

POSTER ABSTRACT

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Environment and Society: Meeting in the Intellectual Agora

A link between the environment and society can be drawn not only in the light of studying the *natural* environment, but also when considering the environment in a broader sense, that of 'the setting or conditions in which activities take place.'¹ The Humanities allow and incite us to explore the connection between society and the *intellectual* environment – the ways in which outer conditions (the 'environment') affect developments in societies located in different geographic spaces and times.

As a case in point, initial results from my undergraduate research assistantship on the *CENSUS of Modern Greek Literature* (a collaboration between the Department of Classical Studies and BC Libraries)² demonstrate an active interaction between the intellectual environment and society.

The project, which tracks both the translations of Modern Greek literature into English, and the essays on topics in Modern Greek literature that have been published in English, illuminates the effects of the *environment* on a society's literary production. Trends in the translation and publication (of criticism) of the literature tracked by the *CENSUS*, emanating primarily from the UK, the USA, and Greece, appear correlative to significant happenings in the environment of the mother-country, Greece. The greatest proliferation of literary translations in English, we observe, has occurred—in both the USA and the UK—during the political upheaval of the seven-year military dictatorship (1967-1974)³, and during the current society-strangling Greek economic crisis (2008-)^{4,5}.

Ultimately, literature serves as a connection between the environment and society. As the *CENSUS* project demonstrates, the translation of literature, and the international production of related criticism, elevates problems from smaller environments to the global stage. Thus, as it crosses national borders, literature may actively seek to ameliorate an environmental condition, while generating a profile of the society that creates it.

NOTES:

¹ "Environment." Dictionary.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Oct. 2016.

² The *CENSUS of Modern Greek Literature in English* is a major international project in the Digital Humanities conducted by Dia M. L. Philippides (Dept. of Classical Studies), Wim F. Bakker (Univ. of Amsterdam), and colleagues in the BC Libraries (Anna Kijas, Senior Digital Scholarship Librarian; Ben Florin, Web Developer; Nancy Adams, Digital Publications Assistant/eTD Administrator), with funding provided over time by The Greek Ministry of Culture, the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, Harvard University, Boston College internal research grants, and individual donors to designated BC research accounts. See www.censusofmoderngreekliterature.org

³ See Figure 1

⁴ See Figure 2

⁵ In an interesting permutation, as observed in the *CENSUS*, particular societal settings are shown to generate varying responses: for instance, the USA and the UK differ widely in the Greek authors they feature most frequently in translation, and in the types (and numbers) of works of criticism produced in each environment.

Translated Books – UK and USA

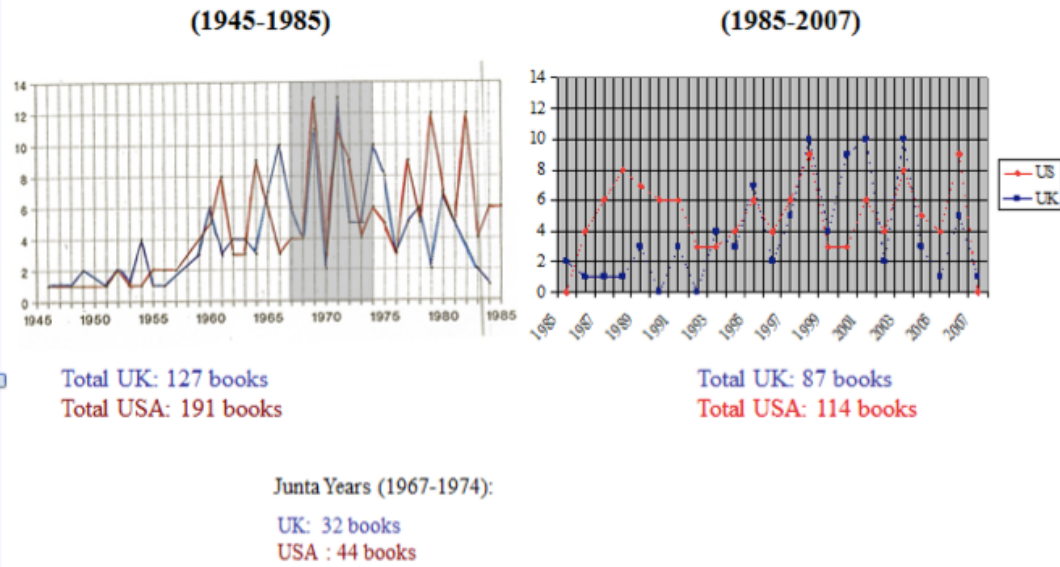


Fig. 1: Translations peaking during the Junta

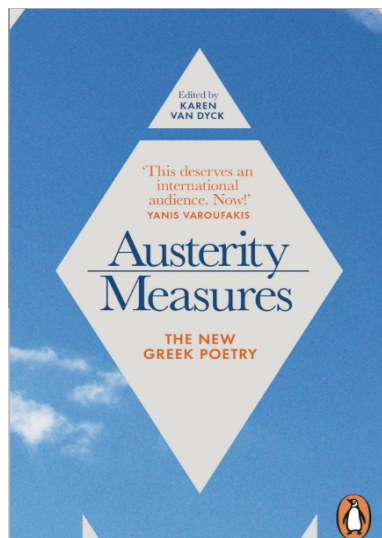


Fig. 2: A recently published anthology