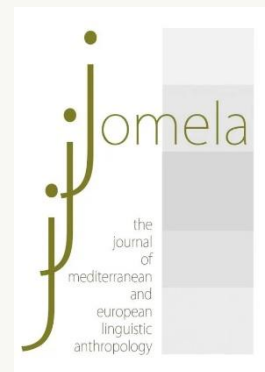


Representations of Refugees, Traffickers and Local People in Greek Literature during the European Migrant Crisis (2014-2018)

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Abstract

This paper investigates Greek literature (prose and poetry), written, in its bulk, during the years of the European migrant crisis (2014-2018) for ways in which refugees, traffickers, and locals are presented. Following a literature review and the presentation of methodology, prose is observed through insights pertinent to Social Representations Theory and a theoretical framework of social exclusion. We analyse poetry with the help of critical discourse analysis (CDA) according to Gee (2011), in terms of the social language, situated meanings, intertextuality, figured worlds, and Discourses that the poems include. The approach employed assists in the eliciting of social perspectives from the sample, as reflected in the writers' or the poets' views. These views may be hyperbolic, but nonetheless echo the opinion of at least part of the Greek population.

Key words: *Refugees, European migrant crisis, Greece, literature, CDA*

Introduction

The European migrant crisis, i.e. the crisis comprising large numbers of people flooding into the European Union from across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through and over Southeast Europe, has acutely affected Greece, one of several countries at the border of entrance into the EU for these migrants.¹ The refugees' best chance to enter European ground has been to travel in precarious inflatable boats from the coasts of Turkey to the Greek islands of the Aegean. These refugees attempt to travel using any means available, paying illegal traffickers or legal transporters (bus and taxi drivers) to assist them cross the Greek state and to reach their desired destinations at locations throughout Europe, for as long as the borders are open. However, the borders to Europe did close, at which time, approximately 60,000 refugees were trapped in Greece. The solidarity expressed by inhabitants of the Greek islands toward the exhausted refugees was formidable and impressed a larger Greek nation. However, discourses and ideologies of fear effected a xenophobic wave that has reverberated until the present time; this xenophobia motivated spiteful attitudes and slogans aimed at the migrants, such as "migrants go back."² These attitudes also motivated the physical efforts of Greeks to deter these migrants, evident in their attempts to force away the boats of the migrants,³ or in preventing the migrants from reaching the shelters or housing provided by the Greek state.^{4,5}

This arrival of approximately 900,000 refugees⁶ during a period of heightened migrant flow (2013-2015), escaping the war in Syria and other conflicts (in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.), contributed to the shaping of the European migration policy, a document that governed the lives of these refugees crossing Aegean waters. This significant period in Greece's history was recorded and verbalized in texts, which sought to record events in this period of massive alteration. Thus, a proliferation of texts emerged, feeding the ideologies of citizens within Greece and beyond. However, little analysis has emerged on these texts, an analysis which would inform scholarship as to people's diverse attitudes and actions towards migrants and migration flows.

This study attempts to analyse literary texts produced consequent to the intensified migration from the east and into Greece from 2013 to 2015, so as to expose these attitudes in the receiving country. As such, the paper attempts to expose the ways in which ideologies of both immigrants into Greece, as well as those of Greek society have been presented in literary works as texts that reflect the feelings and social, political and ideological stances of these populations.

To respond to this, we draw on a sample set of literary works themed on refugees to Greece. This set includes prose books, either originally in Greek or translated, and poetry, the analysis of which contributes to the landscaping of the perceptions of these populations toward the goings on during migration. As optimum tools for the analysis of these texts, we selected analyses of prose and critical discourse analysis.

To develop the paper, we structure it as follows: In the second section, the Literature Review, we review the literature and provide a critical perspective of it. In the third section, the Methodological Framework, we introduce and elaborate on the framework through which to analyse texts discussing the refugee issues. In the fourth section, we analyze the respective texts, and finally, in the Conclusion, we review the project, sociopolitically and academically.

