The Mammon of Melbourne:
George Chamier’s ‘The Story of a Successful Man: An Australian Romance’
(1895)

Sean Sturm

When about to leave Melbourne—soon after Cup Day in 1895, he would have us believe—Mark Twain asks, ‘And what was the origin of this majestic city and its efflorescence of palatial town houses and country seats?’ He answers with a cliché—but attaches it to an aphorism more apt:

Its first brick was laid and its first house built by a passing convict. Australian history is almost always picturesque; indeed, it is so curious and strange, that it is itself the chiefest novelty the country has to offer [...] It does not read like history, but the most beautiful lies.¹

Chamier would agree. His ‘The Story of a Successful Man: An Australian Romance’;² published that same year, offers an alternative history of Marvellous Melbourne as Mammon, an imaginary location or ‘marvellous place’ that is a monument to speculative capitalism (XXV). It is a species of settler-colonial metropolis—as against those of the colonies of occupation, like Algiers, Bombay or Cape Town—that is distinctively ‘econometric’, a place that takes money to be the measure of all things, and utopian, a loose-rooted ‘no-place’ (Gk ou-topia). This econometric utopia foreshadows the shift in modernity from what might be called, to adapt Peter Sloterdijk’s terminology, ‘exoteric’ (territorial or invasive) to truly ‘global’ (terrestrial or pervasive) globalisation.³ Transmitted rather than transplanted
from Europe, as it were, Melbourne turns out to be a halfway house between the historical rooted metropolis (London) of old capitalism and the posthistorical unrooted—and entirely translatable—metropolis (Dubai, perhaps) of transcendental capitalism. Though it seems colonial, it is a place ‘of the most modern type’, as Chamier’s narrator describes it (II). The space of this in-between or metakosmos (Gk ‘interstice’) is my topic here.

Chamier’s tramtasman trilogy

The space between the different worlds is called by Epicurus μετακόσμια [metakosmia], by Lucretius intermundia. It is firstly the place where new worlds may come into being, secondly the dwelling place of the gods.

—C. J. De Vogel, Greek Philosophy

The first two novels of George Chamier’s trilogy, Philosopher Dick: Adventures and Contemplations of a New Zealand Shepherd (1890) and A South-Sea Siren: A Novel Descriptive of New Zealand Life in the Early Days (1895), set in the Canterbury Province in the 1860s, are well thought of, if not well known here in New Zealand—but unknown in Australia. The novel that completes the trilogy, ‘The Story of a Successful Man: An Australian Romance’, set in Marvellous Melbourne in the 1860s and ‘70s, remained unknown until it materialised in Australia in the 1990s in a ‘press copy’, as Carol Franklin reports in ‘A Lost Novel by George Chamier’ (1994). This discovery went unremarked here until lately.

‘The Story of a Successful Man’ takes place in the colonial metropolis of ‘Marvellous Melbourne’ during the land boom of the 1870s. Chamier’s stand-in, the narrator Tim (no surname), is the lawyer of a ‘smart’ (ruthless) and successful ‘land boomer’ or speculator, Frederick Power, with whom he emigrated and the
story of whose rise and fall he tells. Tim could easily be the Richard (Dick) Raleigh of Chamier’s Canterbury novels all grown up and chastened by his experiences in the Canterbury settlement. He is neither smart nor successful, suffering at the whim of his unhappy boss, but in the end it is his philosophy of ‘scrambl[ing] through’ and taking the ‘round-about’ way in life that wins over Power’s amoral, go-ahead materialism that brooks no obstacles (II). Power’s ‘straight line’ life only speeds him to an early death—though he is lauded by his public nonetheless; Tim lives happily ever after and writes their story. While Power is a ‘representative settler’, Tim is the ‘unrepresentative’ settler who represents him.9

Thus Tim makes sense of his life in hindsight, as Chamier does with his trilogy of novels. What interests me here, however, is not the chiastic form of the narrative—how Tim’s ‘comedown’, ‘scramble through’ life and ‘happily ever after’ end mirrors in inverted form Power’s material rise, outward success (but ‘inward’ failure) and personal fall. Tim ends up materially unsuccessful, but personally ‘successful’ (or happy), Power materially successful, but personally not. Or, in terms of their settlement, Power as a representative settler dies unsettled, while Tim as an unrepresentative or unsettled settler dies settled.

