



# JACLR

*Journal of Artistic  
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Research*

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**Xiana Sotelo**  
"Poems"

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**Xiana SOTELO**

**"Proud to be European?"**

Today in our coursepacks  
a new section began  
called 'critical thinking'  
so our minds can expand  
and we trained to demand  
always contrasted opinions  
based on evidence and facts

To assess our critical mind  
one activity our teacher proposed,  
to keep arguments and feelings informed,  
got me thinking to my core

.....

what does Europe mean to me?  
both personally and professionally?

'In crisis, Europe is  
and your voice matters', our teaches says  
...so, I take a moment to reflect  
how language structures can be used  
to visually narrate  
and critically articulate  
a new narrative for Europe  
where reliable information  
always  
comes first

Initiated my research  
so my opinion is backed up  
I put emotions aside  
consciously therefore detached  
from the general tone  
in my house and beyond  
with fixated ideas  
on how Europe to blame is

For economic crisis  
for refugee crisis  
security is beefed up  
a new terrorist attack  
islamophobia is on the rise  
inflammatory rhetorics  
fueling the guts  
of xenophobic discourses  
OMG!!!  
Far right and Nazis are back??

But wait a minute...  
... objectively speaking...  
... once facts are unearthed...  
is it in Europe?  
or in the U.S?  
where real state bubble did first originate?

And, I know it is a fact  
that after 2008 financial crackdown  
the European Union, let a lot of people down  
HOW?  
by bailing banks out!!

I mean...come on, you all!  
not rescuing people but yes rescuing banks?

4 Real?!...  
rescuing those who steal from us?!  
.....but in the end.....  
who is really to blame  
4 all this financial mess?  
the European commission and the rest?  
or Wall-street greedy bankers  
such as J.P. Morgan  
and the Federal Reserve?

Reflecting now  
on the refugee crisis...  
is it 'Europe' ?  
or is it your country?  
who violates agreements  
to relocate these families?  
....Looking at figures ....  
Guauuuu..

Member states  
you are accountable  
except from Finland and Malta  
Spain for example  
promised to welcome 9.323  
and only 1.257  
had given the chance  
of a new life begin

And it is not just Spain,  
there are so many other countries  
that had broken their promise  
of humanity and solidarity  
...so European leaders, yeah!  
compliant you've been  
for letting this happen  
and not firmly acting  
but hey! Let ´s be fair  
It is not just 'Europe' to blame  
This shame  
has particular names:

France, promised to welcome 19.748

and only 4.278 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Germany, promised to welcome 27.536  
and only 7.852 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
The Netherlands, promised to welcome 5.947  
and only 2.357 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Sweden, promised to welcome 3.776  
and only 1.903 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Belgium, promised to welcome 9.323  
and only 1.257 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Portugal, promised to welcome 2.951  
and only 1.415 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Romania, promised to welcome 4.180  
and only 727 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Bulgaria, promised to welcome 1.302  
and only 50 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Czech Republic, promised to welcome 2.691  
and only 12 ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Hungary, promised to welcome 3.812  
and no one was welcomed ... .. SHAME ON YOU!  
Poland, promised to welcome 6.182  
and no one was welcomed ... .. SHAME ON YOU!

And now on the issue  
of terrorist attacks  
yeah, due; the situation is bad  
no denying of that  
but, let's evidence  
moderate this debate  
cause...  
Did you know?  
The 80s and 90s ...  
were far much worse?  
I.R.A and E.T.A,  
European nationals  
in Europe they spread  
division and fear and anger  
and their death toll  
triple the numbers  
of the innocent killed  
in the name of Allah

The only slight difference  
sources have claimed

is that independentists kill  
to their own land proclaim

...

So...You know what?  
with facts on my side,  
I can claim  
with no doubt  
Muslim-haters  
Far-right  
xenophobia  
You suck!  
bigotry and hate,  
go away!!  
in the European union  
You have no place!

And when listing the advantages  
of being European  
not only I praise  
my freedom and rights  
cause I discovered  
great countries  
with my inter-rail summer pass  
and it is thanks to study  
a Bologna degree  
that on my third academic year  
on Erasmus I've been  
soooo happy with my new  
Irish, German, Polish and Italian friends

And it is awesome  
no Visa or passport I need  
to travel, to work nor to live  
with all my new European pals  
and no hassle when it comes to buy  
cause... Euros  
is what everybody has!

Ah! ...just one more thing...  
Freedom of speech  
in the European union  
it is guaranteed!

So...finishing up  
this interesting task  
I must confess  
I've come across  
truly revealing facts  
And thus  
I now deeply wonder  
to myself and to all  
what is it Europe?  
an abstract thought?  
or is it something I could feel and love?  
is it a feeling? a freedom? a right?  
is it nothing  
or is it all at the same time?  
whom to address?  
whom to appeal?  
The European Commission?  
The parliament?  
Central bank?  
Or the Charter of the Fundamental Rights?

Thus, interestingly enough  
proving the facts my opinion implied  
many old arguments  
have fallen apart  
and reliable sources  
have conquered my heart  
providing perspective  
to my objectivity gap

So, let me just say  
with both heart and facts  
I have realized  
that Europe is US  
that Europe is YOU  
that Europe is ME  
and proud I am  
To be part of it!

And you...  
proud to be  
European too?

**"I am You: A Beautiful and Empowered Woman"**

I am You  
a beautiful  
empowered woman  
daughter of the mountains  
and the seas  
I come in all shapes and sizes  
in all smells and tastes  
and I speak  
what you speak  
the language of the heart

When? Why? How?  
you my sister, would ask  
and I will tell you my story  
how it all began  
how I my fears embraced  
and cherished my hopes  
embarked on a journey  
that would forever transform  
confident enough I was  
that encounter  
will forever  
enrich my soul

In this new country of opportunities,  
which echoes traditions  
from faraway lands  
you would say  
my veil

conceals my freedom  
keeps me silenced  
powerless  
and oppressed  
but come close  
come closer  
let 's look into each other 's eyes  
let 's hold each other 's hands  
and you will see  
that voiceless  
I am not  
and will never be

So much we need to talk and exchange  
my dear friend  
when you theorize  
about my man  
as a dominant figure  
that runs my life  
because  
he is more than my friend  
he is the sparkle  
that guides my steps  
helps me grow  
and educate myself  
so please  
listen up  
open up  
and leave all prejudices aside

For years now  
this is the sky  
I caress my dreams with  
and this is the place



my children call home  
so here I stand  
with a smile  
a wave and a cause  
willing to open  
and share  
and celebrate  
a deep sense of empowerment and bonding  
of believing in who you are  
and recognizing  
forever indeed  
that the most beautiful thing  
about you today  
is you  
tomorrow

**Bioprofile of the poetess**

Xiana Sotelo is professor of English studies (Literature) in the School of Philology of Complutense university of Madrid and member of the research group SIIM- Studies on Intermediality and Intercultural Mediation. She writes and explores (digital) poetry as a tool for mediation and intercultural dialogues. This poem is framed in the interdisciplinary research/innovation project New Narratives for Europe: SSH, Critical Thinking and RRI (2016-2018) and aims at sharing the intercultural conversation that took place between Xiana and her undergraduate students around the development of critical thinking skills and European values and identity (<https://www.ucm.es/siim/new-narratives-for-europe>).

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