Literature Review

Determinants of the Refugee Phenomenon

Refugees and economic migrants constitute global migration types that are differentiated through their incentive for their mobility. Refugee pressure emanates from high refugee potential, i.e. high numbers of people who are considering leaving their homeland. This also describes and landscapes geographical areas of potential action for combating the generation of migration flows, as migration tends to occur in “socially selective and geographically strongly patterned ways” (de Haas 2011, p. 10).

The refugee phenomenon is determined, firstly, by factors relevant to the countries of origin. Seen in the context of functionalist approaches, namely neo-classical migration theory, migration is explained by geographical differences in the supply and demand for labour: Migrant movements are predicated on a cost-benefit calculation that promises a better life elsewhere (see e.g., Todaro 1969). According to the specific migration theory, countries of origin represent the supply side. For the period under review, the main factor influencing migration flow was, of course, the war in Syria: “It is destruction that is taking place down there. Entire countries are going empty” (Tzamiotis 2016, p.14). “Every week, boats or small boats full of desperate people arrived” (Tzamiotis 2016, p.19). “The goods came from the Iran border three times a month, [and] were joined up with the ones from Iraq or Syria if there were any, and sent out to us” (Günday 2018, p.13). “As if we had forgotten and remembered again suddenly, that these people had run from war and they were sitting at our tables as refugees” (Makridakis 2017, p. 157).

The second determinant relates to the destination or the demand-side countries. Migration waves are motivated by personal or family security and by the search for life conditions where law and justice predominate; favorable economic conditions are also certainly a desideratum: “There are reasons why some societies thrive, contrary to others that sink into misery” (Tzamiotis 2016, p. 101).

They were both crying. They also knew. They were aware they had no idea what the future held. They were taking the first steps toward darkness on a day like this, when the sun was so bright it practically lit up the insides of our mouths.

(Günday 2018, p. 383)

So we had learnt that they were Kurds and they were living in a city at the border of Syria and Turkey: she was 21 years old and Kachraman was three years older. They were heading to Germany, to find an uncle of theirs who lived there for many years.
 (Makridakis 2017, p. 82)

However, in the context of the latest migrant crisis, the country that the migrant does eventually reach is not the aspired one as the final intended destination. Greece has simply become the country that traffickers from Turkey have chosen as a transit station. The arrival of hordes of exhausted people, thousands drowning in the process, motivates the reception society, i.e., the residents on the Aegean islands, to receive these migrants with mixed feelings: “Did we refuse help to anyone? Did we leave anyone starving? Didn’t we all do whatever we could?” (Tzamiotis 2016, p. 16).

I can’t stand this any longer [...] it is two years now that these people keep coming and coming. I’m sick. I’m sick of seeing them miserable. I’m sick of seeing them drowning..., I’m sick of them being protagonists in my life. [...] Neither do I intend to apologize for having a roof over my head or for not being hungry.
 (pp. 121-122)

and with the voice of a refugee, “These people did nothing wrong to us. We are their guests. They save us, they are taking care of us, they are doing everything they can to help us”
 (p. 224)

The third determinant of global migration is the set of networks: Communication networks, smuggling networks, support networks that either create migration flows or perpetuate existing ones. Human smuggling is an international business yielding high profits. Support networks can reinforce the ambiguity between refugees and migrants, and influence decisions regarding the final destination country by way of misinformation and smuggling costs, while also at times exploiting the smuggled populations. Günday (2018) describes the world of traffickers through the eyes of a child, who is the son of one of them. The boy’s involvement in smuggling refugees, alongside his father, gradually strips him off his childhood and sensitivity. People, the ‘smuggled,’ become just a commodity with a price attached to it: “... they were all just lives. They didn’t turn into novels through mere divulgence. An autopsy report perhaps, at most” (p. 21). At times, immigrants are carried by trucks from inland and are piled up in water tanks constructed for this purpose at the trafficker’s building plot. There, under highly unpleasant and desperate conditions, they await to be transferred to the beach: “Violence, as strong as the sun, was the first you saw when you looked into the techniques for smuggling people” (p. 103). To the boy’s

question, if they can leave together with those who seek a better life, his father answers: "...‘Our job [...] is to send the passengers on their way – not to go with them!’ As if to say that our job was to kill, not to die" (p. 56).

