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Language Education for Refugees and Migrants

MA Dissertation

On-screen approaches to the refugee crisis:

A multimodal film analysis of refugees' representation in

Specters are Haunting Europe

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On-screen approaches to the refugee crisis:
A multimodal film analysis of refugees' representation
in *Specters are Haunting Europe*

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Abstract

This study aims to utilize a multimodal conceptual framework to analyze the documentary film *Specters are Haunting Europe*. By employing multimodal grammar and audiovisual literacy, the study seeks to understand and interpret how meaning is created not only through different modes but also how visual patterns guide and influence this meaning construction. The film is as a multimodal text, and comprehension was systematically examined by defining and analyzing the various modes employed. Specifically, scenes have been analyzed based on their content and the language of the modes used, allowing for an understanding of how refugees are represented by the filmmakers through a multimodal approach. More specifically, this research seeks findings on the intricate aspects of comprehending and interpreting the experiences of refugees, with a specific focus on the depiction of children, men, and women by delving into the diverse modes utilized in the film, such as visuals, sounds, and language as well as by eliciting varied viewer responses based on their identification with the participants.

Keywords

Multimodality, documentary, visual representation

Η προσφυγική κρίση και η προσέγγισή της στην οθόνη.
Μια πολυτροπική ανάλυση της αναπαράστασης των προσφύγων στο
ντοκιμαντέρ «Φαντάσματα πλανώνται πάνω από την Ευρώπη».

Ευστρατία Τζούρη

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα μελέτη αξιοποιεί ένα πολυτροπικό διεπιστημονικό πλαίσιο για την ανάλυση του ντοκιμαντέρ «Φαντάσματα πλανώνται πάνω από την Ευρώπη». Χρησιμοποιώντας την πολυτροπική γραμματική και την οπτικοακουστική γνώση, η μελέτη επιδιώκει να κατανοήσει και να ερμηνεύσει πώς δημιουργείται νόημα όχι μόνο μέσα από διάφορες μορφές, αλλά και πώς τα οπτικά πρότυπα καθοδηγούν και επηρεάζουν την σύνθεση αυτού του νοήματος. Το ντοκιμαντέρ αντιμετωπίζεται ως ένα πολυτροπικό κείμενο και εξετάζεται συστηματικά μέσω του καθορισμού και της ανάλυσης των διάφορων μορφών που χρησιμοποιούνται. Ειδικότερα, αναλύονται επιλεγμένες σκηνές με βάση το περιεχόμενό τους και τη γλώσσα των μορφών που χρησιμοποιούνται, προκειμένου να κατανοήσουμε πώς αναπαρίστανται οι πρόσφυγες από τους δημιουργούς του ντοκιμαντέρ μέσω μιας πολυτροπικής προσέγγισης. Η συγκεκριμένη έρευνα αναζητά ευρήματα σχετικά με τις περίπλοκες πτυχές της κατανόησης και ερμηνείας των εμπειριών των προσφύγων, με ειδική εστίαση στην απεικόνιση παιδιών, ανδρών και γυναικών εστιάζοντας τους διάφορους τρόπους που χρησιμοποιούνται στην ταινία, όπως οπτικά στοιχεία, ήχος και γλώσσα, καθώς και προκαλώντας διάφορες αντιδράσεις των θεατών με βάση το βαθμό ταύτισης που νιώθουν με τους συμμετέχοντες.

Λέξεις – Κλειδιά

Πολυτροπικότητα, Ντοκιμαντέρ, οπτική αναπαράσταση

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This study delves into the realm of multimodal analysis by employing a conceptual framework to examine the documentary film *Specters are Haunting Europe*. The aim is to unravel the intricate process of meaning construction within the film, not solely through different modes but also by exploring the influence of visual patterns in guiding and shaping this construction. By treating the film as a multimodal text, this study seeks to comprehend and interpret the representation of refugees by the filmmakers through the lens of multimodal grammar and audiovisual literacy.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the film's multimodal composition, this study will systematically examine and define the different modes utilized throughout *Specters are Haunting Europe*. By analyzing scenes based on their content and the language of the modes employed, the research aims to decipher the filmmakers' intentions and shed light on the complex representation of refugees.

1.1 The Background to the Study

The refugee crisis in Europe refers to the large influx of refugees and migrants who have been arriving in European countries since the early 2010s. The crisis has been triggered by several factors, ranging from poverty and economic hardship in many African countries to political instability and conflict in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region as well as more remote countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq (Zanfrini, 2022).

The crisis has had significant humanitarian, political, and social consequences for the refugees themselves and for the countries that have received them. A constant theme of the refugee experience is that many refugees have experienced hardship, violence, and discrimination, while the refugee inflow has put significant strain on the resources and infrastructure of host countries (*Global Protection Challenges: What Does the Refugee Experience Teach Us?* Remarks to the Institute of International and European Affairs, n.d.). Even today, the challenges faced by refugees persist, highlighting the complex intersection of humanitarian concerns and socio-political dynamics.

The number of people who are forced to abandon their countries and be displaced every year is continuously rising globally. At the end of 2015, the number of refugees skyrocketed to over 21 million worldwide (*Refugees and Displaced Persons*, n.d.). This population flow has generated significant political debate and controversy, and attention has intensified since 2015, a year when 1,015,078 refugees arrived in Europe (Spindler, 2015; UNHCR, 2015), mainly by crossing the

Mediterranean Sea. There have been numerous protests and demonstrations both in support of and against refugees, and many countries have implemented policies aimed at limiting the number of refugees and migrants they accept (Berry et al., 2015)

The complexity of the issue along with the alarmingly high figures of refugees has raised world interest and has influenced filmmakers around the globe (Aronowitsch, 2020; Matziaraki, 2016; Weiwei, 2017), to name a few, who have dedicated their work to the representation of such a sensitive and politically relevant social issue (Rose, 2017). Recently released films reveal a growing interest in the representation of refugees on screen since, in recent years, refugees have become a significant topic in news reporting, political debates, the development of policies, and public attention on a global scale (D'Haenens & Joris, 2019). The main attempt is to address the humanitarian crisis through vivid images that stories can generate. For instance, *Sky and Ground* (2018), *Manus* (2019) and *A Road to Oxford* (2020) all depict migration as a global phenomenon illustrated by a long, severe journey.

What this study attempts to do is to look at the context of the documentary images, to consider the 'language' or the modes of those visual images and thus to examine how refugees are represented by filmmakers through a multimodal approach. Just as media journalists carefully consider how they produce their content in order to attract and maintain audience interest (Valkenburg et al., 1999), filmmakers, as well, take similar decisions into how visual images and narration will engage viewers (Carta, 2015).

More specifically, this study uses multimodal analysis (Kalantzis & Cope, 2009; Kress, 2004; Kress & Leeuwen, 2006) to examine how the refugees are represented in the documentary «Φαντάσματα πλανιούνται πάνω από την Ευρώπη» [*Spectres Are Haunting Europe*] (Kourkouta & Giannari, 2016). The primary rationale for selecting Giannari and Kourkouta's work was its setting in one of the initial refugee camps established in Greece during the summer of 2015. This was a crucial period when individuals fleeing their countries in the Middle East sought passage to Europe by entering Greece.

Another crucial factor for selecting this film work was the focus on the specific situation in Greece, despite the availability of various other documentaries that also addressed the refugee crisis during that period. Films such as *Human Flow* (Chowdhury, 2023), *This Is Exile: Diaries of Child Refugees* (Benchelah, 2015), and *I am Dublin* (Abdullahi, et al., 2015) shared a similar topic but examining the situation in Greece was the primary concern.

The core idea is to see how refugees are described by looking "at the period predating the summer of 2015, generally seen as the start of the so-called refugee crisis" (Cock, et al., 2018, p.8). What is significant about this period is that at the time refugees from the MENA region were seeking

access to Europe through Greece, the latter being viewed as a transit country at that time. Importantly, this was the time when one of the first camps was settled in Idomeni, an obscure locale Northern Greece, which was near the gateway to Europe.

This was a location where thousands of refugees were trapped when the borders closed, as their way forward to Europe was obstructed by state policy and their return to their home countries was impossible. As will be seen later in this dissertation, the Idomeni camp would eventually become invested with considerable symbolic value, as a locus where frustrated hopes of refugees encountered the impatience and fear of the Greek society, when both sides realised that a temporary coexistence was about to become long-term. Giannari and Kourkouta's film, the first attempt to portray daily routines in a refugee camp in Greece, fuses the two perspectives by looking at the perspectives of refugee men, women, and children through the lens of Greek filmographers.

My involvement in this study stems from a deeper concern to shape a thorough interpretation of how refugees, even though they have undergone incredible hardship and have witnessed a brutal violation of human rights, loss of home, and social and familial bonds (Rymond-Richmond, 2014), manage to navigate in new life and establish a new routine as the only way to survive. What is more, as someone with a refugee background, I have a deeply personal connection to the refugee crisis. The experiences of my relatives, who were forced to leave their homes to secure their survival, have shaped my understanding of the challenges and hardships faced by refugees. I empathize with the arduous journey they endured, walking for days to reach Greece, where they had to rebuild their lives from scratch. These experiences have instilled in me a strong sense of engagement and a desire to raise awareness about the plight of refugees and advocate for their rights and well-being.

1.2 Overview of the study

With the above in mind, in this study I aspire to contribute to the broader field of multimodal analysis and documentary studies by showcasing the potential of a multimodal conceptual framework in unravelling the intricate layers of meaning within the medium of film.

In addition to this introductory chapter, the dissertation is divided into five chapters, as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the refugee crisis and gives examples of refugee camps in Greece.
- In Chapter 3, the theoretical framework of the study is introduced. This chapter describes how refugee have portrayed in media, including documentaries. It also explores the concept of multimodality and discusses how films can function as modes within this framework.

- Chapter 4, the methodology, presents the research questions of the study and the methodological toolkit through which engagement with the documentary was accomplished.
- Chapter 5 presents a detailed multimodal analysis of the documentary film *Spectres are Haunting Europe*. The analysis is organized into six sections. It initiates by introducing the documentary and providing contextual information about the socio-political circumstances during the film's production in the first section. Next, second section illustrates how the filmmakers portray daily life in the Idomeni camp, using specific scenes as representative examples. These initial sections collectively offer data addressing Research Question 1. The subsequent three sections dive deeper into the cinematic representation of refugee children, men, and women. Examining selected scenes as illustrative instances, these sections present data relevant to Research Question 2. Lastly, to address Research Question 3, the perspective of students who viewed specific scenes is presented.
- Chapter 6 presents the discussion and results of the study. It begins by an introduction of a conceptual framework rooted in multimodal grammar and audiovisual literacy, as will be discussed in chapter 3. Therefore, it presents the conclusion of how this framework is utilized to analyze how representation and meaning-making unfold in a documentary film portraying the lives of refugees and the exploration of various modes employed in the film, as will be outlined in section 3.4 (including visuals, sounds, and language) and their effect especially through the attention given to the portrayal of children, men, and women and the interpretation of refugee experiences. Last but not least the results of a case study utilizing the methodological tool of a focus group will be presented.

Overall, this chapter revisits the primary findings of the dissertation, aligning them with the research questions that will be outlined in Section 4.3. Furthermore, teaching implications are outlined in a second section, and the chapter concludes by suggesting avenues for future research.

Chapter 2

The Refugee Crisis

The humanitarian crisis surrounding refugees has been a topic of global concern, prompting extensive research and analysis in various fields. This chapter presents information about this crisis in order to provide a factual backdrop to the examination of the representation of refugees which will follow in the next chapters. The presentation is divided into three sections. Section 2.1. is an opening move, which discusses the refugee experience in global terms. Following that, the focus shifts to the refugee crisis in Greece (Section 2.2.) and then focuses on the refugee camps, such as Idomeni, where *Specters are Haunting Europe* is set (Section 2.3). Because of the recency of the events described, many of which have not been investigated empirically, this chapter draws on journalistic and open access sources to supplement information in the literature.

