



**4th Lyceum of Katerini**  
Mobility to Spain: 25 Nov-29 Nov 2019

# The Road...

## **BUILDING MULTICUTURALISM:**

Entering into a dialogue  
without sacrificing our  
cultural identities.



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As you set out for Ithaca  
hope that your journey is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.

from "Ithaca" a poem by Kavafis





*Greeks have been on the “road” many times during their long history.  
Our presentation will describe how we experienced the road either as becoming  
refugees in our own land  
or becoming immigrants in order to face economic adversity (both old and new).*





*We will also tell the stories of people who found refuge  
in our country.*

*Stories of people who came to Greece as immigrants and have  
worked next to us, have gone to school with us and who  
have become an important part of our society.*

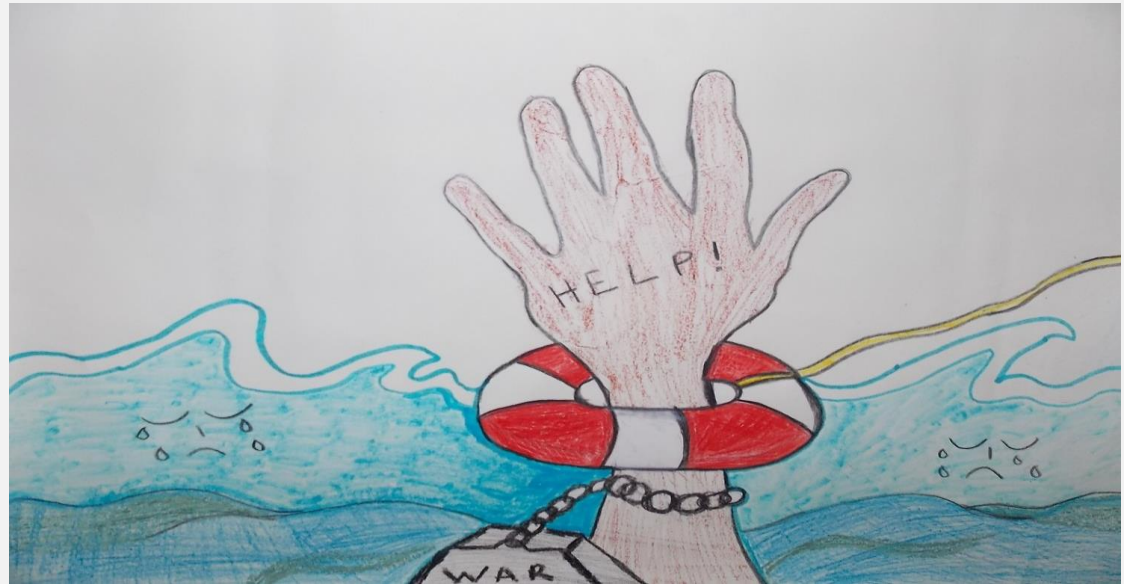
*They are people we are friends with.  
Some of them are taking the road again.*

*You see the **road** hasn't got an end.*

*It goes on and on....*

*In recent years more people have been  
travelling along this "**road**".*

*They have followed the "**road**" running  
away from war and poverty.*





*They follow the “road”.*



*They follow the “road” hoping that  
it will take them to a better life.  
We will try to tell their stories as well.*



# The Long Road

## by Vangelis Stergiopoulos



These days and for the past few years a new refugee wave has started from the East towards the west. But this is not new for the people of Greece. The first big migration wave was experienced in the 1920' with the rise of the Soviet Union when Greeks from Russia were coming to Greece. The hardships that followed the revolution in 1917 were unbearable for most people. So, they decided to leave. So did my grandmother's family. This is the story of how my grandmother's family came to Greece.

The story begins in 1920 at Gelendzhik. Demetrius Karakosmas, my grandmother's grandfather, was hunted by the government. In order to protect his wife and 9 children he decided to abandon his home and go to Greece with a view to saving his family's lives. The road to Greece was difficult and with many hindrances, but they finally made it. When they arrived, they were gathered in a refugee camp in Kalamaria, Thessaloniki.

Upon arrival, they had to be recorded as refugees so they wrote down their names. But Demetrius' last name changed from Karakosmas to Kosmidis in order to "sound" more Greek.

