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Το περιοδικό φιλοξενεί άρθρα στα Αγγλικά και τα Ελληνικά αναφερόμενα σε όλες τις απόψεις των Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών (στη γενικότητά τους). Υποψήφιοι συνεργάτες θα πρέπει να υποβάλλουν κατά προτίμηση τις μελέτες των σε δισκέτα και σε έντυπη μορφή. Όλες οι συνεργασίες από πανεπιστημιακούς έχουν υποβληθεί στην κριτική των εκδοτών και επιλέκτων πανεπιστημιακών συναδέλφων.

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SECTION TWO

GRAECO-AUSTRALIANA

DR TOULA NICOLACOPOULOS and DR GEORGE VASSILACOPOULOS
La Trobe University[1]

THE MAKING OF GREEK-AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP: FROM HETERONOMOUS TO AUTONOMOUS POLITICAL COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

An analysis that aspires to understand the organised presence of Greek migrants in Australia would do well to begin from the rather obvious, but often overlooked, fact that the Greek-Australian communities are, and have been, an integral part of the social institution of Australian society. This is not to insist merely that Australians of Greek origin have made significant contributions to social life, whether economic, cultural or political, but to acknowledge that the study of our distinctive forms of collective organisation and the ways of living that these forms have made possible have something important to tell us about *Australian* history and wider questions of national significance. In our view, the link between the organisational development of the Greek-Australian communities and wider white Australian society is such that a study of the former's positioning as an inside-outsider of the latter provides us with a vantage point from which Australian society might look deeper into its own self, rather than merely beyond itself to its other, as is typically assumed in relation to the migrant position. Indeed, we want to argue in this paper that this is precisely the historical significance of the foreigner position that was assigned to and taken up by the Greek immigrant communities of Melbourne and Sydney in the first half of the 20th century.

In a larger work of which this research forms a part, we have defended the claim that the white Australian national imaginary unavoidably relies upon a construction of the

category of the immigrant in terms of the notion of 'the perpetual foreigner'.[2] The social institution of the latter notion has become indispensable in the light of what we call 'the onto-pathology of white Australian subjectivity'. By this we mean to refer to a fundamental disturbance in the conditions that give meaning to our being as white Australians. For everyone positioned as a white Australian subject the upshot is a lack of ontological integrity in the sense of living out a fundamental discord between the multiple characteristics that make us who we are. We will begin with an outline of this claim since it frames our empirical argument.

DOMINANT WHITE AUSTRALIAN SUBJECTIVITY AND THE NOTION OF THE PERPETUAL FOREIGNER

As a society shaped by western liberal (post)modernity, white Australia provides the social conditions in which effective subjectivity is enacted as the substantive realisation of modern property-owning identities. That is, irrespective of how and in relation to what we might exercise it, we have the power to relate to everything as an item of property, our own bodies and children included. For reasons that we need not go into here, the structuring logic of such property-owning identities calls for their immediate and wilful embodiment in materiality that is of itself conceived as empty of will and, hence, as alienable property.[3] It is in this formal capacity that modern western subjects can function in a social world whose key institutions share in an all-pervasive power to implicate anything and everything in the global processes of commodity circulation.

What is important for present purposes, however, is that the enactment of this form of subject-world relationship has been disturbed in the case of our being as white Australians. It has not been possible for white Australians to ground our presence in this country with the required *immediacy* due to the unacknowledged place of its indigenous peoples. The historical result of this inability has been the enactment of a distorted form of the subject-world relationship we mentioned above. The white Australian national imaginary has taken the form of what is essentially a *criminal will* as defined by Hegel, albeit one that is collectively constructed and maintained.[4] This is a will that imposes the specifics of its particularity, here features of whiteness, on a supposedly universal category of Australian citizenship. Thus whiteness comes to define being Australian and indigenous peoples necessarily fall outside this category. Still, as a product of our having to live with the sources of our complicity in what is both a violent and ongoing dispossession of indigenous Australians, white Australians suffer from an anxiety that is most obviously manifested in recurrent debates about national identity and concerns about our place in and connections to the land.

