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Narratives of the Migrant Crisis

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Narratives of the Migrant Crisis

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I. INTRODUCTION

The migration crisis as a worldwide phenomenon, also affects the European domain by massive displacements of people seeking refuge (asylum seekers) or a better life (economic refugees). Most EU countries are experiencing migratory waves to a larger or a smaller extent according to their geographical location. From 2014 onwards, during the peak of the crisis, several human rights violations were observed, as migrants were often subjected to discrimination, detention, and abuse. This resulted in breaches of treaties, laws, and declarations built on promoting the equal rights of human beings amongst those considered to be the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The article aims to present the migration crisis as a political, and social phenomenon in Hungary, Greece, and Italy, EU border countries deeply affected by it, and refers to the public and officials' political opinion on this complex phenomenon. The fragile migrant's representation in the spectrum of political, social as well as intercultural interactions can be expressed by creative forms of poetry. Thus, poetry facilitates the expressions of those interconnected spaces of individual and public fragile migrant representations.

II. EUROPEAN SPACE AND MIGRATION

A retrospective glance through time is necessary, to better comprehend the phenomenon of

the migration crisis in the European domain. Within Europe, the founding fathers of European integration praised solidarity as a primary shared virtue upon which a better world must be formed. The then French foreign minister Robert Schuman, in his famous Proclamation of May 9, 1950, the EU founding date, argued that "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a *de facto* solidarity" (Gronowska & Sadowski, 2018). This discourse highlighted, in theory, the importance of solidarity amongst Europeans. However, in practice, solidarity was not being applied, as seen in the example of the migrant crisis discussed in this paper, where the EU proved unable to adequately handle the weight, with European member states applying contentious policies and draconian security measures to deal with the situation, going against the very founding values and committing serious human rights violations. Despite the efforts made at an EU level for a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) as well as a Common Migration Policy (EU Migration and Asylum Policy, 2023), at the time of this writing there exists no common migration policy amongst EU states, as every country handles the migration crisis independently, and in accordance with its national policies.

Nevertheless, to demonstrate the extent of the migration crisis in Europe, factual data are much needed. Since 2011, migrant flows into Europe have been increasing, fueled in part by certain international events and conditions like the Arab Spring and the onset eruption of the Syrian civil war (Gatta, 2019). During the Arab Spring in 2011, rapidly increasing waves of irregular migrants came principally from the most south-exposed portions of Europe: the Italian island of Lampedusa, Malta, Cyprus, and Greece (Gronowska & Sadowski, 2018). The refugee crisis reached a climax in 2015, when an estimated one million individuals crossed the Mediterranean illegally entering EU territory (Gatta, 2019). The year 2015 had the highest yearly influx of asylum seekers in Europe since 1985 (PRC, 2016), with certain individuals supporting that the current wave of migration towards the European Union is quickly becoming the greatest and most difficult that Europe had to deal with since World War 2 (Metcalfe, 2015).

In times of crisis, even basic human rights are not being respected, also evident in the case of the migrant crisis. Detailed examples of these violations are repression, abuse, in human and degrading treatment of people, the collective ejection of aliens, illegal

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imprisonment, and any other means of violating one's liberty (Gatta, 2019). Even though human rights appear to provide universal protection and the vocabulary used in the first Article of the UDHR, states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights", reality presents undoubtedly a distinct, complex view (Pulitano, 2022). The European Declaration of Human Rights is nevertheless a declaration rather than a treaty. As a result, states that have signed it are not bound by it (2022), committing human rights violations.

a) *Migratory Routes in European Space*

Geographically speaking, the majority of European frontline States, including Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Spain, France, and Greece, islands including Malta and Cyprus, and lately, countries with boundaries between the Eastern European area such as Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, and Hungary, have been presented to the Strasbourg Court for possible violations on the collective expulsion of foreigners (Gatta, 2019). Similarly, other EU member-states, Greece and Italy, experienced difficulties and were unprepared in managing migratory surges during the crisis (Matveevskaya et al., 2020). Migrants entered these countries through one of the five available routes (Eastern Mediterranean route, Western Mediterranean route, Western African route, Central Mediterranean route, Western Balkans route), following the geographical position of each country (EU Migration and Asylum Policy, 2023).