Empirical evidence confirms the accumulative effect of these three determinants on the creation of modern migration flows (Kontis 2005). In the case of Greece, during the migration crisis of 2014-2018, most of the people requesting asylum arrived in the country through the Aegean islands located closer to the Turkish coast than they are to mainland Greece. These people arrived in big numbers, after having been assembled and staying in Turkey for an extended period. In Turkey, as in Greece, the conditions under which they are held, and the humiliation and brutality transform detention areas into areas of inhumane treatment.⁷

Methodology

We examined three books of prose themed around refugees. Two of these were originally written in Greek: (i) Konstantinos Tzamiotis (2016), *To Perasma* [The Crossing], Athens: Metaixmio, and (ii) Yannis Makridakis (2017), *Ola gia Kalo* [All for Good], Athens: Vivliopoleion tis Hestias. The third book was originally written in Turkish (Hakan Günday 2013, *Daha*, Istanbul: Doğan Kitap) and was later translated into Greek (Hakan Günday 2016, *Ki Allo*, transl.: S. Vrettou, Athens: Okeanida) and into other languages, including English. We lifted the quotes in our current paper from the English book: Hakan Günday (2018), *More*, transl.: Z. Beler, New York: Arcade Publishing. Quotes from the other two Greek books have been translated by Christina Linardaki.

Apart from these books written in prose, we also examined 47 poetry collections that contain poems about immigrants, or which are dedicated to the immigrant communities (more than 170 poems in total).⁸ However, only 85 poems form a convenience sample which we thus deemed appropriate for the analysis in this paper. We at times selected more than one poem from the same collection, as these poems reveal different aspects of the subject under attention.

The bulk of these poems span from 2014 to 2018, though we do not exclude poems written prior to 2014: Greece had been the point of entry to the EU for refugees from different parts of Asia and Africa long before the current European migration crisis. Thus, poems written prior to the refugee crisis may resonate well with its circumstances. As a result, the period throughout which we cover poetry begins in 2004.

We ground the analysis of prose in this paper in the following areas: 1) Social Representations Theory and 2) the theoretical framework of social exclusion. More specifically, Social Representations Theory renders transparent the stereotypical representations that otherwise blur the view of current events. Concurrently, migrants and refugees are framed as vulnerable groups, largely owing to the high risk of social exclusion they have.

For the analysis of poetry, however, we make use of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA focuses, inter alia, on the relations of “power, dominance and inequality and the ways these are reproduced or resisted by social group members through text and talk” (Van Dijk 1995, p. 18), and has appeared to describe several approaches (Wodak and Meyer 2001; Fairclough 1989, 1992, 2010; van Dijk 1995, 2001, 2014, 2015). For the purposes of this paper, however, we largely focus on work by Gee (1999, 2004, 2011) who proposes five tools for developing a CDA: situated meaning, social language, intertextuality, figured worlds, and Discourse (2011, p. 150ff). Since however, in this paper, we consider the fact that social language assigns language its situated meaning, we first explore social language and then its situated meaning.

Analysis of Prose

Social Representations Theory

The theoretical and analytical stance we adopt in this paper becomes more prominent when focusing on our own reflexivity as analysts. This stance is inextricably linked to social representations that exist both in our minds and constructed within society (Wetherell 1996). Tzamiotis and Makridakis present immigrants as bedraggled people who experience much hardship, must abandon their home country while placing themselves in danger, to reach Greece.

Every week rowboats or motor dinghies arrived filled with desperate people, and the shipwrecks were not rare, but he had never seen such a big ship in this condition (p. 19) ... Most people reached ashore half-drowned (p. 25).

(Tzamiotis 2016)

However, immigrants are also presented as a mob, a disorderly crowd that moves as a collectivity and is unpredictable, even if justified in its reactions:

In vein did Ismael with his megaphone try, following the orders he was taking from the Port Authority officer, to persuade them that they had to stay put and that they did badly to cram themselves at the pier. Afraid that there might not be enough room for everyone on board, they continued to push one another in order to board first, not caring if those up front ran the danger of ending up in the sea.