Nor, exactly, is what interests me the ‘providential aesthetic’ of settlement that this narrative reveals: the idea that, despite life on the ground for Tim always being something of a scramble, he can get settled, insofar as an unsettled settler like him (or Chamier) can, by getting his own story straight.10 His narrative serves as an aesthetic solution to the problem of his own unsettlement. Constructed ‘with the conviction that everything has been for the best’, as if providentially, it mirrors—perhaps intentionally, even ironically—the teleological narrative of the settlement of Melbourne: from the ‘early days’ of the gold-rush, through a ‘progressive stage’ of rapid growth in their aftermath, through a period of ‘steady development’, to a final ‘equilibrium’,

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whereupon ‘the great city had assumed something of its matured character and appearance’ (II).

It is in the ‘character and appearance’ of Melbourne as Chamier presents it, or, more precisely, in the spatial aspect of the world of ‘The Story of a Successful Man’ that my interest lies. Patrick Evans describes Chamier’s Canterbury diptych as moving Raleigh ‘from countryside to township to colonial metropolis’—namely Wellington, where he heads at the end of *A South-Sea Siren*—‘in a remarkably sophisticated anticipation of the large thematic movement of New Zealand writing in the twentieth century’, implying a grand antipodean narrative of settlement as a centripetal movement toward the city.\(^{11}\) In fact, unbeknownst to Evans, Chamier had completed that movement in ‘The Story of a Successful Man’ when his protagonist Tim fetched up in the metropolis of Melbourne.\(^{12}\) The centripetal movement of the trilogy explicates the sequence of three settler spaces schematised in Table 1: the frontier, the town and the city or colonial metropolis; here I focus on the third.

**The topos of Marvellous Melbourne**

[...] a bustling hubbub of the most modern type, roaring, rattling, pushing, striving; splendid and squalid, refined and corrupt [...].

—George Chamier, ‘The Story of a Successful Man’ (II)

Leaving aside for now the imaginary location of the settlement as ‘the fifth quarter of the globe’, as *metakosmos* or interstitial space, the fictional world of the novel comprises four main real-world locations, the first three arranged concentrically about Melbourne as new New World metropolis, alternative to the fourth, the Old and old New World metropolises. First, there is the metropolis proper of Melbourne, with its settings of
Table 1

Chamier's Settler Trilogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novel</th>
<th>Mythical Location</th>
<th>Actual Location</th>
<th>Genre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Philosopher Dick</em></td>
<td>The frontier station</td>
<td>Horsley Down ('Marino Station')</td>
<td>The 'rolling stone' novel or pioneer memoir</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>North Canterbury NZ</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>A South-Sea Siren</em></td>
<td>The small town</td>
<td>Leithfield ('Sunnydowns')</td>
<td>The colonial comedy of manners</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Canterbury NZ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The Story of a</td>
<td>The colonial metropolis</td>
<td>Melbourne ('Marvellous Melbourne')</td>
<td>The biography of the 'representative settler'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successful Man'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
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Lonsdale Street, the ‘Kangaroo’ (and other pubs and eating-houses) and Power’s office. Second, there are the settings in the suburban periphery, both settled ones like Tim’s place in the suburbs and relatively unsettled ones like Power’s new settlements of ‘Balmoral’ and ‘Brindisi’. Then there are the more peripheral, largely unsettled or bush settings like Bendigo, Ballarat and ‘Rabbitville’, and finally the overseas settings, both the ‘Homely’ (or Old World) ones of Devonshire, London, Europe (especially Lake Geneva), and less Homely New World ones like America. The geopolitical poles of the colonial place are established early: ‘between ‘at home’, namely, Home (England, or more broadly, Europe), and ‘here’, that is, Australia at ‘the other end of the world’ (XXV). Initially, Home is represented by the metaphorical ‘gold fields [sic] of Merrie England’, hierarchy and aristocracy, parents and the professions, and conventional morality; Australia is represented by the ‘goldfields of Victoria’, democracy and meritocracy, wayward sons, ‘speculation and enterprise’, and the displacement of conventional morality (I). If at Home everyone has their place, here everyone has their price. Tim suggests that he had emigrated because he ‘longed for freedom’, that is, to ‘sh[ake] off the shackles of conventionality’, which he identifies with ‘the Old World, with all its irksome restrictions’ (II). In addition to seeing ‘the Old World [as] “played out”’, he and Power had imagined the New World would offer ‘a fair field and no favor [sic]’ for ‘speculation and enterprise’ without hierarchy, aristocracy and the other obstacles to stand in the way of the entrepreneur (I).