It is in response to an ontological disturbance in the above sense that the white Australian national imaginary must invoke the perpetual foreigner. Here, the foreigner is understood as an institutionally reinforced subject position that is lived within the boundaries and control of the state. In this sense the 'foreigner-within' supplies a suitable subject position from which white Australians might hope to receive the legitimating recognition of rightful belonging and control over the country that the original theft of the land from its indigenous peoples denies. The structuring logic of the interactions of property-owning identities necessitates their mutual recognition[5], but ontologically disturbed white Australian subjectivity can only appear to receive recognition from the immigrant who remains the foreigner-within. This is because only this subject position combines formal subjectivity constructed in terms of a property owning identity with a residual racialised difference from the dominant white Australian. The former characteristic qualifies the immigrant to supply recognition whereas the latter retains her in the subject position of the other whose presence plays an indispensable anxiety-relieving role. Thus the foreigner-within must be both 'white-and-not-white' or, at least, 'white-but-not-white-enough'.

Indeed, we want to argue that with their membership conceived in these terms, foreigner communities can be read as Australian forms of social institution that function as mechanisms for relieving the dominant white Australian anxiety that is generated by its onto-pathology. This is the case for the organised Greek-Australian communities from the turn of the 20th century up until their repositioning as an outcome of the adoption of official multiculturalism. Although the concept of the foreigner-within defines the Greek-Australian communities both prior to and post mass migration, the dominant construction within Anglophone discourses gradually shifts from that of the subversive foreigner to that of the compliant or submissive foreigner. The latter continues to define the relationship of the Greek-Australian communities to the Australian state and wider society until the early 1970s. At this time, the official adoption of a concept of multicultural citizenship re-positioned the Southern European immigrant communities as spaces that are inhabitable by the social equals of Anglophone Australians.[6]

In what follows we will outline a case for three claims in support of this general argument. Focusing on the period from the early 1900s to 1949, our first claim is that Anglophone discourses of European immigrant nationals, in particular those addressing the foreigner's potential to threaten national security, created the conceptual space in which it became possible to socially situate Greek-Australian migrants and their institutions as inside-outsiders. The official parliamentary and intelligence agency discourses generated two distinct images of the foreigner that were equally significant for the enactment by Southern Europeans of their legitimating subject position and associated anxiety-relieving role.

Second, we will indicate how the conservative Greek community leaders, in community organisations and the Greek press, took up a foreigner subject position within the possibilities framed by the Anglophone discourses. This had important implications for the structural maintenance of the communities as spaces inhabited by the foreigner-within. We will conclude by drawing attention to the main features of an alternative construction of the communities' potential for autonomous development that was shaped in the same period by the Greek-Australian Left.

THE FOREIGNER IN THE ANGLOPHONE DISCOURSES OF EUROPEAN IMMIGRANT NATIONALS

The Anglophone official discourses provide ample evidence for the view that the Southern European immigrant was positioned as a formal subject, albeit one for whom British subjectivity still remained substantially inaccessible, irrespective of legal status. Unlike 'aboriginal natives' of various parts of the world,[7] the Southern European fell within the category of the immigrant who could become naturalised and for whom the consequent acquisition of the legal status of British subjectivity certainly represented formal recognition as a property-owning identity in the sense we outlined earlier. But, whilst the Southern European was white enough to count as a property-owning identity, (s)he was not white enough for British subjectivity in the substantive sense of being assigned the very same privileges of white citizenship that were afforded the British national. This difference in treatment was made possible by the conflation of the universal category of Australian citizenship with British nationality, a conflation that rendered allegiance to the Australian state as co-extensive with loyalty to the British nation.[8]

The conceptual association of Australian citizenship and British nationality had a corresponding effect on the operative constructions of the non-citizen or the 'alien', to use the technical term. In the first half of the 20th century, Anglophone discourses constructed two images of the foreigner that defined the subject position assigned to the Southern European immigrant. The first was an image of the subversive foreigner. It dominated Anglophone discourses until the early 40s when the Curtin Labor Government began preparations for the mass migration program. Its key element was the view that migrants' political allegiance was dictated by their national origins. Consequently, the Australian state's formal relations to migrants' designated nation-state of origin determined their alien status as 'friendly', 'enemy' or 'neutral'. This meant not only that an enemy alien was identifiable simply in virtue of having been born within the boundaries of an enemy state, but that all evidence of immigrants' apparent allegiance to the Australian state, whether by those classified as friendly or enemy aliens, could be read as acts of treason to their original

