

THE REPRESENTATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN DIMITRIS NOLLAS' LITERARY WORKS

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The present paper aims at contributing to the recent debates on the perceptions of immigrants in Modern Greek literature, focusing particularly on the prosaic works by Dimitris Nollas.

Migration to and from Greece from political, sociological and historical perspective has been widely debated and studied. Main focus of these studies is the relationship between nationalism and identity, also, selfhood and society in fiction, cultural challenges, etc.¹ Nonetheless, one of the still relatively unexplored questions so far is the perception of immigrants by contemporary Greek authors.² The paper will focus on a study of cultural responses to the current social situation represented in Dimitris Nollas' literary works.

Born in 1940, in Adriani-Drama, Dimitris Nollas began to write and publish short pieces in his early thirties. Nollas has studied in Germany and Belgium but has not completed his studies. From his younger years Dimitris Nollas has lived and worked in Frankfurt, Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Paris and Buenos Aires. Therefore, he has firsthand experience of the issues and problems that migrants might face. He even published his first collection of short stories in Amsterdam. His books have been translated into French, German, Italian, Czech, Serbo-Croat, Georgian, Bulgarian and Albanian.³ Nollas has travelled a lot in Western European countries, in

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1 Indicatively see: Tziovas 2009, Tziovas 2003, etc.

2 Indicatively see relevant articles in: Mackridge and Yannakakis 2004, Lemos and Yannakakis 2015, etc.

3 Translations of Nollas' works: *Τρυφερό δέρμα* in French: *Une peau douce*. tr.by: Françoise Arvanitis. Paris: Hatier - Librairie Kauffmann, 1993, *Τα θολά τζάμια* in Serbian: *Zamagljena stakla*. tr.by: Mina Radulović-Petković. Belgrad: Paideia, 2000, *Επιλογή έργων* in German: *Der alte Feind*. tr.by: Hans Eideneier. Köln: Romiosini Verlag, 2006. *Τα θολά τζάμια* in Albanian: *Xhamat e errët: tregime*. tr.by: Niko Kacalidha. Tiranë: Toena, 2007, *Από τη μία εικόνα στην άλλη* in Serbian *Ođ jedne slike do druge*. tr.by: Niki Radulović. Beograd: Tanesi, 2009. *Φωτεινή μαγική* in Italian: *Magica lucente* tr.by: Maurizio De Rosa. Milano: Crocetti Editore, *Selected works* into Czech *Dávný nepřítel* tr.by: Nicole Votavová Sumelidisová & Simone Sumelidu. Praha: Nakladatelství Vlasty Brtníkové, 2009, *Φωτεινή μαγική* in Georgian: მზღოვრო ფოტოეფ

the USA, as well as in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, where he has met and befriended descendants of Greek immigrants living there.

Dimitris Nollas' collection of short stories «Tender Skin» («Το τρυφερό δέρμα»)⁴ was awarded the National Prize in 1983, and his novel «A Tomb Near the Sea» («Ο τύμβος κοντά στη θάλασσα»)⁵ received the National Prize in 1993. In 2014, for his work: «The Trip to Greece» («Το ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα»)⁶ Dimitris Nollas was awarded with the National Literary Awards prize for best novel.

Along with his own experience of travel and emigration for the last thirty years, and the constant migrations to Greece by refugees from different countries must have had an influence on the writer's vision for the world and thus the theme and images of immigrants play a crucial role in Nollas' literary works. Dimitris Nollas' works are distinguished by cosmopolitan character and current topics. Critics of contemporary Greek literature consider the unique peculiarities of his prose to be bringing forward the individual, bringing the personal to the foreground and introducing travel topics. The main reasons for migration in the works under consideration include socioeconomic, political and educational motives.