Tim gets what he wishes for—in spades—though he misrecognises it. On arrival, he gets a job as a lawyer in the deeds office of the Water Department (where Chamier himself worked as an Assistant Engineer from 1873-77). His first impressions are ambivalent:

My first impressions were of wonder not untinged with disappointment. I was forcibly struck with the amazing
prosperity of the place, but dissatisfied with its character. I had fled from established systems and old-fashioned civilisation to a new world, which I had fancied something radically different. I had expected to find quite another order of things, with boundless vistas of opportunity, freedom, and adventure, instead of which I found myself in a bustling hubbub of the most modern type (II).

As he says, ‘It was too much like what I had come from, without the charm of artistic beauty or venerable associations. I should have preferred it less civilised’ (II). In effect, he—and by implication, Chamier—finds the new New World of Melbourne too much like the Old World: it is hyper-civilised or -metropolitan, not in its degree of cultural refinement but in the radical nature of its capitalism.

For Chamier, then, Marvellous Melbourne is brazenly capitalist: ‘demoralised’ and ‘pushing’. Its founding principle is summed up in the maxim from Horace: ‘Quaerenda pecunia prima est, / Virtus post nummos’ (‘money is to be sought for first of all; virtue after wealth’). As Tim puts it, ‘Money was the god, and the “smart” man his prophet’ (III). Power, the prophet of Mammon, spells it out: ‘[This] world places happiness in money [...]. You can purchase everything the world has to offer for money—all the rest is visionary and emptiness’—an apt axiom for the econometric utopia (XXIV). Chamier sees Melbourne as a kind of bubble-world kept puffed up by boosterist rhetoric, a shrine to settler capitalism dressed up with an uneasy mix of unsentimental meritocracy (for the capitalists like Power) and sentimental domesticity (for the workers, including bureaucrats like Tim, the ‘undercapitalised’ class). Thus locals wonder at their ‘superhuman achievements’, ignore or even endorse political ‘corruption’, and pointedly eschew comparisons with the Old World (II, IX).
But Chamier implies that this unwillingness to compare is not just chauvinism or bigotry. Franklin argues, extrapolating from a well-known passage from Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* that describes 'colonization' as a 'revolutionary element' in 'modern bourgeois society', that settler ideology in Marvellous Melbourne is 'colonialism taken to its logical capitalist and individualist extreme'. In other words, if colonialism is capitalism in the extreme, then Marvellous Melbourne is colonialism in the extreme. Settler society in Australia, as exemplified by Marvellous Melbourne, is bourgeois through and through. It is an experiment in pure capitalism. In geopolitical terms, the clearance (or *terra nullius*) policy and lack of a landed aristocracy create an apparently open field—namely, 'a fair field and no favor'—for settlement and an ahistorical and relatively rootless, egalitarian society, marked by a market economy based in land booming and other speculation (I). This economy gives rise to a self-fashioned petty aristocracy of squatters and *nouveaux riches*, along with a co-opted bureaucracy and working class, who administer the market and serve as consumers of its products. The arch-capitalist land boomer as representative settler, viz. Power, is its exemplar. As such, he embodies what Philip Fisher in *Still the New World* calls the 'new man' characteristic of new-world settler societies that are driven by the dynamic of 'creative destruction' characteristic of 'enterprise capitalism'. Like Emerson's new man, who 'always finds himself standing on the brink of chaos, always in a crisis', Power thrives on what Fisher calls such 'permanently unsettled conditions' (in business, at any rate); Tim doesn't—he's unsettled by his unsettlement.