nation-state or as acts of subversion against the Australian state and its people. Such a reading made it possible for the law-makers to profess in Parliament that the legal status of naturalised European immigrants meant nothing. It also grounded the all-pervasive state surveillance and control of immigrant lives that took the forms of compulsory registration, restrictions on movement, internment and deportation (cf. Dutton, 1998). Accordingly, it became possible to invoke the discourse of the subversive foreigner to negate any state recognition of migrants' formal property-owning identities.

This image of the foreigner invokes the subject position of a perpetual foreigner in whom the possibility of subversion is inherent. Indeed, the subversive foreigner was also identified 'by virtue of an assumed predisposition for leftist political ideas and a lack of sympathy for British Australian society' that was attributed to all non-British immigrants (Dutton, 1998, p. 99). As in the identification of an enemy alien in virtue of the alien status of his/her original nation-state, an individual's actual behaviour, or that of her particular ethnic group, was irrelevant for this assignment. But, in the case of subversiveness grounded in the predisposition for leftist ideas, not even friendly state-to-state relations could count in one's favour. Indeed, no empirical contingencies had any bearing whatsoever on the assignment of subversiveness given this definitional logic. The logic thus ensured that the category of the subversive foreigner could always be filled by an immigrant body no matter what else the state of play. Accordingly, in the guise of the subversive, the foreigner-within could always be rendered fully visible to white Australian society. Full visibility enabled subjection to the control of the white Australian authorities and the latter was doubtless indispensable to the foreigner's anxiety-relieving presence.

At the same time, however, the peculiar logic that made possible the visibility of the foreigner through bodily assignment, also generated a notion of social assimilation whereby the latter could only be understood in terms of 'the elimination of non-British culture and language' (Dutton, 1998, pp. 101; p. 111). Its discursive effect was the creation of a space for the establishment of foreigner communities, understood as the site of non-assimilable racialised difference. As we'll illustrate by reference to the communities shortly, this space for the preservation of language and cultural difference is an indispensable aspect of the subject position of the foreigner who plays the legitimating, anxiety-relieving role for white Australia.

A second image, that of the compliant foreigner, was assigned to the Southern European immigrant as an outcome of the disassociation of allegiance from national origins. Official policy first secured this change in 1944 with the introduction of individual assessment to classify immigrants and with the addition of a category of 'refugee aliens' (Dutton, 1998). On the basis of this construction of the compliant foreigner, it became possible for the immigrant to succeed in demonstrating allegiance to the Australian state,

a task that the Greek communities had set themselves from very early on. This difference can certainly be read as a positive move toward the liberalisation of Australian authorities' treatment of foreigners.[9] But, more importantly for our analysis, it had the effect of socially re-instituting the foreigner as a property-owning identity, something that the image of the subversive foreigner negated. This was a re-instatement of the very subject position that qualified the Southern European to legitimate white Australian authority. The discourse of the compliant foreigner thus created an opening for the reception by the dominant authorities of Greek migrants' self-representation in mutually advantageous ways.

GREEK-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES AS HETERONOMOUS FOREIGNER COMMUNITIES

If we read the Greek community leaders' attention to preserving ethnicity as an enactment of the foreigner position that was assigned to Greek migrants from the outside then it is possible to uncover the wider social historical significance of the fact that the Greek immigrant was first and foremost a perpetual foreigner.

To be sure, Greek migrants' shared inescapable foreigner identity turned the preservation of their racialised ethnic difference into a *collective* project. It is perhaps no accident that the pursuit of this project was socially instituted with the establishment of the Greek Orthodox Community organisations (hereafter GOCs) that were expressly committed to a *democratic* structure. Only with this form of organisation was it possible to give recognition to the fundamental relationship of equality in which Greek migrants found themselves relative to their foreigner positioning. The historical emergence of the GOCs does not only represent a community-based institution of mechanisms for managing schools and churches amongst other cultural needs (Gauntlett, 1998; Tsounis, 1971), or even primarily of mechanisms for asserting class interests (Kakakios, 1984). Indeed, the formalisation of democratic structures afforded an opportunity for collective participation in the construction of an appropriate content for the foreigner identity of Greek migrants.