As far as Hungary is concerned, the primary entrance point for migrants was the Western Balkan route, where in 2015 the country had an enormous number (14%) of asylum applications, and the largest number of asylum seekers in relation to its population (18 applicants per thousand residents). The main groups of asylum seekers entering its territories were from Afghanistan and Syria (Lodovici et al., 2017). Moving on, Greece's principal entry point was the Eastern Mediterranean route, with the number of asylum seekers increasing in 2016, and Greece becoming the leading EU country in terms of the number of asylum seekers it received in relation to its population (almost 6 applicants per thousand people compared to the EU average of 2.5 per thousand people) (Lodovici et al., 2017). In 2015-2016, most migrants entering the Eastern Mediterranean were from the Middle East and South Asia (IOM, 2017). Finally, Italy's principal entrance point was the Central Mediterranean route, with the most visitors arriving in 2016 and the first half of 2017 (Lodovici et al., 2017). Migrants following this route went from Libya to Italy, with others arriving through Egypt and a lesser number of them travelling from Tunisia and Algeria (IOM, 2017). Most of Italy's asylum seekers originated from Africa, with Nigeria accounting for the lion's share (Lodovici et al., 2017).

b) *The Situation in Hungary, Greece, and Italy*

Having specified the paths through which migrants entered these countries, a depiction of the Countries' political situation will follow, focusing on the human rights violations. All three countries individually, as demonstrated by the above statistical information, handled a heavy influx during the migration crisis. This fostered the development of hostile feelings toward migrants. As it concerns, Hungary, the country is considered to be the symbol of European xenophobia (BBC, 2016), something that resulted from the country's claims that she was in danger and should have been safeguarded, while blaming EU institutions for their inability to prohibit refugees and migrants from entering European ground (Pardavi, 2016). Hungary's evidence was the fact that a median of 130 persons traversed its border daily, creating pressure in the country (Lodovici et al., 2017). In a similar fashion to Hungary, both Italy and Greece have become the countries suffering the most migratory strain, with Greece receiving around 821,008 refugees in 2015 and Italy receiving approximately 150,317 individuals (IOM, 2015).

As a result, these countries took steps through the implementation of governmental policies to stem the massive migratory flows that threatened their territories. Indeed, Hungary implemented contentious measures, amongst those the construction of border fences with Serbia and Croatia and amendments to its asylum law and criminal code, penalizing the unlawful entrance of migrants and sentencing people to jail (Majcher et al., 2020). Hungary further implemented the National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism that began on April 24 and finished on July 27, 2015, in which a preface written by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and a questionnaire with a dozen multiple-choice questions were used (Bocskor, 2018), including questions tying migration to terrorism and the money dedicated to migrants' aid impacting and reducing social spending for Hungarians (Lodovici et al., 2017). To ensure the effectiveness of the consultation, Hungary deployed around 16 million EUR in a referendum campaign that took place in 2016, to convince its citizens to defy EU migrant regulations (Gall, 2016). A legislative change that proved successful was passed on July 5, 2016, permitting police to transport any migrant arrested within 8 kilometers of its border, to the Serbian side without submitting an asylum application, resulting in the consideration of the country as amongst Europe's lowest migrant populations (Pardavi, 2016).

Similarly, Greece, built a 12.5 km-long barbed wire fence along the Greek-Turkish land in December 2012 (Skleparis, 2017), preventing migrants from entering its territory. The walls, however, did not entirely stop the flow of refugees, and many continued to attempt perilous sea voyages to reach Greece and other European regions. This resulted in the SYRIZA's government decision to close the "Western Balkan

route" in March 2016 and the activation of the EU-Turkey Statement (Skleparis, 2017), where Turkey agreed to return all migrant asylum-seekers arriving to Greek islands and the EU agreeing to relocate one Syrian from Turkey for each individual transferred to Turkey (Majcher et al., 2020) in order to replace irregular flows of migrants crossing the Aegean Sea in perilous conditions (Lodovici et al., 2017). Turkey was also offered 6 billion EUR, the removal of visa obligations for its citizens, and the restart of Turkey's EU admission process (Majcher et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the EU-Turkey Statement was written and signed in an informal, de-proceduralized, and secretive way, outside the applicable EU legal framework (Gatta, 2019). To make the EU-Turkey Declaration effective to its nation, the government enacted new legislation, tightening Greece's asylum, detention, expulsion, and external border control measures ("Skleparis" 2017).