(Tzamiotis 2016, p. 247)

With respect to locals, both Tzamiotis and Makridakis refrain from making a doxology of Greek society. By contrast, they do not avoid its darker face, i.e., the stereotypical views that lead to the polarized stance of a number of Greeks. In Makridakis’s book, the protagonist is a person who is wholeheartedly dedicated to assisting the refugees where the story is often told from his

viewpoint. But we see, for example, in this book the priest telling captain Fotis, who assists immigrants: “You are helping illegal immigrants to enter our country and turn us all into Muslims, to destroy our religion and nation, to take up our homeland in the end” (Makridakis 2017, p. 108). Or, in a dialogue between the mayor and an officer of the army, in Tzamiotis’s book, we see the tug-of-war of thoughts between those who develop a dim view of the immigrants and those who understand and help them:

You insist on seeing them as innocent victims, when in their majority they are just a few more hundreds of illegal immigrants that enter our country. – Shame on you! As an officer, you should know that the refugee status is sacred all over the civilised world.

(Tzamiotis 2016, p. 168)

The above evidences the fact that, lacking recent social representations that would assist Greeks to assign meaning to the experience, the refugees were led into an ‘anchoring’ process. In such a framework, new experiences are ascribed to an already existing representation, after which, the new part of the representation becomes objectified, as it becomes widely acceptable.⁹ If we accept that literature reflects reality, then we understand the fact that Greek communities cognitively included the experience of massive migrant inflows partly into their already existing representations of xenophobia and partly into their representations of hospitality.

Vulnerable Groups and Social Exclusion

Migrants, refugees, and cultural and religious groups, are defined by the European Union as vulnerable groups. These groups are considered vulnerable largely owing to the fact that they are at high risk of social exclusion. Yet, despite this, they do not constitute exclusion groups (Papadopoulou 2012).

Rashid, Yasmine, Kachraman, Hafez, Osama, and Zaneb appear as Muslim protagonists in the three novels. The identification of a person, whether by themselves or by others, as ‘Muslim’ is not politically and socially neutral, as it can entail identification with a group that is at times stigmatized and demonized in public discourse. In social and public policy, Muslims are increasingly being viewed as a potential security threat or a group that is unwilling or unable to integrate.¹⁰ Yet, a pertinent question now is how local people receive refugees.

We had just welcomed, all together, as if we were close relatives of Yasmin and Kachraman, their son, who remained patient all the way from Syria until here and was born in our little house, the daybreak of Thursday December 10, 2015

(Makridakis 2017, p. 78)

It was not at all important in which language the cries for help were uttered or to which God the pleads of people for mercy were directed.

(Tzamiotis 2016, p. 22)

Tzamiotis, when describing the reaction of a local girl Vassiliki's father, at a time when migrants broke into his house in the village, shows efficiently how the first amicable reaction of understanding can gradually evolve into hatred towards the migrants. A lack of protection by the state, of people who run from war and prosecution, and a lack of provision of assistance to refugees who experience harsh conditions when crossing borders, leads to an enmity of local people who feel undefended against the poverty and the exhaustion of refugees:

My father stopped being sympathetic to those [immigrants] who stole from him. To be honest, he grew hating them. But, because he couldn't tell who exactly were those who stole from him, he grew hating them all.

(Tzamiotis 2016, p. 94)

Analysis of Poetry

Social Language

Social language constitutes a method through which to (choice of words, intonation, style etc.) to enact a particular socially situated identity. The social language of poems is the genre of poetry, and is hence poetic language, as the poets express their view of social and political occurrences. Contrary to everyday talk, poetic language is laden with figures of speech, such as metaphors, similes, hyperboles, irony, oxymorons, alliterations, personifications, and so forth. Other elements include patterns of sound produced from the alternation of short and long syllables, metric considerations, and unusual patterns in word ordering. Since the number of poems that we considered is not small, we attended only to figures of speech, especially those that contribute to the representations of concern. Below we include striking examples of such language:

Representations of Concern

In the poem 'Immigrant' (Skouroliakou 2008), a migrant is seen buying a small piece of sun with a 'living card' of non-specific location. This metaphor points to Greece (a sunny country most of the year) in which a migrant has no specific living circumstances.