... ...

The geopolitics of the place are such that Australia itself is for Chamier an imaginary location or 'marvellous place' (XXV). The
narrator’s ruling geographical metaphors are of Australia as a place of romance—literally a utopia, a ‘no-place’: ‘the fifth quarter of the globe’ and not like ‘any other part of the civilised world’ (V, XIV). And Marvellous Melbourne is imagined, firstly, as a speculative bubble, a ‘mammon’—with Power as Mephistopheles or Faust, having borrowed Mephistopheles’s powers: infernal, magical, ominous and mad (XXVI). It is imagined, secondly, as a self-sufficient metropolis, where ‘local interest’ rules: ‘to [Power] what Paris is to the Parisian, that is, all the world’ (IX, XXV).

The metaphor of Melbourne as a Mammon—a place (rather than a personification, as in the Bible and Milton) of riches and avarice—is the dominant one. Tim compares the suburban settlement of Brindisi to John Milton’s ‘Pandemonium’, the ‘High Capital’ of Hell in Paradise Lost, which ‘rose like an exhalation’ at the command of Mammon (IX). It was created by ‘almost magical means’—like Melbourne when it arose ‘as if by magic’: ‘a range of shifting sandhills, with a sea frontage, and a tract of marshes in the rear, were transformed as if by magic into a […] seaside resort’ (VI, II, IX). Thus, ‘Whole streets sprung out of the ground like mushrooms’ thaumaturgically (IX). As a ‘mighty magician’ and a “POWER” in the land, Power embodies this magical quality. Not only is he able to inveigle his victims—including Tim—by ‘fascinat[ing]’ them and appearing like ‘an angel of light’ when he is as ‘saturnnial’ as Mephistopheles—but he also possesses ‘the Devil’s gift’, having ‘acquired by some occult means […] the alchemist’s secret of modern times [by which] whatever he touched turned to gold’ (II, XII). Nonetheless, Power’s bargain—to trade personal happiness for success in business—is Faustian. He acts ‘as if the devil possessed him’ (II). Though he seeks personal happiness, he cannot give up business, which is ‘a gift from hell’ to him (VI). As Power says to Tim, mistaking Tim’s critical distance for apathy, ‘Money is not to be made in a half-hearted way, as you do everything. You must give up your whole soul to it—your mind,
your heart, your sleep, even your dreams. It must be [...] your sole purpose in life, your everything. That is not in your line' (XXVII). The bargain does go wrong, though his business never fails: wealth becomes 'an incubus [that] crushe[s] him with its weight' (XXII). As the narrator puts it, even when 'h[e] had solemnly decided to give up business [...] business would not give him up' (XXVII).

In keeping with its magicked-up nature, the world of the settlement seems to be wholly determined by fate. Fortune favours Power—in business, at least:

To the impartial looker-on [Tim at the time] it really seemed as if a special dispensation attended on my friend, so that whenever the element of chance came in, it would turn to his advantage. Fred. Power knew this, and he trusted to a great extent to his fortunate star. He was a child of fate (XIII).