2.1 Refugee Humanitarian Crisis

In 2022 the unprecedented displacement of individuals around the globe has exceeded 100 million (“Refugee Crisis: 100 Million Displaced”, n.d.) as a result of ongoing conflicts, persecution, wars, crises, and other forms of violence in countries like Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and Yemen.

Increasing conflict not only continues to fuel a growing displacement around the world but most inconceivably it causes indescribable harm to individuals’ well-being and basic human rights, including food shortage, lack of water, access to shelter, and healthcare (“Humanitarian Emergencies around the World”, n.d.). Limited or no access to essential services like hospitals can further exacerbate the suffering of affected communities. The humanitarian crisis is accompanied by extreme conditions like hunger in Ethiopia, gang warfare and violence in Central America, Venezuela and the Central African Republic with Syria and Yemen remaining the world’s largest refugee crisis and internally displaced (UNHRC,n.d).

When fleeing their homes, refugees often must make perilous journeys to reach safety in other countries. The routes they take depend on various factors, such as proximity to neighbouring countries, the level of violence in their home country, and the availability of transportation options. In some cases, refugees may travel on foot frequently covering long distances to reach neighbouring countries. As a result, individuals may face extreme weather conditions, physical exhaustion, and the risk of attacks from armed groups (Health Concerns for Displaced Persons, n.d.)

Another perilous journey is by boat, which, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2019), is often organized by smugglers or traffickers. Unfortunately, this might prove an

incredibly risky journey, as refugees may face overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels and the risk of drowning.

Once they reach the border of a neighbouring country, refugees often must go through a series of legal and administrative processes to register their status and access basic services such as shelter, food, and medical care. In some cases, refugees may be housed in temporary camps while awaiting further processing or resettlement in other countries.

2.2 The Refugee Crisis in Greece

The refugee crisis in Greece has been a significant and ongoing issue in recent years. Due to its geographic location, Greece has become one of the primary entry points for refugees and migrants seeking asylum in Europe, particularly those fleeing conflict-ridden countries in the Middle East and North Africa (UNHCR, 2015)

The crisis intensified in 2015 when a large influx of refugees, primarily from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, arrived in Greece, often making perilous sea crossings from Turkey ("Migrant Crisis: One Million Enter Europe in 2015", 2015). The Greek islands, such as Lesbos, Chios, and Samos, were particularly overwhelmed by the arrival of thousands of people seeking safety and a better future ("Greece Migrant Crisis: Islanders Strike over Crowded Camps", 2020).

The sheer scale of the crisis, in combination with Greece's economic challenges and limited infrastructure, created immense humanitarian and management difficulties (Maris, 2021). Overcrowded refugee camps and insufficient resources strained the capacity of Greek authorities and humanitarian organizations to provide adequate shelter, healthcare, and other essential services (Smith, 2022).

The situation was further complicated by the European Union's implementation of the Dublin Regulation, which mandated that refugees apply for asylum in the first EU country they entered ("The Implementation of the Dublin III Regulation in 2020", 2021). This policy placed a disproportionate burden on Greece, as it was the main point of entry for many refugees, leading to overcrowding and a backlog of asylum applications ("Issue Brief: Blocked at Every Pass: How Greece's Policy of Exclusion Harms Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Greece", 2020)

Efforts to address the crisis involved collaboration between the Greek government, international organizations, NGOs, and volunteers. Steps were taken to establish reception centres, improve living conditions in camps, and expedite asylum procedures ("Greece Crisis Response Plan 2021" 2021). However, the challenges persist, with ongoing debates surrounding immigration policies,

burden-sharing among EU member states, and long-term solutions for the integration and resettlement of refugees in Greece (Lebano et al., 2020)

The refugee crisis in Greece continues to have profound humanitarian, social, and political implications, highlighting the need for sustained international attention and support to address the needs of displaced individuals and find sufficient solutions (Human Rights Watch, 2021)

2.3 The Refugee Camps in Greece

Refugee camps in Greece have been established to provide temporary shelter and essential services for displaced individuals seeking asylum. Some of the most prominent ones are established in Greece to provide temporary shelter and essential services for displaced individuals seeking asylum include Moria on the island of Lesbos, Ritsona in Central Greece, and Diavata near Thessaloniki, among others. These camps serve as a transitional space while asylum applications are processed and decisions are made regarding refugees' legal status and potential relocation (Schmitz, 2023).

2.3.1. Description of the Camps

The conditions in refugee camps have varied over time, with some facing significant challenges due to overcrowding, limited resources, and inadequate infrastructure. The Greek islands, such as Lesbos, Chios, and Samos, have been particularly burdened by the influx of refugees and migrants, resulting in overcrowded and strained camp facilities (Refugee Camps | Definition, Facts and Statistics, 2021)

The camps are typically organized into different sections or areas, providing spaces for accommodation, sanitation facilities, medical clinics, and communal areas. Tents or prefabricated housing units are often used to accommodate individuals and families, though the quality and availability of these accommodations can vary (UNHCR, 2013). The camps at Ritsona (Central Greece) and Eleonas (Athens), which are typical examples, consist of prefabricated housing units and offer various services, including education, healthcare, and community activities (Ritsona, 2020) (InfoMigrants, 2018)

Basic services, such as food distribution, healthcare, and education, are provided by humanitarian organizations, international agencies, and NGOs operating within the camps (World Health Organization, 2021a). However, the capacity to meet the needs of all residents has often been limited, leading to challenges in providing sufficient support ("Basic Needs Approach in the Refugee Response – World", 2017). For example, the Moria camp housed tens of thousands of refugees and migrants, far exceeding its intended capacity, and it gained international attention due to its severe overcrowding and difficult living conditions (Psaropoulos, 2020). Similarly, the camp at Vathy, on the

island of Samos, faced significant overcrowding and challenging living conditions, as the number of refugees and migrants it housed severely exceeded the intended specifications for which the camp had been built (“Greece: Stories from Vathy Camp - Greece | ReliefWeb”, 2020).

The living conditions in refugee camps have raised concerns regarding hygiene, privacy, safety, and the mental and emotional well-being of the residents, especially vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly (World Health Organization, 2022b). In Northern Greece, the Serres camp is no longer welcoming additional refugees, facing capacity problems. The camp houses most of the Yazidi community in Greece (a Kurdish-speaking minority) but currently accommodates only women and children. Men sleep outside the camp (“More than a Hundred Yazidis Sleeping Outside Greek Refugee Camp”, 2022).

2.3.2. The Camp at Idomeni

Of particular relevance to this study is the camp at Idomeni, a village close to the border between Greece and North Macedonia (formerly known as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The camp emerged because of the closure of the Balkan route into Central Europe in March 2016, which left thousands of refugees stranded in Greece. At its peak, the camp housed an estimated 14,000 to 15,000 refugees, although its facilities were designed for a much smaller capacity (“Infamous Refugee Camp at Idomeni Cleared out”, 2016). Conditions in the Idomeni camp were extremely challenging. The camp lacked adequate infrastructure, including proper sanitation facilities, clean water, and sufficient shelter. Overcrowding was a significant issue, with people living in makeshift tents and enduring harsh weather conditions (*Greece: How ADRA Is One of the First NGO's to Respond and Help Refugees*, 2016)

The closure of the Balkan route meant that refugees and migrants were unable to continue their journey towards Central Europe, leading to frustration and desperation among the camp residents. Many of them had hoped to seek asylum in other European countries but found themselves stuck in Idomeni for an extended period (“Balkan Countries Shut Borders as Attention Turns to New Refugee Routes”, 2016)

In May 2016, Greek authorities carried out an operation to evacuate the camp and relocate the residents to other facilities. The closure of Idomeni camp marked the end of a significant chapter in the refugee crisis, but the challenges and issues faced by refugees and migrants in Greece continued to persist in other camps and reception centres across the country (“Infamous Refugee Camp at Idomeni Cleared out”, 2016).

Chapter 3

The Refugee Crisis in the Media

This chapter reports on how refugees have been represented in the media, in order to provide theoretical depth to the discussion of how the refugee experience is depicted in *Specters are Haunting Europe*. This discussion focuses on questions of representation in general (Section 3.1), and then moves on to the representation of refugees in documentaries (Section 3.2). Particular emphasis is given to the topic of multimodality (Section 3.3), which is a key tool used in the analysis of the film. The chapter concludes with an argument that films can be interpreted as 'modes' (Section 3.4), which underpins the rationale of this study.

3.1. Social, Psychological and Physical Representation of Refugees

Refugee humanitarian crisis can not only lead to the loss of natural resources, social distortion, political instability and severing community ties but also results in individuals' loss of their livelihoods. According to research (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Hayward, 2017; Hodes & Vostanis, 2018; World Health Organization, 2021), refugees may experience a range of emotional and psychological challenges as a result of their experiences of persecution and displacement. These can include trauma, anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation and loneliness.

As Hodes and Vostanis (2018) point out, refugee children and adolescents are at heightened risk for mental health problems due to the traumatic experiences they have endured, the stress of displacement and resettlement, and the challenges of adapting to a new culture and language. Additionally, language barriers, forms of discrimination in first-asylum country schools, and lack of access to food and safe and adequate housing are considered major dimensions of refugee children disruption and limited schooling (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

Studies on how refugees are portrayed in international media argue that positive and negative description has been presented during the past two decades (Gale, 2004; Hardy & Phillips 1999; Phillips & Hardy 1997; Pickering 2001). To identify the principles under which certain descriptions are shaped in news coverage recent research focusing on media frames (e.g., Steimel, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Valkenburg, et al., 1999,) "investigate the prevalence of specific frames in the news and how certain issues are framed" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Goffman (1974) defines frames as "schemata of interpretation that provides a context for understanding information and enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label" (p.21). Valkenburg et al. (1999) assume that journalists' choices of certain frames seem unavoidable because their aim is to represent political

events that are “accessible to a larger audience” (p. 550). As they point out, journalists “use certain frames to simplify and give meaning to events, and to maintain audience interest” (p. 551)

The idea that frames can be classified into categories is supported by scholars like Cock et al. (2018), Gofmann (2010), Steimel (2010), Valkenburg et al. (1999). According to Valkenburg et al. (1999), there are four ways that news reports are framed: ‘conflict’, ‘responsible’, ‘human interest’ and ‘economic consequence’ frame. As Steimel (2010) points out, “different frames can influence readers’ or viewers’ perceptions of public issues” (p. 220).

Among those framing categories, ‘human interest’ frame involves a representation through an emotional and personal angle. D’Haenens and de Lange’s (2001) show that since “reporting news in a human interest frame is a way to personalise, dramatize and emotionalize news” (p. 850). As such, it has been ranked as one of the most popular frames in news coverage (D’Haenens & de Lange, 2001; Neuman et al., 1992). As Steimel (2010) points out, referring to D’Haenens & de Lange’s (2001), work ‘human interest’ frame is “most commonly used in their analysis of refugee coverage in Dutch newspapers, an understanding of how the personalized, dramatized and emotionalized human interest frame depicts refugees is an important area of study” (p. 220).

Moreover, research and analysis of media coverage (Cock et al., 2019; Gale, 2014; Steimel, 2010) has shown that refugees are “positioned as victims” (Gale, 2014, as cited in Steimel, 2010). Cock et al. (2019) state that “in the fall of 2015, one of the most common images carried by the European news media was that of refugees walking along train tracks in the hope of reaching various destinations in Europe” (p. 39). Also, Wright (2002, p. 53) suggests that “visual representations of refugees across a range of media forms have origins in Christian iconography” to interpret “the treatment of forced migration” and “human suffering”.

