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René Dietrich and Kerstin Knopf: Biopolitics, Geopolitics, Life. Settler States and Indigenous Presence

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'Biopolitics, Geopolitics, Life' is an insightful compilation of different articles, each describing the relation between biopolitics and biogeopolitics with various core themes. The book is both resourceful and knowledgeable for scholars researching settler colonialism and Indigenous peoples. It covers a wider area ranging from North America to the Global South, i.e. Australia. The most interesting feature of this book does not lie in its compilation of a wide range of articles but it lies in the way that no two articles or chapters have a common object of discussion. In the following paragraphs, I will deal with this in detail. Each section of this work helps us understand the two concepts of biopolitics and biogeopolitics. It goes beyond the traditional understandings of linkages between biopolitics and biopower, and biopolitics and biogeopolitics. I want to highlight here that some of the articles begin with sharp and focused statements, which are both inquisitive and intriguing. In the following, I will bring out the interesting areas of research in different articles, including the foreword.

In the 'Foreword', with the help of the film 'Blood Quantum', the author focuses on settler colonialism in Quebec. The film deals with the insatiable settler colonizers, violence against Indigenous people in the form of the doing away with of Aboriginal treaty rights, and the biopolitical and geopolitical entanglement between Indigenous presence and settler colonial occupation. Indigenous relations are grounded in necropolitics, and tribal sovereign immunity is nonetheless central to Indigenous sovereignty. This tribal sovereign immunity is articulated and contested against the colonial powers and their institutions. This film reflects the long history of colonial bio-warfare against Indigenous people. Through this film, we can understand that settler colonialism is not only limited to conventional warfare or subjugation of Indigenous people but also manifests in the politics of life which goes beyond the traditional conventions of power.

This volume emphasizes the unconventional practices by the settlers to manifest their politics of violence by capturing the pivotal political, social, and economic structures. In contestation to this onslaught, questions of how the struggle for decolonization was conceived and carried forward by Indigenous people and what changes it brought to the Indigenous ecosystem form the larger part of this research.

The introductory part by Rene Dietrich questions the normativities of biopolitics and geopolitics of settler colonialism. It goes into lengthy detail on the points raised by different contributions from this compilation regarding the different kinds of onslaught on the part of the colonizers. Broadly, this section

meticulously discusses details like the penetration by colonial power into the biopolitics of Indigenous people, which is thus entangled with geopolitics. Various ideas related to biopolitics, geopolitics, and life like Michel Foucault's idea of biopower and biopolitics (5), Giorgio Agamben's concept of 'bare life' (6), and Mark Rifkin's concept of 'bare habitance' (6) are discussed. Lastly, settler colonial powers are engaged in altering the structures (thought, politics, and traditions) of Indigenous people, while having contributed to the establishment and strengthening of colonial and post-colonial structures. This work manifests the view that post-colonial structures propagated liberal traditions which they have never practised in the context of the Indigenous people.

Mishuana Goeman's 'You tell me your stories and I will tell you mine: Witnessing and Combating Native Women's Extirpation in American Indian Literature' focuses on the deconstruction of colonial statecraft and its failure to reduce resource exploitation and the "epidemic of sexual assault on American Indian Reservations" (45). These cruelties are archived as part of the oral traditions of Indigenous communities, contemporary fiction, and poetry, which stand testimony to the trials of the violence unleashed by different arms of the settlers.

Sandy Grande's 'The Biopolitics of Aging: Indigenous Elders as Elsewhere' highlights the factor of ageing in the real terms of biopolitics, i.e. how ageing can be defined in terms of power and life. This addresses the precarious approach of the settler administration towards the aged, both in the early stages of settler colonialism and the contemporary times where it is linked with the economy. This is manifested in the tactics of the settler state which seem decisively eliminative. The role of neoliberal institutions is highlighted in this article, which actually act as the executors of their policies distinct by the notion of "precarity as a social condition marked by economic insecurity" (66) towards aged Indigenous people.

Robert Nichols' 'The Colonialism of Incarceration' deals with the incarceration of Indigenous people. The tougher attitude towards the Indigenous youth and the correctional homes reflects the reality of the increasing number of prisons and carceral power by the settler states. This reminds me of Jeremy Bentham's concept of the 'Panopticon' where the state's power would be visible but unverifiable. Different forms of surveillance are part of this agenda. These coercive and vindictive policies towards Indigenous people have further isolated them and increased the politics of identity and assimilation.

David Uahikeaikalei'ohu Maile's 'Are Hawaiians Indians?' discusses the nefarious necropolitics of the settlers in encouraging divisive politics among Indigenous communities. This can undermine the rights of self-determination and sovereignty of the Indigenous groups. The author terms it 'colonial governmentality', where inclusive and exclusive policies by settler governments vary among Indigenous communities. The paradox among the settler states and neoliberal institutions' norms and practices is evident in racialization and discrimination of their attitudes towards Indigenous people. This is reminiscent of the Chinese government's divisive and assimilationist policies towards the Muslim communities of Hui and Uyghurs.

Shona N. Jackson's 'Postcolonial Biopolitics and the Hieroglyphs of Democracy' is a strong critique, which highlights the contradiction between policy and

practice. The Amerindian Act 2006, which deals with the collective rights and self-determination of the Amerindian villages and communities, diversifies the colonial narratives and discourses regarding the rights of Indigenous communities. The post-colonial apparatus has adopted new tactics to control the lands and people thus moving to different levels of biopolitics. As the author highlights, that is, for example, the role of democratic institutions and traditions in increasing ties with Indigenous people. This cultural reification, rather than cultural obliteration, is quite questionable as this increases cultural assimilation and can serve the divisive politics of the postcolonial biopolitics of the settler states.

