

vid narratives and illustrative examples readers are brought into a cultural and political milieu, and into the lives of the young Iranian Americans. Accessible for undergraduates and lay audiences, and of particular value to Iranian Americans, the book beautifully weaves together analysis and narrative to demonstrate the complex dynamics of race-making, and how it is encountered individually and collectively with the potential of producing a transformative politics.

New York University

MITRA RASTEGAR

Maile Arvin. *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019, 328 pp, 19 illustrations. Paperback \$27.95. ISBN: 978-1-4780-0633-6.

Maile Arvin's *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania*, provides a critical and comprehensive review of settler understandings of race in Oceania, specifically in Hawai'i. Arvin contends that "science" between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries argued that Polynesians were a "primitive" form of "white civilizations" (2–3). This, in turn, supported settler claims to Polynesia while having the added effect of dispersing any apprehensions settlers had of displacing Indigenous inhabitants of their (is)lands. Arvin further maintains that while settlers (and their "white settler nation-states") acquired access to Polynesian lands, Polynesians did not receive the same cultural capital that comes with whiteness. Instead, they "became the feminized, exotic, possessions of whiteness" (14).

Within the field of Native American and Indigenous studies, queer and Indigenous feminists have often argued that gender and sexuality were targets of dismantling Indigenous governance systems and kinship systems, otherwise known as Indigenous ontologies. Arvin's coauthored article, *Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy*, articulates as much. Arvin primarily theorizes the *logic of possession (through whiteness)* with the *logic of elimination*, a concept reintroduced and popularized by Patrick Wolfe in the last two decades, as focusing "more precisely [on] the permanent partial state of the Indigenous subject being inhabited (being known and produced) by a settler society" (16). Part I of the text focuses on situating the history of possession through whiteness in three chapters. Arvin examines the so-called rigorous research of scholars beginning with early-nineteenth-century discourse claiming Polynesians had Aryan ancestry (Chapter 1) to physical anthropologist and eugenics work arguing Polynesian proximity to Caucasians (Chapter 2). The third chapter focuses on sociological texts and discourse maintaining that through assimilation, or rather, *possession*, racial difference will be eradicated and thus racial prejudice will cease to exist. Significantly, Arvin addresses the role of anti-blackness within these chapters, noting that binary thinking (in this case, black/white) assisted in the formation of Polynesians' proximity to whiteness. I respect Arvin's attention to how this was done by juxtaposing Polynesians (as *almost* white) with Melanesians (as black). Colonial

anxieties, during these historical periods, viewed black as synonymous with “savage[ry]” and “cannibal[ism].” This distinction between these ethno-geographical identities lends credence to Arvin’s analysis that mid-nineteenth- and mid-twentieth-century science is enveloped and steeped in racist, colonial understandings of indigeneity *and* blackness.

Part II elaborates on Arvin’s Indigenous feminist analysis, shaped in her theory of *regenerative refusal*. *Regenerative refusal* is concerned with reinstituting Indigenous peoples’ connections to their bodies, lands, and each other (130). In similar work by Indigenous feminists including Christine Taitano DeLisle and Lani Teves (also cited by Arvin in this text), Arvin’s theorization of regenerative refusals are attentive not to an unearthing and return to the past, but rather contending with both historical and contemporary manifestations of (settler) colonialism *within* Indigenous communities. That is, Arvin’s reckoning of the historical impact of science in Oceania is attentive to their contemporary affects on Oceanic communities. Arvin does this in chapter 4 through analyzing the 2005 *Day v. Apoliona* case where five Native Hawaiian men contested blood quantum laws. Chapter 5 considers the importance of *refusing* to participate in “science” geared toward “progress” via genomic mapping. Arvin’s final chapter in Part II examines the *regenerative refusals* of (mixed-race) Polynesian artists, Yuki Kihara (Sāmoan) and Adrienne Keahi Pao (Kanaka Maoli) in juxtaposition to the *The Hapa Project* conducted by Kip Fullbeck. In this half of the text, Arvin’s goal is to showcase how Polynesians *refuse* moves to define Indigeneity, or rather Indigenous identity, according to Western epistemologies. With the analyses in these final three chapters, Arvin adequately showcases how the history of science in Polynesia informs our contemporary moment (133). *Regenerative refusal*, as an Indigenous feminist analytic, points toward a global movement among Indigenous peoples to refuse state-sanctioned forms of recognition through legal channels, art and activism, and mundane rejections to participate in re-committing the sins of settler science.

Overall, Arvin crafts a vivid image of the ways in which settler colonial ideologies are entrenched in our histories and thoughts in contemporary times. *Possessing Polynesians* is a fascinating read to understand how settler science has historically been utilized to discredit Indigenous claims to land and body sovereignty. Moreover, Arvin tackles the difficult subject of anti-blackness in the Pacific and unpacks its entrenched nature in science’s pursuit to understand “What is a Polynesian?” (1). The attention to the enmeshments of what is decidedly “indigenous” (and what “isn’t”) marks *Possessing Polynesians* as a must-read text for individuals interested in understanding an Indigenous feminist framework and its importance to the growing field of critical Indigenous studies.

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

JONATHAN R. QUENGA BORJA