With regards to Italy, the country has taken actions to close the migratory path through Libya as well as through the Mediterranean, by enhancing the ability of the Libyan Coast Guard to apprehend and deport migrants and refugees to Libya (Amnesty International, 2018). A rise in migrants and refugees apprehended at sea by Libyan authorities has resulted in at least 2,600 individuals being transported to dismal detention centers where they risked violence and extortion (Amnesty International, 2018). Torture, such as electrocution, use of force, and lengthy confinement were among the alleged measures, with the primary goal of the hotspot's approach being (according to the country's Interior Ministry) to ensure the rapid detection and subsequent classing of aliens entering Europe (Majcher et al., 2020). The turning of a detention institution into a migratory "hotspot" allowed multiple state power tools to accelerate asylum processes, determining who can stay and who should be expelled (Pulitano, 2020). This "hotspot approach" has evolved into a fundamental characteristic of the relocation processes implemented by Italy and Greece until September 2017, in line with the Council Decisions 2015/1523 and 2015/1601 made on the 14th and 22nd of September 2015 (ASGI, 2022). After these actions, irregular sea arrivals began to drop in 2018, coinciding with the election of a populist anti-immigrant government (the Salvini government) which swiftly carried out harsh measures intended for preventing arrivals, such as limiting terminals to civil society rescue vessels and enacting policies penalizing NGOs by thousands of euros per rescued migrant (Majcher et al., 2020). This took place amid a planned smear campaign by anti-immigrant organizations and some media outlets, fueled by the EU border agency Frontex's assertion that NGOs acted as a "pull factor" for migrants (Sunderland, n. d.).

Nevertheless, despite the application of such measures by the governments, EU leaders were also

responsible for the implementation of such policies. As EU leaders themselves supported the inhumane practices of migrant expulsions, the existence of a problem in European space and its values is evident. In fact, a deputy of the EU Parliament from Hungary has been reprimanded for proposing that pigs' heads were placed on border walls to prevent refugees from entering, while denying it and apologizing, stating that the comment was "hypothetical" and "a thought exercise" (BBC, 2016). Another vivid example can be seen in a conference that took place in mid-October 2017 in Brussels, where EU leaders praised what they said was proof that their method was efficient, with EU Council President Donald Tusk boldly declaring: "We have a real chance of closing the central Mediterranean route" (Sunderland, n.d.). There, they reported a remarkable 70% decline in arrivals in comparison to the summer of 2016. However, there was no mention that fewer arrivals meant that thousands more individuals were stuck in lawless and unviable conditions (Sunderland, n.d.).

Notwithstanding the behavior of certain EU leaders who were considered as part of a minority, these human rights violations were eventually noticed, as the ECtHR took a position on the issue and condemned a certain number of atrocities committed by these states. The EU parliament has dealt with the matter concerning Hungary: on September 12, 2018, for the first time in the EU records, it voted in favor of initiating the operation mentioned in the 7th Article of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) against the Hungarian State for the existence of a definite threat of a gross violation of the Union's founding values (Gatta, 2019). The resolution, approved with a significant majority (448 votes in favor, 197 against, and 48 abstentions), was following the "Sargentini report" that demonstrated several serious rules of law problems in Hungary. Consequently, in October 2019 the Commission decided to proceed with the infringement proceedings¹ in Hungary, due to the country's failure to provide food to those detained in Hungarian transit zones along the border with Serbia, an act that has been equally addressed by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)(2019). Greece's behavior was also condemned, resulting in roughly two dozen ECtHR rulings (Majcher et al., 2020). An example can be seen in the ruling *Kaak and Others v. Greece*, given on the 3rd of October 2019, in which the ECtHR addressed the concerns of the circumstances and legality of 51 people detained in the hotspots of Vial and Souda on the Greek island of Chios (Gatta, 2019). Similarly, Italy's approach towards migrants breached

¹ For more details about the infringement proceedings happened in Hungary see the EU Commission's annual report for 2019: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0147&rid=8>

the principle of non-refoulement, which is part of Italy's obligations imposed by Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, resulting in different ECtHR rulings amongst those the *Khalifa and others v. Italy* case, where three Tunisian migrants were detained by Italian coastguard as they entered Italy, while being transferred to the island of Lampedusa for registration (Gronowska & Sadowski, 2018). However, as the initial reception center was in an unsatisfactory condition, with congestion and inadequate sanitation, they fled to Lampedusa and participated in a protest, with authorities apprehending them and placing them on overloaded ships without their permission (2018).

