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To Settle the Settler:
Pathologies of Colonialism in New Zealand History Films
1925 – 2005

Cherie Lacey

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Film, Television, and Media Studies,
The University of Auckland, 2010
Abstract

Social pathologies are thoroughly intertwined with colonial history. From the colonial project’s drive to categorise and treat indigenous disorders, to postcolonial theorists’ attempts to understand the psychological effects of (de)colonisation, psychology has provided a lens through which to investigate the (post)colonial condition. For the most part, these psycho-colonial investigations have focused on either the colonised or the coloniser, or on the relation between them, thus remaining silent on the nature of the settler subject. Unwilling to identify as the coloniser, and unable to identify as the colonised, the settler occupies an ambivalent subject position, in which traditional psychological investigations of colonialism are confounded. Furthermore, too often, postcolonial theorists have recourse to certain pathologies, such as anxiety, melancholy or trauma, without a thorough awareness of the intricacies of the disorder itself. This study is grounded in the belief that, when it comes to understanding the psychical structure of the settler, we need to read colonial disorders anew. With this in mind, my research returns to Lacanian psychoanalysis in order work through the (post)colonial disorders of the settler subject. Lacanian analysis provides us with one of the most complex languages through which to examine subjectivity and has a long history of association with the discourse of (post)colonialism; it thus provides us with a point of re-entry through which to approach a psychoanalytic exploration of settlement.

This examination will be carried out through analysis of New Zealand settler narratives; in particular, films that return to a specific time in New Zealand’s early settlement period: the New Zealand Wars (1843-1972). The Wars occurred in response to what many Māori understood to be breaches in the Treaty of Waitangi (signed in 1840), and were instrumental in forging the identities of both Māori and Pākehā as peoples. Narratives of the New Zealand Wars have been repeated throughout New Zealand’s cinematic history, and act as crucibles for the formation of Pākehā (white settler) identity at the time of their making. As ‘veils of fantasy’ (in Slavoj Žižek’s words), films provide us with a back-door into knowledge; by paying attention to what is not said about colonial history, to the unspoken and the unspeakable in these films, my research attempts to reveal something about the concealed unconscious structure of the settler subject in New Zealand society.
Dedicated to

Susan Claire Lacey

and

Michael Paul Lacey
Acknowledgements

Above all, I wish to thank my primary supervisor Laurence Simmons for his ongoing enthusiasm for this project. Laurence has been a constant source of guidance, support, and knowledge throughout the course of this research – an inspiration in the art of reading against the grain. Thanks must also go to Simone Drichel and Ranjana Khanna for their critical insight and invaluable comments. Annie Goldson was instrumental in the early stages of this research, and has been a valuable source of advice throughout. Further mention must be made to academic staff in the Department of Film, Television, and Media Studies at the University of Auckland. In particular, I thank Annamarie Jagose and Misha Kavka for their support. I owe much to the Centre for Lacanian Analysis in Auckland, and the Australian Centre for Psychoanalysis in Melbourne, for their invaluable dialogue on Lacanian psychoanalysis. Kiri Griffin from the New Zealand Film Archive was an inexhaustible source of knowledge and information on New Zealand cinema. I thank her for the hours of work she put into sourcing, arranging, and photocopying documents. To my dear friends Vulcan Demirkan-Martin and Anna Jackson, who convinced me to leave the house when I insisted I would rather stay in and work: I have you to thank for my sanity. To Irene Lee, words cannot express how thankful I am for your friendship, your generosity of knowledge, your therapeutic wisdom, and your companionship through the jouissance of psychoanalytic knowledge. For her encouragement, critical engagement, and for designing the diagrams in this work, I would like to thank my sister, Sonya. To my nana and granddad, grandma and granddad, Mark, Boston, Carol and Jenny, who remind me of the importance of family. I owe so much to my parents, Sue and Paul Lacey, who taught me to pursue my dreams, gave me the ability to do so, supported me when things got rough, and who always make their love felt in ways that are impossible to name. Most of all, to James, my love, my best friend, my Osram, who supported me in so many ways throughout the course of this thesis and showed me a happiness I never thought possible.

***

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When referencing works by Jacques Lacan, in-text citations follow this formula: Seminar: Lecture, Page. For example, the third page of the fifth lecture in his *Seminar on Identification* (IX) will appear as: (IX.5, 3).

The bibliography contains full references for the following, and less utilised, works:

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# Glossary of Māori Words

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<tr>
<td>Ariki</td>
<td>High chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwi</td>
<td>Tribe, bone, race, people, nation, strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitiaki</td>
<td>Guard, protector, trustee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maniapoto</td>
<td>Ngati Maniapoto: A tribe based in the Waikato-Waitomo region of New Zealand’s North Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māoritanga</td>
<td>Māori culture, Māori perspective, Māori way of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moko</td>
<td>Tattoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngā Puhi</td>
<td>A northern tribe, spanning from South Hokianga, to the Bay of Plenty, and south to Whangarei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pā</td>
<td>Stockade, fort, stronghold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pākehā</td>
<td>Non-Māori, European, Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiaha</td>
<td>Long club, wooden weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapu</td>
<td>Sacred, forbidden, confidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taurekareka</td>
<td>Slave, prisoner of war, scoundrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Reo</td>
<td>The voice, language, or speech of the Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohunga</td>
<td>Expert, specialist, priest, artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turangawaewae</td>
<td>Place to stand, domicile, home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tūtū ngārahu haka</td>
<td>Posture dance performed by men before going into battle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utu</td>
<td>Reciprocal or equivalent act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiata</td>
<td>Chant of lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakapapa</td>
<td>Genealogy, cultural identity, family tree</td>
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</table>

All definitions are sourced from P.M. Ryan’s *Dictionary of Modern Māori*; full bibliographic details can be found at the end of the thesis.