

Transcript: (Mis)using Histories, Mediterranean Diasporas and the Politics of Belonging

SARAH: Hey, we might get underway. Welcome everyone to today's Critical Public Conversation with Andonis Piperoglou and Daphne Arapakis. Before we do anything else, Auntie Georgina Nicholson has kindly recorded a Welcome to Country for us.

[Welcome]

SARAH: Thank you to our dear Auntie Georgina. We really hope that you are but feeling better soon and able to join us in person online again. Just before I introduce today's amazing speakers, just a couple of technicalities about how this webinar will run for those of you who might be here for the first time. So we really welcome questions for the presenters and we'll have about 15 minutes at the end.

But please use the Q&A function in your Zoom screen – bottom of your Zoom screen – to ask your question. And don't be shy, you can write them in at any time during the webinar. The chat function is disabled, but we do want to hear from you all, so please don't be shy.

I am now going to introduce the wonderful speakers we have with us today who are opening up such an important area of work for all of us in the Faculty of Arts and at the University of Melbourne. And their work speaks so directly to our theme in the Critical Public Conversation series this year around sovereignty and solidarity.

So, under the title *(Mis)using Histories, Mediterranean Diasporas and the Politics of Belonging*, two presenters today. First, Dr Andonis Piperoglou, who is the Hellenics Senior Lecturer in Global Diasporas here in the Faculty of Arts. He grew up on Ngannawal Country and has Cypriot and Castellorizian cultural heritage. Prior to commencing at the University of Melbourne, he was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Cultural Research at Griffith University. Andonis is a specialist in migration and ethnic history, with a particular interest in the dynamics of whiteness and Greek diasporisation in Australia. He works on historical connections between colonialism, racism and the formation of ethnic identities, as well as human movements between the Mediterranean and the Pacific. In the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, Andonis teaches subjects on migration, diaspora, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and globalisation. He's passionate about inclusive historical practice and engagement with migrant communities.

Presenting with Andonis today is Daphne Arapakis, who is a PhD candidate in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Her thesis, *Mediterranean*



Diasporas, Indigenous Sovereignities: The Ethnic Dimensions of the Settler-Colonial Present, explores the dynamics of ethnic-Indigenous relations in Australia. Daphne has worked as the Policy and Research Officer at the Koorie Youth Council and volunteered for the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. In 2023, she was awarded the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust Scholarship and the Faculty of Arts Dean's PhD Excellence Scholarship Award.

Research for this seminar presentation was recently published in the article Ethnic Compartmentalisation: Greek-Australian (Dis)Associations with White Australia and Indigenous Sovereignty in the Journal of Intercultural Studies.

Over to you two legends.

ANDONIS: Hi everyone. Thank you Sarah, and thank you Auntie Georgina for that warm welcome.

As someone who was born – whose mother rather – was born in British Cyprus, I've inherited a pretty healthy distrust of colonial regimes.

And it's because of this cultural inheritance that I'd like to pay my respects to the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung Peoples and any First Nations joining us today.

I'd like to acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded on this beautiful Country that hugs the bay here in Narm, and that I and many of my diasporic forebears have called and continue to call home.

To start today's presentation, we'd like to share a clip from the series Black Comedy. And please forgive any lag that may be here, but it's only a few minutes, so we hope you enjoy.

[Black Comedy clip]

Damon goes a whole new level, though.

We need to talk.

I thought Tash was the chair.

This isn't a meeting.

This this is a conversation.

What's going on?

I found a white man in the bathroom this morning, and I just found it a little bit interesting, seeing as we all agreed to go on an embargo.

Only you agreed to that.

Like you can talk.

I'm sorry, what?



You called them Reparation Roots.

Yeah, but since our embargo, I've stopped.

There was a white woman in the kitchen just last night.

She wasn't white.

She was Lebanese.

Lebanese isn't white.

Nah.

Turkish?

No, not white either.

Italians?

Depends.

On what?

If they're white.

What?

You could ethnically be some other kind of non-Italian mob.

So you could be black and Italian.

But if you're a white Italian then nah, you're a white.

But some Italians are real tanned.

Yeah that's because they're spicy whites.

Spicy whites?

Yeah you know, like non-Anglo non-Saxon, non-Celtic, non-Gaelic, non-Nordic, non-Aryan type mother-f*ckers who are white nonetheless.

Ethnic whites, whites with a culture.

Spain?

Spicy.

Morocco?

No, not white.

How does that work? They're basically across the road from each other.

Don't know. It just is.



What about Russians?

Complicated because they are a part of Asia and they have indigenous people but the non-mob there are white. So white Russians are the whites of Asia.

Who are the blacks?

Filipinos.

Brazilians?

Colonisers are spicy but they have a slave history and indigenous people whose land they're stealing as we speak.