Mark Rifkin's 'Fictions of Land and Flesh: Blackness, Indigeneity, Speculation' deals with narratives and discourses of Indigenous people and how they are linked with biopolitics. This article emphasises the role of Black freedom struggles, Indigenous people's self-determination movements, and how their orientations and narratives are both intellectually and politically undermined. The mapping of contemporary life and conditions will have a profound influence on social life. This depends on the construction of the realities and their impact on the society. The narratives and discourses of the post-colonial states are quite contrary where they attribute indigenous communities for independence to Indigenous reactionism and aggression.

Sabine N. Meyer's "'I was Nothing but a Bare Skeleton Walking the Path': Biopolitics, Geopolitics, and Life in Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear*' deals with the critical understanding of the book titled 'Pushing the Bear' by Diane Glancy. Here, the author emphatically agrees with Glancy's view that American policy has to be re-examined and retold in the context of existing Indigenous historiography and the rewriting of official narratives. Meyer calls for a revisiting of Euro-centred visions of "bare life and biopolitics" (178). The major project underlying colonial biopolitics is to eliminate the national memory of Indigenous people in order to erase their linkages with their land. The decimation of the collective memories of Indigenous people amounts to a great deal of success for the colonizers.

Michael R. Griffiths' 'Unseen Wonder: Decolonizing Magical Realism in Kim Scott's *"Benang"* and Witi Ihimaera's *"Maata"*' focuses on the hierarchical structures of knowledge systems. The concept of 'magic realism' is construed here with the downplaying of Indigenous knowledge systems in contrast to Western empiricism and orientation. This was made part of the centre-periphery distinctions and became a factor in the biopolitical and geopolitical war. In this article, the misconception of the concept of magic realism, i.e. the genre of literature that treats the real world as an undercurrent of magic or fantasy, is highlighted. It defies and deconstructs the narratives of well-established authors from Indigenous communities. The technological domination of the settler states is overpowering the Indigenous knowledge systems. The author points out the interlinkages between colonial modernity and Indigenous modernity.

'Agency and Art: Survivance with Camera and Crayon' by Jacqueline Fear-Segal focuses on the colonial domination over the minds of Indigenous people in the field of drawing and photography. These colonial tactics are represented as a sense or moment of pride for the Indigenous people who were part of these

projects. The intricate idea is how the moment of pride leads to the misconception that Indigenous people are equal to the settlers. The false sense of equality is based on them being part of these monumental projects of colonization.

Kerstin Knopf's 'Land through the Camera: Post/Colonial Space and Indigenous Struggles in Birdwatchers (Terra Vermelha)' can be associated with the post-colonial territorialisation of biopolitics and how it is depicted in various media. It explains the vast uneven changes in the social and natural spaces through which Indigenous people are becoming landless and are being robbed of their nature. The author beautifully engages the reader with the help of the film 'Birdwatchers'.

To conclude, this work is a rich compilation of contemporary debates on the politics of Indigenous life within the biopolitics and necropolitics of settler colonial institutions and powers. It is not limited to an understanding of the concept of 'biopower' but moves beyond this by dealing with points like land, labour, and racialization. The criticality lies in contesting issues like the colonial divisions of humanity, and questioning the colonial practices of racialization of Indigenous relations with their land and kin. Here, it is essential to understand how settler colonizers fostered the establishment of capitalist and liberal practices as part of their institutions. Primarily, the compilation's argument is that settler colonialism is part of a wider project of interlinked biopolitics and geopolitics to initiate and perpetuate institutional and incremental changes to the occupied land. This serves its own purposes; it is discussed, for example, how the constitutions of these settler states are instrumentalized to complete their Colonization projects.

Even though 'Right to Life' is construed as a fundamental right and a basic human right in these liberal colonial states; why was there state violence and vilification of Indigenous people fighting for their kin and land? The normativities of the definitions of biopower and biopolitics are questioned and challenged by the contributors.

The introductory part helps the reader to understand the central questions addressed in this book, for instance: How do biopolitical and geopolitical techniques help in producing normativities; relatedly, how do colonial powers manipulate these gaps and try to sustain the logics of manifestation of power, discourses and narratives? This work further helps us to understand minute details of how biopower is wielded to extricate a well-established set of geopolitical practices. Briefly, it is the question of the suppression of Indigenous people by Settlers by employing biopolitics. How the settlers employed their biopolitics to suppress the biopolitics of the Indigenous people is also an important question here. In different articles in this work, the respective authors tried to showcase governmental techniques applied by the settlers against Indigenous people. This reminds me of the post-colonized or liberated states' policies towards Indigenous and minority communities. They also became part of the monumental post-colonial liberal structures and are extremely focused on optimizing benefits for themselves.

After critical analysis of this book, it is found that it is one of the significant works for cultural and literary studies. Both scholars and students of cultural and literary studies can refer to this book as it stands as an exemplary work on settler colonialism.

Author:

Vijaya Chamundeswari is an early career researcher. Her research is focused on ethnicity, nationalism, nation-states. Her newfound interests are environmental politics and impact of climate change on the Indigenous people. Vijaya's doctoral thesis investigated the Uyghur community of Xinjiang, China. Her area of interest broadly includes emerging global issues which are undermining the post-colonial global order.