Unfortunately, typhus broke out in the camp, resulting in the death of thousands of refugees along with the death of 5 of Demetrius' children. That was the result of the refugee camp being poorly managed. Therefore, they decided it was time to look for a new home in this new country. When Demetrius was asked where he would like to go, he responded: "All I want is a place close to the Sea, mountains and meadows". And so, they were moved to Ferejik or as it is now known Feres, a small village just 1.2km away from the Greek-Turkish border at the river of Evros. The government built a house for them and gave them land so that they could sustain themselves. They even brought seeds from Russia in order to cultivate as soon as they got there. As luck would have it, Demetrius died four years later, in 1924, at the age of 49 due to injuries sustained in Russia. Although my grandmother never got the chance to meet him, she always laughs when she remembers a saying he used to tell: "To our homeland Greece we shall go, bread and many olives we shall eat and with our king we shall be."

This is just one of the many stories that unfolds as we speak as, thousands of people attempt to migrate to a different country in order to save both themselves and their families, in hope for a better and brighter future. The story of how my grandmother's family came to Greece always moves me due to the fact that the locals embraced them, welcomed them and treated them as they should be treated.

For that is the sole thing one must do when someone has gone through so many hardships.





## Nefeli

by Markella Kallifatidou

My friend Nefeli moved with her family 2 years ago in America because her father found a really satisfying job there and that was the main reason, they decided to start a new life.

When Nefeli heard the news, she was a little bit terrified because America is a huge country and all these changes that this decision would bring, were a lot for a thirteen-year-old girl.

She didn't want to lose her friends and go to a place far away from all the things she loved. She was also afraid of all the difficulties an immigrant can face and the whole idea scared her.

Since she left, we haven't stopped talking. She also comes every summer to Greece to see me and her other friends here. She is now very happy with her life in America, her new school and her new friends but things hadn't always been that easy for her.

At first, she had a lot of language problems. It's no great surprise that language tops the list of issues facing immigrants to any country. Being able to communicate (or not) affects every area of life in which we have to interact with others.

From jobs to schooling, to simply finding your way around or buying food, language plays a vital role.

In addition, she had some issues with various cultural differences. This is not necessarily the first on the list of practical considerations for immigrants and housing, jobs, transport and services are naturally a priority.

However, many immigrants like Nefeli report that, on arrival, it's the cultural differences that really make a big impression. This can range from social customs to more significant issues such as attitudes towards gender, religious diversity and ethnicity, which can all be vastly different in a new country.

She also used to tell me that missing your friends, family and extended social circles was a big factor for her, because those who come from societies where traditional support structures within communities are strong, can find that they feel lost, alienated and disorientated when moving to a Western country where individualism is often prized over family.

However, her new school there, her new teachers and friends and of course her family helped her a lot with the inclusion and the integration.



# Stathis or the story of my father

By Konstantinos Hamperis



A boy by the name of Stathis, who was born in 1967 in Greece, was an economic immigrant. He went to the USA from the age of 2 until he was 8 and then he came back again to Greece. In the US he didn't have to get into an integration class and everything went well. His schoolmates and teachers were very kind with him and helped him with everything he needed. He adjusted to the new school environment very fast and he was one of the greatest in his class.

Once he came back to Greece it was really hard for him to get used to his new environment. His feelings were mixed. He was happy for coming back to his family but also sad because he had left his friends and cousins back in the US. Due to the fact that he had come from a foreign country, the people that approached him were a few in the beginning. Most of the kids and parents were suspicious until they got to know him. He was often bullied by his schoolmates for not knowing the language well. What the school did to help him, was to have a translator always be with him and help him through his classes.

Those who helped him were his teachers, who always told him to be open with them and ask them his questions. They would often assign him less homework. They also provided him with some extra hours of teaching.

Some of his classmates helped him in this journey. They would often teach him how to speak more fluently and this made him feel more comfortable and part of the school community.

His efforts for learning were always rewarded and that led to giving him the courage to continue.

Thank you for your time.



# My friend Nick

*by Leonidas Paleoselitis*

I have decided to base my work on a real story about a fifteen-year-old boy named Nick. Nick's parents were born in Georgia and had been living there for their whole life. When Nick was 5 years old, the difficult financial conditions in their country made them immigrate to Greece and start a new life, hoping for a better future for Nick and his siblings.

When Nick reached the age of six, he went to school for the first time. There, he could easily stand out among all the young children in his school, because of his darker complexion. From the first day he went to the elementary school of his region, he heard some of his classmates discussing and making fun of him because of his darker skin. He was really sad about their behavior and every day, his mother forced him to go to school even though he was refusing to.

However, things begun changing for him as his peers started wondering about his nationality and culture. He was really glad that he had some new friends, and he was willing to go to school and do his homework. As for learning, he didn't face any serious problem apart from the accent he had, which derived from his nationality. This was not a big problem for him as his friends offered him as much help as he needed to speak Greek fluently.