c) Public Opinion on Migration

In conjunction with these countries' heinous policies, citizens also contributed to the implementation of the inhumane policies applied by EU member states, by publicly expressing their negative views on the matter, either due to being manipulated by public order or because of their own personal beliefs. Examples will be presented from the countries stated above that demonstrate this is not only a political but also a societal problem. In fact, in the European space, public opinion on international migration is highly divided, impacting both government policy and integration opportunities for refugees and other migrants (Metcalf, 2015). The treatment of migrants by public officials upon their arrival in a certain nation teaches the public to see such "illegal" persons as criminals (Pulitano, 2022).

Starting with Hungary, only politically independent and left-wing media organizations were covering the humanitarian aspect of the refugee situation (Lodovici et al., 2017). Since the 2015 crisis, asylum seekers and refugees have been an ongoing topic in Hungary's media, especially in the public media including the public TV channel M1, which addressed this topic primarily as a security risk issue, implying the necessity to sustain a state of emergency. Due to the dominance of public media and government initiatives in shaping public opinion, the number of Hungarians who were opposed to immigrants and foreigners climbed from 29% in 2010 to 58% at the end of 2016. A vast number of opinion surveys further indicated that most Hungarians see migrants as a threat to the country and wanted them to be barred from entering (2017).

Moving onto Greece, persons of foreign origin, or "xeni", are rapidly monopolizing unfavorable media debates in the country. The broad welcoming attitude began to alter with the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement on March 18, 2016. Terms like "migration" and "migrants" were used by political leaders and other powerful players instead of "refugees", implying that the country did not have the same legal duties as for refugees (Lodovici et al., 2017). This behavior cultivated negative feelings such as xenophobia amongst Greek citizens, indirectly contributing to the implementation of

stricter migratory policies similar to the ones analyzed above.

Finally, in Italy, due to the labor market conditions and recent terrorist acts, Italians were increasingly less accepting of immigrants. The public felt that Italy was left to deal with the refugee situation on its own. In a Eurobarometer survey that took place in 2017, 49% of Italians expressed that immigration was the major political issue confronting the European Union, far outweighing terrorism (which is ranked second by 8% of Italians) and the state of the economy (24%) (Lodovici et al., 2017). These changing views reflected the deteriorating labor market conditions in Italy, as well as the perceptions that immigrants may take away jobs from the Italians. The direct emotional impact of these societal occurrences on the public has been immense, affecting the public's collective opinion of immigrants, particularly among the elderly and the less educated. In addition to the financial expenses, which were mostly covered with EU funds, the unprecedented and vast concentration of arrivals has sparked anti-immigrant sentiments in these nations, fueled by right-wing and populist media (2017).

The migration crisis phenomenon raises the complexity of political, social as well as cultural interactions in European space, thus confirming the ambiguous migrant representation. The violation of essential human rights emphasizes a fragility that can only be self-expressed through different forms of art, such as poetry, intersecting it with a larger community and revealing its inner world or experiences.

III. MIGRATION POETRY AS IDENTITY

Whilst conducting research for poems containing a migration theme, the focus was on showcasing the emotional impact that each poem elicited to the readers, through its own diversity. The fundamental criterion for this selection was to find poems with emotionally charged words that portrayed the experiences and the perilous journey that every migrant faced and still faces due to societal, political, or personal reasons. Each poem was carefully selected for its own characteristics and uniqueness, resulting in the creation of a compilation of poems that are different to each other, while all are pieces of a puzzle that carries contemporary themes and problems like war, belonging and personal identity, the struggle of leaving one's homeland, as well as storytelling. Furthermore, the selection of works from distinct time frames and the poets' ethnic backgrounds was intentional, to accentuate the universality of poetry as a method of expressing one's voice, beliefs, and shared experiences. As the poems chosen were written both by actual poets as well as by migrants themselves or by other people indirectly describing these phenomena, they provide readers with an opportunity to analyze and

compare recognized literary voices, while discovering new ones.