During his writing career, in his literary works – in short stories, essays, novels, and in a trilogy Nollas depicts different kinds of immigrants, emigrants, and refugees. They are:

1. Greek immigrants – first generation of Greek immigrants in different countries (Austria, Australia, Germany, Poland, UK, etc.), their back and forth journeys to the homeland and their “between-ness”;
2. Descendants of Greek immigrants in European countries (Germany, Holland) – second generation of Greek immigrants;

tr. by Ani Udzilauri, Tbilisi, Logos 2010, *Selected stories* in Bulgarian *He вземай със себе си нищо: разкази*. tr.by Iana Bukova. Sofia: Stigmati, 2010, *Ναυαγίων πλάσματα* in german: *Schiffbrüchige und weitere Erzählungen* tr. by Birgit Hildebrand und Hans Eideneier, publisher epubli, 2016, *Travel in Greece* in french: *Le retour en Grece* tr.by: Richard Tchelevides; in collaboration with Isabelle Tloupas publisher Desmos, Paris, 2017, *Οι ιστορίες είναι πάντα ξένες* in French: *Les histoires sont toujours étrangères*, tr. by Hélène Zervas and Michel Volkovitch, publisher Le miel des anges, 2017, etc.

4 Νόλλας 1998 (1).

5 Νόλλας 1994.

6 Νόλλας 2013.

3. Descendants of Greek immigrants in Pontos, Caucasus – second and third generation of Greek immigrants;

4. Foreign immigrants in Greece – those from Eastern Europe – after the collapse of the Soviet Union, or those from Asia and the Middle East from the recent wave of immigration that has stricken Greece in the 21st century.

Besides these kinds of immigrants, Dimitris Nollas' literary works also demonstrate how one can feel like a foreigner in his own homeland or how one integrates back into the home country after a long absence. Admittedly, Nollas has noted himself that he has felt like a foreigner/alien only in his homeland, elsewhere, in other places he always felt Greek.⁷

Dimitris Nollas also brings in protagonists with dual national identity (i.e. Aris Katsetis in the novel: «From one Picture to the Other» /«Από τη μία εικόνα στην άλλη»⁸ is the son of a Greek father and an Austrian Mother).

The writer offers to readers' observations on how having a spouse with another national identity may or may not change migrants' world visions (i.e. Gerasimos in «A Man who Lost Himself» («Ο άνθρωπος που ξεχάστηκε»)⁹ or as in the short story «Mantzikert» («Μάντζικερτ») from the collection: «In the Place» («Στον Τόπο»)¹⁰, Where a Turk Omar kills his German wife Brigitte for infidelity.

In one early collection of stories, a play on words about strangeness is expressed through the title – woman's name «Polikseni» («Πολυξένη»)¹¹. As the writer himself explains later – this title/name can be understood in several different ways i.e. as a foreign city (πόλη ξένη), very foreign (πολύ ξένη), many foreigners (πολλοί ξένοι), extremely strangers (πολύ ξένοι), which can be referring at the same time to hostility and alienation.¹²

Diverse images of immigrants and their lives are presented in the last novel trilogy by Dimitris Nollas titled «Hard Times» («Δύσκολοι Καιροί»)

7 Interview with Ilias Maglinis, cited from Δημητρούλια (2017: 511).

8 Νόλλας 2003.

9 Νόλλας 1995.

10 Νόλλας 2012.

11 Νόλλας 1985.

12 Δημητρούλια (2017: 518).

and it covers seventy years of Modern Greek history. The novel «The Trip to Greece» («Το ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα») is the first part of the trilogy, which begins in the early sixties where the protagonist, reckless student Aristos, returns to Greece from Germany for a short time, taking responsibility to accompany another immigrant woman to Greece and to use this occasion to travel for free to his homeland. The trip in the train awakens lots of memories and unanswered questions. The readers get to know the life story of Chrisanthi, who was a migrant worker in Germany in 1943 and is suspected by Aristos because she worked with Germans during the Second World War. The stereotypic attitude of Aristos changes as he listens to the story and views of Chrisanthi. At the end of the trip, the woman he has been obliged to bring to Greece disappears and Aristos finds himself in a changed homeland, where he is not sure if he still belongs. When Aristos leaves Greece to return to Germany (Munich), he is leaving something behind: an order for a volume of his poems to be published in Greece. It is also interesting that a publisher who had learned bookbinding in Austria had later abandoned Austria and his Austrian Master, because this last one called him Turk.

The trilogy continues with the second novel «Marbles on the Way» («Μάρμαρα στην Μέση») ¹³ set at the end of the last century. The action is being evolved in Münster, Germany. By trading with marbles the Greek migrants are converting the beauty and the purity of the sculpture material of ancient works into just a building material, the object of buying and selling. The life of Greek immigrants, their struggle to settle in the new environment, to cheat each other, and their inability to cope with the problems is presented in this literary work.