You think you know the world and then total paradigm shift.

[End clip]

ANDONIS: OK, so as this clip demonstrates what we see as kind of clarifying discussion between mob, whiteness is variable and how particular groups fit within the constructed category of 'white' often requires explaining. People, particularly from the Mediterranean region, like Italians, Lebanese, Moroccans and Turks are often rendered as having an ambiguous or unsettled relationship to whites. We're often relegated into relational statuses as being, say, non or less or 'spicy' whites; whites, if you will, with some degree of cultural flavour.

With this in mind, we're interested in exploring how assortment of diasporic groups from the Mediterranean region, a region that sits on the axle point between East and West, strategically use their heritages and historical attachments to whiteness to place themselves in Australian settler culture.

In particular, we would like to share some recent moments in which the Greek diaspora, in its varied forms and expressions, draw on the past, the matter in the present.

And in doing so we're keen to tap into how the past is both used and perhaps misused in relation to settler-colonial culture and Indigenous politics via a reflective engagement with the concept of 'perpetual foreigner within', which we borrow from George Vassilacopoulos and Toulia Nicolacopoulos in their manifesto, *Indigenous Sovereignty and the Being of the Occupier*.

We're interested in exploring how migrant / ethnic groups from the Mediterranean region position themselves as outsiders within settler nation.

A positioning as the concept makes clear, that gives white settler-colonial culture a sense of legitimacy in its occupation via a so-called foreigner's perpetual recognition of land ownership.

In this context, people like us and our diasporic kin, our fellow baklava lovers, if you will, hold a tenuous relation to the politics of whiteness or are considered ethnic whites, to use a phrase from the Black Comedy clip, and which is in kind of more regular circulation



in US ethnic studies and is well explored in Yiorgos Anagnostou's volume, *The Contours of White Ethnicity*.

As a result, people rendered as non or less or not quite white, are conditionally placed in ritualised and institutionalised framings of who and how different groups are included and excluded from the settler nation's governance of multiculturalism.

Further, this theorisation has offered us a means to methodologically grapple with cultural specificity when historicising the transnational politics of whiteness in the past and the present.

In my work, for example, on the making of a Greek settler consciousness in the early 20th century, I've examined how migrants placed themselves in Australian vernaculars of race making by aligning themselves with the operations of British imperialism in the Mediterranean, an imperialism that continues to leave a legacy in locales from Gibraltar to Cyprus to Palestine.

DAPHNE: Thanks, Andonis, and thank you to Auntie Georgina Nicholson for that beautiful welcome.

As someone who was born and raised on Wurundjeri Country as the daughter of children of Greek migrants, I too would like to pay my respects to the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the first custodians of this beautiful country that has nourished Wurundjeri people and uninvited guests like my family for generations. I extend my respects across the Birrarung to the neighbouring Boonwurrung peoples and to any First Nations people joining in the dialogue today and echo that sovereignty has never been ceded from Wurundjeri land to the occupied West Bank in Palestine.

For me, thinking through the notion of a perpetual foreigner within invites a reflection on the specificity of my diasporic inheritance and how it is enmeshed within Wurundjeri Country. The diasporic inner north of a so-called Mediterranean Melbourne, Brunswick. My *giagiá* and *pappoús* migrated here in the 1960s following the peak period of assimilationist Australia, the period of the 'populate or perish' migration boom.

Growing up raised with heartfelt stories of their journeys, Brunswick represented the transplantation of Greek villages that my grandparents left, where stories of their hard life of labouring in textile factories and manufacturing industries, in addition to the stories of their poverty-stricken, war-torn peasant lives in Greece, became a central part of my diasporic subjectivity. Such stories of migrant struggle and success have become a central trope in framings of migration history and mirror prevailing settler national historical narratives of a country that has transitioned from an assimilationist to a multicultural society. This narrative of transition has come to dominate how diasporic groups from the Mediterranean region, be it Greek, Italian or Lebanese, understand their histories and heritages.

And we are interested in reframing such a monolithic narrative. By pluralising the conceptual terrain of migrancy, ethnicisation and diasporisation, we aim to better



understand how migrant pasts can work in a generative dialogue with Indigenous sovereignties, but also how situated diasporic expressions are produced, circulated and reproduced across settler-colonial spaces.

Expressions that are intertwined with overlapping historical narratives, including deep Indigenous pasts. Via an exploration of Greek diasporic cultural productions, including graphic murals, engagements with the recent referendum, and narrativisations of migrant struggle and success in the media landscape, we chart here the varied contours of Mediterranean temporal and spatial relationships to colonialism and Indigenous politics.

In doing so, we aim to give attention to specific nodes of ethnic settler-colonial dynamics and go some way in offering an understanding of what we see as the evolving terrain of indigenous-diasporic relations.

