Decolonizing Hellas

Hybrid Nomadic Symposium
PLYFA Industrial Park
Korytsas 39 Votanikos Athens

dècolonize hellása

4.11
5.11
6.11
7.11

2021
IMPÆRİAL
PAŞTS—
CONTEŞTED
PRESЄİNTS—
EMANÇİPATĖD
FUTUŘES—

1821
2021
Welcome from the Collective

The dëcolonize hellάş collective will introduce the aims of the 4-day symposium and its place in the unfolding initiative.

Nikolas Kosmatopoulos
Department of Political Studies, Department of Anthropology, American University of Beirut / FLOATS – Floating Laboratory of Action and Theory at Sea

Despina Lalaki
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Baruch College, City University of New York – CUNY

Penelope Papailias
Department of History, Archeology and Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly / Pelion Summer Lab for Cultural History and Experimental Humanities

Sissie Theodosiou
Department of Music Studies, University of Ioannina

Fotini Tsibiridou
Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki / Culture-Borders-Gender Lab
Epistemologies of the South, Epistemicide and Cosmopolitics: A Discussion with Boaventura de Sousa Santos

We discuss with sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos regarding the possibilities to think beyond the Western colonial epistemicide that has been imposed on local knowledge and cosmologies through European colonial technologies. What would it mean to establish new epistemologies and ecologies of knowledge in the broader Balkan, Mediterranean and Post-Ottoman worlds?

Through engaged fieldwork and the use of ethnographic methodology, we propose the concept of cosmopolitics as a new analytical category that includes our shared cosmo-philosophical concerns about humanism and beyond, local political action and global struggle for justice, rights and equality.
Museum as Heist: Between the “Benin Bronzes” and the “Elgin Marbles”

This discussion brings together two experts on and participants in the activism around the decolonization of the British Museum. They consider the treatment of the “Elgin Marbles” as an exceptional (i.e., “white”) case of appropriation/looting, something that often quarantines them from contemporary global discussions and struggles for museum decolonization. These struggles demand the recognition and redress of histories of extractivism, physical, material and symbolic violences and white supremacy: histories that have shaped museums and associated disciplines.

PARTICIPANTS
— Lylaah L. Bhalerao  
(Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University)
— Dan Hicks  
(Oxford University, Pitt-Rivers Museum)

MODERATOR
— Esther Solomon  
(Department of Fine Arts and Arts Sciences, University of Ioannina)

ORGANIZER
— Penelope Papailias  
(Department of History, Archeology and Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly)
Decolonize Empty Spaces

The video art installation “Empty spaces” interweaves images and sounds from two urban ethnographies on the two sides of the Aegean Sea: one by Miltiadis Zerboulis in Thessaloniki and another by Hasan Işıklı in Izmir. The church of Saint Voukolos in Izmir and Alkazar, the former Hamza Bey Mosque, in Thessaloniki are two places that have historically connected the communities in the respective cities. And while the former mosque and its surrounding, once vibrant, spaces have now become a “hollow materiality,” related to the suspended archeological projects and the subway construction, the church, once ruined but now renovated, remains empty because of its disconnection to its neighborhood. The video art installation invites the viewer to experience different forms of spatial “hollowing out,” while also criticizing the cultural policies followed by decision makers and other actors in the two cities.
Coloniality, Race, and Revolution

This discussion explores the colonial and racial genealogies implicated in the formation of the modern Greek state and its imaginary.

The discussion is held in collaboration with the Decolonizing Initiative at Brown University.

PARTICIPANTS
— Anthony Bogues
  (Department of African Studies, Brown University)
— Sakis Gekas
  (Department of History, York University, Toronto)
— Konstantina Zanou
  (Department of Italian Studies, Columbia University)

MODERATORS / ORGANIZERS
— Vangelis Calotychos
  (Department of Comparative Literature and Modern Greek Studies Program, Brown University)
— Yannis Hamilakis
  (Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World and Modern Greek Studies Program, Brown University)
The Alpha and Omega in the Letter: A Sonic Meditation on Freedom

A performance by the feminist artist and anthropologist Gina Athena Ulysse inspired by the letter written by Jean-Pierre Boyer (a prominent figure in the Haitian Revolution and president of Haiti from 1818 until 1843), and addressed to the Greek Revolutionaries.
Political Identities I: From Empire to Nation. State Formation and Civic Identities

The panel takes a historical perspective on transformations of political subjectivity at the early stages of the Greek nation-state. It is the first of three panel discussions that seek to trace changes in the Greek political identities and political culture from the founding of the state until today.

