

# Polynesia is a Project, Not a Place: Regenerating Indigenous Futures

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Scholar Lorenzo Veracini has defined colonialism as “a demand for labour,” whereas settler colonialism is “a demand to go away.” Yet, these oppositional definitions obscure the ways that exploitation of labor and land are in fact intertwined. This talk examines how settler colonialism is much more complicated than a demand for Indigenous peoples to “go away,” and how we are all in the story of settler colonialism, even if we do not want to be there. Grounded in the contexts of settler colonialism in the Pacific, and Hawai‘i in particular, the talk examines an eclectic visual archive of depictions of settlers, natives, and immigrants or “arrivants.” From early twentieth century scientific “racial type” photographs to depictions of Pacific settler colonialism as U.S. southern slave plantations in the recent science fiction movie *Cloud Atlas*, the talk questions the different ways that indigenous Pacific Islanders and Asian immigrants are placed in varying, and notably gendered, proximities to whiteness and blackness. Against such examples of settler imaginaries, the talk also examines visual culture engaged in decolonizing and regenerating the Pacific beyond its image as a Western paradise.

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