In the poem 'Bulletin of Incidents' (Skouroliakou 2015), it is not temperature but shame that hits high temperatures.

In the poem 'Wet Grave' (Chloptsioudis 2016), the rain is seen as a rain of nails that crucifies dreams, as justice is an underage refugee without a raincoat sitting inside an inflatable boat with holes.

In the Poem 'Eidomeni' (Liatzoura 2017), named after an infamous Greek refugee camp where hundreds of people are crammed under unhealthy conditions, an ironic statement appears on 'refugee tourism,' promising a unique experience not to be forgotten, offered at a bargain price, where a third receives free transport and deliverance for another two tickets purchased.

Situated Meaning

Situated meaning is the specific meaning situated in the context of a word's the use of language; in this way, a word, a phrase or an utterance act as a clue or cue to guide the active construction of meaning in context. This process can occur as words, phrases, and utterances can assume new and more complex meaning in situated use than in general use; any structure in language has a certain meaning potential, i.e. a range of possible meanings that it can take on in different contexts. Following on from the above, social language affords language its situated meaning, where its usage changes in unexpected ways within the figures of speech employed. Thus, we explore situated meaning within these figures of speech, thus identifying symbols, and adding significance to certain words or phrases.

Since the sample is broad, we adopted a quantitative approach, enabling the extraction of conclusions between all 85 poems in the sample. More particularly, we counted recurring words and/or clusters of words in each poem. This process evidenced the fact that an occurrence of a word/meaning/symbol should be counted only upon first finding the item in the poem, so as to prevent more popular words from overshadowing less used words. A threshold of 10 total one-time occurrences was established and only 18 words managed to pass the threshold: sea, children, death, water, boat, refugees, night/darkness, road, dreams, homeland, hope, sinking, food, Aegean/Mediterranean, migrants, shipwreck, migratory birds, tears. These appeared inside figures of speech, exposing their meaning. Below we give some characteristic examples:

'Sea,' a cluster of words that also includes salty water, open sea, waves, blue waters etc., refers to the common denotation, yet which takes on situated meaning. Sea assumes a bitter connotation in the poem 'Tonight I feel shame' (Konstantopoulou 2014), where the poet speaks of the shame that she feels. In the poem 'On Christmas day' (Sidira 2016), the sea is seen washing ashore corpses of little children inside the poet's room. In the poem 'Without a Talisman' (Kolossiatou 2017), sea becomes a mirror of death for all those trying to cross it. 'Aegean/Mediterranean' narrows down 'sea,' showing locality. The Aegean features in the title of 'The refugee of the Aegean' (Liatzoura 2017) but, in the lines, the refugee is storing his soul inside an Aegean coffin. This suggests that the sea or, more specifically, the Aegean/Mediterranean sea, is crossed with boats (plain, inflatable or precarious/crooked), appearing in 22 poems. In the poem 'Memory of Returning' (Dimouli 2015), refugees appear inside boats without sails, i.e. boats without the possibility of being guided to a destination.

The term 'Dreams' (15 occurrences) appears in the poem 'Wet Grave' (Chloptsioudis 2016) crucified and in the poem 'Birds of the east' (Papadopoulos 2016) dead. In the poem 'The Last Moon of Spring' (Kolossiatiou 2017), dreams become expendable, and in the poem 'Voices' (ibid.), dreams are smuggled.

