown and New English provincial government, and following the defection of the Pale to the rebels in late December, the rebellion in Munster began on New Year’s Eve 1641, when a combined Gaelic-Irish and Old English Catholic force in Tipperary led an attack on the historic town of Cashel and sacked it (Trinity College Dublin (hereafter TCD): MS 821 (1641 Depositions), fos. 7, 12, 221, 234, 255; Carte, *Ormond*, Vol. 2: 266). On taking the town, the rebels’ leader, Philip O’Dwyer, lamented to the Protestant citizens held captive that ‘they might thank the Lord President of Munster for the case they were in’ (TCD: MS 821, fo. 7). O’Dwyer and his Catholic comrades-in-arms were effectively forced to take sides in a radicalised political climate. Their ‘moment’ of resistance served to galvanise essentialised senses of Catholic and Protestant Irish identities, whose divergence would intensify post-Cromwell and after.

### **Conclusion: texts, contexts and postcolonialism**

Carroll (2003) has recently made the timely assertion that all too often we read colonial ‘texts’ out of ‘(con)text’. By taking the example of Sir John Davies’ endorsement of the English common law in his influential 1612 work, *A discovery of the true causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued*, she (2003: 65) argues that Davies’ upholding of English legality in theory masked a whole series of inconsistencies and indeed illegality in practice:

*‘How does his praise for the successful extension of the common law in Ireland – ‘that the streams of public justice are derived into every part of the kingdom’ – relate to his orders [as Attorney General of Ireland from 1603 to 1619] for the threatening, starving, and mutilation of juries, whose members did not return verdicts favourable to the English crown?’*

She goes on to remind us that:

*‘[t]he interpretation of the relation between text and context is clearly a matter of whose political interests are at stake [...] Those interested in maintaining that the extension of the common law was progress, regardless of how violently it was enforced, wanted to separate writing from events. This is a distinction that keeps us from seeing the darker side of the Renaissance in Ireland’* (Carroll, 2003: 65-66).

Joseph Conrad made the same argument brilliantly in *Heart of Darkness*:

*‘The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it [...] something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer sacrifice to’* (Conrad, 1996: 20).



When we ‘look into’ what lay behind the New English ‘civilising’ mission in early colonial Ireland, we frequently find in the largely colonial archives a proliferation of words like ‘reform’, ‘civility’, ‘progress’ and ‘order’. We rarely see contemporary Ireland through a lens that illuminates the veracity of colonialism’s racialism and militancy in practice, the ‘foul-rag-and-bone shop’, as Yeats might have put it, of colonialism.

The import of a postcolonial geographical inquiry of the past lies in its possibility to situate a differentiated analysis in context on the ground. For early colonial Ireland, it is imperative that the exclusivism, racialism and violence of colonial ‘practice’ are not overlooked in any critical postcolonial rethinking of the period. As argued elsewhere, writing the diverse and often conflicting narratives of Ireland’s early modern historical geographies must necessarily involve an engagement with the hybridity and fluidity of social and cultural interaction (Morrissey, 2003). It must also, however, entail a reading of the cultures of contemporary English colonialism’s ‘geography militant’, and its essentialisation, discrimination and later dispossession of a Catholic Other. This paper has attempted to draw attention to a militant and proto-racist settler discourse experienced on the ground in early colonial Ireland in distinct ways. In pre-1641 Munster, specifically, it was epitomised in the rhetoric and actions of its colonial administrative leader, Sir William St. Leger. Other influential actors in the colonial project in Munster, especially key members of the adventurer class like Sir Philip Percivall, had earlier played an important intermediary role between New English settlers and the existing population, and indeed had negotiated a number of shared economic and social links. Two weeks before the rebellion began in Munster, however, Percivall returned to England and abandoned a fledgling colonial society to the more militant and racist discourse of St. Leger.<sup>10</sup> The retreat of the more moderate and mediating voices of contemporary New English colonialism merely underlined the ascendancy of a more radical and exclusivist settler colonial visioning and practice.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Such aversion to theory has prompted Driver's (2001: 7) observation that 'academic debates over postcolonialism are becoming increasingly sterile, especially when framed in terms of an essential antagonism between history and theory'.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas (1994) makes a similar argument in *Colonialism's culture*.

<sup>3</sup> For more detailed commentary, see Driver (1992) *Geography's empire*.

<sup>4</sup> On this point, see Jones' (2004: 287) recent argument that contemporary human geography has experienced a 'considerable narrowing of the time periods that inform its empirical and conceptual studies'. Wishart (2004: 305), too, points out the restricted time-selectivity of historical geographical inquiry and the need for incorporating more diverse time-frames in generating 'alternative narratives'.

<sup>5</sup> For further discussion, see Morrissey (2003) *Negotiating colonialism*, chap. 4.

<sup>6</sup> The *Egmont Manuscripts* are a rich but much under-used source in studies of early modern Ireland, which is unfortunate given the plethora of materials contained within.

<sup>7</sup> On this point, see Morrissey (2005b) Cultural geographies of the contact zone.

<sup>8</sup> Early modern Ireland was not unique, of course, in experiencing the articulation of a more radical settler discourse on the ground in response to the perceived barbarism and inferiority of the Other. See, for example, Lester's (1998) work on the contestation of settler discourse in nineteenth-century South Africa in 'Otherness' and the frontiers of empire'.

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<sup>9</sup> Their efforts can be equated to the practice of what Pratt (1992, 1994) terms ‘autoethnography’, as discussed earlier. Autoethnography is typically employed as a ‘mode of transcultural interaction by members of subordinate groups whose subjectivities are forged in the context of cross-cultural relations of domination’ (Butz and Besio, 2004: 351).

<sup>10</sup> *Egmont MSS*, Vol. 1(1): 156.