



Narrating an extravagant nation, warranting a reasonable self: A case study on the cultural Othering of contemporary crisis-ridden Greece in global media

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Footscray Park Campus, Room G470

In contemporary critical political theory, it is commonly asserted that one of the ways in which neoliberalism affirms its political grip and power is through its transformation into a common-sense ideology. While the genealogical, historical, political and macro-sociological contours of this large-scale transformation are fairly well documented, what often is in want is an analytic focus on the fine details of the cultural texts within which neoliberal assumptions are 'naturally materialized' as common sense. In this presentation, I turn to consider one such text: an extended (11,000 words) travelogue narrative on sovereign debt crisis-ridden Greece, authored by an esteemed non-fiction writer and financial journalist Michael Lewis, (first) published in the U.S.-based but global in circulation magazine *Vanity Fair*, on the 1st of October 2010. I argue that within this text the post-2008, global, systemic capitalist crisis, in its Greek sovereign debt manifestation, comes to be rhetorically transformed into a 'cultural' issue, rooted in essentialized attributes of contemporary Greece and Greeks. In order to substantiate analytically my theoretical argument, I draw upon three distinct social psychological and social theoretical resources: i.) on the social psychological concept of *banal nationalism*; ii.) on the notion of *occidentalism* drawn from cultural theory and ethnography and its application to social psychological concerns; and iii.) on methodological developments within discursive psychology and critical discursive social psychology.

Dr. Nikos Bozatsis is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy, Education and Psychology, University of Ioannina, Greece. Nikos is a social psychologist of a discourse-analytic persuasion. Since the formative days of his doctorate training at Lancaster University, his research has focused on ways in which notions of (national) culture come to be mobilized within lay, media and political texts and talk. In recent years, he has been a visiting researcher with the Psychology Department of Georgetown University and an Olympia Fellow in Comparative Cultural Studies, Centre for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University. Nikos is currently based in Melbourne, on a sabbatical leave from his home University, undertaking field research on newcomer Greek immigrants' narratives of mobility and settlement (in affiliation with the School of Psychology of the University of Adelaide and the Victoria Institute, Victoria University).

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