On the other hand, Bleiker et al.’s (2013) analysis of how asylum seekers are represented on media suggests that “images that feature a large number of victims tend to lose their ability to evoke a compassionate response” (p. 404), while images of single individuals suffering may enhance viewer sympathy and pitifulness. The greater the number of victims depicted, the less the mercifulness aroused, a tactic which creates “dehumanising visual patterns” that discourage “a compassionate political response” (Bleiker et al., 2013, p. 398). Bleiker et al. go on to suggest that “the photograph of an individual person in distress in any given disaster is more effective than accounts of the millions at risk or dying from that situation.” (p. 408). They argue that “of refugees” is synonymous to the lack of ethical sense which is generated by the absence of displaying “identifiable victims.”(p.404)

What is more important to mention here is an overall view on how “media discourses have been shown to be immensely influential in constructing migrants as ‘others’” (King & Wood, 2001, p.2)

3.2 Representation of Refugees in Documentaries

Documentaries are powerful mediums for representing and exploring the experiences of refugees. As a medium of expression that fuses factual and artistic perspectives, they offer a visual and narrative platform to shed light on the challenges, resilience, and human stories of those forced to flee their homes.

3.2.1. Defining Documentaries

Before looking into how refugees are represented in documentaries, a few brief comments are necessary to define to what a documentary film is, what some significant elements are entailed in the specific film genre and how can become distinguished by a narrative film (POV, n.d)

‘Documentary’ is a general term that is mainly used to describe a film genre that is based on a non-fiction storytelling. Its scope is to record and capture reality (Desktop Documentaries, 2019). According to Bernard (2010), “documentaries bring viewers into new worlds and experiences through the presentation of factual information about real people, places, and events, generally—but not always—portrayed through the use of actual images and artifacts” (p. 1).

Bordwell et al. (2020) suggest that “a documentary claims to present factual information about the world” (p. 353), a term that shares similarities to what the *Glossary of Film Terms* (Corrigan, 2015) defines as “a nonfiction film about real events and people” (p. 194). Kuhn and Westwell (2012) and Nichols (2017) include terms like *actual*, *factual*, and *filming real people* in “actual locations using natural light and ambient sound” (Kuhn & Westwell, p. 563) to define documentary films.

Furthermore, Beattie (2004) as well as Nichols (2017) add the terms *historical* and *social* to signal the distinction between fact and fiction. More particularly, Nichols (2017) expresses the idea that documentary films “refer directly to the historical world” (p. 5) with no symbolic meaning involved by saying that “documentary images present people and events that belong to the world we share rather than invent characters and actions to tell a story that refers to our world obliquely or allegorically” (p. 5).

Beattie (2004), on the other hand, states that “the documentarian draws on past and present actuality – the world of social and historical experience – to construct an account of lives and events” (p. 10), borrowing the term *actuality* that Grierson (1920) “the founder of the British Documentary

Movement" (Kuhn & Westwell, p. 563), coined the term to define documentary. For Beattie (2004) actuality may imply a clear division between a truth claim of what a documentary represents and the actual truth that should be presented underlining "the complex relationship of representation, reality and truth" (p. 10) as well as the work undertaken by the filmmakers to provide "a full and accurate account of a subject" (p. 12)

3.2.2. Representation of Refugees in Documentary Films

"European films often present images of innocent and victimised refugees in order to raise compassion of their liberal spectators" state Celik & Ipek (2017, p. 81) in their recent study about filmmaking on refugees by examining several European productions. What they support is that film production which raises compassion emerged in need to tackle what has been the representation of refugees in "European mass media for decades" (p. 82), a portrayal closely related to "crisis and catastrophe" and threat to European welfare systems. "Establishing the innocence of refugees" (Rappas & Ipek, 2017) is a core goal of the directors who give voice to refugees to narrate stories of humanity.

Prime (2006) argues that a new genre has emerged, "the refugee film", which "integrates into its structure the sense of displacement that is perhaps the fundamental experience of the refugee and asylum seeker" (p. 58). This emphasis on displacement has been sealed by images of "lived experiences of people in extreme transition" and has created opportunities to "produce authentic accounts of every-day life" (Hughes, 2019, p. 161)

According to Valkenburg et al. (1999), the refugee film genre establishes a fundamental element which is the 'human interest' frame bringing "an individual's story or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem" resulting in "personalisation of an issue" (D'Haenens & de Lange, 2001, p.23). As Mayeux (2000) argues, "documentaries present facts about subjects using real events, people, places then creatively interprets all comments of those realities and people's concerns" (p.189).

Media and film share common visual representations of refugees, the one of a "suffering victim" (Rappas & Ipek, 2017) whose human rights are infringed and dignity is encroached and the other of the fundamental displacement and transition.

All in all, documentaries often aim to humanize refugees, showing their individual stories, struggles, and resilience. They might provide insights into their backgrounds, motivations, and the challenges they face during their journeys or in their new host countries or they may emphasize the

vulnerability of refugee men, women, and children, particularly in the context of forced displacement, war, or persecution. Additionally, documentaries frequently shed light on the hardships and obstacles refugees encounter, such as dangerous journeys or overcrowded camps.

Last but not least, it's important to note that the portrayal of refugees in documentary films can vary significantly based on the filmmaker's perspective, the specific context, and the intended message.

3.3 Multimodality

Multimodality theory recognizes that communication includes various modes such as visuals, sound, and gestures. Applying this theory to the analysis of documentaries depicting refugees allows us to delve into the complex interplay of different modes and explore how meaning is constructed and conveyed in these multimodal texts. By examining films as multimodal texts, we can gain deeper insights into the portrayal of refugees, their lived experiences, and the socio-cultural dynamics surrounding their displacement.

Multimodality, the integration of multiple modes of communication, is a powerful tool that documentary filmmakers often utilize to portray the complex and multifaceted experiences of refugee men, women, and children (Kessler, 2022). Documentaries about refugees use visuals, audio, editing, and narrative structure to create a rich and immersive portrayal of their lives (Trencsényi & Naumescu, 2021). By employing a multimodal approach, these documentaries aim to go beyond mere storytelling and engage viewers on multiple sensory and emotional levels, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the challenges, resilience, and cultural dynamics that define the refugee experience (Yeo & Nielsen, 2020). Through the thoughtful combination of various modes, these documentaries open spaces for empathy, awareness, and critical engagement, ultimately fostering a deeper connection between audiences and the realities faced by refugees around the world (Conquergood, 1985)

Kress (2010) explains that a composition of semiotic resources shapes communication in terms of the textual, oral, linguistic, spatial, and visual 'modes' which are arranged in a social environment in an attempt to deliver a message. Thus, he defines 'mode' as a culturally and socially shaped resource for making meaning. Modes are images, writing, speech, gesture, 'sign language' that are "present and active" (p. 5) in communities and cultures and that "have been elaborated and articulated in fully functioning representational resource" (p. 5).

Modes are practiced in a regular frequency within society and are chosen to be combined in a way that best illustrates the meaning. Kress (2009) discusses the notion of 'functional specialization' to explain that each mode is specialized in some kind of purposes which carry a certain role according to their use and their arrangement in a social environment. More explicitly, he writes: "in communication several modes are always used together, in 'modal ensembles' designed so that each mode has a specific task or function. Such ensembles are based on designs, that is, on selections and arrangements of resources for making a specific message about a particular issue for a particular audience" (p. 28).

Since meaning is produced in social environment communication as multimodal. According to Jewitt (2016, p. 18), "research questions about meaning, communication, discourse or interaction" make a study multimodal as long as multimodality plays a dominant role within the theoretical framework and there is an intention to be further expanded. Jewitt supports the idea that "adopting multimodal concepts" (p. 19) such as "mode or semiotic resource" (p.19) sets the ground to design a multimodal study advocating the notion that "multimodality approaches representation, communication and interaction as something more than language." (2014, p. 1). Jewitt et al. (2016, p. 16) explain that while language is "the most resourceful and important of all modes" it is significant to name "all means of making meaning 'language', prefixed with such terms as 'body' or 'sign' or 'non-verbal' or 'visual'" (p. 17). Since oral and written language is studied separately by scholars, similarly 'body language' could be categorised as 'gesture' and 'gaze' and can be studied separately as different modes. Kress and Leeuwen (2017) also note that:

Communicative practices always involve both representation and interaction. First of all, by communicating we interact, we do something to or for or with people - entertain them with stories, persuade them to do or think something, debate issues with them, tell them what to do, and so on. None of these communicative activities can exist without being linked to some form of representational, 'content', not only in language, but also in all other modes. (p. 114).

For Kress (2009) communication is multimodal because "it is a response to a 'prompt': a gaze might produce a spoken comment that leads to an action" (p. 32) and "has happened when a particular attention has focused on some aspect of communication" (p. 32). This kind of interaction has got a level of engagement and audience reception. 'Prompts' or modes are received by the participants who are engaged in a social relation and are interpreted in accordance with the level of response. Therefore, as Kress (2009) points out an interpretation "is the result of a series of

transformations in which aspects of the prompt and aspects of the resources brought by the interpreter are shaped, jointly, into a new semiotic entity" (p. 36). "The meaning made in that interpretation" (p. 37) becomes the basic unit of a sign formation, a process which is common to all attempts towards "a making of new message" (p. 37). The level of reception involves a degree of engagement which encourages the participants to experience interaction in order to gain or to share information. As Kress suggests "in the reception of a sign the materiality of modes interacts with the physiology of bodies" (p. 76).

Jewitt (2005, p. 316) has previously emphasized meaning making which is offered by different modes and she believes that "the ways in which modes contribute to people's meaning making vary". What she defines as "the representation of a concept" is perceived differently on screen and on a written text and "different criterial aspects are included and excluded from a written or visual representation" (p. 316). Those criteria are related to form, design and the way images and words are put together to create meaning. In other words, "the particular design of image and word relations in a text impacts on its potential shape of meaning" (p. 316).

For Kress (2009) "communication is semiotic work" and "changes that produced by social-semiotic work are meaningful" (p. 32). According to Kress and Leeuwen (2017), semiotic work is a result of a discourse, design and production formation through which the message is perceived and the meaning is interpreted. The following example is provided in their study:

And we know that design and production are sometimes coupled, so that different productions of the same design can be regarded as 'saying the same thing' (e.g. performances of classical music) and sometimes uncoupled (e.g. jazz performances, where two different versions of the same tune might be 'saying' something quite different. (p. 10)

Kress (2009) refers to this variety of versions by using the term 'frame'. For him what is the most essential towards choosing how to illustrate a message is "framing in forms of its display" (p. 122) supporting the idea that "frequently the same actions are different signs in the other frame. He believes that 'multiple framing' is a common practice "in most instances of communication" (p. 33).

Jewitt's viewpoint shares common elements with Kress and Leeuwen (2017) who support that multimodal theory on communication is based on "on an analysis of the specificities and common traits of semiotic modes which takes account of their social, cultural and historical production" (Kress & Leeuwen, 2017, p. 4). Multimodal texts are seen "as making meaning in multiple articulations." (p.

5). For Kress and Leeuwen (2017) making meaning is closely related to discourses which in their study are defined as “socially constructed knowledges of reality” (p. 5). According to this notion, documentary films may well be treated as discourses and thus could be interpreted in terms of multimodality because, as Kaiser (2016) states, they are considered to be a medium “that can be used to explore the reality of actual people in real world situations” (p. 3) and can “provide knowledge about human nature in different ways than any other social science discipline currently does.” (p. 3).

