

CFP: Settler Social Identities: Rational Recreation in the Long Nineteenth Century
24-25 July 2018, University College Dublin

Confirmed keynotes:

Dr Natasha Eaton (University College London)

A/Professor Clara Tuite (University of Melbourne)

This two-day conference, to be held at the Humanities' Institute, University College Dublin, will bring together an international network of scholars in the interdisciplinary field of settler colonial studies to consider the role that settler literary and social institutions played in the formation of colonial and imperial identities in the long nineteenth century. Historian James Belich's influential exploration of the economic history of the 'settler explosion' that created what Belich terms the 'Anglo World' between 1815 and 1920 inaugurated a reassessment of the political, economic and cultural influence of Anglophone settler colonies. Over the past decade, scholars in the interdisciplinary field of nineteenth-century settler studies have begun to argue that, far from simply replicating a series of 'little Britains' across the globe, the 'empire migrants' of the Anglophone settler colonies developed new forms of national and trans-national identification independent of (albeit in relation to) British national and imperial identities (Harper and Constantine). Interdisciplinary in nature, this conference aims to analyse the role popular entertainments, associational life and literary culture have played in defining and disseminating these new forms of national and trans-national belonging in the British settler colonies of Africa, Asia, North America and Australasia.

Responding to Russell and Tuite's call to consider sociability as 'a text in its own right', this conference will examine the role literary sociability and associational life performed in defining and regulating the ideologies of citizenship in the settler colonies. Focusing on a broad definition of rational recreation this conference will explore how popular reading practices, circulating libraries, public lectures, soirées, exhibitions, clubs, societies and other associations created and reinforced notions of 'respectability' and 'improvement' that both projected an image of coherent community in nascent settler colonies, and defined who was included and excluded from these new colonial formations. Focusing on the popular and recreational, we encourage papers which engage with understudied facets of colonial experience including the experiences of women, working-class settlers, and indigenous and minority groups. In considering webs of cultural association we also create space for approaches to the field which privilege intra-colonial and trans-peripheral networks of influence, complicating the traditional periphery/metropole binary.

We welcome proposals for individual twenty-minute papers or three paper panels on the following themes:

- Settler literary and cultural institutions and associational life
- Intra-imperial or trans-regional intellectual networks in which settler literary and cultural institutions proved important 'nodes'
- Colonial print, visual and material culture
- Popular lecturing and popular reading in the colonies
- Methodological papers about approaches to the study of settler cultures and societies
- Colonial exhibitions and Worlds' Fairs
- The relationship between literary culture and the (trans)formation of national, colonial and imperial identities
- The relationship between cultures of intellectual 'improvement' and ideologies of exclusion based on class, race, gender in the colonial context
- The ways minority groups used sociability to gain influence across these intra-colonial and trans-peripheral networks.

Guide for submissions:

Please send 250-word abstracts with a short biography to the conferenced email address: settlersocialidentity@gmail.com.

If you are submitting a proposal for a panel, please include an abstract for each paper (250 words) and a summary of the panel theme (300 words). Please include short biographies for all the speakers on the panel.

All proposals should include your name, email address, and academic affiliation (if applicable).

Deadline for submissions: Tuesday 1 May 2018

Organising Committee:

Dr. Sarah Comyn

Dr. Lara Atkin

Dr. Sarah Sharp

Dr. Kathryn Milligan

For any enquiries please contact: settlersocialidentity@gmail.com

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