The term 'Death' (which also includes reference to 'dead,' 'corpses,' 'grave,' 'graveyard') is bought off in poem 'We Guarded Ourselves' (Toumanidis, 2014) and in the poem 'Bulletin of Incidents' (Skouroliakou 2015) hands are seen, exchanging dead banknotes. In the poem Nr.77 there is an underwater graveyard, and in the poem 'Dead Refugee Children' (Frangos 2018), whole beaches have been turned into graveyards under a fable moonlight that lights over them as a candle. In the poem 'A Place in Heaven' (Kopsida-Vrettou 2018), death is seen personified, walking barefoot on the forehead of a child.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality refers to excerpts from texts that also signify other texts, or the reference or allusion of one text to another. It may also involve instances of another social language within a respective context.

Poets in our sample set are keen on using various elements of intertextuality. For example, some poems contain parentheses that reveal another voice commenting or speaking. The poem 'Amygdaleza 2012' (Dimouli 2015) discusses another infamous refugee camp, Amygdaleza. Here, a mother is wondering if her child is eating well at the camp; the parenthesis emphasizes that it is not a concentration camp '(as they say);' this is a euphemism that only underlines the harsh conditions akin to those in a concentration camp, such as in Nazi Germany.

Other poems contain spoken statements or dialogues. These elements serve to afford the poems immediacy and to add intensity, but also reveal different voices and different aspects. In the poem 'Through their Broken Glass' (Toumanidis 2014), which is about the cruelty of the Westerners, the latter are given a voice: "What refugees and immigrants, they are just signs of the times that will pass..." Poem 'News' (ibid.) shows the indifference and the annoyance of local people at the arrival of refugees: Half of the population is wondering how they managed to pass the guardians of the borders, where the other half is sending them back to their homelands.

Finally, some poems contain rhetorical questions or phrases bearing an oral speech quality, uttered by the poetic subject or perhaps the poet him/herself. For example, the poem 'Lynch from Rwanda' (Skouroliakou 2008) ends with the line "Please forgive me," which is the poet's/poetic subject's appeal to a refugee child. In the poem 'We Guarded ourselves' (Toumanidis 2014), we see the question "[Pain's] hungry children, aren't they our own too?" Such questions or phrases do more than intensify the general point of the poem. They offer a direct address to the reader, constituting a voice that rings higher than the general voice in the poems.

Figured Worlds

The situated meanings of words and phrases within given social languages in combination with intertextuality trigger specific figured worlds, i.e., everyday notions (narratives, images, schemas, metaphors and models) about the world that inform people of the typical or normal. Children could represent such a schema. However, in the poem samples, refugee children are juxtaposed to 'our children' through an interesting divide. This divide, 'their children' versus 'our children,' challenges the universal one. The challenge is aptly used to underline the different circumstances, if not realities, pertaining to each group of children. Thus, in the poem 'We guarded ourselves' (Toumanidis 2014), we do not see children refugees, but rather, Greek children in their homes. It is for their sake that the Greeks are shutting migrant pain and trouble out of their homes. The poem 'Children of War' (Vakirli 2015) describes children's voices which have become screams of pain or death. It also contains an image of a child's shirt with a bullet hole, while discussing the slaughtering of children in a Syrian school. In this poem, the division between 'their children' and 'our children' is underlined: 'Their children's' hands are dyed in blood, 'ours' are holding rose petals. In the poem 'Bulletin of incidents' (Skouroliakou 2015), children's playgrounds become death-bearing omens for 'their children.' In the poem 'The messmates of another land,' (Koutsoumbeli 2016), children's toys include drowned bunnies and torn cuddle bears, along with a music box playing an out-of-rhythm lullaby. Happy symbols are seen wrecked, as a testimony of the hardship 'their children' are traversing. We see, therefore, symbols of serenity connected with 'our children,' whereas 'their children' are presented inside horrific circumstances.

Another notion challenged is the one of 'peace.' In the poem 'Reportage II' (Stamboglis 2014), the signification of 'peace' is seen as alien to its original denotation, 'an extraordinary condition above the facts,' i.e., unplugged from reality; godly feelings only help to nurture 'the ethics of fear.' This is also the case with 'sorrow.' Sorrow is being bought at a bargain price through the images of distressed children in the poem 'Without remorse' (Karakokkinos 2017), only to be sold as cheap, empty rhetoric regarding truth and justice.