The last part of the trilogy named «The Garden in the Flames» («Ο Κήπος στις Φλόγες») ¹⁴ takes us up to the present time. The action is moved to Athens, where the younger generations of Greeks will meet with numerous foreign immigrants who have arrived in Greece and are trying to survive.

This trilogy encourages the readers to rethink about their own capacity for understanding the pain of others and for recognizing how our power

¹³ Νόλλας 2015.

¹⁴ Νόλλας 2017.

and privilege can contribute to other's injury, whether that be material, political or emotional. The writer is refusing to be willfully ignorant of the reality and introduces literature as a medium in which readers are given a representational view of immigrants' life experiences.

Nollas' protagonists are moving on without having a clear goal or schedule for the future. The impact of the crisis on both the real and the fictional relationship with the "other" is palpable especially in this last literary work of Nollas – a trilogy «Hard Times» («Δύσκολοι Καιροί»). In the interview to the journal «Endevktirio» Dimitris Nollas points out: "One place does not only produce angels, it is not a production factory for saints and martyrs. It is also a womb for common, very common and despised and unsuccessful beings. This is how our world is made and it is beautiful like that. In this sense, I admit that "The trip to Greece" is an album of wrecks."¹⁵ Thus Dimitris Nollas implies that in order for this world to go on there is no need (or ability given) to change everyone from wicked to good. Just the world is made like this, and all we need is to live in (and with) love.¹⁶

The novel «Magic Photine» («Φωτεινή Μαγική»)¹⁷ has the same theme of emigration and immigrants. One of the main characters in the work is Sveta – an immigrant who came to Greece from the "fallen East." In the novel, the passing of trauma from one generation to the next is described – the parents immigrated to Germany and left children back in Greece to live with their Grandmother and Grandfather. Giannis cannot understand his parents' decision to emigrate; how can it be for his good to be raised without a mother? Later, when his parents took him to Germany and the boy started to attend school in Stuttgart, he felt very lonely there. When his parents died in a car accident, he thought it was a suitable punishment and never understood why his sister, Martha, after many years, is trying to bring his parents' bones to Greece in order to bury them in their homeland.

15 Μπέκος 2015. In the original: "Ένας τόπος δεν παράγει μόνον αγγέλους, δεν είναι εργοστάσιο παραγωγής οσίων και μαρτύρων. Είναι και μήτρα κοινών, κοινότατων και ποταπών υπάρξεων και αποτυχημένων. Έτσι είναι πλασμένος ο κόσμος μας και είναι όμορφος έτσι. Υπ' αυτή την έννοια, παραδέχομαι πως «Το ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα» είναι ένα άλμπουμ ναυαγίων".

16 Ibid.

17 Νόλλας 2000.

Sveta does not appear in the novel directly. There are no dialogues/monologues where she participates, nor are her feelings made known; however, the narrative revolves around her. Her unconditional love changes the life of Alkis, Martha's adopted son, who had been feeling lost, trying to find his roots and the meaning of his life. Sveta brings meaning to his life. Martha, who at the beginning has a negative attitude toward this emigrant woman, gradually sees how she changes her son's life for the better, giving light and love to his life. A life that ends abruptly from the murderer's knife, when he stands up to defend his beloved.

The author makes the reader question the different approaches toward immigrants. He never offers solutions, but puts forward the empathy.

The main character of the novel «Creatures of the Shipwreck» («Ναυαγίων πλάσματα»)¹⁸ is an illegal immigrant, the only one who escaped the waves together with the infant. She was on board together with other illegal emigrants and came to shore on one of the Greek islands. In the story there is no indication of the location where the illegal immigrants came from, nor is the Greek island named. The writer focuses on the Greek environment of illegal immigrant Asmat, and the environment that cheated her. The head of the port is madly in love with her, but because of the dowry leaves her and marries another woman. «Creatures of the Shipwreck» makes readers think about the issues of modern Greek reality and Greek environment, including issues concerning the problem of immigrants.¹⁹