Contemporary studies have been devoted to film analysis and interpretation through a multimodal perspective to apply linguistic principles in film meaning making. Wildfeuer (2013) writes:

Meaning in film arises out of the multiple interaction of various modalities such as images, sounds, music, gestures, camera effects, etc., which are strung together by film editing in a chronological, linear order. The interplay of the modalities results in a narrative text whose comprehension and interpretation requires the spectator's active participation. (p. 1)

Expanding on this, a combination of modes is responsible for the meaning making with the aim to deliver this message to a recipient. So, a form of communication occurs between the medium (a series of moving images) and the viewer who is exposed to that. The degree of engagement varies according to interest and level of interaction. Wildfeuer (2013) develops a method regarding ‘film discourse interpretation’ through which she studies films as texts in an attempt to “bridge the gap between general approaches to film interpretation on the one hand and modern linguistic analysis of how meaning in multimodal texts is created on the other” (p.1).

Bateman and Schimidt (2011) define the semiotic construction of films by arguing that “films are artefacts particularly designed to carry meanings, to have effects on their viewers, to build and combine patterns made in a variety of materials—visual, acoustic, spatial and more” (p.28). They believe that “films are very complex ‘signs’ in their own right, including within them a broad range of further signs, such as spoken language, written language, visual representations of diverse kinds, spatial organisations, proxemics, codes of dress and other social conventions and so on—all orchestrated to create rich and complex webs of meaning” (p. 28). Therefore, since films carry a semiotic system, it means that they can be examined through a linguistic prism and meaning making can be interpreted via social conventions.

What is significant to mention here is that scholars like Kress (1993), van Leeuwen (1996) and Wildfeuer (2013), to name some, support the idea that our interests shape our degree of engagement

to a communication process. Comprehension and interpretation rely very much on this degree of reception. "Understood as the combination of different modes of communication in order to relay meaning, multimodality affects how readers engage with texts" (Xerri, 2019), in this case how viewers engage with moving images.

This study's attempt is to apply multimodal concept framework in understanding and interpreting documentary films of refugees' representation, develop an analysis based on multimodal grammar and audiovisual literacy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) and examine how meaning making is built not only "across different modes but also how this meaning construction can be guided and constrained by textual patterns." (Wildfeuer, 2016, p.9). Therefore, films will be viewed as multimodal texts and comprehension will be studied in systematic way by defining and analyzing the variety of modes.

For Cope and Kalantzis (2009), modes deliver a message not only through 'written' and 'oral' language but also through 'visual', 'special', 'gestural' and 'audio' representation. They use the term 'synaesthesia' to define "the process of shifting between modes and re-representing the same thing from one mode to another" (p. 363) and to explain that the degree of engagement involves a whole body participation. They explicitly say that "everyday representational experience is intrinsically multimodal" as "our bodily sensations are holistically integrated" to "multimodal actualities of everyday meaning" (p. 363).

Taking into account that representational experience involves a message that is delivered when different modes are combined and communication occurs in a social environment when this message is transmitted to a recipient who interacts according to the level of engagement then documentaries can be examined through a multimodal lens.

3.4 Films as Modes

Films may be analysed as multimodal texts since they are composed of multiple modes of communication such as visuals, sound, gestures and language and camera effects according to Wildfeuer (2014). A multimodal analysis of a film could illustrate a thorough comprehension into how these different modes work together to orchestrate a meaning and how audiences interpret that meaning as Bateman & Schmidt (2012) define.

Scholars like Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) as well as Painter et al. (2014) emphasise the significant role of visual in films which is characterised by elements such as camera angles, lighting, colour, and framing. Those key components influence the viewer's emotional response and invite

them to “convince mechanisms for how filmic interpretation functions in specific situations of reception” (Bateman & Schmidt, pp. 23-24). For instance, a low-angle shot can make a character appear powerful or dominant, while a high-angle shot can make them appear weak or vulnerable (Robinson, 2023)

Sound is another powerful mode in films, as it plays a very dominant role into how and to what extent the viewer can become emotionally involved in the storyline (Branigan, 1989). According to Lee Simpson (2023), sound might include elements such as music, sound effects, and dialogue. The choice of music could set the tone for a scene, with a fast-paced beat creating tension or excitement and a slow, melodic score suggesting romance or sadness. Sound effects can add realism to a scene or create an otherworldly atmosphere, while dialogue can reveal character traits and advance the plot.

Language is the final mode in films, and it includes spoken or written words that appear on the screen. As Androutsopoulos (2012) points out, language can be used to convey information about the characters or setting, to reveal the themes of the film, or to provide commentary on social or political issues. For example, a character's use of slang or a regional accent can reveal their cultural background, while a character's use of formal language can suggest their level of education or social status.

By analysing how these different modes work together in a film, we can gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the film and the ways in which the audience interprets it. Multimodal analysis can also help us to identify the techniques used by filmmakers to create emotional responses in the viewer and to explore the ways in which films reflect and shape cultural values and attitudes (Wildfeuer, 2014b)

Chapter 4 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology of the study. This description is structured in three sections. It begins by presenting aspects of the research design, including the research aims and questions and case study method used to answer them (Section 4.1). Next, in Section 4.2, a methodological toolkit is introduced, which involves film analysis through a multimodal perspective, offering a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the representation of refugees in a documentary. Finally, Section 4.3 describes the researcher's engagement with the case, emphasizing the active involvement in the study and its impact on the research process.

4.1. Overview of the Study

This study employs a socio-cultural constructivist worldview and a case study approach to critically analyse the representation of refugees in a specific documentary. Using a methodological toolkit that includes film analysis through a multimodal perspective, the researcher engages with the case to uncover dominant narratives, visual strategies, and the refugees' own engagement with their portrayal.

4.1.1. Research Worldview

Using Creswell's (2014) framework of "philosophical worldview assumptions" (p. 5), this study is informed by constructivism, as "the researcher's intent is to make sense (or interpret) the meaning others have about the world" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8) with an aim to seeing how documentary film can shape perspectives.

A constructivist worldview "is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Studies that involve documentary film exploration (Aufderheide, 2011; Friend & Caruthers, 2016) recommend qualitative perspectives either because documentaries contain narratives

(Aufderheide, 2011) or because one can use qualitative techniques in order to explore ideas and meanings (Friend & Caruthers, 2016). As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest, qualitative research goes beyond the surface-level information captured by quantitative analysis, delving into the underlying reasons and processes that drive human behaviour. It seeks to understand the “why” and “how” behind phenomena, offering a deeper exploration of the complexities of human experiences.

4.1.2. Research Aims

This study aims to make a conceptual and a methodological contribution to scholarship about refugees and migrants, as seen from a constructivist worldview. From a conceptual perspective, it aims to inform current debates on three topics. First, it addresses the question of how refugees are represented in a state of enclosure in a camp. This is important because it sheds light on the power dynamics and structural inequalities that exist within these enclosed spaces. The representation of refugees in such environments can reveal the extent to which their agency, dignity, and human rights are respected or undermined. Secondly, it aims to generate insights into the ways in which men, women and children are depicted in the film *Spectres Are Haunting Europe* with a view to showing how such representations can offer comprehension of gendered perspectives, resilience, humanitarian conditions, social and cultural contexts, narratives, stereotypes, and the potential for empathy and solidarity. The third conceptual issue that the study aims to address is whether the refugees' representation affects viewers' engagement. Together, these three interlinked aims aspire to reveal various aspects of their experiences and shed light on broader social dynamics.

In addition to the above aims, this study also seeks to make a methodological contribution to the study of films. Several tools have been proposed in the literature for the analysis of various aspects of cinematographic production (see section 4.2). While all the instruments and analytical tools have strengths, it is important to note that none of them has been specifically developed for the analysis of documentaries or other 'factual' forms of film representation. However, such forms of film production

are idiosyncratic, because the researcher should adapt and develop methodologies that are sensitive to the specificities of documentaries, their storytelling techniques, and their impact on audiences and society. It may therefore prove useful to develop specific instruments that are better suited to the particularities of this medium. By using the documentary *Spectres Are Haunting Europe* as an example, this study demonstrates the feasibility and potential of such an instrument.

4.1.3. A Case Study Approach

To address the conceptual and methodological aims outlined above, a case study approach will be used. Case studies are investigations of current phenomena within their real-life setting where they unfold, which are particularly suitable the boundaries between said phenomena and the situations in which they are embedded are not easy to discern (Yin, 2003). While there are many different applications of case studies, some closer to Yin's definition and some further away, a feature that they share is a holistic outlook that is very pertinent to the study of filmography, because it would be hard to tell the boundaries between the conscious and unconscious aspects of a directors' decision-making.

Furthermore, the complexity of the socio-cultural, ideological and personal factors that shape the film-making process (Ntai & Motsiou, 2021) precludes reductive explanations that would emerge from more analytical methodologies (Kostoulas, 2018). Another feature of case studies that renders them suitable for this investigation is their suitability for answering 'how' and 'why' questions, such as the ones that outlined in section 4.1.4., when control of the subjects' behaviour is not possible or desired (Yin, 2003).

Case studies are used for a variety of purposes, including the documentation of unique cases (Stake, 1994). In this study, however, our focus will be on what has been defined as a 'instrumental case study' (Stake, 1994). In this type of research, a 'case' (*Spectres Are Haunting Europe*) is used as an empirical ground for the purposes of theory development: this would be a set of insights about the ways documentaries can be used to represent refugees and how this representation can affect

viewers' experience. It should be noted that these insights are not intended to be generalisable – i.e., it is not expected that will be able to be projected to all, or even many, similar documentaries; rather, the purpose is to generate tools and theory that can be used to analyse other analogous filmographic products.

4.1.4. Research Questions

With the above in mind, the specific research questions that this study aims to answer are as follows:

1. How are refugees and their daily routines in the camp represented in the documentary?
2. What specific techniques are used to elicit affective and cognitive responses during viewing of the documentary?
3. To what extent can the visual perspective of the documentary elicit responses from the viewers?

4.2. A Methodological Toolkit

Conducting qualitative research based on a documentary film involves image and scene analysis as well as interpretation. There are various methods and tools that could be used to achieve this. The case study design that has been adopted necessitated taking a synthetic approach to developing methodology (Yin, 2003). Specifically, the interpretation of moving images in a documentary film that represents refugees will involve a synthesis of the methodological options that are presented below.

A first step towards the analysis of films is what Bateman and Schmidt (2014, p. 9) defined as “a standard division used within film analysis”, which involves dividing film fragments into discrete shots. A shot is the outcome of a stream of continuous recording which is achieved by recording without stopping the camera or switching to other cameras. By examining films shot by shot, researchers can uncover intricate elements of filmmaking, understand the nuances of storytelling, and gain deeper insights into the film's aesthetic, narrative, and symbolic dimensions.

One of the methodological approaches that is indispensable to film analysis is the study of the *film glossary*. This involves studying film segments as far as the camera angle is concerned, the location, the distance and “what is being filmed” (Bateman & Schmidt, 2014). For instance, Kress and Leeuwen (2006) talk about long, medium, and close-up shots that determine the ‘social distance’ and the level of engagement or disengagement between the viewer and the participant. The study of these aspects can also provide insights into whether viewers are aligned with the characters or the participants, see the story through their eyes, and develop feelings of sympathy or antipathy towards them (Smith, 2014).

Another methodological approach involves focussing on the process of meaning-making from a more holistic perspective. This can be achieved by systematically analysing the content of the documentary film, by identifying the themes, messages, and visual and auditory elements that it comprises (Bateman & Schmidt, 2014). It should be remembered that meaning can be composed through different semiotic resources depending on the mode of communication, i.e., spoken language, written language, visual, audio, gestural, and or spatial semiosis (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). As Kress and Leeuwen (2006) point out, “modality configurations would describe what, in a specific genre or a specific work, is regarded as real, as adequate to reality” (p. 172). In other words, the ways in which a particular genre or work portrays reality is an indication of what is considered to be real and truthful within that context. Kress and Leeuwen (2006) also demonstrate how insights about different forms of representation and meaning-making can be combined to create cohesive and complex images. In essence, images are composed of multiple signifying systems and representational modes that blend together to create a unified whole.