How, then, are we to understand this process of collective identity formation? For Greek immigrants seeking to *preserve* their ethnic difference as a collectivity, Greekness does not itself appear open to processes of reformulation; what is open to a collective definition is instead *the substance of their assigned foreigner position*. But if Greekness was to give substantive content to the foreigner identity, it had to be re-formulated in a way suited to its incorporation by the Anglophone notion of the foreigner-within. That the community leaders were responding directly to the Anglophone discourses that we have outlined is clearly evidenced by the example of the editor's choice of masthead for the

paper, *Ethniko Vima*, that was first inserted in 1927 in the English language. Its slogan read: 'A Greek Must Always Remain a Good Greek, Because You Cannot Make a Good Australian Out of a Bad Greek. Australia Has No Need to Doubt or Fear the Man Who Loves Two Countries; the Real Danger Lies in the Man who Loves None' (cited in Gilchrist, 1997, p. 344). The 'man who loves no country' is, of course, the leftist and, on our earlier analysis, the paradigmatic embodiment of the subversive foreigner.

The historical record of the period provides overwhelming evidence of the concern of community leaders to show how it was possible to submit, with integrity, to the Anglophone authorities' assignment of their foreigner position. Though we do not have time to present this evidence here, Gilchrist's summation of the message of *I Zoe en Afstralia* (*Life in Australia*), that was published with the support of NSW community leaders in 1916, conveys something of the means by which a third image of the foreigner position was being shaped, this time within the Greek communities. Gilchrist notes that the emphasis was on 'work, honesty, philanthropy, compliance with Australian laws, and devotion to the Hellenic fatherland' (Gilchrist, 1997 p. 255). The combining of these commitments can be read as a response to the two images of the foreigner position we outlined above. Note firstly, that the insistence on work and honesty share with the image of the compliant foreigner a recognition of Greek migrants' formal subjectivity in terms of the property-owning identity that made possible their full involvement in market relations. Along with an insistence on philanthropy and compliance with Australian laws, these qualities served to project an image of the Greek migrant as not only trustworthy but, being moral and law abiding, (s)he could be recognised as a *genuinely* 'friendly alien'. Recall that in the Anglophone image of the compliant foreigner this subject position was made available to the foreigner, because state allegiance was no longer straightforwardly derived from national origins.

Still, for the Greek community leaders, absolute devotion to the Greek nation-state did not suggest a tension with their projection of the image of the submissive foreigner, 'the man who loves two countries'. Indeed, they shared with those who endorsed the dominant image of the subversive foreigner – that denied even the possibility of a friendly alien – the background conviction that national origins dictate political allegiance. Unlike the Anglophone discourse, however, for the Greek community leaders it was possible consistently to combine these seemingly opposed convictions by invoking the notion of 'philoxenia' understood as the idea that, as a guest in someone else's home, one ought to abide by the rules and demands of the host.[10] Here it is worth recalling our earlier suggestion that in decisively linking the European immigrant's property-owning identity to their foreigner position, the Anglophone image of the compliant foreigner affirms the foreigner's power to legitimate white Australian authority. In the Greek community

leaders' discourse the home is not that of indigenous Australians; the host is of course the white Australian authorities and its British people. In line with our analysis of the Anglophone foreigner discourses, we note further that within this image of the submissive foreigner racialised difference could also be represented as free of harbouring any danger to Anglophone Australians whilst still retaining full visibility as expected. Thus, the submissive foreigner secured both aspects of the subject position that were required if the foreigner-within is to play its legitimating and anxiety-relieving role for the dominant white Australian subjectivity. Its embodiment in the Greek migrant combined a formal property-owning identity with a residual racialised ethnic difference. In this way, conservative Greek community leaders actively internalised their assigned subject position but not as an expression of complete powerlessness. On the contrary, their discourse gave substance to the Greek as foreigner, though they were powerless to affect the processes that constructed the foreigner as Greek or, more generally, as Southern European.