Immigrants in Nollas' literary works represent different cultures. They travel and immigrate back and forth to different countries (i.e. Makis: Greece–England [«The Man Who Lost Himself»/«Ο άνθρωπος που ξεχάστηκε»]; the parents of Martha and Giannis: Greece–Germany; Fotini: Russia–Greece [«Magical Photine»/«Φωτεινή μαγική»]; Victor: Greece–Australia [«From One Picture to Another»/«Από τη μια εικόνα στην Άλλη»]; Andzey: Poland–Greece [«Tomb Near the Sea»/«Ο τύμβος κοντά στη θάλασσα»]; Aristos: Germany–Greece; Nissat, Zaxiris, and others: Middle East–Greece [«The Garden in the Flames»/«Ο Κήπος στις Φλόγες»], etc.).

¹⁸ Νόλλας 2009.

¹⁹ Παπασπύρου 2009.

Nollas in his writings presents not only the first wave of immigrants from the Balkans, former Soviet Countries and the Black Sea region, but also the later, second wave of immigrants from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Speaking in an interview and explaining why he keeps emphasis on immigrants in his writings, Dimitris Nollas notes: “The presence of foreigners in our country is a reality that comes from very old ages and sometimes it raises feelings of solidarity and sometimes feelings of wild exploitation. Hatred has nothing to do with either one or the other. Xenophobia characterizes the petty-minded people... but culture and traditions in Greece – i.e. language, faith and, in one word, our identity was always distinguished by acceptance and assimilation of the different one.”²⁰

Dimitris Nollas not only refers in his writings to the immigrants and refugees living in Greece, or Greek *gastarbeiters* in Europe, but also to the Greek immigrants living on the shores of the Black Sea. In the collection «Small Travels» («Μικρά Ταξίδια»)²¹, in the second part of the collection named «The Final Voyage» («Εσχατος Πλους»), dedicated to his travels in the Caucasus, the writer describes a trip to the Adjara region. The author refers to a family of refugees from Trabzon who fled to these places at the end of the last century. Panagiotis Papadopoulos was born in Georgia in 1920. The fifty acres of land with citrus fruits bought by the grandfather of the seventy-year-old Panagiotis, when he came here one hundred years ago, nurtured three generations of Greeks. Those Greeks, who learned Greek alphabet only with the twenty letters, having stopped using the vowels that sounded alike. The writer admires Pontiac Greeks' hospitality and describes how proud they are of being Greeks, or *Romei*, as Panagiotis names them. “Romeos in the government, Romeos in the Kolkhoz, Romeos in the school, also in the Greek Community, everywhere. We were always full of *Romei* and everyone educated...”²²

20 Πουρνάρα 2003. In the original: “Η παρουσία των ξένων στον τόπο μας είναι μια πραγματικότητα που έρχεται από πολύ παλιά και ξυπνάει άλλοτε αισθήματα αλληλεγγύης και άλλοτε αισθήματα άγριας εκμετάλλευσης. Το μίσος δεν έχει τίποτα να κάνει ούτε με το ένα ούτε με το άλλο. Η ξενοφοβία χαρακτηρίζει μικρόνοες.... Και είναι γνωστό πως ο πολιτισμός αυτού του τόπου, δηλαδή η γλώσσα και η πίστη του, η ταυτότητά του με μια λέξη, πάντα κατανοούσε και πάντα αφομοίωνε το διαφορετικό”.

21 Νόλλας 1998 (2).

22 Νόλλας (1998 (2):171-172): «Στην κυβέρνηση Ρωμαίος, στο Κοκχός Ρωμαίος, στο

The reporting style of the narrative is attractive. Critics point out that Dimitris Nollas collection «Small Travels» («Μικρά Ταξίδια»), especially the trip to mythical Colchis and to the Baku and Caspian Sea, reveals the special talent and so called cinematic vision of the writer, that gives special emphasis on the interchangeability, alteration of the pictures in the narrative.²³

It is widely known that one of the results of migration is the constant challenge to one's identity. There is also the possibility of maintaining dual, or even multiple identities, each carrying a challenge at a personal level.²⁴ The identities of real and fictional characters are not the same and may be difficult to distinguish. Nevertheless, as successful literary characters tend to embody group identity, the study suggests, that novels and short stories involving a plausible individual migrant can likewise construct a group identity of migrants in Greece. Thus, social response to the image of migrants and the ways migrants are perceived, can be studied through literature as well as through various approaches in social studies.