For Power, the two fortunes—fate and wealth—seem to go hand in hand, because he works entirely according to the logic of the settlement. Hence, Power can describe his schemes as 'work[ing the] oracle' (VI). Tim is not so fortunate. For him, an omen spells 'a final adieu to all fond dreams of a life of happy and congenial independence' (VII). When he is broke after failing to find a job after his arrival in Melbourne, he finds a coin in the street and takes a meal in a cheap eating-house; seeing in there the 'seedy-looking individuals [...] who had evidently come down in the world' determines him in favour of taking the job Power has offered him. At this moment, as he says, 'my visionary life ended, and my practical existence began. I had weighed hard cash against poetry, and chosen the coin' (VII). From that point, it seems 'Dame Nature' is 'evilly disposed' to him, assigning Power to be 'the arbiter of [his] fate' (XV). Tim spends the rest of the novel coming to terms with Power and with his own fate, only able to make sense of the 'ups and downs' of his life as 'for the best' in hindsight (II).
The symbolic geography that underlies these geographical metaphors has horizontal and vertical aspects. On the face of it, its horizontal aspect is straightforwardly colonial: the centre is privileged over the periphery. Consequently, movement from Home (the metropolis of London) to here (the colonial metropolis of Melbourne) is represented as downward, read: bad. But Melbourne is also represented as an alternative metropolis, a ‘thriving centre’ to the suburban and bush country on its periphery. The centre of the city is the engine of the settlement. It represents both ‘civilisation’ or ‘luxury’ and the places where business is actually done: back alley pubs and eating-houses like the ‘Kangaroo’, underground and entered by a ‘back entrance’ down a ‘by-lane’ (II, VII). The fact that business is done underground and somewhat underhandedly signifies the mano a mano nature of colonial business, but perhaps also the geopolitical fact that actual land is changing hands in the speculative market of the land boomers, and that such land probably came into the hands of the speculators by morally ambiguous, not to mention originally invasive means. And it is a reminder that something cannot be made from nothing, that settlements do not arise magically, which Chamier well knew as an engineer familiar with the groundwork of suburban settlements like roads, tramways, sewerage and so on. Further, it alerts us to the fact, as Robert Young puts it in ‘Colonialism and the Desiring Machine’, that ‘cultural colonization [is] not simply a discursive operation but a seizure of cultural [...] space’. That is to say, the ‘waste land’ where settlements like Brindisi sprang up was already peopled—though it may well have seemed empty—and had to be unpeopled directly or indirectly before it could be repeopled with settler suburbanites (XI).

Perhaps in tacit recognition of this fact, Tim represents the city as ‘corrupt’, belying its appearance of ‘amazing prosperity’
with its antithetical ‘character’: ‘splendid and squalid, refined and corrupt, with the extremes of luxurious wealth side by side with rugged poverty’ (II). The reality of life for Tim ‘within the confines of this much despised civilisation’ is ‘cheap [...] quarters over a carpenter’s shop, in a little back street’, ‘shady localit[ies]’ like ‘Mrs. Cherrytree’s select establishment for young ladies in Little Diddle Street’, and a ‘countless multitude’ with ‘not one friendly hand that [he] could shake—or borrow a shilling from’ (II, VI, VII). Power himself implies that the city is unhealthy compared to his new suburban development of ‘Brindisi’, which is promoted as morally and bodily salubrious (XI). Accordingly, he heads out to the country in pursuit of a cure for his ill health brought on by overwork: first to an old mining town to recuperate, then to Rabbitville ‘on the border’ chasing a quack (XVI, XXIII). Constantinos Doxiades has argued in *Ekistics* that the process of settlement tends to spread centrifugally through suburban development—away from the engine of the settlement and toward the less settled periphery, and this is how Power represents the process on a visit to a new settlement: “In another three years”, remarked Power, “there won’t be a foot of vacant land left all about here, and twenty years hence this place will be near the heart of the city, and Melbourne will embrace these distant downs”*(V).*