In addition, Levinson (1990) highlights the importance of considering the medium of film not only as a mode of communication, but also as an art form. Therefore, the medium itself plays an active role in shaping the ways in which ideas can be expressed, rather than just serving as a passive tool for

transmitting information (p .76). Viewing a film as a cultural artefact involves, examining how it is received and interpreted by different audiences and communities. As Burn (2013) suggests, multimodality affects the degree of reception and the level of communication between the image maker and the audience. Understanding and interpreting a visual representation can provide the spectator with deep knowledge about culture, interpersonal relations, feelings, and societal conventions.

Taking Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) approach into account, what this study will attempt is: first of all to define aspects of reality through the representation of refugees through identification of patterns and themes that are present in the film. Second, a combination of Cope and Kalantzis's (2007) multimodal grammar framework, in association with film glossary, will build an effective tool that will assist the analysis of the signs and symbols used in the documentary film, such as images, sounds, and words, to understand how they convey meaning and contribute to the overall message of the film. Finally, in this part it will be explored the extent to which the framing of images influences their impact on the audience.

4.3. Engaging with the Documentary

The analysis of the film was conducted in three stages, which are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1
Overview of analytical procedures

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Research question</i>	<i>Procedure</i>
1	RQ1: How are refugees and their daily routines in the camp represented in the documentary?	Holistic viewing, and generation of analytical notes
2	RQ2: What specific techniques are used to elicit affective and cognitive responses during viewing of the documentary?	In depth viewing of selected scenes, using analytical frame
3	RQ3: To what extent can the visual perspective of the documentary elicit responses from the viewers?	Exploring the degree of identification through focus group

In stage 1, which corresponds to Research Question 1, the researcher viewed the film in its entirety, and made notes focusing on the overall narrative structure, thematic content, and the portrayal of refugee experiences. This initial viewing allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the film's storyline, character development, and the central issues addressed by the filmmakers. This stage is described in more detail in Section 4.3.1.

The second stage of analysis involved the in-depth viewing of selected scenes, with a view to answering Research Question 2. Additional details about this analytical stage can be found in Section 4.3.2.

Finally, to answer Research Question 3, a filmic approach proposed by Smith (1994) was followed, which examines the levels of imaginative engagement and sympathy that viewers experience when engaging with fictional narratives. Smith's framework distinguishes three levels of engagement that contribute to a structure of sympathy, often referred to as "identification". Firstly, spectators construct characters in their minds based on the narrative. Secondly, spectators are immersed in the visual and auditory information available to the characters, creating a sense of alignment. Finally, spectators evaluate characters based on the values they embody, leading to varying degrees of sympathy or antipathy towards them. Smith argues that the narrative is the driving force behind recognition, alignment, and allegiance, which form the foundation of sympathy.

In that sense, one can claim that viewer's engagement could be related to the degree of identification with the participants in a documentary. According to Kharel (2015), images play a crucial role in our everyday lives, influencing our personal identities, narratives, cultures, and societies. They are intertwined with our understanding of history, space, and truth. Kharel further suggests that film cameras have the potential to capture and document the ordinary lives of individuals, serving as valuable research tools for recording real events and exploring cultural knowledge. Therefore, using a focus group as a methodological tool for the analysis of a documentary film portraying refugees in a

camp can provide valuable insights and perspectives from different individuals (Breen, 2006). Information about this final analytical move is presented in Section 4.3.3.

4.3.1. Holistic Viewing

Holistic viewing is a comprehensive approach to analyzing a film or any multimodal text that involves watching or experiencing the text in its entirety before conducting specific focused analyses. It allows the researcher to gain a complete understanding of the overall narrative, themes, and stylistic choices employed within the text. By engaging in holistic viewing, the researcher can grasp the broader context and identify patterns, motifs, and recurring elements that may influence the interpretation and analysis of specific scenes or moments.

As the study acknowledges the potential impact of the researcher's subjectivity, positionality, and personal experiences on the research process, the researcher has actively engaged with the case by immersing herself in the documentary, empathetically listening to the voices of the refugees, and critically reflecting on their own positionality. This engagement enhances the depth and authenticity of the analysis and ensures that the study captures a thorough understanding of the representation of refugees.

By closely examining these aspects, key themes, motifs, and storytelling techniques were identified which employed throughout the documentary. Additionally, attention was given to the ways in which refugees were depicted and the potential presence of any visual or linguistic patterns that contributed to the construction of their representation. The comprehensive notes compiled in this stage formed the foundation for subsequent analyses, providing a basis for deeper exploration and interpretation of the film's multimodal elements in later stages of the study. These notes, which were intended to capture a holistic impression of the film were later converted into analytical text in the form of memos (Miles et al., 2014), and used as the foundation of subsequent analysis.

4.3.2. In-depth Analysis

A documentary film analysis from a multimodal perspective should arise after taking into consideration various elements such as visuals, audio, editing, and narrative structure (see also Chapter 3). Therefore, personal choices on how refugee men, women, and children are represented in specific scenes would be explained by the following step-by-step approach.

To determine which scenes were analysed in depth, four criteria were considered (Table 2). First and foremost, the selection of scenes was done through the prism of their contribution to the overall representation. More specifically, the analysis looked at scenes that showcased different aspects of refugee lives, challenges, or moments of resilience and portray refugee experiences (criterion i). Another very significant factor was the visual elements in relation to how and to what extent they shape the portrayal of refugee men, women, and children. For instance, a close-up shot of a child's face might evoke empathy and emphasize their vulnerability (criterion ii). What is more, the specific scenes that have been chosen for analysis capture effectively aspects of representation such as resilience and vulnerability (criterion iii). Last but not least, scene selection was determined by how the sequencing of scenes, transitions, or juxtapositions influences the representation of refugee men, women, and children as well as the context consideration and the filmmakers' intentions exploration. In other words, what should be focused on is if the documentary aims to challenge stereotypes, raise awareness, or advocate for specific issues (criterion iv).

Table 2
Summary of scene selection criteria

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Description</i>
i	Potential to showcase diverse aspects of the refugee experience
ii	Potential to showcase specific visual techniques
lii	Potential to showcase vulnerability and resilience
iv	Potential to showcase sequencing, transitions & juxtapositions

By applying these criteria, 18 scenes were selected for in depth analysis. These are presented in Table 3, which locates them in the documentary and summarises their content.

Table 3
Scenes selected for in-depth analysis

<i>Scene</i>	<i>Time Stamp</i>	<i>Summary</i>
A	00:12 – 01:06	Establishing shot. Landscape (Appendix A, screenshot 1)
B	01:07 – 05:21	Men, women and children walking, passing by in front of the camera, with backpacks, luggage, and their personal belongings, moving in a particular direction. (Appendix A, screenshots 2 & 3)
C	05:30 – 6:30	The spectator is viewing an extended queue of people waiting. An aluminium shelter is covering the line of individuals. The ground is muddy and there are tents in the vicinity. The prominent sound is the rain, accompanied by the distant murmur of human voices. (Appendix A, screenshot 4)
D	06:31 – 09:00	A discussion among men and young people wearing raincoats. They've temporarily paused their line formation to converse with each other, even though it's raining."
E	09:14 – 10:31	Announcement delivered by the General Registry for Migration Policy in Idomeni Camp
F	25:47 – 28:46	Different kinds of shoes, varying in sizes and forms, take centre stage visually. They are forming a line. The arrangement of the camera angle is influenced by the motion and orientation of the feet and legs. They are stepping on a muddy ground (Appendix A, screenshots 5,7,8,9,10,11 12)
G	29: 49 – 31:29	Steady focus on muddy feet waiting behind a long fence (Appendix A, screenshot 10)
H	40: 35 – 44:16	Steady focus on muddy feet are walking on rails. Children attempt to maintain their balance while waiting in a long queue on the railway tracks (Appendix A, screenshot 11)
I	22:35 – 23:32	Young children play on rail trails (Appendix B, screenshot 1)
J	35:05 – 36:05	A young boy is sitting on a stone trying to tie his shoelaces (Appendix B, screenshot 2)
K	34:29 - 35:04	Men, women and children are seen as they are involved in a tensed situation. Shouts and screams can be heard distinctly (Appendix B, screenshot 3)
L	19:48 - 21:15	An extended scene featuring a train passing by for several minutes, with the added detail of a wire fence and clothes hanging in the background. (Appendix A, screenshot 6)
M	31:59 - 34:28	Passing train
N	38:26 - 38:28	Passing train
O	50:48 to 53:38	The viewer is presented with a pressing situation Refugee men have gathered together. They are watched obstructing the passage of train by sitting on railroad tracks. They express their dissent against the border closure. (Appendix C, screenshots 1 & 2)
P	53:40 to 54:42	Scene of a boycott, where male refugees exhibit unwavering determination and refuse to retreat. (Appendix C, screenshot 2)
Q	54:47 to 59:40	Scene of a boycott (Appendix C, screenshots 3 & 4)
R	1:23:25 until the end of the film	Black-and-white images. The viewer experiences a closer engagement with the faces of the refugees through close-up shots. Segments of routine in the camp. A poetic narration delivered by a female voice-over accompanies the scene. (Appendix A, screenshots 17 & 20)

The multimodal analysis of the scenes was based on a systematic examination of the various modes employed, including visual elements, auditory components, textual elements, and other relevant forms of communication. By closely studying the scenes, the researcher sought to identify and analyze the specific language and grammar of each mode, exploring how they interacted and contributed to the overall meaning-making process. Notes were kept using a structured form which is presented in Appendix A, and these formed the basis for the presentation of findings that are presented in the following chapter.

4.3.3. Focus Group

Images, as powerful communicative tools, play a significant role in shaping daily lives, influencing personal identities, narratives, cultures, and societies. Furthermore, the reality of the events depicted in the documentary adds another layer of impact.

To explore the extent of these responses, a case study employing the methodological tool of a focus group was conducted. The focus group consisted of primary school students aged 11 with no refugee background. The screening took place at Varnavas Primary School in Attica region on 30th of October 2023.

Before the film screening, the students were encouraged to observe and take note of various elements such as the landscape, weather and clothing worn by the refugees, especially by the children depicted in the scenes, the facial expressions of the individuals being filmed, as well as the language they used. Following the screening, they were prompted to share their emotions and describe their hypothetical actions if they were placed in a similar situation. Six replies were collected and thematically grouped. The analysed responses are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Multimodal Analysis of *Spectres are Haunting Europe*

This chapter presents a multimodal analysis of the documentary film *Spectres are Haunting Europe*. The analysis is structured into six sections. It begins by presenting the documentary as well as contextualising information about the socio-political situation in which the film was produced (Section 5.1). Following that, Section 5.2 presents the way the filmmakers depict and illustrate the daily life in the Idomeni camp, showcasing specific scenes as representative examples. Together, these two sections present data that help to answer Research Question 1. The following three sections (Sections 5.3, 5.4, & 5.5) discuss, in more detail, the cinematographic depiction of refugee children, men, and women. By looking at selected scenes as illustrative examples, these sections show data that are pertinent to Research Question 2. Finally, to answer Research Question 3, the perspective of students who viewed selected scenes is presented.

5.1 The Documentary

5.1.1. *Setting*

As has already been mentioned in Chapter 2, Idomeni, a Greek village located on the border with North Macedonia, became one of the initial makeshift camps where refugees from the Middle East sought shelter, aspiring to create a better future for themselves and their families in Europe. However, in March 2016, approximately 15,000 people found themselves trapped when the European Commission made the decision to close the Balkan route (Petković, 2016).

At that time, the Greek police implemented a plan to evacuate and relocate over 8,000 individuals from the 'informal camp' in Idomeni. According to Al Jazeera (2016), Greek authorities initiated an operation to clear the largest refugee camp in Idomeni, situated on the Macedonian

border. They blocked access to the area and deployed over 700 riot police. In response, the refugees decided to obstruct a railway line that was used for transporting goods.