PRESENTATIONS
— Nikos Vafeas (Department of Philosophy and Social Studies, University of Crete), “Ambivalent Identities in the Age of Transition: The Case of Samos”
— Elpida Vogli (Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace), “Religion as Civic Identity”

MODERATOR / ORGANIZER
— Despina Lalaki (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Baruch College, City University of New York – CUNY)
Liberalism, Empire and the Postcolonial Standpoint

This talk draws on examples from US liberal imperialism to illuminate the postcolonial critique of liberalism and its standpoint. It argues that the postcolonial critique sees the liberal script as a constitutive boundary-drawing project and that the postcolonial critique emerges from the space of the “colonial”: from a sociopolitical site of difference, both material (or “actual”) and conceptual, that liberal projects seek to organize hierarchically. To illuminate these points, the essay refers to America’s new empire of the early 20th century that encompassed Puerto Rico and the Philippines and colonized even the anticolonial critique targeted against it.
Anti-Colonial/De-Colonial Cyprus: Colonialism, Irridentism, and Cultural Imperialism

This discussion addresses the formation of the cultural and political relation between the Greek nation-state and, firstly, the Greek-Cypriot community (and Cypriot society at large) and, subsequently, the Cypriot state, within the historical context of colonialism and decolonization. The discussants will direct their attention to matters related to education, political history, and language.
Can the Subaltern Sail?
Laboring in the Greek Shipping Industry

An anthropologist and a filmmaker look into the lives and struggles of workers in Greek merchant and passenger ships. The author of the forthcoming ethnography *We the Sailors, Embarked & On Hold*, and the creator of the documentary Tied (which focuses on the 2015 NEL strike) will talk about ship workers and ship owners, as well as cosmopolitanism, racism and gender, aboard or ashore.

In collaboration with FLOATS – Floating Laboratory of Action and Theory at Sea.
Michel Pablo, a Greek partisan in Algeria’s War of Independence

Michel Pablo was the nom-du-guerre of the trotskyist revolutionary and 4th international leader Michalis Raptis. Two of Pablo’s companions will talk about the participation of Greeks in Algeria’s anticolonial armed struggle, and will also reflect on the relation between decolonization and revolutionary Left today.

PARTICIPANTS
— Dimitris (Mimis) Livieratos (Writer)
— Aleka Makri (Founding Member of Protagoras Association)

MODERATOR
— Yiannis-Orestis Papadimitriou (Journalist, The Manifold)

ORGANIZER
— Nikolas Kosmatopoulos (Department of Political Studies, Department of Anthropology, American University of Beirut)

DISCUSSION
PANEL
ASSEMBLY
ANTI—TOUR
VIDEO—ART
PROJECTION
PERFORMANCE
KEYNOTE
VOTANIKOS
ONLINE
GREEK
ENGLISH
NATION—RACE
COSMOPOLITANISMS—COSMOPOLITICS
MEMORY—MONUMENTS
Political Identities II: The postwar liberal international order. The case of Hellenism

If during the 19th and the early 20th century Hellenism – this convoluted relationship between Greek antiquity and Western modernity – came to be identified with European liberalism, Christianity, and whiteness, during the second half of the 20th century, democracy came to be its main tenet. This panel explores semantic fields and relationships associated with radicalism, totalitarianism, autonomy, and corruption to explain the Greek democratic culture in the context of the American age.