The second and more significant vertical aspect of the symbolic geography of ‘The Story of a Successful Man’ fits with the conventional moral valuations, that is, up is good, down is bad—likewise, upward and downward mobility. Hence, Power rises to success and falls as he fails. Emigration to Australia, disillusionment and economic depression represent downward mobility. For example, the ‘fall’ of Brindisi is described as ‘an awful come down’ (XXI). It is also ‘a retrograde motion’ in the terms of the settlement’s narrative of progress, which demands that the settlement move onward as well as upward. Downward mobility or debasement does have its positive aspects from a colonial point of view: according to the Law of the settlement,
Tim ‘derive[s] a moral benefit’ from his “come down” and ‘plunge into the lower stratum of life’ on finding himself with few prospects on emigrating to Melbourne (VII). This debasement is seen to be levelling, to offer ‘a fair field and no favor’ to all comers and aspirants to the meritocracy (I).

In contrast, development, with the associated ‘puffing’, ‘enthusiasm’ and inflation, represents upward mobility (XI), hence the metaphors of development as ‘floating’ a settlement and of the settlement as a speculative bubble ‘blown into existence by puffing, and [...] swollen out to [...] enormous dimensions by public gullibility’ (XXI). The implication is that, for Chamier, the settlement of Marvellous Melbourne, rather than being founded on an imaginary void created by clearance like the settlement of Sunnydowns in *A South-Sea Siren*, is itself a void. Whereas the bubble-world of Sunnydowns inflated as the world of the first settlers, namely local Maori, was pushed down and out but paradoxically seemed to remain weighted to the ground by the effort of these sublimations, the world of the speculative bubble of Melbourne seems to float, barely touching the ground, as if cut off from the history of the place and its peoples. It is not that the first settlers of the place have been imagined out of existence, rather, that the new settlement is so imaginary, so fully imagined, that there is no room for them: all other worldviews have been closed out. ‘The Native’ does not even come into question in Marvellous Melbourne—hence the shading out of the other worlds and exclusionary sublimations in the figure on the next page.

The new place is so completely mediated by capitalism that, in keeping with Marx’s metaphor from *The Communist Manifesto*, ‘[a]ll that is solid melts into air’. It has been totally deterritorialized. In fact, Chamier suggests that his Marvellous Melbourne was dreamt up in the heads of speculative capitalists, as Power says of the suburban settlement of Balmoral: ‘I originated the scheme; it all came out of my brain’. Tim likens
the process of imagining or ‘originat[ing]’ the settlement to
authorship. Power is the ‘author’ of the settlement and the
development of the place seems wholly discursive: ‘dubb[ing]’ it
with ‘romantic names’, ‘lay[ing it] out (on paper)’, getting political
approval through ‘an Act of Parliament’, and then promoting the
settlement through ‘advertis[ing]’ in the press and ‘bill-sticking’
(XI). As such, he is like ‘the spectre who stalks behind’ the
bubble in the quote from Coleridge’s ‘Ode to Tranquillity’ that
serves as the epigraph to the Brindisi chapter: ‘The bubble floats
before; the spectre stalks behind’ (XI). 22 For Tim, who seems to
overlook the implications of this authorial analogy for himself as narrator, this makes the ‘fascinating transaction’ of setting up the settlement—literally ‘fascinating’ in its inveiglement of potential settlers—‘unsound at the core’ (VI). Unconsciously, the other settlers find it unsettling too. Hence, Tim describes the general ‘hubbub’ of ‘enthusiasm’ for the settlement of Brindisi at the auction as causing ‘such delightful confusion that most people lost their legs, and had as much as they could do to keep their legs’—never mind the fact that the settlement was literally ‘floated’ on a tract of ‘waste land [...] mostly under water’ (XI).

The nature of the alternative metropolis: spherology/sphairopoësis

First the universe was globalized with the help of geometry, then the earth was globalized with the help of capital [...].