Discourse

Finally, Discourse is a manifestation of how meaning travels well beyond human language to involve objects, tools, technologies etc. used in enacting a specific identity. It involves conventions that people use when they talk and act not just as individuals, but as members of various social and cultural groups. Discourses refer to previous elements, thus they signify the poets' position relevant to refugees. From what we have seen, we understand that Greek poets see in refugees a heroic part of humanity and a manifestation of the human struggle and will to live; thus, they are sanctifying these refugees, presenting them as martyrs. By contrast, Greek poets see locals and Westerners as villains who seek to eradicate the refugees. This is a distorted

and hyperbolic point of view, which however may hide true aspects of reality in its exaggeration.

Poems do not simply describe the situation of refugees in the third (an observer's) person, but sometimes also in the first (the subject's) person. An example appears in the following excerpt, where the poem speaks of traffickers from the viewpoint of refugees in the first-person plural:

HOPE (excerpt, Dimouli 2015)

Noiselessly they drowned us; like the diver's last Breath
We were standing in queue
For them to count us.
City animals
Had brought us next to saltiness.
All day long the azure craved for us
So fiercely that they told us – they will drown us...

By contrast to refugees, Westerners in general are presented cold-hearted, indifferent, and eventually maleficent towards the refugees:

AMOK (excerpt, Ganelis 2017)

I find your flesh on the rails
[...]
You came last in a refugee caravan
Walls standing erect
Two steps before Heaven
Behind barriers
Innocence in the mincer.
I find your blood on the rails
Europe of racist amok.

Ultimately, refugees are seen to have arrived to assist Westerners to see through the rotten foundations of their civilization:

BIRDS OF THE EAST (Papadopoulos 2016)

The East yesterday
Sent us its birds
Millions
They cleared the landscape
From our dead dreams

Conclusion

This paper has investigated Greek prose and poetry written, in its bulk, during 2014-2018, i.e., the years of the heightened European migrant crisis, for ways in which refugees and locals are presented. We analyzed prose books by employing two analytical tools: 1) Social representation theory and 2) the theoretical framework of social exclusion. We analyzed the 85 poems in the sample using critical discourse analysis, and specifically drawing on situated meaning, social language, intertextuality, figured worlds and Discourses (Gee 2011).

The approaches employed assisted in the eliciting of social perspectives from the sample, as reflected in the writers' or the poets' views. These views may be hyperbolic, but nonetheless echo the opinion of at least a part of the Greek population. Here, art is once salient and effective in reflecting reality, even in its exaggeration, and draws attention not only to the experiences of refugees, but also to the very essence of contemporary European identity.

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Endnotes

- ¹ See https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration# (accessed on 17.3.2019).
- ² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BadznLzhbs> (accessed on 15.7.2020).
- ³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEYA6yqkJrI> (accessed on 13.8.2020).
- ⁴ See, for example, <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/24586/greece-locals-set-fire-to-hotel-for-asylum-seekers> (accessed on 15.7.2020).
- ⁵ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/greece-locals-stop-migrants-camps-reaching-housing-70533257>
- ⁶ See Petracou et al. (2018), p. 13; also <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/statistics> and <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179> (accessed on 16.3.2020).
- ⁷ “Nouvelles formes de confinement aux portes de l’Union européenne”. Actes de la conférence de Migreurop Madrid, 8 juin 2019. Available at: <https://www.lacimade.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Actes-confe%CC%81rence-de%CC%81tention-Madrid-8-juin-2019-Migrp-ok.pdf> (last accessed: 16.3.2021).
- ⁸ We thank, for their help in locating the poems, the literary bloggers Dimos Chloptsioudis (tovivlio.net), Dione Dimitriadou (meanoihtavivlia.blogspot.gr) and Katerina Tsitsekli (stigmalogou.blogspot.gr), as well as Mandragoras and Vaxkikon publications.
- ⁹ Op.cit., 207.
- ¹⁰ *Muslims in Europe: A report on 11 EU Cities*, New York, Budapest, London: Open Society Institute, 2010.