After two years going to the elementary school, Nick had finally managed to feel as he were part of the school community, and he was happy about his parents' decision to move to Greece. Moreover, Nick's teachers played a major role in helping him get involved in the issues of his school. They always asked him how he was feeling about his "new start" and made him feel as if the school was a big family. Teachers also told him to express his feelings and always ask them for every query he had. With all this help from his school environment, Nick finally became part of the school community and had a really good time through the years he spent in elementary school.

However, Nick and his parents had been coping with some more difficulties in Greece, and when he reached twelve, they immigrated to Germany. Since then, he kept contact with most of his old classmates via social media.

When he was asked by some of them about his adaptation to the German school system, he said that the only problem he had was the language. He didn't know that he and his parents were going to move to Germany, and he hadn't made any effort to learn German. As a result, he had to make some intensive lessons to learn the most important things about the language so he could attend the school classes. As for his new, German classmates, he told us that they have welcomed him with joy and he has started getting used to German tradition and habits.

To sum up, Nick is now happy that he knows many things about three different countries (Georgia, Greece and Germany) and he feels glad for the way in which his life continued.



# Immigration

by Alexandra Mpampo

*My name is Alexandra Mpampo. I'm a student in my sophomore year at the fourth senior high school of Katerini, Greece. I am going to present some facts about what immigration is as well as an interview by my friend Nicole.*

- Immigration is the international movement of individuals to a destination country of which they're not natives nor possess citizenship so as to settle or reside there, particularly as permanent residents or naturalized voters, or to require employment as a migrant employee.
- As for economic effects, analysis suggests that migration is beneficial both to the receiving and causing countries. Analysis, with few exceptions, finds that immigration on the average has positive economic effects on the native population. However, it is mixed on whether or not low-skilled immigration adversely affects low-skilled natives (estimates of gains ranging between 67 and 147 %).
- The academic literature provides mixed findings for the link between immigration and crime worldwide. However, immigration either has no impact on the rate or reduces the crime rate. Analysis shows that the country of origin matters for the speed and depth of immigrant assimilation.
- In depth research has found proof of discrimination against foreign born and minority populations in criminal justice, business, the economy, housing, health care, media, and politics within the U.S. and Europe.



*Nicol a 16-year-old student in Thessaloniki, Greece agreed to my suggestion to interview her about her experience being a child from immigrant parents from Albania and dealing with her identity crisis.*

*"What was the biggest challenge you had to face?"*

"Ethnicity is an important characteristic for a person's personal and intellectual Identity. Growing up with two completely different cultures is hard. You find yourself in between two ethnicities and you feel great pressure. When you expose young children to this sort of pressure the most common choice is to accept or deny both."

*"How do you think having two ethnicities has changed you?"*

"You learn to count on your own capabilities and not on your ethnicity. The progress of distancing yourself from your ethnicity is hard, long-lasting and difficult. Your ethnicity is a union that provides you a feeling of belonging whereas individualism places you in a more valuable position."

*"What are the pros and cons of being multiethnic?"*

"Like I mentioned if you don't want to accept or deny your ethnicity you find yourself within the between. You are definitely less biased, and you create an objectivity for matters such as ethnicity. In addition, it helps you view certain issues from another perspective. The cons are, the logging feeling of wanting to belong in some sort of union."

*"Have you ever felt unwelcome?"*

"When I went back to Albania for the holidays, I couldn't communicate with the locals due to the language barrier. In Greece, it's totally different. While there's no language barrier, the lack of feeling you belong can be quite difficult."

*"What are your hopes and dreams for the future?"*

"I want to learn Albanian and communicate with my relatives in ease. Also, I'm aiming to learn their culture and history."

*"What advice would you offer to someone in the same position as you?"*

"Try to take the pros from your ethnicities and respect them. Educate yourself on each culture, grow your intellectual field and expand your knowledge."



Hi there! My name is Helen Karatzouli and I'm a student of the first grade of senior high school. I live in Katerini, a small and beautiful city of Greece.

I would like to present to you a text inspired by some real interviews concerning immigrants coming from Syria. In my opinion it's about a controversial issue that concerns humanity on a worldwide level.

In today's society, an issue that concerns us is the constant transportation, legal or not, of a large percentage of the population of Syria. Unfortunately, this is happening due to the Civil War, which is taking place there. It's a topic on which many experts have dedicated their time in order to find a realizable solution.

Firstly, during this time period, the rapid evolution of the technological world renders it impossible not to kill innocent people due to the invention of massive destruction weapons. So, it's logical that the residents of the war zone are searching for a way to flee. But, the majority of them has lost the papers needed to do so or they are not accepted in Europe.