—Peter Sloterdijk, ‘Against Gravity’

By way of conclusion, a question: if the settlement is so completely mediated by capitalism as to float free, totally deteritorialized, is the colony entirely imaginary or virtual in nature? If so, it is akin to a derivatives market—which can easily ‘bubble’, as Marvellous Melbourne did—or, to speak geopolitically, akin to a phantom limb of the Empire, one that presumably terminates in an ‘invisible hand’. Young talks this way: quoting Deleuze and Guattari, he describes ‘the Empire as [a desiring-]machine’ that replicates itself via ‘capital as a proliferating body, “money that produces more money”’. And, in order to proliferate, that invisible hand writes; thus, the globe becomes a ‘surface for the recording of the entire process of production of desire’, as Deleuze and Guattari put it. For Young, this is capitalism as ‘cartography’, as the operation of ‘a
territorial writing-machine’. This fits with the way Tim compares the process of imagining or ‘originat[ing]’ the settlement with authorship (XI)—and with Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s ‘art’ of antipodean colonisation, literary and planned from afar, literally in the case of the eight so-called ‘Wakefield towns’ in what became Australia and New Zealand.

However, as Young himself notes, this is too apolitical—or non-geopolitical—a reading of colonialism: it softens its invasive nature, which involves ‘physical appropriation of land’ and ‘the introduction of a new notion of land as a form of private property’, and ‘begins and perpetuates itself through acts of violence’. In keeping with the origin of its postcolonial politics in the linguistic turn, this reading is captured by the textual metaphor in Deleuze and Guattari’s characterisation of capitalism—and by extension colonialism—as the ‘twofold movement of decoding or deterritorializing flows on the one hand, and their violent and artificial [recoding or] reterritorialization on the other’. And the alternative reading Young offers remains textual, a matter of finding a more adequate code to describe the ‘culture change’ attendant upon colonialism:

Decoding and recoding implies too simplistic a grafting of one culture on to another. We need to modify this model to a form of palimpsestual inscription and reinscription, an historical paradigm that will acknowledge the extent to which cultures were not simply destroyed but rather layered on top of each other.

To redress this ‘hypertextuality’, we can give Young’s original geopolitical impetus free rein and think colonialism spatially, after Peter Sloterdijk’s ‘spherology’ or science of spheres. This theory explicates what Samuel A. Butler calls ‘the rise of the globe as the fundamental picture of the world’, in particular, globalization as ‘sphairopoièsis’ (Gk ‘sphere-making’). The
term ‘sphairopoïēsis’ alludes to the Hellenistic art of *sphairopoïēta*
or the ‘constructing of working models of the heavens’, be they mechanical, theoretical or natural.34 In ‘Reanimating the Place of Thought’, Nigel Thrift outlines the three phases of the history of this ‘outward spatial revolution’: the esoteric, the exoteric and the truly global.35 ‘[E]soteric geometricism’ is the metaphysical or *theoretical* globalisation of the Greeks, embodied in Parmenides’s image of being as global, which is esoteric in being confined, at least initially, to an inner circle of philosophers.36 ‘[E]xoteric cosmopolitanism’ is the nautical or *territorial* globalisation of the Iberians, embodied in Magellan’s redrawn globe, which is not esoteric in that it is taken to the world.37 ‘[G]lobal provincialism’ is the ‘atmospheric’ globalisation of the world-system within which transcendental capital circulates, embodied in the glocal places, projects and products of global corporates, for- and not-for-profit, which is *terrestrial* in that its reach is truly global.38 Thus, from theoretical to territorial to terrestrial globalisation, ‘the globe functions as a category by which a specific form of power is exerted upon reality’, namely sphairopoësis.39

To extrapolate, what we might call ‘sphairopoëtic settlement’ is spatial first of all. It proceeds by the setting-up of new spheres (with their geometry of insides, outsides and centres) in what by a gesture of deterritorialisation is made to seem like undifferentiated space or ‘waste land’. In this way, the new country is made inhabitable or able to be reterritorialized. The sphairopoëtic settlement, then, is actual rather than virtual and a hypertrophic limb of the Empire, as it were. Thus, whereas in colonial settlements the centre—the index of all action—is normally a European metropolis, Marvellous Melbourne sets itself up as an alternative centre, a settler-colonial metropolis.