PRESENTATIONS
— Peter Bratsis
   (Department of Political Sciences, BMCC, City University of New York – CUNY), “Authoritarian Statism and the Crisis of Politics in Greece”
— Vassilis Lambropoulos
   (Department of Classical Studies and Comparative Literature, University of Michigan), “From André Malraux to Emmanuel Macron: French Selling Hellenism to the Greeks”
— Despina Papadimitriou
   (Department of Political Science and History, Panteion University), “Exploring the Semantic Field of Anti-totalitarianism in the Greek Context”

MODERATOR / ORGANIZER
— Despina Lalaki
   (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Baruch College, City University of New York – CUNY)
From Merchants to Tycoons: Greek Shipping in Ottomanism, Colonialism, Capitalism

Two world-acclaimed maritime historians, specialized in the Mediterranean Sea, reflect on the status of maritime trade (especially the part of it controlled by Greeks) during the Ottoman period and the transition to the nation-state. They also discuss the relation between the Greek merchants-turned-shipowners and the colonial seas.
Racialization processes and the Greek Roma

Within the wider context of knowledge and exchange about postcolonial and decolonial theories and activist practices, this discussion addresses the historical experience and presence of Roma in contemporary Greek society. The discussants will ask how these theories and practices might reframe our understandings of Roma experience and positionality.

PARTICIPANTS
— Christos Iliadis
  (Department of Social Anthropology, Panteion University / Council of Europe)
— Alexandra Karayianni
  (Lawyer, Council of Europe)
— Electra Kostopoulou
  (Federated Department of History, Rutgers Newark and NJIT)
— Cynthia-Helen Malakasis
  (Department of Social Anthropology, Panteion University)
— Sissie Theodosiou
  (Department of Music Studies, University of Ioannina)

MODERATOR
— Sissie Theodosiou
  (Department of Music Studies, University of Ioannina)

ORGANIZER
— Sissie Theodosiou
  (Department of Music Studies, University of Ioannina)
— Cynthia-Helen Malakasis
  (Department of Social Anthropology, Panteion University)
Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities

Mahmood Mamdani focuses on the problem of extreme violence and its link with the nation-state. His talk will trace this problem of the Indian Question and the reservation system in North America. He will then turn to the end of formal apartheid in South Africa for ideas on how to move forward. Finally, the talk looks at the the Israel/Palestine question through lenses crafted in the South African experience.
Mediterranean Diasporas and Australian Settler Colonialism

This discussion reconsiders the history of migration from the Mediterranean region to Australia. It aims to discuss how migrant-cum-settlers from the Mediterranean displaced, interacted, engaged, and coexisted with Australia’s Indigenous peoples. Participants will discuss specific case studies that challenge conventional understandings of how migrants from Italy, Greece, and Serbia interpreted and settled in Australia. The discussion will act as an opportunity to rethink how migration history and diaspora studies are interacting with settler colonial studies. It will also posit questions about the possibility of building on the points of intersection and dissension between these fields with the aim of opening possible future research directions that rethink migrant permanency and belonging.

PARTICIPANTS
— Matteo Dutto
  (Department of Italian Studies, Monash University)
— Francesco Ricatti
  (Department of Italian Studies, Monash University)
— Zora Simic
  (Department of Gender Studies and History, University of New South Wales)

MODERATOR
— Andonis Piperoglou
  (Centre for Social and Cultural Research, Griffith University)

ORGANIZERS
— Penelope Papailias
  (Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly)
— Andonis Piperoglou
  (Centre for Social and Cultural Research, Griffith University)
Decolonizing Gender / Feminist Methodologies

On the occasion of the publication of the book *Women in the Kurdish Movement. Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses* by Handan Çağlayan, we discuss anticolonial inquiries on the “coloniality of power,” which primarily concern colonized and subaltern female bodies, but also the dominant male ones. Capitalist enclosures and colonial disposessions, as they become visible in the dense feminist discourse on patriarchy, feminicide and rape culture, but also through female practices of care and solidarity, and the creative performances of local cosmologies, are urging us to relate female colonized bodies with other subaltern bodies, things and their worlds. Once feminist methodologies engage not only with gender but also with race, class, power and justice, they establish intersectionality in social struggles, in line with postcolonial critique, and become inspiring and practical mediations between society, embodied knowledge and academia.