In the meantime, it's essential to describe the longtime procedure that they are obliged to go through. Their main purpose is to pass the borders, go to Europe safely and find a good job there. When they arrive at Turkey their main concern is to avoid becoming perceived by the local authorities. As a consequence, they become easy prey to the many smugglers willing to "help" them who on the contrary, exploit them by charging them huge sums for the trip. Once they arrive at Greece, their next step is to try to finally reach the country they want. Some of them believe that this journey takes a part of themselves, because they obtain experiences they will remember for the rest of their life.





- ❖ By exploring the emotional world of these people, we can see that they are afraid of the unknown because they have left their country. In addition, the truth is that the residents of Europe are forced to accept and welcome a large number of Syrians, who have a different culture and religion.
- ❖ However, we have to understand that they are usually people who want to see their kids go to school and grow up with safety.
- ❖ It's really important to mention that a great deal of European citizens believe that all immigrants have bad intentions towards them and that they may act in a harmful way, without thinking of the consequences.
- ❖ But the point is that without getting to know them we shouldn't express an opinion concerning them. Sometimes, we forget that they have little or no financial resources and they are surviving under inhuman conditions, without water or food, that they may feel like strangers in the countries they have travelled to and have a difficulty integrating in societies so different to their own.
- ❖ That's why we have to support and understand them and it's very useful to put ourselves in their position.

We have to be certain that we can find a solution, because where there is a will, there is a way. It's very important to reach an agreement because this way families will not be left homeless anymore and children will not be orphaned.

I think that, we don't have the right to be displeased with our lives because we have all that we actually need. Of course, there will be times when we feel injustice, but then we have to remember that there are always people suffering and facing more difficult situations than the ones we are facing right now.

In conclusion, European civilians have to help disadvantaged people, including immigrants from Syria. Even though we always say that we have to welcome them we only say it without acting. This is terrible because there are many organizations all around the world, proposing ways in order to support them financially or mentally. Today is the day! We must act now. Finally, I would like to thank you for listening to my presentation and I hope that I did convey to you the important message I intended.



With Honor,

Karatzouli    Helen



*My name is Evelyn and I am 16 years old. I live in Greece and I study at the 4th High School of Katerini as a second year high school student. The hobby I love the most is digital photography, which I've been dealing with since my childhood, because of my father. He is a photojournalist in large agencies and has been working in this workplace for 30 years now....*

*It was Tuesday morning when my father received a phone call to go to a refugee camp. Without a second thought I grabbed the opportunity to go with him too. So, I managed to get in touch and contact a refugee and ask him some questions.*

*Note \* on the morning of that day, there were intense police incidents.*



The interview took place at the Thessaloniki 'Anagnostopoulos' refugee camp in a café near the old gate. The date of the interview is 5/11/2019 on Tuesday afternoon at 5 pm. The photojournalist accompanying me is Benevnick of the former Sigma French agency. The speaker did not allow us to record the interview. He also did not accept being taken any photos during the discussion. The interview is based on a true story. The conversation was full of twists and surprises, especially for a person such as myself who was experiencing such a situation for the first time. The language of the discussion was English, Turkish and a few Arabic that my companion has come to know.

- The occasion for the interview.

Given the general tension in the country due to the refugee crisis and its large dimensions, and motivated by my teacher as part of the program, I designed an interview with Murat Samanai Orhan, a Syrian immigrant. Murat Samanai Orhan is a man from Lattakia, born in 1988 in a neighborhood near the east side of the city.

\*Latakia is a seaside town in the eastern Mediterranean in northern Syria.

- The Cause of Forced Displacement.

As it is known, Syria has been plagued for eight years by a war with multiple causes. This is a war that never seems to reach the limits of irrationality and madness, which often has us wondering who's fighting whom? There have been so many twists and turns that no one knows, with whom they might be fighting the next day. The result of this inevitable lengthy war of attrition, as it is called, is that, a large proportion of the population has left their homeland, in a desperate attempt to save its life. Historically it is described as the most tangled war that has happened in the history of mankind.

- Reference to “the road”

His journey from Latakia to Greece could be described as “adventurous with a strong sense of danger and absurdity,” Murat told us. At first he attempted to cross over to Cyprus but the sea route was dangerous and difficult, especially in a sea where warships were watching over him. The second road, in the middle of Turkey, was through the “land of martyrdom” as he calls it.

