HUMANISM AND AMERICA

Humanism and America is the first major study of the impact of the Renaissance and Renaissance humanism upon the English colonisation of America. The analysis is conducted through an interdisciplinary examination of a broad spectrum of writings on colonisation, ranging from the works of Thomas More to those of the Virginia Company. Andrew Fitzmaurice shows that English expansion was profoundly neo-classical in inspiration, and he excavates the distinctively humanist tradition that informed some central issues of colonisation: the motivations of wealth and profit, honour and glory; the nature of and possibilities for liberty; and the problems of just title, including the dispossession of native Americans. Dr Fitzmaurice presents a colonial tradition which, counter to received wisdom, is often hostile to profit, nervous of dispossession and desirous of liberty. Only in the final chapters does he chart the rise of an aggressive, acquisitive and possessive colonial ideology.
The books in this series will discuss the emergence of intellectual traditions and of related new disciplines. The procedures, aims and vocabularies that were generated will be set in the context of the alternatives available within the contemporary frameworks of ideas and institutions. Through detailed studies of the evolution of such traditions, and their modification by different audiences, it is hoped that a new picture will form of the development of ideas in their concrete contexts. By this means, artificial distinctions between the history of philosophy, of the various sciences, of society and politics, and of literature may be seen to dissolve. The series is published with the support of the Exxon Foundation.

A list of books in the series will be found at the end of the volume.
For my parents
# Contents

Acknowledgements \hspace{1.5cm} page ix

1 Introduction \hspace{1.5cm} 1

2 The moral philosophy of Tudor colonisation \hspace{1.5cm} 20
   Tudor moral philosophy: the vita activa and corruption \hspace{1.5cm} 21
   Alexander Barclay’s scepticism \hspace{1.5cm} 25
   John Rastell’s apology \hspace{1.5cm} 28
   Richard Eden’s projections \hspace{1.5cm} 31
   Thomas Smith and Ireland \hspace{1.5cm} 35
   Humphrey Gilbert’s projects \hspace{1.5cm} 39
   The moral philosophy of Gilbert’s projects \hspace{1.5cm} 47
   Walter Ralegh’s projects \hspace{1.5cm} 50
   The moral philosophy of Ralegh’s projects \hspace{1.5cm} 53

3 The moral philosophy of Jacobean colonisation \hspace{1.5cm} 58
   The Virginia Company \hspace{1.5cm} 58
   The participants \hspace{1.5cm} 62
   The vita activa and corruption \hspace{1.5cm} 67
   Moral philosophy after tobacco \hspace{1.5cm} 87
   Newfoundland and Nova Scotia \hspace{1.5cm} 92
   New England \hspace{1.5cm} 97

4 Rhetoric – ‘not the Words, but the Acts’ \hspace{1.5cm} 102
   The foundation of commonwealths \hspace{1.5cm} 102
   Linguistic possession \hspace{1.5cm} 111
   Plain style and ‘Asiatic’ corruption \hspace{1.5cm} 129

5 Law and history \hspace{1.5cm} 137
   Religious justifications \hspace{1.5cm} 138
   Natural law: res nullius, trade and friendship \hspace{1.5cm} 140
   Conquest and just war \hspace{1.5cm} 146
   Legal humanism \hspace{1.5cm} 148
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>viii</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nostalgia for native virtues 157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The denial of dispossession 164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Machiavellian argument for colonial possession 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Shakespeare, <em>The Tempest</em> 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Smith 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Conclusion 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bibliography 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index 208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

This book has a history embracing more than ten years, in various characters, and has accordingly acquired some profound debts.

I have received generous support from St John’s College, Cambridge, Churchill College, Cambridge, and also from the Cambridge Commonwealth Trust. Since arriving at Sydney University I have received invaluable guidance from Michael Jackson, Richard Waterhouse and Shane White.

Early versions of the chapters have been delivered in a number of conferences and seminars. In particular the Atlantic History Seminar in August 1997 at Harvard University was an invaluable forum in which to present ideas and I thank Bernard Bailyn for the opportunity to participate and for the inspiration which he and the other participants provided. My thanks also to the participants in The touch of the real: A symposium hosting Stephen Greenblatt, at the Humanities Research Centre, the Australian National University, June 1998. Stephen Greenblatt’s generous suggestions were also greatly appreciated. I am grateful to the editors of The Historical Journal, The Journal of the History of Ideas and to Manchester University Press for permission to reproduce and revise previously published material.

More people than I can remember have aided in various ways. They include Richard Bourke, Martin Dzelzainis, Sam Glover, Mark Goldie, Neil Kenny, Andrew McRae, Jonathan Scott, John O. Ward and Iain Wright. Karen Kupperman and Anthony Pagden contributed greatly in advising on the direction the project should take. David Armitage has been unerring in his encouragement and unflinching in his intellectual generosity. My students have many times forced me to reconsider my convictions concerning some of the book’s central arguments. I am indebted also to Richard Fisher at Cambridge University Press for his great patience. The anonymous readers for the Press have been particularly helpful in the final stages.

I have several special debts. Conal Condren set me on the path that led me here. He has tried to teach me to be more sceptical, as well as the best
way to cook broad beans. Saliha Belmessous has read and commented on the manuscript more times than she would care to remember. She has tried to teach me to be less sceptical. I promise her never to mention the Virginia Company again, certainly not after 7 pm.

My greatest debt in the writing of this book is to Quentin Skinner. His support over the years is beyond praise. The example of his research and writing is surpassed only by his commitment in teaching – the two virtues are not always found in company.

At proof stage the text has been copy-edited with the greatest care by Hilary Scannell.