ANDONIS: So in 2021, Greeks across the world celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence, in which Greek revolutionaries revolted against the Ottoman Empire.

And many in the global Greek diaspora understood the Greek Revolution as a kind of pivotal moment that led to the foundation of modern Greece, where many, but not all of their forebears had left the previous century, and as such the bicentenary of the revolt was a moment of great significance: Lectures, festivals, naming ceremonies, exhibitions, gatherings for worship, digital archive projects marked the event, ranging from cities from Toronto to Thessaloniki, from Los Angeles to Athens, and in Sydney's Marrickville, where many Greek settlers came to make homes in their 50s and 60s and sort of mirrors Daphne's Brunswick, a precinct was named Little Greece.

And at the official naming ceremony, an intergenerational diasporic crowd of Greek Sydneysiders gathered for a photo opportunity in front of this street mural titled Hestia's Migration and across the top of Hestia's Migration, the patriotic Greek revolutionary slogan "Freedom or Death", Eleftheria i thanatos, paid homage to Greek resistance from Ottoman rule. The mural's references to classical Greece and considered departures from, as well as returns to Greek diasporic aesthetics, conveys a creative rendering of Greek migration and settlement, painted in green and gold, the national sporting colours.

The ancient Greek goddess Hestia, who in ancient Greece symbolised the alliance between Greek colonies and their mother cities, and it was also the deity for home and fire, is surrounded by motifs that signify historical connections to a range of Greek path. Byzantium and Christian Orthodoxy, depicted as a bearded St. Nicholas in the top left, and which the local Orthodox parish is named after, overlooks the goddess. The actual process of migration is captured as a mode of transport, the steamship Patris, which brought thousands of Greeks to Australian shores. On either side of the goddess is an olive tree with visible roots and a cluster of eucalyptus leaves. Attracting considerable coverage in the local, municipal and wider Greek diaspora press, the mural was celebrated as an uplifting representation of Greek contribution to multiculturalism.



100 years earlier, in 1921, the centenary of the Greek War of Independence was celebrated in Brisbane. Although a Greek church was yet to be built in the city, a special service took place in an Anglican cathedral. And speaking at an event, the Acting Consul for Greece and President of the Hellenic Association of Brisbane, his name was Christy Freeleagus, delivered an address in Greek and English.

"Tonight," he declared, "we are celebrating the first centenary of the moment that led to the people of Greece becoming a free people. And we are celebrating it in our country of adoption under the British flag, which waves over the empire, synonymous with all that is best in liberty and freedom. We are proud to be Greek and we are proud to be citizens of the great and glorious British Empire. Greece has contributed much to the art and classics of the world. The language and architecture stand out in bold relief in the pages of history. And just as our fellow citizens can look back with pride that to all that their British forebears have done for the advancement of the world, so we can look back with pardonable pride on the part of our forebears have played in the progress of civilisation."

In contrast to the bicentennial celebration, in which attention was paid to post-war Greek migrant contributions to multiculturalism, the ceremony that took place 100 years earlier, as the bilingual speech by the early Greek settler reveals, marks the moment in which Greeks, by a narrative of civilisational progress, linked the glories of ancient Greek past with the reach of British colonialism across the world.

Separated by 100 years, each Greek diaspora commemorative anniversary, when viewed in tandem, points at the sustained presence of Greeks in the settler-colonial polity. They remind us that ideas of Greece and mobile Greek subjects circulated across global context fashioned by British imperialism, settler-colonial culture and its relationship to the allure of Hellenic antiquity.

So, returning to the mural and its symbolic gesturing, we can view it as a kind of quick historical guide in the making of Greek transplantation in Sydney's Marrickville. Yet the representation of Greekness in the suburb's public space suggests not just an arrival but a signalling to a fluid and perhaps more malleable Greek diasporic expression. A window into what it might mean for the Greek diaspora to feel not uprooted, but perhaps rooted, grounded in Marrickville.

However, what is absent in this artistic rendition is any definitive reference to Australia's colonial past or Indigenous presence. Something that is perhaps odd, especially when considering another mural that was painted on the exterior of Gumbramorra Hall, which sits only a few blocks away at Addison Road Community Centre, a key site of 1980s multicultural activism.

Interestingly, in 2016, Gumbramorra Hall was beautified with this mural by Palestinian-Syrian artist and refugee, Mahmoud Salaman. The mural, as you can see, depicts a refugee boat being greeted by another boat steered by Indigenous peoples. It challenges a dominant – a cultural perspective which has traditionally ensured that both Indigenous



and migrant history still largely occupy marginal spaces in colonialist narrativisations of the nation.