In the second place, sphairopoëtic settlement is geopolitical; that is to say, except in its premodern phase, it is driven by capitalism. For Sloterdijk, Magellan eclipses Copernicus in the phase of territorial globalisation: ‘The fundamental fact of modernity is not that the earth orbits the sun, but rather that
money circumnavigates the earth'.

Territorial globalisation is, as Stuart Elden puts it, a 'imperial and commercial globalisation, which was brought about by Europe's colonialism and circumnavigation of the world in search of new markets and products'.

It works from the centre out, seeking new territories. But where territorial globalisation is invasive, terrestrial globalisation is pervasive and, in Jean-Pierre Couture's litotic phrase, 'seeks only to consolidate the great indoors of capitalism' by promoting the circulation of capital.

The Eurocentrism of the previous phase gives way to a sphere without a centre—or rather, with many centres, each a relatively free-floating node of capital, not unlike Chamier's vision of Marvellous Melbourne as an econometric utopia, a place that takes money to be the measure of all things, and a loose-rooted 'no-place' or utopia.

Chamier's alternative history of Marvellous Melbourne as a colonial metropolis thus foreshadows the shift in modernity from territorial or invasive to terrestrial or pervasive globalisation in the service of capitalism.

As both a hypertrophic limb of Empire and an econometric utopia, Melbourne sits halfway between the historical rooted metropolis of old capitalism and the posthistorical unrooted metropolis of transcendental capitalism.

The singular virtue of Chamier's history is that it imagines into being this historical and geopolitical metakosmos or in-between place, which, though it seems colonial, is 'most modern' (II). In this sense, 'The Story of a Successful Man' is metahistorical, well aware of itself as history—or as making history in what Hayden White would call the 'ironic' mode.

And by its modest subtitle, 'An Australian Romance', Chamier characteristically understates its purchase on the geopolitics of colonialism, and gives a further twist to Twain's aphorism about Australian history—that it is 'not [...] history, but the most beautiful lies'.

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Notes

1 Mark Twain, *Following the Equator* [1897], introd. by Anthony Brandt (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2005), p. 98.

2 George Chamier, ‘The Story of a Successful Man: An Australian Romance’, *The Country* 11 May-30 November 1895, hereafter abbreviated to ‘The Story of a Successful Man’. All references to the novel, which was published only in serial form with occasionally unclear or missing pagination, cite chapter numbers rather than page numbers for ease of reference.


7 Carol Franklin, ‘A Lost Novel by George Chamier’, *Proceedings: Association for the Study of Australian Literature, Sixteenth Annual*


12 See Sturm, pp. 231-34.

13 Horace, Epistle 1.1.53 (see Horace, Epistles, ed. by Roland Mayer [Cambridge: CUP, 1994], p. 56), quoted as the epigraph of Chapter III of ‘The Story of a Successful Man’.


16 Ralph Waldo Emerson, Society and Solitude: Twelve Chapters (Boston, MA: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870), p. 147, quoted in Fisher, p. 5.

17 See the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:19-21, 24) and the parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:9-13).


23 Qtd in Bettina Funcke, n. p.


26 Deleuze and Guattari, p. 12.

27 Young, p. 169.


29 Young, pp. 172-73.

30 Deleuze and Guattari, p. 37.

31 Young, pp. 173-74.


Parmenides, fragment 8: ‘But since there is a furthest limit, it is bounded on every side, like the bulk of a well rounded sphere’ (The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts, ed. by G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven [Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1975], p. 276).


40 Sloterdijk, 'Geometry in the Colossal', p. 33.


42 Couture, p. 151.

43 Quoted as the epigraph to Anckaert, p. 9.

44 See De Cauter, p. 271.


46 Twain, p. 98.
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