*“ We crossed the border with my other nine fellow citizens. As soon as we crossed and contacted the Turks we were asked to pay them five thousand euro’s each so as to be taken to a camp on the coast of western Turkey, and two thousand euro’s for paper and other transport costs, food and housing. None of it was true ... They loaded us into a truck and crossed the country with ease, though we were often stopped by police on the way to different areas. We were stopped at least 9 times ... one thousand two hundred endless kilometers and fifty people stacked like animals. The police as soon as they saw us being refugees allowed us to leave without saying anything. As they were bribed handsomely, the traffickers were so sure they would have no problem with the policemen. They simply laughed when we expressed our anxiety.”*



*“It took us three days to reach our destination. The thirst, hunger and filth had exhausted us but we could not do anything.*

*The traffickers had guns, all of them. If any one complained they immediately took him off the truck”.*

“When we reached our destination some organizations took over. There was something there that I didn’t like. They told us to say things that we didn’t know. At some point we realized that at the camp there was a conflict among the non governmental organizations as to who was going to “help” more refugees”



**“It was as if we were just cattle to be exported.**

**Later on we found out from refugees that had been there for a longer time at the camp (about a year and even more) that the larger the number of people these “organizations” were responsible for, the larger the funding they would receive.”**





- Feelings of coming to our country - living conditions, adaptability, lifestyle in the new country.

-I can't say I feel well but at least I feel safe away from war and destruction -An endless catastrophe, an endless tragedy- In Greece at least we are in a state of peace, which does not mean that if we find something better we will not head there, or at least those of us who can, because we're economically exhausted. However, the living conditions are relatively good if you are in a rent-a-house program and all you need to do is live. If this is not the case, life in tents is intolerable in the summer because of the heat and the insects, and unbearable during the frosty and wet winter. And the food ... It is not always there... It's hard to adjust here. There are no mosques, and your women are dressed provocatively.



- Family and circumstances, fears and present-day situations.

When I asked him where was his family, he replied:

“My wife and my children are in Bosnia three years now. I want to go there too- but I can't get out of here ... I'm trapped”- he said. *“At the same time, my parents are in Iran while my four other brothers are in Jordan”.* *“These conditions are pretty much what is to be expected for almost every refugee outside our home country”,* he said and sighed, *“but what is going to be, will be”.* *“The will of Allah be done. Allah is great. Allah 'Akbar”.* He unfolded his arms and touched his beard with both his hands, as a sign of respect for his God.



- Future plans.

To this question I got a very short answer that I had heard before again and again. He repeated the same words but with greater emphasis and intensity.

*“Allah is great. Only he knows the future, only he has plans for people. We should never make plans because we do not know his will”.*

It struck me that after so much suffering in his homeland, in his life and environment, he simply put everything in the hands of God and seemed to make no effort to change his fortune. It is hard for me to understand ...

- Thoughts about returning to your homeland.

-Yes, this is something we look forward to, but of course those who left without papers, that is to say, have left the country illegally, may not be able to go back for perhaps many years unless we are granted a pardon by the president of the country. Difficult thing,....

- The psychology of a refugee.

-The worst thing that can happen is for a man to be uprooted, with a broken home, with a broken family, with broken morals and customs, with no prospective in your life, no future, no job, no idea what will happen to him tomorrow.





- *‘Situations are all uncertain. We cannot know what will happen to us and tomorrow or what we will do in the light of political developments. We always have the fear. And let's not forget that Greece is a country which sooner or later will have problems with your neighbors, the Turks. We can't stand beside you voluntarily. You see ... it's a matter of religion. Faith precedes everything, even if there are disagreements. For the time being, however, we are merely observers and we suffer patiently’.*

At this point his words caused me great anxiety and I felt a chill running through my body. What was he trying to say?... While trying to put his words in order and analyze them, I suddenly shuddered. For a moment I felt dizzy and a pain pierced my head.



- Judgment, opinion, feelings and conclusion.

From what I saw today and from my general knowledge ....  
War turns man into a beast, he" kills to survive ". People  
who have experienced such situations - like refugees –  
are changing at different levels.

What I mean is... these situations are so intense and  
every human being will deal with them in their own  
way because we are not all the same ...



After all, this is the beauty of human nature. For example, a child - a teenager will deal with it differently than an adult. However, every teenager will still deal with it with a different sensitivity. Other children with more sensitivity will be dominated by the feeling of fear and ignorance or even shame.





.....At home.

So the only thing left to do now is to write all this down, and here's the question:

where to start and how to finish?

Some questions and their answers left me feeling confused. I felt quite shaken.

It was an experience I would never repeat again.

Inside my mind, images have been drawn. Images that I shouldn't have seen, images that I would like to forget.

Such issues are quite sensitive.

They create "wounds that are difficult to heal".