Grigoris Bekos comments about the immigrants in Nollas' works:

“The author has been vigorously insisting over recent years to bring Modern Greek society to face its immigrants, its foreigners and thus to make the society to see reflected its own self. These immigrants all form the famous “Other” that transforms and tests its contradictions and conflicts, its many identities and souls as they formed during its turbulent history...”²⁵

σχολείο Ρωμαίος, στην κοινότητα, παντού. Πάντα ήμασταν γεμάτοι Ρωμαίους εδώ, και όλοι σπουδασμένοι».

23 See: Θεοδοσοπούλου 2008.

24 There are three different options considering the choice of the individual as far as his or her original identity is concerned: to forget it and adopt a new national identity; to keep it and preserve it; or to keep it and at the same time adopt a new national identity. Even if it is only a temporary residency, the experience of confronting the national identity of the majority can be significant.

25 Μπέκος 2012. In the original: “Ο συγγραφέας επιμένει σθεναρά τα τελευταία χρόνια να φέρνει τη νεοελληνική κοινωνία αντιμέτωπη με τους μετανάστες της, τους ξένους της και εξ αντανακλάσεως με τον ίδιο της τον εαυτό. Όλοι αυτοί συγκροτούν τον περίφημο «Άλλο» που εκ των πραγμάτων τη μεταμορφώνουν και δοκιμάζουν τις αντιφάσεις και τις συγκρούσεις της, τις πολλές ταυτότητες και τις ψυχώσεις της, όπως αυτές διαμορφώθηκαν στη διάρκεια της πολυτάραχης ιστορίας της...”

Dimitris Nollas' depiction of immigrants is never limited to any type of the immigrant, quite the opposite, Nollas' literary works present as many different images of immigration or refugees as one could imagine. Although the extent to which the literary works influence readers can be debated multiple articles, essays and responses in major Greek newspapers and literary magazines, as well as different literary prizes won by Nollas' writings, show that this influence or reflection does exist. The problematic issues of immigrants are harder to address than to ignore and this makes the literary works that revive interest and raise the awareness significantly positive for the society.

It is interesting for us to consider the names of protagonists used in different stories – a certain message that the writer wants to give to the readers. The writer considers the symbolic implications of name or changing the name. In several works where immigrants are presented, the reader can witness how changing of name adjusts to the changing of the protagonist's character. The study of changing names leads to the detection of interesting principles that run throughout his works, in particular generic transcultural representation of "migrant" experience.

«The Man Who Lost Himself» («ο Άνθρωπος που ξεχάστηκε»), 1992, is the first novel written by Dimitris Nollas. In this novel, migrant Gerasimos changes his name and in England he becomes Max, but when the old memories and melodies surround Max he becomes Gerasimos again. In the novel «Magical Photine» («Φωτεινή μαγική»), the story revolves around the immigrant Sveta, but her name is changed to the name with the same meaning in Greek, Fotini. This can be translated as lighting, bringing light. In the same novel, Martha and Giannis's grandfather changes his surname from Kopsolemis to Kapsolemis, when he decides to start a new life. In the novel «From One Picture to the Other» («Από τη μια εικόνα στην άλλη»), Greek Victoras changes his name in Australia and becomes Andreas. As he states, he changed his name because he felt to be a copy of his past existence, so he decided to change "Beta" into "Alfa"²⁶. Along with changing the name, we meet examples of Hellenization of names. For example, immigrant Zahir is named Zakhiris by his best friend of Greek origin to make it more acceptable for the surrounding classmates («The Garden in the Flames»/«Ο Κήπος στις φλόγες»).

26 See details in Udzilauri 2006.

Along with the changing of the name by the characters themselves, the writer also presents cases, when name calling/changing takes place in order to hurt and disrespect the other, i.e. Michalis, who is called Fritz or Zahir, who was called Memetis (offensive for Muslim) from his school friends («The Garden in the Flames»/«Ο Κήπος στις Φλόγες»).