In doing so, the mural captures what Tony Birch describes as the potential benefit for migrant communities to recognise what is "held in common with Indigenous people, a refusal to accept the status of marginalisation."

Such commonality, however, took a different form when Greeks engaged with the recent referendum.

DAPHNE: So here we have a submission made by Greek Melbourne based newspaper *Neos Kosmos* in 2018 to the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the precursor to the referendum.

In the submission, *Neos Kosmos* endorses the Uluru Statement from the Heart by declaring, "Many peoples and societies have sought to replicate our democracy over the last 2500 years. It is because of our belief in democracy, our intangible cultural heritage, that we want to see Indigenous Australians to be referred to when laws are made that may impact on them and for that to be enshrined in the Constitution of Australia. We cannot be confident, independent or real Hellenes, if we do not recognise the rightful place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution. We remind the Australian Government, as custodians of our ancient custom, democracy, that they have a responsibility to honour it, just as Pericles did some 2500 years ago."

So here the newspaper makes it clear that if Australian society wishes to claim Greece as the origin of democracy, and by extension, Western civilisation, then the state has a responsibility to uphold its democratic principles. In other words, Hellenistic ideals are used to spotlight contradictions between the settler state's democratic principles and its treatment of First Nations people.

In this sense, the diasporic press draws on Hellenic civilisational exceptionalism and places it in an authoritative position over the settler state, albeit a contradictory strategy to rework civilisational discourse to support First Nations people's political interests, the accountability towards Hellenic democratic principles ignores Indigenous political orders and discounts Indigenous sovereignties.

Even in appeals to First Nations political interests, members of the Greek diaspora use history to position their cultural inheritance within an imposing mould of civilisational exemplariness. Yet while at the same time some Greek people are mobilising civilisational heritage to appeal to the settler state's investments in "the colonial politics of recognition", to quote Yellowknives Dene Scholar Glen Coulthard, members of the Greek diaspora are simultaneously indigenising Hellenism to forge ties with Indigenous presences on this continent since time immemorial.

Here we have an assortment of Greek diasporic commentaries that point to connections shared between Greek and First Nations antiquity. On the right-hand side we have a reference to Greek and First Nations cultures as "the two most ancient cultures". Titles of



articles note the Synaxis of native peoples, a Greek homage to Australian first Peoples at the Greek Centre, and Myths and Dreamings are links between ancient Greece and Aboriginal Australians. Within such framings exist statements like "We too, despite our urbanisation, are also a tribal people."

These cultural expressions demonstrate attempts by Greeks to link their civilisational heritage to First Nations, deep ontological connections to country. Via references to Greeks as, "native people", the cultural producers seek to invoke what I call an indigenisation of Hellenism, an appropriation of First Nations experiences to forge common Greek-Indigenous ties.

It's necessary, however, to differentiate articulations of Hellenistic indigeneity, lower-case i, from politically significant expressions of Indigenous nationhood and assertions of Indigenous sovereignty, capital I. Any attempt to alight or invisibilise this difference simply serves the Australian state as it symbolises a settler move to innocence, to borrow the words of Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, an attempt to "relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without having to give up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all."

So if the politicisation of Hellenism in relation to Indigenous peoples calls for self-determination is contingent on flattening politically significant difference, then it is fundamentally limited in its ability to invoke transformative political change. In this example, the temporal focus shifts from usages of Hellenic antiquity to narratives of migration.

Here, an article published by former state Labor politician and Cypriot community president Theo Theophonous outlines the migration experiences of Cypriots. He states, "There have been many challenges, but also many successes. Our parents worked hard and they and their children contributed to the arts, in law, in politics and healthcare and many other areas. More than that, they helped change Australia into a multicultural, tolerant society."

When Theophonous describes the reason behind his use of this narrative of migrant struggle and success, he adds, "I highlight this account to show the intensity of our ancestors' struggles in Australia, but also to show that the injustices in Australia were not just perpetrated against our Indigenous populations. They are rightly being recognised today, but a word should also be spared for the injustices against European settlers in the early years, which were no less severe."

With no other mention of First Nations people in the article, the reference to First Nations is solely to claim that Cypriots and First Nations people have experienced equivalent levels of injustice, diminishing the magnitude of Indigenous dispossession and the ongoing ramifications – ramifications of colonialism in the present. Instead of reflecting on and interrogating how common experiences of struggle, his remarks can be read as strategically using history to pitch Cypriot experiences as oppositional to First Nations claims.