Spectres Are Haunting Europe, directed by Maria Kourkouta and Niki Giannari, portrays the efforts of refugees from Middle East to cross the borders and continue their journey in Europe in order to resettle or seek asylum. Their temporary home is Idomeni camp.

5.1.2. Artistic Features

Observable characteristics of filming and framing throughout the film are mainly defined by static and long shots (camera on a fixed support such as a tripod) (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012b). Kourkouta (2016) explains that the intention was to capture the sense of enclosure and the absence of progress by establishing extended shots captured with a motionless camera mounted on a tripod. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2007), perspective is one of the ways “the imagemaker means to draw the viewer into their meaning” (p. 401) thus making the relationship between the object and the space become polarized.

In general, in this documentary, the filmmakers show an intention not only to observe the events but also to incorporate and present static images in detail. This cinematic perspective leads to a generation of a space that expands both inside and outside the frame shedding light on the hardships and obstacles refugees encounter in an overcrowded camp and exploring issues like access to healthcare, food and bureaucracy.

The researcher's engagement is gradually developing by the emphasis given to the lived reality of the camp environment. The immersive space created expands beyond the frame providing a rich and multi-dimensional understanding of the hardships and obstacles encountered and evoking emotion. Through interpreting and analysing the visual material the researcher uncovers underlying power dynamics, structural barriers, and potential solutions.

5.1.3. Structure of the Documentary

The film is divided into three main thematic units. The overall structure of the film follows a triptych format, which leads to an absence of a straightforward, linear narrative. Kourkouta explains that “the general structure of the film does take the form of a triptych – perhaps because we wanted to avoid a linear narrative that would have been deceptive” (Kourkouta interviewed by Petković, 2016).

The first part is the predominant sight of thousands of people enduring constant queues day and night in front of the closed borders plunging in the mud and under the rain. As Petković (2016) says, everyday life is described by long queues mainly for clothes or food and characterized by the absence of events. Giannari (interviewed by Petković, 2016) states that the role of the directors is mainly humanitarian as they decide to depict imprisonment and enclosure of refugees who have been “forced out by the barriers imposed to them” (Giannari, 2016).

The second part shows refugees who have decided to stop trains from passing through by sitting on railway tracks near the camp, as a form of protest against the closed border. The filmmakers' attempt is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation by taking into considerations the refugees' perspectives. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2007) “our assumptions about context and our experience of what meanings refer to shape what we take meanings to be” (p.376).

The third part of the documentary, screened in black-and-white film, adds a lyrical and poetic aesthetic as it depicts facial expressions through close ups. It is the first time throughout the documentary that the refugees are closely captured by the camera. What is more, this is the first instance in which the filmmakers introduce a poetic narrative delivered through a female voiceover providing a poetic commentary. As Giannari (interviewed by Petković, 2016) points out “the black-and-white images and the accompanying text are there in order to show something that is born of our own history and which leaves deep impressions on us.”

5.2 Representation of life in the Idomeni camp

The following scenes show fractures from daily routine in Idomeni camp. The categorization and naming have been done as an attempt to effectively analyze shots that appear to display all elements that have already been mentioned in the previous chapter throughout the documentary. Therefore, the selected scenes work as representative examples with the scope of examining the semiotic modes which compose the “everyday symbolic and expressive practices” (Lister & Wells, 2001) and interpreting “what there is to interpret” (Bateman & Schmidt, 2014) in those extracts.

Scene A (Table 3, initial or establishing shot) (Appendix A, screenshot 1) presents the audience with the first scene of the documentary movie. The camera remains stationary, providing viewers with a perspective similar to watching a play in a theatre. By framing an empty landscape, the filmmakers create a sense of an unclaimed territory, a location that is undefined and might be contested. This concept of a no man's land is described as an area that is uninhabited or left unsettled due to fear or uncertainty. Initially, the only noticeable movement in the otherwise still nature scene is caused by the wind.

Shortly after the stillness, the contrast is created as women, men, and children enter the scene, walking in a synchronized manner (screenshots 2 & 3, Appendix A). They carry backpacks, suitcases, and sleeping bags, their gaze primarily fixed in a specific direction, and there is minimal interaction with the filmmakers, or sometimes no interaction at all (except for a boy waving at the camera at 1:41 minute). The camera does not track their movement, and their destination is not shown within the frame, allowing the viewer to only observe the moment of transition between their entrance and exit, as they move from right to left. The absence of dialogue is prominent, with only the sound of their footsteps audible, and the narrative is conveyed through the physical movements captured on screen.

According to Gofmann (2010), “frame organizes activity [...] given that the frame applied to an activity is expected to enable us to come to terms with all events in that activity” and “that the human body is one of those things that can disrupt the organization of activity and break the frame” (p. 347). As Van Leeuwen (2004) suggests “human action is by nature rhythmically coordinated” and points out that “the rhythms of our actions become as finely attuned to each other as the parts of different instruments in a musical performance. They have to be. If they were not, things would go drastically wrong” (p. 181).

In this introductory scene (Scene A), the filming effectively captures the flowing and rhythmic movements of the people, resulting in the creation of a theatrical composition that encompasses action, set, and costumes (Burn, 2013). With the absence of spoken or written language, the visuals in film or video serve as powerful tools for illustrating location, space, and conveying the progression of actions and events over time (Kalantzis & Cope, 2009). The use of a long shot in the first five minutes of the film serves multiple purposes: it establishes who and what is involved in the represented meanings, it tends to engage the viewer with the filmmaker's intended meaning, it highlights the unique aspects of this form of communication, it contextualizes the meanings within a larger world of significance, and it reveals the interests and intentions of the meaning creator (Kalantzis & Cope, 2009)

Therefore, what can be perceived is that the viewer, seeing through the filmmaker's perspective, bears witness to the journey of men, women, and children on foot, carrying their belongings in a manner that provides a clear interpretation of their resettlement to an unfamiliar and inhospitable landscape rather than their home. The presence of cultural and religious symbols, such as hijabs, indicates their background. They remain voiceless, possibly due to physical exhaustion. Their experience is observed from a distance, with no active involvement or engagement. To conclude the introductory scene, a fade-out occurs (as defined in filmology terminology, where an image gradually disappears), signifying its closure according to Columbia University's description (n.d.).

According to Kourkouta (2016), in a location characterized by the presence of thousand individuals continuously queuing for 24 hours a day, there was little else to do rather than document the act of waiting itself, primarily recognizing it as a temporary situation.

In the following scenes (Scenes *F, G, H*, Table 3) the filmmakers seem to opt to film them from a child's eye-level perspective (camera is set in a lower eye level). What is evident and distinctive across all three scenes is that the stationary camera captures an unending row of muddy footwear.

Specifically, in scene *F* (Screenshot 9, Appendix A), the primary focus is on the ongoing actions taking place, as described by Goodwin (2000) as the "central vision." The framing of the shot is determined by the movement and direction of the feet and legs. Various types of footwear, differing in sizes and shapes, become the central visual element. Each step taken on the muddy ground can be interpreted as a symbol of confinement or being trapped, as the camera captures a continuous line of feet, repeating and circling without allowing their owners to step beyond a specific spot.

Likewise, in Scenes *G* and *H* (Screenshots 10 and 11, Appendix A), the camera maintains a steady focus on muddy feet. In one instance, the feet are either waiting behind a long fence, and in the other, they are walking on rails. Once again, the steps taken by the feet do not permit them to cover distances or alter their direction. The static nature of the shots conveys a feeling that the ground within the camp restricts and minimizes movement ceaselessly, imposing limitations on mobility.

Here is to be added another scene that it is characterised by its static movement and it is considered significant in portraying refugee experience in Idomeni camp. It is a night long static shot (Scene *C*, Table 3) in which the viewer is introduced to a situation while the camera is filming people waiting in a long line (screenshot 4, Appendix A). Although the environment is dimly lit, preventing clear visibility of faces, one can observe an aluminium covering under which the line of people stands, along with a muddy ground and tents. In terms of sound, despite the predominant noise of rain falling

on the ground, there is also a faint background of human voices accompanying the rhythmic tone created by the raindrops.

A follow-up shot (Scene *D*, Table 3) (screenshot 5, Appendix A), the viewer is presented with a nearly two-and-a-half-minute conversation among male individuals wearing raincoats. They have temporarily halted their queueing and engage in interaction despite the rain. Their smooth communication and apparent understanding suggest that they speak the same language. The time and location remain unchanged, but now the waiting line is observed from a different perspective. The viewer's attention to the conversation is momentarily disrupted by a boy holding a red umbrella. He decides to cross the space in front of the camera and waves to the filmmakers. Despite the rainy weather, the boy maintains a cheerful mood, with a smile on his face and an apparent resilience to any negativity or absence of enthusiasm.

The scene concludes with an announcement delivered by the General Registry for Migration Policy in Idomeni Camp (Scene *E*, Table 3). It informs the temporary residents that the borders between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are closed (as stated in the announcement). The announcement also assures that the Greek police is prepared to provide food, medical services, and accommodations at the reception centers. Cooperation with the Greek authorities is requested, and gratitude is expressed. The announcement is repeated twice, first in Afghan-Persian and then accompanied by English subtitles.

Contrary to static shots, the filmmakers seek spontaneity by capturing interactions between children and themselves through gestures or facial expressions (screenshots 12 to 16, Appendix A). It is noticeable that children respond to the presence of the camera in their own unique ways, communicating their thoughts primarily through body language. Some seek direct eye contact with the filmmakers, while others show a warmer interaction, especially when their expressions are relaxed

and smiling. It is characteristic of young children to behave spontaneously, as they often engage in playfulness without hesitation. The filmmakers take advantage of these moments of spontaneity, allowing them to blend with the static shots. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), the portrayal of human participants in images establishes an imaginary relationship with the viewer, depicting them as either friends or strangers. However, when examining the images of the children in these shots, there is no sense of distance or unfamiliarity because the viewer can see them as they truly are, allowing for an imaginary closeness as if they were our own friends or neighbours.

The final sequence of the documentary (Scene R, Table 3) also presents a departure from the static and immobile camera position seen in the previously analyzed scenes (screenshots 17-20, Appendix A). In this segment, the viewer experiences a closer engagement with the faces of the participants through close-up shots. It is the first time that the refugees direct their gaze towards the camera, allowing the spectators to witness their interactions, communication with the filmmakers, and the various facial expressions and gestures of the men, women, and children. Additionally, this is the first time where the filmmakers introduce a poetic narration delivered by a female voice-over. Giannari describes this poetic element as the "tear of history," as she believes that the refugees possess the knowledge and experiences of past refugees, thereby reflecting their history and assuming the role of a poet (Giannari, 2016). According to her, poetry serves to convey the aspects that may not be explicitly conveyed through narration, encompassing that which endures over time.

To conclude, among the sequence of scenes depicting the refugees' daily routine in the camp should be added scenes that capture the viewer's attention with the presence of a moving train. These scenes are significant in highlighting the train's role and impact on the lives of the refugees.

In particular, in scene L (Table 3), the viewer is presented with the image of a passing train for several minutes, while also noticing the presence of a wired fence with hanging clothes in the

background of the scene (screenshot 6, Appendix A). The camera is positioned at a low angle, creating a sense of magnification and emphasizing the dominance of the train in the scene. According to Columbia University's definition, a low-angle shot occurs when the camera is placed below eye level, resulting in a view from below looking up at the subject.

This type of shot is often associated with portraying the subject as important and powerful, and it can evoke feelings of fear or insecurity in the viewer, as mentioned by Ulloa (2007). The background typically consists of the sky or ceiling, contributing to a sense of disorientation due to the lack of detail. Cope and Kalantzis (2007) propose that meanings are constructed through the interaction of spaces and objects, whether natural or man-made. In this context, the train represents an active presence, a dynamic force associated with a destination or route.