This said, the task of collectively internalising their foreigner position as a community called for the production of internal homogeneity.[11] This was captured in the slogan that one Greek represents all Greeks. Furthermore, whereas the dominant representation of assimilation demanded the impossibility of a complete forgetting of one's ethnic origins, the call to embody the foreigner position required one to behave as if the ties of ethnicity can never be overcome. In this latter case all that matters is outward appearance. So it became necessary to promote certain generalised modes of behaviour and relatedly to develop self-policing mechanisms for their enforcement. Self-policing was, in fact, an extension of state policing through the secret services and it imbued the political culture of the communities with an acute sense of members' dependence and vulnerability.[12]

We want to make a final point regarding the submissive foreigner's conformity to a logic whereby subjectivity defined by Greekness was objectively regulated by the foreigner position. To be Greek in these terms was to negate one's self-determining agency. Because identification with Greekness was inescapably mediated by the concept of the foreigner over whose assignment conservative Greek community discourse had no control, subjectivity took on a heteronomous form. The communities' institutional adoption of the foreigner position made it impossible to create alliances that might serve as entry points into wider Australian society. Foreigner communities could not go beyond their racialised ethnicity and by extension the foreigner could not formulate demands, such as for the protection of his property, but was to remain forever grateful for the privileges that he might be granted. To be sure, ethnicity was a marker of racialised difference thanks to the Anglophone discourses, but through the discourse of conservative Greek community leaders it also marked the already invaded site whose potential for a re-enacting of the forms of its invasion by the Anglophone discourses was unlimited.

THE GREEK-AUSTRALIAN LEFT AND THE FOUNDING OF AUTONOMOUS POLITICAL COMMUNITIES

Despite having been assigned from the outside and enforced from within, the communities' foreigner position was in fact challenged in ways that would ultimately prove highly significant for the future of the communities. This challenge came from a small group of activists who had mainly come into contact with left ideas soon after arriving in Australia during the 1920s and 1930s.[13] They were mostly self-educated men who devoted much of their free time to listening to the Anglophone speakers at the Domain and Yarra Bank on Sunday afternoons and to studying Australian history. They all became members of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), most of them having joined after experiencing the great hardships associated with the lead up to, and period of, the 1930 Depression.

At the time, the CPA stood apart from other Anglophone organisations in Australia due to its opposition to the White Australia policy and its commitment to the socialist ideal of internationalism (MacIntyre, 1998). The embodiment of these convictions as the policy of an *Australian* political party made available to the Southern European an alternative subject position to that of the foreigner-within. The CPA's policy provided the ground for endorsing an ideal of people's solidarity in life struggles for survival and advancement. From their marginalised social position, the Greek-Australian activists readily identified with a discourse of solidarity across nationalities.

The CPA constituted the site for the construction of a new identity, namely that of *Australians*-of-Greek-origin. For the Greek-Australian activists, Greekness was by no means the basis for positioning themselves alongside their compatriots *as foreigners*. Instead, within the discourse of solidarity in which the socialist ideal of internationalism played a wider unifying role, Greek-Australian activists were able to take on convictions and attitudes to life that they encountered amongst other Australians irrespective of different national origins. The commitment to bringing about democracy and social equality, the maintenance of a firm stand against racism and xenophobia, and the struggle for world peace all extended beyond national origins or ethnic ties. These values also drew Greek-Australian activists, beyond the Australian left movement, into struggles that were taking place within the wider Australian labour movement.

Still, their self-identification as Australians did not signal an abandonment of their ethnic ties neither in their self-definitions nor in their social lives. Indeed, their Greekness served as a source of meanings and values that could be invoked in their ongoing efforts to re-define their identity as a collective within Australian society. The re-defining process worked in two directions: firstly, as a challenge to the conservative construction of ethnicity that, as we indicated in the previous section, was dominant

within their communities; and, secondly, as a challenge to the conflation of ethnicity and citizenship that was dominant in the Anglophone discourses that took for granted the link between British nationality and Australian citizenship. This double-sided re-defining process was socially instituted with the formation of the Greek workers' leagues in the 1930s. Whilst space does not permit us to draw extensively on the historical record to demonstrate our claims, two examples serve to illustrate our point here. Firstly, the *Democratic Bulletin*, which was published and distributed within the communities by the Greek Democritus League, indicates that at least from 1944, the League was widely advocating the idea of 'bringing together all nationalities … for the pleasure and benefit of all' (*Democratic Bulletin*, June, 1944). This position directly challenged the view that Greekness rigidly marked the boundaries of a foreigner community. But, in effectively reducing its idea of the dominant culture to that of one particular culture amongst many it also rendered problematic the conflation of the former with the substance of Australian citizenship. By 1949, with the Constitution of the newly formed *Confederation of Greek Organisations in Australia*, a noteworthy number of Greek community organisations came together to advocate their alternative image of democratic citizenship for Australians.[14]