Interestingly, during the lead-up to the Voice referendum, Theophanous shared a very different perspective. As the President of the Cyprus Community of Melbourne and Victoria, he noted, "As a community with a British colonial history, I can attest to the impact that the experience of British occupation has had on Cypriots. I think it is the major reason why to breed Australians, along with the vast majority of great Australians who empathise with them, are likely to vote Yes in the referendum, when added to the other citizens from countries with British occupation histories, they could well make the difference." Theophanous continued, "Today, Australians are beginning to understand the suffering under the British occupation that was endured by Australia's Indigenous peoples. But it's one thing to reflect on these injustices of British occupation as an Australian of Anglo-Celtic heritage, and another to have cultural heritage from a country that has experienced them. British colonial actions in Australia have parallels in many countries that were occupied by the British, including in Cyprus."

And he concluded, "as Cypriot Australians, we understand the pain and suffering that British occupation brought to Australia's Indigenous peoples, because our forefathers in Cyprus also felt it. We also recognise the modern systems and development that came with British occupation, as I think most Indigenous Australians do."

Although Theophanous recognises that British colonialism laid the foundations for Turkish occupation in Cyprus, he fails to account for how the Greek-Cypriot experience of Turkish occupation on the northern part of the Mediterranean island could be used as a generative point of connection between Greek Cypriots and First Nations people. Further, he does not acknowledge that all non-Indigenous people, including Cypriots, despite their colonial history, collectively represent the occupying force in Australia. Indeed, Theophanous as a diasporic commentator, places emphasis on a shared understanding that inadvertently is used to flatten politically significant differences between Greek Cypriots and First Nations people. Despite the obvious problems associated with examples we have shared today, there is possibility for generative reworkings of migrant usages of history.

Take the final example. Here we have Gumbaynggirr historian and activist Professor Gary Foley on the front page of Italian diaspora newspaper *Nuovo Paese* (*New Country*) in 1988, the year of the bicentenary. Foley is pictured at a concert organised by the Migrant Committee for Aboriginal Rights, a coalition of progressive organisations for migrant communities including the Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and Families (FILEF), as well as a few Greek, Yugoslav and Lebanese associations. Although we're still trying to identify who these associations actually were, according to the article, the aim of the concept was to raise awareness of, "the issue of Aboriginal rights within migrant communities of non-English speaking backgrounds and to demonstrate the support that exists among these communities with Aboriginal people in the struggle for justice in 1988." Speaking at the event, a speech that was later published in the *Diasporic Press*, Foley addressed an audience by identifying 2 key points of confluence between Mediterranean migrants and Indigenous experiences when he described as quote the



experience of dispossession and the common experience of white Australian racism." Sharing a school yard memory folly.

And please forgive the historical racial slurs that followed here.

Quote: "We found ourselves naturally drawn together and hanging together for the simple reason that a lot of the white Australian kids used to give us hell. They used to call us the BWD group – the Boong, the Wog and the Dago – which is what Australia is about in many ways, especially in the 50s, and it is still so today. When I was very young, I thought Blakfellas were out of it when it came to that sort of experience. But through having that experience before I was even 10 years old, I learnt a hell of a lot about the commonality of our experience."

By noting the shared experience of racialisation, "Boong, Wog, Dago", Foley's 1988 reflections invite us to consider alternative historical narratives of indigenous-migrant relations and how they can be used to build diasporic solidarities in the present. Such alternative histories not only articulate Indigenous and migrant experiences together, but may offer a way of rethinking notions of migrant struggle and success that allow the Mediterranean diasporas to be accountable to present Indigenous movements that centre Indigenous sovereignty.

ANDONIS: So we end here by acknowledging perhaps what may be possible when considering how narratives of migrant activism with indigenous rights have the potential to provide opportunities to reroute diasporic cultural expressions in the present. So, as seen here, the bicentenary pro- protest slogan migrant rights – sorry, migrants for Aboriginal rights – still has contemporary usage, as illustrated in this image from this year's Invasion Day Protest.

Such a statement, in our view, redirects the settler-Indigenous dichotomy. It propels us to account for cultural and historical specificity as well as differential expressions of racialisation. These accounts do not deny the historical complicity of Mediterranean diasporas and settler colonialism, nor do they deny how diasporic communities have benefitted from colonial occupation. Rather, they demonstrate how radical the radical protect potential to act upon historical memory and re-orientate how the past is used in the present to account for inter-group alliances and expressions that centre Indigenous sovereignties.

We finish here by suggesting that thinking about how diasporas misuse the past the matter in the present can contribute to a more nuanced framing settler-colonial culture. By elucidating how Greek civilisational heritage has been utilised in, say, a public mural, and expressed in relation to the referendum, we're attempting to move beyond singular historical framings of migration and account for the paradoxes that are identifiable and how our diasporas attempt to attach themselves to Indigenous politics. In doing so, we hope that we're going some way towards trans-culturalising expressions of belonging and settler-colonial pasts and presents.



In the end, the question of how to approach the heterogeneities of our histories propels us to question whether we want to enforce a dominant, relatively homogeneous view of mobility and its role in producing settler-colonial culture.