The age-old fear of strangers is depicted in literary works, but there are other elements added on, such as the rejection of the “second-comer” refugees by those who came first. The desire not to share a roof and sleeping place with newcomers is demonstrated not only by local Greeks, but also by other refugees with the same nationality and faith («The Garden in Flames»/ «Ο Κήπος στις Φλόγες»).

In the literary works, the author does not accentuate his views, but he has expressed himself in different interviews and essays. In the collection of essays *Tobacco leaves* (*Φύλλα Καπνού*) Nollas notes: “I was not born to save the world. But – distancing myself from authority, while at the same time being critical – I can preserve an essential quality in myself.”²⁷

A remarkable characteristic feature for Nollas’ immigrants is that if and when they return to their homeland their feelings start to confuse them. More or less the majority of them feel that they no longer belong to the place they were so keen and nervous to return. Another disappointment awaits them when returning to their “destination”, country of immigration, they start to feel like strangers in cities where they once belonged; the cities where they had lived or spent their student years. For example, Gerasimos Frangoulis from the novel «The Man Who Lost Himself» («Ο άνθρωπος που ξεχάστηκε») on returning to London starts to doubt where homeland is. Thus, immigrants travelling back and forth to their homeland frequently cannot decide where they belong and somehow lose themselves, like Gerasimos.

These difficulties are not always on the surface. The immigrants in many cases feel well adjusted as they only discover difficulty while receiving “reverse culture shock” and find it difficult to integrate back into their own home country after a long absence (e.g. «Travel to Greece», «From one Picture to the Other», «The Man Who Lost Himself», «Tomb Near the Sea»).

The double “otherness” of the immigrants – i.e. being “other” in the

27 Νόλλας 2005, translated by: Georgouli 1999.

home country as well as in the receiving/destination country of immigration is a characteristic that runs throughout the literary works. Also, it is worth noticing the depiction of local Greeks who become strangers in their own homeland, and pretend to be foreigners and refuse to speak Greek in the presence of other Greeks in order to be left alone (e.g. Ermilos in «The Garden in the Flames»/«Ο Κήπος στις Φλόγες»).

Dimitris Nollas' literary works demonstrate how immigrants – the “Other” – are perceived in contemporary Greek culture. In «The Garden in the Flames» («Ο Κήπος στις φλόγες») Nissat admits:

“Refugees and immigrants we are the rubbish of your civilized world... We are the nightmares of your dreams, the embryos thrown into the skylight you do not want to see ... I never felt a rubbish in the courtyard of the civilized world.”²⁸

While discussing the representation of The Other in recent Greek fiction, Mikela Chartoulari implies, that “the big challenge for new writing is to represent not only difference, but diversity.”²⁹ Taking into consideration the breadth of immigrants' characters embodied in Dimitris Nollas' literary works, we can argue that Nollas has fully represented the diversity of immigrants and refugees in his works.

Dimitris Nollas' writings broadly illustrate how Greek society and culture views itself in relation to the presence of immigrants. The writer never regards immigrants as a problem or a threat but shows how society regards them as such. As Mikela Chartoulari notes, “things are not black and white Nollas is saying...and he invites the reader to reflect on the effect that destitution and truncated hopes exercise on human relations.”³⁰ The literary works echo the existing social and economic problems and reveal the identity of contemporary society.

As for gender and its representation – both female as well as male immigrants and their hardships and tragedies are depicted. The knowledge or

28 Νόλλας (2017: 90). In the original: “Οι πρόσφυγες και οι μετανάστες είμαστε τα σκουπίδια του πολιτισμένου κόσμου σας ...; Είμαστε οι εφιάλτες των ονείρων σας, τα πεταμένα στο φωταγωγό έμβρυα που δε θέλετε να βλέπετε; ... Ποτέ μου δεν ένιωσα σκουπίδι στην αυλή του πολιτισμένου κόσμου”.

29 Chartoulari (2015: 82).

30 Ibid: 72.

ignorance of the language spoken in the host country and how immigrants cope with the language barriers is shown on the surface, but is not given crucial meaning.