Migration poetry reveals a direct link between human rights with stories and memories from migrants' shared experiences encouraging tolerance and common ground among citizens (Pulitano 2022). Thus, it proves the migrants' circumstances and fragility. It can be conceived as a means of creation and expression especially in real and virtual environments, for example the Internet, interconnecting different events, facts, practices, or spaces. Furthermore, mapping this genre comes with difficulties since poetry depicting migration as a plethoric self-expressive tool demonstrates a social, cultural, and political complex context that demands an in-depth analysis of its intensification. Thus, we cannot frame the phenomenon in a specific national or European space, since by its definition it is defeating such boundaries. Migration poetry precisely expresses a hybrid poetic expression dealing with multiple themes and means in complex environments. Realistic or fantasy elements (expectations, dreams, or nightmares) surpass trauma, sometimes in a sophisticated or in a simple approach to the migration phenomenon nonetheless, always in a critical manner. Various categories related to human rights and the migrants' existence appearing in chosen poems were analyzed, in a variety of expressions, through the lens of political, social, and cultural interconnections. This part aims to underline that poetry, migration, and human rights are intrinsically interconnected representing the migrants' fragile status. Moreover, as Rahayu states: "Poems provide a symbol of resistance towards refugees' given fate and offer a platform for them to create their authentic version of knowledge" (2020 1). Migration poetry also constitutes an act of resistance against an absurd and inhuman global situation. As the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on International Migration once correctly stated: "there is no reason to require people seeking asylum to run a gamut of desert crossings, abuse by smugglers, beatings, extortion, rape and exploitation... doing so is cruel and inhuman" (Sutherland, 2015). Poetry can portray this "no reason". Poetic expression questions the act of writing and storytelling, the diversity in time and space, the trauma, the overall impact of migration on society, and the diverse cultural spaces, issues, or identities.

As much as migration can be considered by some people as a problem affecting only certain countries, poems "My form against those at border" by Dawn Lundy Martin (2017), "Lesvos" by Christopher Bakken (2016), and "Owning our Language, facing its demons" by Krysel Anson (2018), prove otherwise. The phrase in Martin's poem "knocking among other refugees" (2017) shows that migration is a global phenomenon. Indeed, countries often get overpopulated because of mass arrivals of people as often "there aren't enough boats to carry them" (Bakken, 2016). This

condition appears timeless as irrespective how time flies, the problem persists. Anson's poem can be seen as an example picturing a massive human displacement: "time passes, another // batch of refugees and migrants" (2018). But migration is often associated with trauma and with illegal activities in several poems. Indeed, the poem "Legality of migration" by Mateuš Conrad (2018) tackles the subject of illegal migration, with people being traumatized by their experiences on the matter. The illegal attempt is reduced to failure: "seeing my parents get arrested // i² started a fist fight with a wall // that i knewi was going to lose..." (Conrad, 2018). Moreover, even legal migration can be traumatizing as migrants are often objectified and seen as numbers, indicating the lack of human rights as can be observed in many detention institutions. The verse "get lifejacket with green laminated card carabinered to chest, billet number on front" mentioned in the poem "Signing on Again" by Elizabeth Bradfield (2017) illustrates the migrant's elliptic and uncertain figure. Thus, the poem "Before your arrival" suggests avoidance to limit mental distress linked to migration: "Don't look back. You will only see the islands melting away" (Hagan, 2014).

Migration and the abandonment of motherland cause pain and suffering, with the intolerable, often unbearable, experience of loss. The poet may easily express grief and the loss of beloved persons, as well as the loss of his own identity. In Shiferraw's poem "Nomenclatures of Invisibility", an unbearable equation between immigration and loss emerges: "when we travel, we lose brothers at sea and do not stop to grieve" (2017). Pain can be both physical and mental depending on the situation on hand. As in the poem "1922 /Greek Refugees", physical pain is often portrayed inseparable from the body: "strip searches where your body is left aching" (Skarpathiotaki, 2020). Or, in Shiferraw's poem (2017): "we have drowned many at a time and left our bodies burning, or swollen, or bleeding and purple." Nonetheless, the body constitutes proof or a testimony of migration, appearing in the poem "Conversations about Home (at the deportation center)" by Warsan Shire (2013): "They ask me *how did you get here?* Can't you see it on my body?" Mental pain is visible through the expression of trauma taking many forms, one of which is psychological pain such as lack or failure of expression. A vivid example that indicates psychological pain and trauma is seen in the poem "My form against those at border" by Lundy Martin: "and we, here amid a failure of images" (2017). This loss of identity is not only individual but also collective. Collective experience depicts individual feelings but in a common traumatic experience. In the poem entitled "My