If histories of migration are regarded as, say, the history of Greeks moving from A to B, from alien to citizen, from distinguishable to assimilable, from minority to model minority, from migrant to settler, outspoken diasporic representatives will continue to reproduce essentialising and exceptionless narratives about the experience of their so-called white-ethnic world. But if we acknowledge the importance of history and contra practices and institutions that make a difference in the way diasporic people understand and act within settler-colonial culture, we may figure out alternative ways to turn the past into a usable and uplifting resource in the present.

We can acknowledge dispossession and discrimination, but we can also tell of cultural ferment and the dynamism of hybrid expressions of sovereignty and solidarity.

Thank you.

SARAH: Thank you both. What a fantastic presentation.

I love seeing the love and applause reacts coming through. It's always nice.

We've got about 20 minutes, just under 20 minutes, to take some questions. I can see one's coming in the chat – there's another one – but I'm going to jump in first. I was so interested to hear that reflection on Greeks leaning into the ownership of the creation of democracy as a part of contributing to the, I guess public discourse in the lead up to the Voice referendum last year.

And you know of course your critique of that is spot on, you know, in that it does overlook Indigenous political orders that have survived on this continent for 10s of thousands of years. For me that feels like such an instance of, you know, a community trying to do the right thing. And you know of course the history of this continent post-invasion is littered with examples of people doing incredible harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through their good intentions. But in the case of a diaspora community and Daphne, I know this kind of goes to an aspect of your work: What resources are there for that community to know better, to do better?

You know, here's a community organisation that's trying to do the right thing and step into this debate and yet still missing – missing the mark. So how do, how, how do you bring that same community into the conversation in a way that helps them to see – 'cause that would blind side them, I would presume: "But wait, what? We're doing the right thing. We're saying – you know – we're trying to support this proposal."

How, how would you suggest that that that community can be supported to think more critically?

DAPHNE: Thank you, Sarah.



That's a really, really good question and definitely something that I don't think, I don't think that ... It can be really challenging when you're part of the community and you're witnessing these efforts from people to try and connect on an emotional level, a cultural level, on a political level.

And you can tell that there's well-meaning intentions behind their expressions, but that they end up reproducing certain tropes as we sort of outlined in our presentation, and some problematic dynamics and discourses. I guess in terms of redirecting resources in the present,

I think the work that Andonis and I are trying to do currently in making sure that we get to speak up and back to community in the public sphere.

And not just kind of siloing these discussions as part of important and necessary academic dialogues, but making sure that we're bringing out our analysis and our reflections into the public sphere and with communities.

So whether that is through, you know, hosting public lectures that are at community spaces like the Greek Community of Melbourne, for example, or other spaces like the Greek Democritus Workers League and other places like that.

But I also think, I mean in terms of getting the education underway, something our presentation points to is that it involves uncovering a lot of these narratives that aren't necessarily at the forefront. So I don't blame people for trying to draw on narratives that are available in the public sphere when they're limited.

So it's also about being able to build up I guess an archive of historical narratives that can redirect those attempts at connection and not make them about, I guess flattening difference and then resulting in an attempt to express sameness, but instead talking about related differences, points of convergence, meeting grounds.

Did you want to add anything?

ANDONIS: It's a good, very good question, Sarah.

I mean, Daphne's started a new reading group where she's getting people both within and outside the academic space to read up and explore this type of tension – framings of the past.

And that's a really generative grassrootsy type of way that things can be redirected and altered.

But just to that last point that Daphne said, which is, which is since I've arrived here at the university, I've been thinking quite heavily about the "how" of this.

And I do think that there is a need to do a type of archival activism.



And if I think about the queer archives here in Melbourne, we've done just a brilliant job over the last 10 years of some really like situating you know a really great resource and then that's doing really great work.

And in uncovering LGBTQI pasts, the same thing needs to happen here, whether you call it a migrant archive, where you whether you start in in a singular sense like a Greek Australian archive, but that, this, that that you are collecting and finding ways of exposing the interconnectedness of experience, both between diasporic roots, in our case the Mediterranean region, right? Or between First Nations and diasporic peoples.

And I think particular distinction needs to be made here between like a difference between migrant and diaspora, right, is to say migrant in a in a traditional sense of the term of someone who moves from somewhere to elsewhere, right, is an important thing that's been well historicised and feeds into a particular, as we said, narrativisation of the nation.

It's now time to think about what those inherited experiences mean intergenerationally. That's why the framing of diaspora allows us to give a kind of alternative perspective that there are now 3, 4, 5 generations of people that have inherited a particular experience of migrancy that is allowing them a particular type of relation to the invasiveness of settler colonialism.

I see a few questions.