In the literary works under consideration three major events of protagonists' experiences in the process of immigration are described: experiences prior to emigration/immigration, journeys of immigration/journeys back to the home country, and adjustments due to immigration. Depending on the literary work, one, two or all three experiences are presented in different order or as flashbacks. In some cases, no part of the story takes place in the home country, but the protagonist or other characters recollect memories of their home country. For the journeys of immigration, transportation methods differ from boat and train to plane, car or foot journeys. Throughout the journey, people accompanying the protagonist sometimes play a crucial role in the development of the plot («Travel to Greece»/«Το ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα»), but in the majority of cases the travel companions are missing from the story or do not play a significant role. A number of accounts involved elements of escape, often with quite treacherous journeys that either are described or just mentioned («Creatures of Shipwreck»/ «Ναυαγίων πλάσματα», «Tomb Near the Sea»/ «Ο τύμβος κοντά στη θάλασσα»)

As related studies have shown, the active migrant displacements to Greece at the end of 20th century played an important role in re-thinking the image of the “other”. An analysis of Dimitris Nollas' works shows that cultural perceptions have undergone changes and the portrayal of immigrants in literature may be closely linked to a shift in cultural identity approaches.

Among cultural responses to the current social situation represented in Dimitris Nollas' literary works we could also mention disillusionment, which, as an outcome of the fundamental revision of values creates a special kind of empathy. Texts under consideration give opportunities to readers to exercise their imagination in deepening the understanding of themselves and of those individuals and groups of immigrants over whom they hold power.

Nollas addresses universal problems among which those of the ethnic and economic migrant are currently so important. The writer pays special

attention and shows interest in people whom society has forgotten, who are most vulnerable; however, these are not the people in the margins, but the people who construct the society of a changed, contemporary world.

The wealth of voices and images of immigrants in Dimitris Nollas' literary works is obvious. The representation of immigrants and refugees in Nollas' works proposes a way for the better understanding of human pain and loss, both in the past and present. These findings aid the achievement of the ultimate aim of literature – to share and perceive the fate of the other.

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Περίληψη

Σκοπός του παρόντος άρθρου είναι να συμβάλει στις πρόσφατες συζητήσεις σχετικά με τις αντιλήψεις των μεταναστών στη νεοελληνική λογοτεχνία, εστιάζοντας στα έργα του Δημήτρη Νόλλα. Η μετανάστευση προς την Ελλάδα από πολιτική, κοινωνιολογική και ιστορική άποψη έχει συζητηθεί και μελετηθεί ευρέως. Κύριος στόχος αυτών των μελετών είναι η σχέση μεταξύ εθνικισμού και ταυτότητας, ωστόσο ένα από τα σχετικά ανεξερεύνητα ερωτήματα μέχρι στιγμής είναι η πρόσληψη των μεταναστών από τους Έλληνες συγγραφείς.

Η εργασία επικεντρώνεται στην μελέτη πολιτιστικών ανταποκρίσεων στην τρέχουσα κοινωνική κατάσταση που εκπροσωπείται στα λογοτεχνικά έργα του Δημήτρη Νόλλα. Οι ερευνητικές μέθοδοι συνίστανται στην ερμηνεία και τη σύγκριση λογοτεχνικών πηγών.

Αν και οι ταυτότητες των πραγματικών και λογοτεχνικών χαρακτήρων δεν είναι ίδιες και μπορεί να είναι δύσκολο να διακριθούν, οι επιτυχημένοι λογοτεχνικοί χαρακτήρες τείνουν να ενσωματώνουν την ομαδική ταυτότητα. Η μελέτη υποδηλώνει ότι, τα λογοτεχνικά έργα με μετανάστες μπορούν παρομοίως να κατασκευάζουν μια ομαδική ταυτότητα των μεταναστών στην Ελλάδα. Έτσι, η κοινωνική ανταπόκριση στην εικόνα των μεταναστών και οι τρόποι με τους οποίους γίνονται ή δεν γίνονται αποδεκτοί οι μετανάστες, μπορούν να μελετηθούν μέσω των λογοτεχνικών έργων. Όπως δείχνει η μελέτη, μετακινήσεις των μεταναστών στην Ελλάδα στα τέλη 20ού αιώνα διαδραμάτισαν σημαντικό ρόλο στην εκ νέου πρόσληψη της εικόνας του *άλλου*.

Key words: contemporary literature, literature and migration, Dimitris Nollas