

# Anti-Racism, Anti-Colonialism, & Climate Change: Christine J. Winter

## Reflection by Jayden Hooper.

Christine J. Winter presents a compelling argument for an anti-colonialist movement, Land Back 2012. Embracing the concept of Whenua, Christine argues that with this system, everyone will have a home, so long as they embrace Whenua too.

Who are you? Christine dives deep into the meaning of this question for Māori people. Who are your ancestors? Who are your people? The land and the ancestors of the people who are living on the land define Whenua. Whenua is Papatūānuku's placenta, the place for the birth of life on the land. The land cares for us as a mother does for a child. There is always a place for those who care for the land and care for Whenua. There is no understanding of land as a financial asset; Whenua is a beautiful freedom.

Christine leads on to explain that our current system is ugly freedom. Land as property is a fragile system, and in New Zealand, Christine argues that lies, fraud and deception define this system. She explains how the land contracts do not abide by current laws and that her forefathers and their forefathers knew that. Ownership is fragile, those with power can liquidate it at any point in time, and this can happen to anyone (while those of minority are more vulnerable than the rest).

Climate change adds another layer of fragility to land ownership. If floodings cause soil to wash away from your property to another's, what does the value of your property then become? Climate change is taking away people's property and their freedom. Under Whenua, the people do not have to give up their independence. There is always space for people to relocate with no new ownership. Whenua mitigates the effects of climate change before the problem has occurred.

After Christine's talk, there was a discussion regarding similar goals, how to adapt, social dynamics, this solution vs nature-based solutions and co-governance over New Zealand.

Nature-based solutions are those responding to climate change, such as reducing carbon emissions and reversing the effect of global warming. Christine points out that while these are excellent for Whenua, it is only a reaction, whereas Whenua is mitigation. Climate change will only impact people less if we come to an understanding of Whenua as a society.

How do we adapt? Start small, says Christine. It has to be an incremental shift. Look in your local community, care for your plants, and be mindful of how you shop and communicate with your local iwi. The government can give back land one piece at a time. They've done it before and can do it again.

This talk was very refreshing. I had not heard of nor thought about this discussion to this depth before, changing the system on such a meta scale. This event was my first time investing my own time listening about anti-decolonization, how to achieve it and the implications regarding that, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.