SARAH: Yeah, I'm going to start moving through them.

Yeah, we've got about 6 here, so we'll see how we go. So the first from Emily says, "Thanks for sharing Gary Foley's personal experience of interpersonal relationships between Indigenous and migrant people. Are you interested in exploring that further, such as examples of marriage between Greek migrants and Aboriginal people?"

Daphne.

DAPHNE: Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Emily. That's a wonderful question and definitely something that's been coming up a lot in our research at the moment.

So what I've noticed thus far from I guess my canvassing in the Greek diaspora press, because I'm focusing currently on exploring Greek diaspora experiences in my thesis, is that a lot of the time people also draw on intermarriage as a way to kind of highlight connections between Greek and First Nations groups.

And I guess one of the more notable examples of that connection is represented in Alec Giacomos, who was Greek – a second, I think second generation. His parents migrated here from Gusta de Laodigo and he married a Yorta Yorta woman, Auntie Mo Morgan from Cummeragunja. And then so this sort of narrative of, I guess, marriage between Auntie Mel and Uncle Alec has become a, I guess, a narrative that's commonly used among the Greek community to kind of talk about the ways that our community has these deeper connections that then can get translated into political acts of solidarity, as



Alec Giacomos was a fiercest campaigner for First Nations rights. So that's just one, I guess, big and prominent example of the connections between Greek and First Nations people in the form of intermarriages.

But I am definitely keen to tease out, I guess, more relationships that do exist between groups in this form. And the recent work by Maria Pallotta Chiarolli and Francesco Riccati have looked at a particular family in in the outback and the kind of intergenerational, sorry, intermarriage and kind of the kind of culture of a particular family.

But we can also, beyond marriage, look at say, the many Greek cafes that were dotted across rural and regional NSW and Queensland, which hired a lot of Aboriginal people and some of their in, in, in – in their – in some of their paid work so decently as part of the archive activism. It's like to record these stories is very important, we think. Yeah.

And just on that, it would be great to check out when it's out for publication on Maria's work, which is titled *Mobs and Wogs*. So it looks at the relationship between groups with Southern European impersonations, heritages.

SARAH: I'm jumping to the bottom of the list of questions at the moment because I think this connects to what we're talking about at the moment. So this person asks:

"I experienced a similar connection with migrant great communities as a child as Uncle Gary spoke to, mostly due to the shared experiences of racism. However, have found a disconnect in modern times due to a more due to more acceptance of Greek communities and hence less personal experience of racism.

"How do we find connection without personal shared experiences of racism? For example, perhaps a large philosophical question of how to be how to encourage real empathy and maybe too broad but interested in your thoughts."

I think this goes to your point about the difference between migrants and diaspora, Andonis.

ANDONIS: Well, this, there trained historian in me would be to say that it's definitely a need to translate those very real and very remembered, right, like within community of past racisms.

And to not forget the severity of that like to not forget what it meant to not quite fit in and by so if that can be utilised as then an inherited historical inheritance right that can be that can form part of that empathy that's – that's sort of one way that I think – think through it.

And then the other thing is to say through education, to say, I mean within the question is to say both at not, not a lived experience of being racism, but I'll just give:

I grew up in Canberra, I'm not a Melbournian. And I think that distinction has given me a particular type of experience of what it meant to be Greek in a particular place at a



particular time in which my cousins, who were from here and perhaps different from Daphne, did not experience due to the huge Greek populace that exists in this city.

So it's also then too important to think about the variability of different experiences of racism across space and time. And there's something very unique about the Melbourne experience. I, you know, I really do want to share. You know, it's often said that you know it's the city with the second largest Greek population outside of Greece or third largest.

Whether that's true or not, sometimes I think New York might rival Melbourne. But, you know, that's profound. That's a profound thing to think about. And it's a profound thing to think about in the dynamic set of colonialism. For us to explore, for example, aspects of civilisational heritage and by extension civilisation, narratives of exemplariness, right, exceptionalism. You know the Greek case, you know that affords the Greek experience a particular type of the attachment from the experience of being marginalised, right? Like how that's viewed inside the colonial culture.

SARAH: Well, I guess flowing directly from that is perhaps the next question from George speaking about one dimension at least of the Greek community in Melbourne, who says his experience of first- and second-generation Greek Australians living and working in the northern suburbs of Melbourne is that they disproportionately identify with mercantile – the mercantile right and are hostile to progressive causes. This doesn't seem to align with your thesis of a commonality with Indigenous peoples.

Got any reflections on that observation?

DAPHNE: Yeah definitely. I think to also just clarify to begin with is that we're not, we're not claiming necessarily that there is a full commonality like there are common grounds of meeting and points of connection.

But we're in no way saying that this is a homogeneous experience or a uniform experience of Greek Australia or Mediterranean people in Australia and First Nations people.