**PARTICIPANTS**
- Angela Dimitrakaki
  (College of Art, University of Edinburgh)
- Christina Grammatikopoulou
  (University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki)
- Murat Issi
  (Department of History and Archeology, University of Crete)
- Persefoni Myrtsou / Ayşenur
  (Institute of European Ethnology, Humboldt University of Berlin)
- Katerina Sergidou
  (Department of Communication, Media, and Culture, Panteion University, Universidad del País Vasco UPV-EHU)

**VIDEO PERFORMANCE**
- “How to Rescue Turkey? A Geopolitical Reflection on the Future of a Glorious Land” by Persefoni Myrtsou / Ayşenur

**MODERATOR / ORGANIZER**
- Fotini Tsibiridou
  (Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki)
The Greek Alt Right: Genealogies, Aesthetics and New Media Tactics

The discussion will focus on the discourses, aesthetics and media practices that emerge in the context of the alt right on both an international and a local level. More specifically, we will attempt to identify discourses being articulated on that side of the political spectrum related to concepts of race, gender, and nation. In particular, the discussants will address the notions of “beauty” promoted by these discourses and crystallized through rhetoric and audiovisual representations.

Additionally, the discussion will try to present a brief genealogy of the alt right and refer to some basic media tactics adopted by their supporters (including the use of memes, videogames, and trolling) in order to propagandize their views and forge their identity.

PARTICIPANTS
— Petros Petridis
  (Department of Social Anthropology, Panteion University)
— Kostis Stafylakis
  (Athens School of Fine Arts)

MODERATOR
— Alex Afouzenidis
  (National Centre for Social Research, Greece)

ORGANIZER
— Penelope Papailias
  (Department of History, Archeology and Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly)
Decolonization and Independent Publishing in Greece

Discussion with small, independent publishers that share a common interest in post-/de-colonial studies, feminist theory, and writings on racism/anti-racism. The aim of the discussion is to explore and extend the thinking and practice that inspires the publication of such books in Greece in the early 21st century. How does this publishing activity act as a gesture of distancing from, critique and rethinking of, and resisting dominant (national) discourses and biopolitical forms of managing interconnected “crises” – the economic or migrant crisis, racial and gender violence.

Relevant books will be on sale at the Symposium venue.
Greek-Turkish War, Peace, and the (De-)Colonial Management of Difference

Two Turkish anthropologists with important books on the topic discuss the Greek-Turkish violence and its relation with colonial pacification models in the post-Ottoman space and colonial world in general. What can we learn about the human ruins and the untold dramas of the 1922 population exchange and the Cyprus conflict? How did the post-war peace treaties between Greece, Turkey and Cyprus inspire and were inspired by post-colonial regimes that regulate violence and manage refugee populations?

PARTICIPANTS
— Aslı Iğsız
  (Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University, Institute of Advanced Studies, Princeton University)
— Yael Navaro
  (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge)

MODERATORS / ORGANIZERS
— Nikolas Kosmatopoulos
  (Department of Political Studies, Department of Anthropology, American University of Beirut)
— Fotini Tsibiridou
  (Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki)
Imperial Democracy on (il)Liberal Ground: Why the Call for “Decolonizing” Now?

Turning away from the sharp distinction between metropole and colony, this talk seeks to address how “internal enemies” are produced. It asks how racial formations underwrite the imperial archipelagos that have prospered to forge the “interior frontiers” of nation-states and their allegedly “peripheral” imperial locations. This reflection questions why “decolonizing” has become the buzzword of these times, focusing on the pretenses of democratic orders that at once open and foreclose how we understand the inequities written into the very infrastructure of these polities today.

SPEAKER
— Ann Laura Stoler
    (Department of Anthropology, The New School for Social Research)

MODERATOR / ORGANIZER
— Penelope Papailias
    (Department of History, Archeology and Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly)
“Decolonize the University!” — dëcoloиıze hellάş Student Network Assembly

Students and faculty from three universities of the Greek periphery (Universities of Ioannina, University of Thessaly and University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki) will discuss with guests what the decolonization of the university might mean in the Greek context.
Decolonize Acropolis —
The Ottoman Era

This anti-tour is part of a wider program of dēcolonisē hellás that aims to open new routes in the monumental landscape of the Acropolis and the city of Athens with a series of activities, seminars and artistic events.

The program is coordinated by Leonidas Moiras with the help of a research team of historians of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens consisting of Eleni Anastassopoulou, Kostakis Babes, and Costas Zouvelos.
Anti-Periplus: Of Other Ships

“Anti-Periplus – Of Other ships” is a pilot anti-tour project by dëcoloiize hellâş that aims to showcase the “unconventional” seas, focusing on ships on strike, ships in solidarity, ships with political role, ships that carry pirates or migrants. It also aims to creatively deconstruct the cartographic representation as a postcolonial technology that inscribes borders and controls the flows and lives at sea. On launching this project, we invite researchers and collectivities active around the sea in emancipatory ways to talk about a radical Mediterranean and its new political movements that consist of maroons, migrants and activists.