² Quotations are not corrected since the poetic form questions norms and conventions, and the fault itself

Brain is an Immigrant", written by a refugee himself, feelings like "fear, flashback, scared hopeless, stressful" reveal themselves (Hagose, n.d.). Also, in the poem "Moria Apocalypse" there is a personal testimony of a refugee living in a refugee camp in Greece expressing her emotions felt while there including "the stress, the psychosis, the mental routine" (CPT net, 2017). Whilst migration can cause pain, it can also lead to personal growth in certain cases, since people get to discover novel places and encounter new cultures. These examples are limited but worth mentioning. Nevertheless, nothing ever feels like home. Phrases like "they walked, all over the earth" seen in the poem by Skarpathiotaki (2020), "from Greece to the streets" seen in the poem entitled "My experience" written by Kiki Gillina (2017), a girl describing her grandmother's experiences on migration, and "my mind can travel anywhere across the ocean, across dry land, past present and future" also seen in the poem by Hagose (n.d.), accentuate this multiplicity in time and space. As physical and mental mobility, as salvation or destruction, migration simultaneously helps and/or destroys people and provokes intergenerational trauma symptoms that affect generations proving that the trauma and the loss of identity are not as ephemeral as they might appear (Sangalang & Vang, 2017).

As seen in the first part of the article, people in positions of power, including the ones involved in politics or legal matters, often commit atrocities by violating basic human rights, while putting democracy at stake by establishing border controls, and detaining people thus limiting their freedom of movement. The poem "Bullets, Moats and Alligators" written by Bob B. (2019), is noteworthy in describing the official political discourse involved in migration, containing a plethora of examples of the corruptive political system existing nowadays, referring to "cold and heartless" politicians (2019), barbarous political decisions to enforce security by placing "soldiers along our southern//Border[...] That we can easily stop // migrants from making their way across"(2019), and a humiliating stance towards migrants: "We will see the un welcome//Migrants start to drop like flies" (2019). The poem assesses that "democracy fails when an unfit elected leader goes completely off the rails" (Bob B, 2019). Equally, "On Immigration" refers to the corruptive economic system, another diachronic problem, as seen in the phrase "to live sanctioned in the // migrancy with an ugly plate for the economy" (Sharma, 2007). Similarly, "Refugee", a poem written by JJ Bola (2021), highlights the apathy of political figures in such matters with its emphasis on "their suits and ties.// never came for you" (Bola, 2021) and demonstrating it. As it concerns lawfulness, W H Auden's poem "Refugee Blues" (Auden, n.d.), highlights the importance of legality to be treated right, indicating that "if you've got no passport, you're officially dead" (n.d.). "Judges" (2014) is a poem written by a detainee

directed as an accusation towards lawmakers stating that "most judges don't use their moral authority" (2014). Moreover, poetry is expectation: "I would like to see justice served right not by someone using their might" (2014). It also reveals the disrespect for the laws and the unwillingness to deal with global problems like migration, while establishing an inner dialogue between individual expression and a problematic situation.

a) *Dialogues*

Storytelling takes the form of inner thoughts and beliefs, expressing individual or collective experiences, and as a result, acquires a dialogical character. In the case of migration, it is a description of one's memories of the past, a voyage back in time, resulting in reliving those memories. Several poems contain that composition including "1922 /Greek refugees" (Skarpathiotaki, 2020) and "My Experience" (Gillina, 2017). However, the poem "Legality of migration" (Conrad, 2018) is the only one that describes in detail a person's life in an almost diary type form. Dates, places, and memories are portrayed vividly, while the narrator describes their journey through illegal immigration, including the discrimination felt by people in the spectrum of language being a barrier: "only the more obnoxious English people are bothered by my "accent", the brutalities committed towards one's parents "was one, aged 11... // seeing my parents get arrested", the people's bias about one's race "whenever some, *****Somali migrant... // some African migrant in his teens // gets away with illegal migration?", as well as the few but joyful moments spent with family members "at least i spent 1998 being homeschooled- // and watching the World Cup with // my great-grandmother...//and discovering Metallica..."(2018). These memories form a puzzle and the dialogical progression of memories.