According to Kourkouta, who was interviewed by Petković, there was an intention to create long sequences intercut with the passing train, which was seen as the only thing crossing borders. Scenes *M* and *N* (Table 3) depict the impression that the passing train dictates life in the camp. The viewer is exposed to a routine where camp residents are visible as they wait for the train to pass in order to safely cross the rails.

Overall, the presence of a train in the refugee camp seems to hold a significant influence over the lives of the displaced individuals. Serving as a mode of transportation for delivering goods to Europe, the train's path crosses through the camp, demanding caution and awareness from the residents. The train's regular passage establishes a routine that affects their daily activities and movements. Before attempting to cross the rails, individuals must exercise caution and wait for the train to pass, ensuring their safety. This reliance on the train as a means of transportation and the necessity to coordinate their actions around its schedule exemplify the extent to which the refugees' lives are intertwined with this powerful and constant presence.

5.3 Representation of refugee children

As mentioned in section 5.2, it is evident that children have distinct and individual responses to the presence of the camera, expressing themselves primarily through nonverbal communication. Some children seek direct eye contact with the filmmakers, while others exhibit a more friendly interaction, particularly when they appear relaxed and smiling. The spontaneous behaviour observed in young children is notable, as they often engage in playful activities without any hesitation.

Two notable instances showcasing the playful nature of children can be seen in scenes *I* and *J* (screenshots 1 and 2, Appendix B). In the first scene, the filmmakers employ a static camera shot to draw the viewer's attention to two youngsters who appear engrossed in playing on the train rails. They engage in a brief interaction, and one of them uses a wooden stick to try and strike a stone placed on the rail, creating a makeshift game.

The second scene captures the activity of a boy sitting on a stone with his back facing the camera, fully engrossed in his own makeshift game. Despite the constant movement of people around him, he remains deeply focused on his play.

However, there are two scenes (Scenes *K* and *H*, Table 3) (screenshots 3 and 4, Appendix B) that disrupt this sense of playfulness. In the first scene, the filmmakers capture a moment of turbulence, deliberately choosing to portray a tense situation. Viewers are confronted with a conflicting atmosphere, as shouts and screams can be heard distinctly. The camera, set at the same height as a child's eye level and remaining relatively stable, gives the impression that the filmmakers are actively engaged in this tense situation. It suggests that they have a deliberate intention to involve the viewer directly in the intensity of the moment.

The second scene features young boys and girls attempting to maintain their balance while waiting in a long queue on the railway tracks. The camera, positioned at a low angle, clearly captures

their attire. Notably, the children are wearing raincoats, and one girl is shown folding her trousers to avoid getting them muddy.

All in all, the portrayal of refugee children initially captures their playful and childlike behaviour, highlighting their innocence and resilience in the face of adversity. However, the filmmakers also make a conscious decision to shed light on the harsh realities these children endure. They depict scenes where the children are seen waiting patiently in long lines under the pouring rain, their raincoats serving as a shield against the elements. They show the children stepping through muddy terrain, navigating the challenges of their environment. Additionally, the filmmakers choose to reveal tense moments where the children are confronted with unsettling situations, capturing their expressions of fear or distress. By showcasing these contrasting moments, the filmmakers aim to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the refugee children's lives, acknowledging both their moments of joy and their encounters with hardship and uncertainty.

5.4 Representation of refugee men

The most distinctive portrayal of refugee men is found in the second part of the documentary which, as it has already been described in section 5.1.3, depicts refugees who have chosen to obstruct the passage of train by sitting on railroad tracks as a way to express their dissent against the border closure.

It is important to note that the second part of the documentary comprises a sequence of three scenes. In these scenes, the viewer is presented with a pressing situation where refugee men have gathered together with the aim of reclaiming their right to cross the borders and reach their ultimate destination, Germany.

Furthermore, at this point, the documentary introduces the technique of fade in and fade out effects (Cutting, 2021) for the first time. The fade transition creates the illusion that the viewer is

looking through a window at the scene outside rather than observing it from within the room (Cutting, 2021). Hence, the filmmakers opt to employ this specific effect to maintain a sense of continuity, ensuring that the viewer comprehends the events that have happened and is prepared for what lies ahead.

During scene *O* (Table 3) (screenshots 1 and 2, Appendix C), the filmmakers depict men of various ages using a middle static shot that allows the viewer to distinguish facial expressions and gestures. Most of them are standing but few are positioned seated with their backs facing the camera. Their determination is evident through their facial expressions, with their gaze fixed in a specific direction. A shout of the slogan "open the borders" can repeatedly be heard. One refugee man is holding a cardboard placard written in German.

Likewise, in Scenes *P* and *Q* (Table 3) (screenshots 3 and 4, Appendix C), the viewer is presented as an observer of a boycott, where male refugees exhibit unwavering determination and refuse to retreat.

What is more, this sequence of scenes mark the first occasion where the filmmakers decide to amplify the voices of the refugees, granting them the opportunity to be heard. This allows the viewer to delve into the broader context (Kalantzis & Cope, 2009) within which the protest takes place and consider the reasons why refugees might resort to such drastic measures, such as closed borders and the impact it has on their lives.

Also viewers may identify the goals and motivations behind the refugees' decision to block the train tracks not only because of their body position but also because of the discourse that is occurred. A very significant factor filmed in this scene is that there is clear disagreement among individuals regarding their support or opposition to what extent Greece has provided assistance to refugees. Two very characteristic statements that describe the situation are the following: "We are

losing ourselves, we are losing our children our health and everything. We only came here to pass over Germany" (Scene P). "We are not animals (screenshot 2, Appendix C). We've been here for months, they're imprisoned us".

5.5 Representation of Refugee Women

What is been notable throughout the film is that the presence of refugee women is characterised by a random depiction of them carrying luggage and being with their children. Additionally, there is there an absence or limited visibility of their face as they are mainly showed sitting with their back facing the camera.

Nevertheless, during the last part of the documentary, the filmmakers decide to show women's faces using close-up shots which emphasize their calm and smiley expressions. By highlighting positive emotions, the filmmakers may seek to elicit empathy and create a connection between the viewers and the women depicted, fostering a more compassionate understanding of their experiences.

5.6 Focus group – Students' responses

As it has already been mentioned in section 4.3.3, the collected responses of viewers are presented in this section.

First and foremost, the emotional impact on the students according to what has been reported is marked by a profound sense of sadness and empathy for the refugees portrayed in the documentary. In particular, they use expressions like: "I felt deep sadness for the film we watched...", "it was really sad because there were a lot of children ..." "I would never like to be in such a place...", "I felt very sentimental and heartbroken for the people there..."

Many of the responses, in particular, convey a sense of sorrow regarding the harsh living conditions that refugees endure daily in the camp. Examples include descriptions of the clothing worn by individuals, especially children. More specifically students say: "I feel sorrow because in this film I saw people who had limited access to food and water", "Children have no proper clothes and shoes to wear". Additionally, reports highlight the challenging circumstances of living in tents which are exposed in rain and cold, in a place surrounded by mud. For instance, students write: "I feel sad because people live in tents and feel cold". The students' reports also note the prolonged waiting in queues for food, the lack of access to clean water, and the inability of refugees to take showers and maintain personal hygiene. They characteristically say: "People live in mud and they have no access to daily personal hygiene".

Furthermore, the students' feedback explores the potential emotions of refugees as victims of war and the memories they might carry from their war-torn homelands. A common observation from students is that despite the challenging conditions, refugees endeavour to survive. In particular, reports highlight the resilience of refugee children who, despite hardship, manage to find ways to entertain themselves and play with whatever resources are available. For example, students say: "Despite difficulties refugees try to build a routine", "Children find ways to play with whatever they have available". What is more, the students note their impression regarding the powerful image of refugees sharing a smile on camera. They specifically write: "In the documentary people never lose their smile".

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

Documentary films play a crucial role in shedding light on the experiences of refugees, capturing their daily lives and struggles within the context of a camp setting. The choice of the documentary film "Spectres are Haunting Europe" as a case to be studied was quite helpful in achieving the aims of the dissertation. One reason was that this specific documentary offers a raw portrayal, depicted through a rough montage, of the arduous circumstances faced by refugees in the Idomeni camp. Another very important reason was that it serves as a media-like footage, capturing the challenging realities endured by those seeking refuge. Despite its production in 2016, the film holds significant historical value, providing authentic glimpses into the initial wave of refugees navigating through a camp, uncertain of their fate and the duration of their stay. Its portrayal serves as a poignant reminder of the struggles faced by displaced individuals during that time. Furthermore, the documentary carries pedagogical significance, offering educators a valuable resource to incorporate into classroom settings. By utilizing it as historical footage, educators can introduce students to the realities of refugee experiences and foster empathy and compassion towards those affected by displacement.

This dissertation has provided a multimodal concept framework, drawing upon multimodal grammar and audiovisual literacy presented in chapter 3, to analyse the representation and meaning-making processes in a documentary film that depicts the lives of refugees. By examining the variety of modes employed in the film as illustrated in section 3.4, including visuals, sounds, and language, this study aimed to unravel the complexities of understanding and interpreting the experiences of refugees, while paying particular attention to the representation of children, men, and women. Finally, to evoke various responses from viewers, depending on the degree of identification they feel with the participants a case study employing the methodological tool of a focus group was conducted.

In this chapter, the main findings of the dissertation will be revisited, with reference to the research questions that were described in Section 4.3. A second section outlines teaching implications, and finally, the chapter concludes with suggestions for future work.

6.1 Main Conclusions

The structure of this section mirrors the three research questions that this dissertation aspired to answer. Each section summarises the main findings from the study are summarised, connected to published sources, and projected —where relevant— to broader issues about cinematography, the refugee experience and education.

6.1.1. How are Refugees and their Daily Routines in the Camp Represented in the Documentary?

The first research question asked how refugees and their daily routines were represented in *Spectres are Haunting Europe*. This specific documentary was, at the time of writing, one of the very few cinematographic attempts in the Greek context, to portray the lives of people with a refugee and migrant background. For this reason, a detailed analysis of the way these themes are presented was expected to shed light on how these were made available to the Greek public consciousness, through the artistic mediation of the documentary.

The analysis of the documentary showed that *Spectres are Haunting Europe* offered a unique window into the daily life of refugees residing in Idomeni camp, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the multimodal elements that construct their experiences. Through a systematic examination of visual patterns, auditory cues, and linguistic expressions, recurring motifs and themes were identified, which contribute to the construction of meaning in the film.

The visual mode in the documentary film played a pivotal role in conveying the realities of life in the camp. By analysing the composition of shots, framing, and camera movements, one could discern the power dynamics and social interactions within the refugee community. For instance, the frequent use of close-ups of children's faces showcased their vulnerability and innocence, inviting empathy from the viewers. In contrast, wide shots were chosen to depict the overcrowded living conditions and lack of privacy, reinforcing the sense of displacement and confinement.

Sound was a crucial multimodal resource that shaped the audience's emotional engagement and understanding of the refugees' experiences. The documentary utilized ambient sounds, such as bustling crowds, distant conversations, passing train sounds or the sounds of nature, to immerse viewers in the camp environment. By juxtaposing these sounds with the discourse as well as the voice-over, the filmmakers managed to unveil certain aspects of the refugees' daily lives, such as resilience, hope, or despair.

The linguistic mode, encompassing spoken words, written text, or subtitles, contributed to the multimodal analysis by providing additional layers of meaning. In that sense, the filmmakers' choices offered insight to the broader context by providing viewers with the opportunity to understand the local dynamics and political situation.