By the late 1940s, the Greek workers' leagues had firmly re-positioned the communities of Melbourne and Sydney as integral parts of the Anglophone Australian left and labour movements and the discourses that these movements made possible. Drawing upon the cultural heritage of Greek liberation struggles, they had formulated their understanding of Greekness in terms of defiance of illegitimate power in all spheres of life and commitment to participation in political processes that facilitated the creation of a just and democratic Australia. From then on they would take their task to be a matter of building and strengthening their links to the wider society.

Like the conservative community leaders' relationship to the submissive foreigner discourse, the Greek-Australian left activists were positioned within, and actively took up, a discourse of solidarity that was not of their exclusive making. But there is an important difference in the processes that resulted in the construction of the images respectively of the submissive foreigner and the Australian-citizen-of-Greek-origin. Whereas, as we explained in the previous section, the former re-inforced a heteronomous form of agency, the latter introduced into the communities the ideal of autonomous collective agency whereby no aspect of the lives of Greek migrants could be taken as pre-determined by the conventions of 'good host-guest relations'. Indeed, it pushed the communities toward a greater self-determination that in the post-mass migration period grounded extensive struggles for social justice and equality in every aspect of Australian social life.

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NOTES

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2 T. Nicolacopoulos and G. Vassilacopoulos, 'Racism, Foreigner Communities and the onto-pathology of white Australian subjectivity' forthcoming in A. Moreton-Robinson, ed. *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism, Aboriginal Studies Press*, Canberra; T. Nicolacopoulos and G. Vassilacopoulos, *Locating the Foreigner Within*, working title of book manuscript in progress.

3 For an extensive discussion of our account see Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, 1999, Part 1.

4 Cf. Hegel, 1981, paragraphs 82–103. We are appropriating Hegel's analysis of the particular criminal will of the individual who opposes the universal in the form of the law.

5 The latter cannot be supplied either by the aborigine, whose very subject position has been denied, or by the dominant white Australian who is fully implicated in the dynamics of a collective criminal will.

6 We develop these claims extensively in T. Nicolaocopoulos and G. Vassilacopoulos *From Foreigner to Citizen: Greek Migrants and Social Change in White Australia* (1900–2000), (Greek) Eothinon Publications, MM forthcoming.

7 From 1903 to 1920 Commonwealth naturalisation legislation operated expressly to deny naturalisation to immigrants designated 'aboriginal natives' from a number of continents and islands. The practice continued even after the legislation was repealed. Cf. Chesterman and Galligan 1999, pp. 54–55.

8 On this conflation see Davidson, 1997, ch. 2.

9 Dutton, 1998, reads the policy change as a movement towards liberalisation that followed from two circumstances: recognition of the existence of genuine refugees and of the assimilability of non-British European immigrants in preparation for the mass migration program.

10 See, for example, the *Hellenic Herald* editorials cited in Holbraad, 1977, p. 146.

11 The constraints on their self-representation that flowed from their adoption of the foreigner position might explain why, as Karalis has observed, Greek community organisations did not give expression to the communities 'cultural multiplicity and existential variety', Karalis, 1999, p. 115.

12 For evidence see Tsounis, 1971 and Holbraad, 1977.

13 For a more extensive discussion of the lives of these people see T. Nicolacopoulos and G. Vassilacopoulos 'Doubly Outsiders: Pre-war Greek-Australian Migrants and their Socialist Ideals', 2002.

14 T. Nicolacopoulos and G. Vassilacopoulos, 'Greek migrants and Australian Identities', paper delivered to the Department of Social Inquiry, University of Adelaide, 17 August 2001.