The sea as a liquid element metaphorizes destiny as Bachelard's idea of water (1983, 6). The sea is directly linked to migration, being the only way for many people to escape from events putting their lives at stake including risking them through war. For others, the option of flying by airplane still exists. This does not make the journey any easier, as the pain of leaving everything behind continues to linger. Poems "Home" (Shire, 2020) and "Conversations about Home(at the deportation center)" (Shire, 2013) written by War san Shire, as well as "Refugee" by JJ Bola (2021) refer to this unintended trip made owing to the outbreak of war putting people's lives in danger. Indeed, there is only a one-way trip: "tearing up your passport in an airport toilet//sobbing as each mouthful of paper // made it clear that you wouldn't be going back" (Shire, 2020). Are returns allowed? As "now my home is the barrel of a gun" (Shire, 2013) and "there we would sit and watch police that lurked and came only at night to arrest the youths" (Bola, 2021) encompass these issues by offering a vivid image to readers and demonstrating

what is like to be a refugee. The sea and the dangers associated with it are also presented in Wang Ping's poem "Things we carry on the Sea" (Ping, 2018) with a reference to "rubber boats" utilized by refugees to escape as they think of themselves as "orphans of the wars" (Ping, 2018). Consequently, this feeling of enforcement can also be considered as a form of exile, with refugees even questioning their existence without it. The poem "Who Am I, Without Exile", identifies the migrant to this perilous sea voyage: "What will I do without exile, and a long night that stares at the water?" (Darwish, 2008).

Migrants are often treated as minorities and considered by others as outsiders, or strangers. Migration amasses sentiments of xenophobia in people, with those pretending to like them committing hypocrisies. This hostile vision is common in migration poetry, presenting the mistreatment of others either on a physical or a psychological level, with an evident lack of humanity. The poem "A migrant I am too" by Mamma Mpyana presents this context as a declaration: "However, human beings don't understand, as they stand on my beings like am of no being..." (IOM, 2012, 16). Furthermore, Nicola Davies in "The day the War Came", "a poem about unaccompanied child refugees", illustrates xenophobia and the distinction between them and other people: "but the teacher didn't smile // She said, there is no room for you, // you see, there is no chair for you to sit on, //you have to go away" (Davies, 2016). This story takes place in supposedly welcoming environments like schools. Likewise, Jade Amoli-Jackson's poem entitled "A Woman, A Refugee" refers to this inhumane behavior towards refugees and explains that people sometimes don't believe them and consider them as liars: "I don't want to know //You're dirty and a liar //You have not been tortured //You just depend on our generosity // I hope they don't give you any benefits at all" (Jackson, n.d.). "Lesvos" written by Christopher Bakken addresses the hypocrisies through the metaphor and the irony, thus underling the visual perception: "We both wore the same ironic mask: // one blue eye floating upon a white sea" (Bakken, 2016). W H Auden's poem "Refugee Blues" also stresses the hypocrisies "went to a committee; they offered me a chair; asked me politely to return next year" (Auden, n. d.). Stories, connected to hostile and non-inclusive societies, are still possible across migration themed poetry.

b) *Belonging*

Writing is a form of symbolic expression that allows people to give form to emotions, experiences, dreams, or nightmares. When words can no longer be voiced, writing comes to replace that inability and transform it into power. In turn, just like other people experiencing traumatizing events, migrants speak through writing, describing, and sharing the events that

they experienced. Trauma, war, pain, childhood memories, and the human condition are some of the themes presented in poems. And, only poetry as a dynamic articulation allows the expression of the repressed experience thus the memory. "The icebreaker" written by Yovanka Paquet Perdigao, reveals in the third and last stanza the poet's final intention. Writing may act as a method to remember things, sometimes chosen by the person themselves not to be remembered. The verse "although you pretend like it's nothing, although you pretend like you barely remember it, you live in a house of ghosts with a pen that doesn't stop writing" (Perdigao, 2015), mentions this situation with the verb "pretend" implying that the person writing remembers things but chooses to ignore them. Moreover, this stanza focuses on the power of writing, which helps people acknowledge mistakes, gives them life, and even acts as salvation towards them. The last verse of the stanza: "Because if you don't write, who will tell their story?" (Perdigao, 2015) is also noteworthy, as storytelling can become a method of transmitting a specific message or a memory. Thus, this poem contains a lyrical character, by adopting an introspective dialogue with itself ("you") to tell the story ("ones"). This kind of Brechtian distancing between different elements and means (Brecht & Shookman, 1989) shows the interwoven violence of trauma and poetry as a way of expressing it.