Within the broader analysis of the daily life of refugees, it was thought essential to explore how the documentary represented and portrayed gender dynamics. Analysing the documentary from

a gender perspective facilitated an understanding of how the film reinforces or challenges stereotypical gender roles and power imbalances. For example, a careful examination of camera angles and dialogues highlighted refugee men who become advocates for their community. They vocalized their rights, fiercely fought for them, and demonstrated steadfast determination as they refused to surrender, driven by the fact that they had nothing to lose. Similarly, exploring the depiction of women and children allowed for a nuanced understanding of how their experiences and roles are constructed within the context of the camp.

One of the most important research motivations though was the realization that the impact of images on the audience is contingent upon their framing. The examination began with an exploration of how refugees are depicted in international media and documentaries, aiming to uncover the various types of descriptions encountered by spectators.

More specifically, the human interest frame presents a portrayal through an emotional and personal lens (Steimel, 2010), while contrasting dehumanizing visual patterns (Bleiker et al., 2013) to evoke a political response. Giannari (2016) further elucidates that the movement of refugees constitutes a significant political act, and the stronger their presence, the more borders they can transcend. She emphasizes that the issue of hospitality is not merely a humanitarian concern but a crucial political matter in our current era, alongside the fight against discrimination, deportation, racism, and fascism in Europe (2016).

The filmmakers aimed to prevent the elicitation of viewer compassion towards the refugees. As stated by Giannari, the absence of interviews delving into personal stories and dramas in the film was intentional, as they did not seek to evoke feelings of compassion or pity towards the migrants. The filmmakers do not view the migrants as victims (Giannari, 2016). Therefore, Giannari and Kourkouta's documentary doesn't focus heavily on displacement or highlight individual stories. Instead, it captures real-time experiences of events happening in a specific location. By applying multimodal analysis, the documentary reveals a unique aesthetic of the moving image. As noted by Burn (2013), aesthetics can be explored in terms of how we perceive and embody the film, as well as in relation to design, style, taste, and cultural value. Furthermore, multimodality influences the reception and level of communication between the filmmaker and the audience. By understanding and interpreting visual representations, viewers can gain profound insights into culture, interpersonal relationships, emotions, and societal norms.

6.1.2. What Specific Techniques Are Used to Elicit Affective and Cognitive Responses During Viewing of the Documentary?

To answer the second research question, an in-depth analysis of individual scenes was conducted, drawing on the methodological toolkit proposed by Kress and Leeuwen (2006). The main insights are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

One notable aspect, which has already been discussed in Chapter 5 was the filmmakers' decision on how to depict human participants. This was achieved through the use of different shot types, such as long static shots, medium shots, and close-ups, which play a significant role in determining the "social distance" experienced by the audience (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

Long shots, capturing a larger portion of the environment or a group of individuals, tended to create a sense of distance and detachment. They provided a broader context and allowed viewers to observe the interactions between people and their surroundings. The result was a more objective and analytical response, encouraging viewers to consider the larger social and cultural implications of the events depicted.

On the other hand, medium shots strike a balance between proximity and distance. Framing individuals within their immediate environment was a way to allow viewers to establish a more personal connection with the subjects. Therefore, the degree of empathy and emotional engagement was raised as viewers were given the opportunity to observe the nuances of facial expressions, body language, and gestures.

Close-up shots, capturing intimate details of individuals, intensified the emotional impact, especially during the last part of the documentary. By bringing the audience physically closer to the subjects, those shots promoted a strong sense of empathy and identification. Viewers could closely examine the characters' emotions, capturing subtle nuances and fostering a deeper understanding of their experiences. As a result, the viewers' cognitive processing and emotional connection is enhanced.

The visual perspective of a documentary portraying refugees has the potential to evoke various responses from viewers, depending on the degree of identification they feel with the participants. In that sense, the degree of identification experienced by the young students with the depicted participants who were children significantly influenced their emotional, cognitive, and empathetic responses. By relating their own experiences or imagining themselves in similar

circumstances, they developed a deeper understanding and connection with the refugee children showcased in the images. These images played a vital role in shaping their perceptions, attitudes, and compassion towards the plight of refugees.

Overall, the filmmakers strategically applied various camera placements in order to manipulate the social distance experienced by viewers, influencing their level of engagement or disengagement. These techniques played a crucial role in eliciting both affective responses, by evoking emotions and empathy, and cognitive responses, by promoting critical analysis and understanding of the depicted events and their broader implications.

6.1.3. To What Extent Can the Documentary Elicit Responses from the Viewers?

The final research question focused on the impact of the documentary on viewers, with a focus on younger learners. This was intended to explore the pedagogical potential of the film, and the affordances that might be present if it were to be incorporated in teaching. To address this question, a screening of specific sequences was organised, and responses were elicited from a focus group of students.

First and foremost, the visual perspective of the documentary was found to have a significant emotional impact on students. In particular, the predominant emotions reported by students included profound sadness and empathy towards the refugees depicted in the documentary.

Moreover, students expressed a sense of sorrow regarding the harsh living conditions experienced by refugees in the camp which is revealed by the descriptions that focus on aspects such as clothing, especially for children, and the challenging circumstances of living in exposed tents surrounded by mud. In addition, student reports highlighted the daily struggles faced by refugees, including prolonged waiting in queues for food, lack of access to clean water, and challenges in maintaining personal hygiene.

Another vital key finding was that students demonstrated empathy with the refugees as victims of war and they considered the potential emotional burdens that refugees may carry from their war-torn homelands. They also emphasized the ability of refugee children to find ways to entertain themselves and play with available resources despite the challenging conditions, noting the resilience of refugees.

Last but not least, the students' feedback underscored a positive impression of the powerful image of refugees sharing a smile on camera, highlighting the resilience and determination of the refugee community despite adversity.

In summary, the documentary effectively elicited strong emotional responses from the students, leading to increased awareness and empathy for the difficult circumstances faced by refugees. The results emphasize both the challenges and the resilience of the refugee population, providing an implication of the emotional impact of the documentary on viewers.

6.2. Implications for Teaching

The findings of the study, which were outlined in the previous section, suggest that the film (and likely similar films) have great educational potential and can benefit students on multiple levels. First and foremost, the multimodal analysis of the documentary film enhances students' visual literacy skills. They learn to interpret and understand the meaning conveyed through various visual elements, such as camera angles, composition, body language, and facial expressions. Those skills can become transferable to other visual media forms, empowering students to engage critically with a wide range of visual texts.

Furthermore, examining the representation of men, women, and children in a documentary film encourages empathy and perspective-taking. Students can explore the experiences and challenges of different genders and age groups, broadening their understanding of human diversity and fostering empathy towards marginalized or underrepresented individuals. This promotes a more inclusive and compassionate worldview.

What is more, a multimodal analysis of gender or age representation in a documentary film provides insights into societal norms, cultural values, and power dynamics. Students can gain a deeper understanding of how gender and age intersect with social structures and influence individuals' experiences. This awareness fosters a more inclusive and empathetic perspective, promoting tolerance and respect for diverse identities and experiences.

Finally, analysing the representation of gender or age in a documentary film helps develop critical media literacy skills. It enables viewers to understand how media representations shape our perceptions and contribute to social constructions of gender roles and stereotypes. By engaging in this analysis, students can become more discerning consumers of media and better equipped to critically evaluate the messages conveyed through visual media.

As Jewitt (2008, p. 241) points out “the mode and media chosen, is a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning and learning more generally” but most importantly because “the ways in which something is represented shape both what is to be learned, that is, and how it is to be learned”.

6.3. Future Paths

As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter the study's insights can be incorporated into educational settings, influencing curriculum development and teaching practices. Educators can integrate critical media literacy lessons, incorporating multimodal analysis of gender and age representation in documentary films and help students to acquire a better understanding of societal norms and cultural diversity.

Also, a study based on multimodal analysis of a documentary representing refugees can be connected to Media Studies and inspires both researchers and students to create their own media projects that challenge stereotypes and promote more diverse and inclusive narratives.

Another very prominent path could be opened in Film Studies. For instance, by applying a multimodal perspective, researchers can delve into the visual aspects of the documentary film, including cinematography, editing, mise-en-scène, and sound design.

Film studies also explore how audiences interpret and engage with films. By analysing the representation of gender and age through a multimodal perspective, researchers can shed light on how viewers perceive and respond to these portrayals. This research can provide insights into audience reception, identification, and emotional responses, enriching the understanding of the film-viewer relationship.

My personal advocacy though is that a study like this which focuses on analysing the representation of men, women, and children in a documentary film through a multimodal perspective can certainly have a future path in visual ethnography mainly because if the principles and techniques of visual ethnography will be applied would enhance a deeper understanding of the cultural, social, and personal dimensions embedded in the visual representation.

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Appendix A: "Life in the camp"

Screenshot 1



Screenshot 2



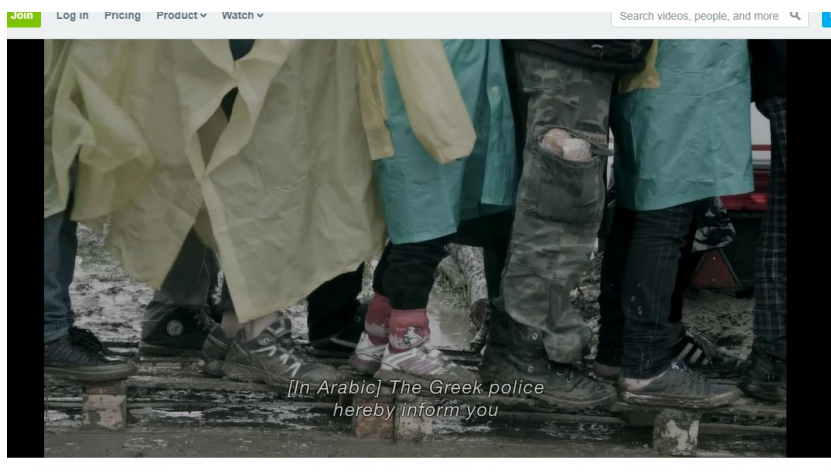
Screenshot 3



Screenshot 4



Screenshot 5



Screenshot 6



Screenshot 7



Screenshot 8



Screenshot 9



Screenshot 10



Screenshot 11



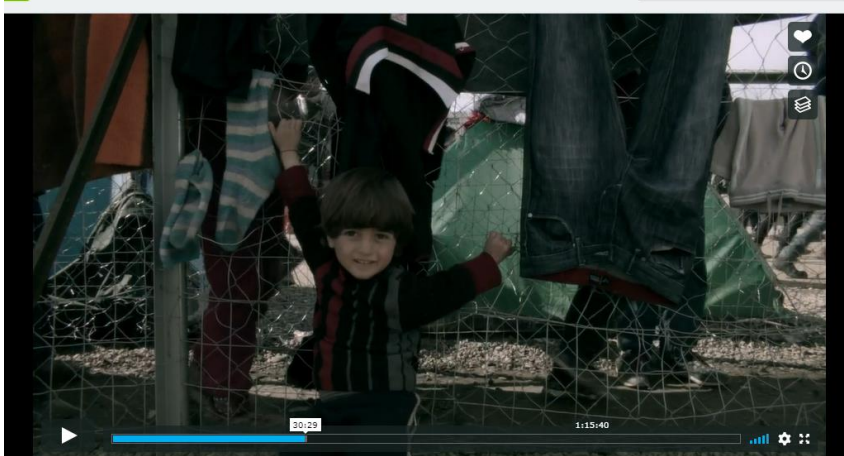
Screenshot 12



Screenshot 13



Screenshot 14



Screenshot 15



Screenshot 16



Screenshot 17



Screenshot 18



Screenshot 19



Screenshot 20



APPENDIX B: Representation of refugee children

Screenshot 1



Screenshot 2



Screenshot 3



Screenshot 4



Appendix C: Representation of refugee men

Screenshot 1



Screenshot 2



Screenshot 3



Screenshot 4