In collaboration with FLOATS Platform – Floating Laboratory of Action and Theory at Sea.
Political Identities III: The clash of civilizations at the end of history

Historical narratives engineered during the Cold War to sustain the righteousness of liberalism are being reworked to legitimize neoliberalism – the totalitarianism of our time. On the other side, revolts and revolutions around the world suggest that nothing is lost yet. The panel places the Greek case at its center to explore the transformative effects of the series of crises that the new neoliberal world order has unleashed.

PRESENTATIONS
— Dimitris Dalakoglou (Department of Social Anthropology, Vrije University, Amsterdam), “Europe’s Last Frontier: Securitization, Racialization and the Politics of Belonging”
— Alexandros Kioupkiolis (Department of Political Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), “Democracy in Common. Rethinking the Political Representativeness”
— Aimilia Voulvouli (Department of Political Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), “From ‘Free Greece’ to Today’s Commons. An Ethnohistorical Approach to Cooperativism in the Thessaly of Crisis”

MODERATOR / MODERATOR
— Despina Lalaki (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Baruch College, City University of New York – CUNY)
Monumentøclasm Manifesto

The Monumentøclasm: Anticolonial Imagination Workshop, which started in mid-October, reflected on the creative and critical practices, the debates, social movements and the forms of activism that today are intervening in and transforming monumental landscapes in Greece and all over the world. The discussions, webinars, listening activities, reading collaboratives and walks in the Athens were organized by the artists, architects, anthropologists, art historians and social geographers taking part in the décolonize hellás Memory-Monuments working group, in collaboration with collectivities in Athens.

The members of the workshop will present their manifesto on monuments.
Decolonize the Salon: Reflections

The workshop Decolonizing Salon revived the idea of the “salon” as a space of dialogue, flow of ideas, exchange and creativity. In a cultural landscape split between the instrumentalization of cultural heritage for touristic or nationalistic purposes and the institutionalization of contemporary culture within a context of privatization of public spaces, environmental degradation and increased violence and policing, this workshop focused on the art of poster making as a tool for action, propaganda and awareness-raising. It also tried to imagine how decolonization might look in buildings, public spaces and landscapes, cultural heritage and narratives, in short in every aspect of what one might call “Greek culture.”

In collaboration with 1927 Art Space.
Closing and Reflections on the Future of dëcolonизe hellάş

This final discussion brings together members of the DH collective, the advisory board and collaborating collectives to reflect on the actions of the initiative up to this point, the symposium and the possible directions the initiative could develop in the future.

Today the European Union uses the Balkans & East Mediterranean region as a buffer zone for migrants treated as racialized “surplus populations.” By relying on Black Marxism’s sociological history of racial capitalism, this talk argues that, despite the region’s Europeanization, the EU’s racialization is neither an administrative nor a temporary “solution” for the so-called “migration crisis.” Rather, since medieval capitalism, the region has been a historically designated place for the production and reproduction of Europe’s racial supremacy. Firstly, the talk analyzes the rise of Venetian capitalism and, more specifically, the sugar plantations in Cyprus. It then analyzes the regional revolts and the rise of the region’s pre-modern radical tradition. The speech concludes with a discussion of Cedric J. Robinson’s parallel between the Black Radical Tradition and the region’s radical tradition, their shared task to abolish ‘Europe’ as a civilization of racial capitalism.
Advisory Board

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Graduate Center of the  
City University of New York  
– CUNY

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Supporting Institutions

SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZATION

DH Collective

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Translation/Editing
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Event Coordinator
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Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

All events will be streamed on the DH YouTube at EEST time and later archived.

Due to public health restrictions related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, only a limited number of people - on a first-come-first-serve basis - will be able to enter the buildings where the symposium is being streamed.

To be admitted into PLYFA Industrial Park, vaccination documentation or documentation of illness from COVID-19 will be required. The wearing of face masks is mandatory in all indoor spaces.

https://decolonizehellas.org/en/