I think also something that I'm doing and I have also been reflecting a lot and in the context of the concept of 'the perpetual foreigner within' is that Greek people, Southern European people, Mediterranean diasporas, when we migrated here, we were able to accumulate property.

And then if we think about Aileen Moreton-Robinson's idea of – who's a Goenpul scholar – who speaks about white possession, who speaks about property ownership as sort of essential tenet of white possession, non-Indigenous presence on Indigenous soil.

And so if we think and apply that to the way in which our communities have been able to migrate appropriate spaces, even my discussion, for example, speaking of, I guess, you know, Brunswick or Andonis' discussion of Marrickville's Little Greece, these sort of experiences speak to how we not only appropriated land, but in doing so we had to accumulate, you know, land ownership territory.



And so, I think from that specific experience of being afforded those, quote unquote, "property-owning identities", then it resulted in our treatment of First Nations peoples as non-citizens in order to legitimise our own, I guess, illegitimate presence or uninvited presence on First Nations land.

So I think a lot of the time there is this anxiety, which is also what Toula Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos speak about, there's this anxiety about dispossession, this anxiety about illegitimately being here, and so in order to, I guess, further entrench our ties of many people in the Greek diaspora and other diasporas broadly will align themselves with the right.

ANDONIS: Yeah. And it's a really interesting phrase that George puts in there: "Mercantile right". You know. So it's like this intergenerational property accumulation is also very much part of upward social mobility.

So you know, to come from a poverty-stricken, war-torn post-war Greece if you will, or to be refugees from Cyprus and then to, you know, the experience of that to then have this sort of like "property, property, property" you know, "ownership, ownership, ownership" is very much part of them.

What we're trying to get at is giving cultural specificity to our understanding of settler-colonial culture. So as in to say we can say that like New South Wales, literally "New South Wales", right, is an extension of British diasporic culture, so, too, are our migrant suburbs. But it's re-worked, right? It's both. It's attached the story of British colonialism and its enduring legacy, but it's also got a cultural specificity that's attached to the homelands and the diasporic linkages that people still hold on to. And they hold on to rigid framings of their past because it's in their vested interest.

And so it would just take very simplistic, but nonetheless something we perhaps need to remind ourselves of this certain notion of settler is to be settled, you know, to live, to be somewhere permanently and to feel comfortable in that settlement and that's something that we're disrupting, if you will, to think through it.

SARAH: There's one more question I want to get to, but we've got two minutes to answer it. So pretend you're on radio and I'm going to cut you off. So, but it's a big question:

"So the term indigenisation of Hellenism is a very interesting one. Could you help us by providing a time framework for this term? When would you trace its emergence? Also, what are the tools used for its expression besides linking it to ancient Greek democracy?"

One minute.

DAPHNE: OK, that is a fantastic question. Also something that I'm still currently working through. It's very much a work in progress at this point in time, but I guess where we're trying to connect it to. So I'm focused on the ways in which Hellenism is used as a tool to then, I guess, claim, claim indigeneity and claim indigeneity in politically significant ways.



To say that we have the same experiences because we are, quote unquote, indigenous populations. But obviously our connections to our so-called indigeneity to being an indigenous population of the so-called homeland in Greece is disconnected over time.

So in settler-colonial polities, for example, First Nations peoples have articulated indigenous nationhood as a way to distinctly affirm their status as sovereign first peoples, whereas in the context of contemporary modern Greece, I don't personally believe that that connection is still there in that particular way. Greece is not a settler colonial polity.

I think also Andonis, it would be worth you talking about here if you're comfortable with the ways in which you were saying whiteness

ANDONIS: Just cause the question's sort of like timeframe ...

SARAH: 20 seconds, Andonis.

ANDONIS: Very quickly is to say, you know, early Greek settlers in white Australia positioned themselves and used Hellenism in it, sort of nativist discourse.

So here it's like lower case indigenisation attached to this kind of nativist, framing, settler, nativist thing which you know you couldn't get more settler colonial but yet the cultural specificity matters.

SARAH: Thank you both so much. Clearly this conversation could go on some rich conversation emerging there. So I'm really sorry we are at the hour, but thank you so much. Such important work opening up, you know really important new areas of empirical research, but also the theorising you're both doing I think is really important. So thank you both very much.

This is the final CPC for Semester 1 in the Australian Centre's program this year. Stay tuned for the Semester 2 program. We will be promoting that very soon and hope to see many of you back online with us soon. Thank you.

ANDONIS: Thank you. Thanks so much everyone. Great questions. Thanks Sarah, and thanks the Australian Centre, always nice to do stuff with you and your rad team!

DAPHNE: Yes, thank you very much everyone. Enjoy the rest of your day.