Migration motivates the coming together of different nationalities and cultures with indefinite mixtures. People originating from different countries, united by the trauma of their situation, who search for a brighter future far away from their motherlands. Indeed, as described in the poem "Alien", written by a migrant in detention (LIRS, 2020), there are "so many faces I have seen from foreign places I have never been" (2020). Nonetheless, traces of their own identity such as their language, customs, and traditions travel and remain with them. In "Things we carry on the Sea", Sea Wang Ping points out the contradiction between a cruel reception and the language as an undeletable identity: "we're refugees of the sea rising from industrial wastes, and we carry our mother tongues" (2018). Equally, the poem "I am a Migrant too" written by Raphael Griffiths mentions identity by explaining that their "roots go beyond borders" (IOM, 2012, 10). As the poem "Before your Arrival" testifies, migrants tend to live in different spaces simultaneously with language often restricting them at the beginning as "translations get muddled too" (Hagan, 2014). After all, identity is something important to people and an aspect that cannot easily be hidden as according to the poem "On Immigration" "after being humiliated one continues the manuscript of identity" (Sharma, 2007). It is a common phenomenon for people to try to remove traces of their identity either willingly to belong, or unwillingly, by force. This sort of belonging is clear in the poem "The Icebreaker" by Yovanka Paquete

Perdigao when migrants start “nodding at whoever is talking and smile” (Perdigao, 2015) even if they “have no clue what they just said” (2015). Similarly, this unwillingness is evident in the poem *Alien*: “I no longer have a name MY LIFE I have to fix, nameless now I am number 456” stating that clearly (LIRS, 2020). A migrant’s fragile identity is only relevant to continuous mobility between past and present, being himself and somebody else, or a number.

Home is not only a building, immobile, and often taken for granted by many people. It is an individual space in a larger community. This is not the case with migrants, as they do not have that stability, being sometimes obliged to leave their homes. For this reason, their families become their homes and accompany them on this perilous journey. This is not, however, a reality for all migrants, as numerous migrants are obliged to leave their families behind too. The poem entitled “Home” addresses the phenomenon of expatriation by mentioning that “no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark” (Shire, 2020). Equally, “Refugee” (Bola, 2021) speaks about the effort of refugees in constructing another home: “I told them that a refugee is simply someone who is trying to make a home” (n.d.). The importance of one’s family is mentioned in this poem with simple gestures portraying that: “so next time when you go home, tuck your children in and kiss your families goodnight” (n.d.). The poem *Another Country* by Ryan Teitman expresses the sentimental bondage one has with one’s family even if being far away. These verses unite simultaneously presenting objects and absent lives: “around my neck my mother’s pearls clink like teeth” (Teitman, 2014) and “I wait for my father the way men wait for a train” (2014). Migration poetry is a correlation of memories, people, spaces, and objects, connected with the effort of putting down roots in a new place.

IV. CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, there is room for improvement in Europe’s management of the migrant crisis. Despite the rulings made by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) itself to condemn the violations committed by EU countries, as seen in the cases of Hungary, Italy, and Greece presented in this article, a different reality emerges as the problem persists. The fragility of immigrant representations through their interconnection with political, social, and intercultural matters in European territory and worldwide, proves an invisibility state. Asylum-seekers, migrants, and refugees, battling for a better future, are still in marginalized positions. Likewise, the public is often not receptive to migrants, having its share of responsibility that indirectly leads to the implementation of such strict laws and governmental policies. Thus, the public’s negative perception of migrants, functions as a cliché which fosters a

problematic identity of a person or a category, reflecting an intercultural negative exchange. That is precisely where poetry comes into place, as a form of expression and self-liberation, enhancing a dynamic interpretation of the migrant’s complex status. Poems, as a way of sharing thoughts, experiences, dreams, or fears, validate that contemporary society must face the significance of the migration crisis through its very own prominence.

Abbreviations

CEAS Common European Asylum System
ECtHR European Court of Human Rights
EU European Union
TEU Treaty on European Union
UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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