

Come Vagabond with Me: Nikos Hadjikyriakos Ghika's Transnational Literary Contributions

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Abstract

Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika invited many anglophone literary artists to stay at his home on the island of Hydra, along with other artists, politicians, and diplomats from Greece, France, Sweden, and more. Henry Miller, Lawrence Durrell, Patrick Leigh Fermor, and many more anglophone literary writers accepted this offer. Hadjikyriakos-Ghika's vagabonding invitations assisted anglophone literary writers to experience and write about Greece and the Greek people, engraving national interpretations of Greece and 'Greekness' from various perspectives. They inscribed memories, moments, and envisionings of Greece and transmitted the Greek identity globally through the English language. Thanks to his active social involvement in the arts and his mingling ability, Hadjikyriakos-Ghika made significant national and international literary contributions through soft diplomacy in the artistic realm, resulting in transnational literary exchanges. They facilitated friendships, which propelled the island Hydra into formulating an artistic hub for artistic vagabonding, inspiring even more artists from other nations to follow suit.

Keywords: Literary Activism, Literary Diplomacy, Vagabonding, Transnational Interactions

Introduction

Literary activism is critical in nation-building, identity formation, and reformations. Creating opportunities for literary explorations, artists from Greece and elsewhere have access to opened pathways of envisioning Greece within Greece for the nation and for an international stage. Interactions between Greek and English-speaking literary artists resulted in transnational literary exchanges. They facilitated friendships, which propelled the picturesque island of Hydra into formulating an artistic hub for artistic vagabonding, inspiring even more artists from other nations to follow suit and explore the Greek nation within Greek borders. Hadjikyriakos-Ghika's vagabonding invitations assisted anglophone literary writers to experience and write about Greece and the Greek people, engraving national interpretations of Greece and 'Greekness' from various perspectives. They inscribed memories, moments, and envisionings of Greece and transmitted the Greek identity globally through the English language as a result of spending time with Hadjikyriakos-Ghika. Thanks to his active social involvement in the arts, Hadjikyriakos-Ghika made significant national and international literary contributions through soft diplomacy. This paper examines literary activism and literary diplomacy seen because of Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika's interactive social contributions during the 20th Century as he invited many vagabonding anglophone literary artists to stay at his home on the island of Hydra, along with other artists, politicians, and diplomats from Greece, France, Sweden, and elsewhere to experience and create within Greece.

Ghika's Transnational Literary Exploration Contributions

'We sat on the terrace under the starry sky and talked about poetry,
we drank wine, we swam, we rode donkeys, we played chess—
it was like life in a novel'

(Arapoglou citing Ghikas 2018, p. 56)

Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika's maternal ancestral home is on the island of Hydra. The Ghika family made shipping contributions to the Greek War of Independence. Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika was a talented artist who became known internationally for Greek modernism from a young age. He was an affluent local island citizen who was a painter, sculptor, engraver, writer, and academic (Arapoglou 2018. P. 51). After a considerable amount of time living and studying in Paris, Ghika returned to Hydra and restored his ancestral home, writing, 'because distant memories drew me there. .../My childhood home seemed to have dwindled into primeval silence' (Aragoplou 2018, p. 52-54). He invested heavily in its restoration and development, often encouraging friends to participate in its restorations.

The Ghika's house on Hydra played an intrinsic role in the transnational interactions that emerged through artistic vagabonding within Greek borders. It gave Hydra a form of 'rebirth' as Greek and foreign intellectuals, writers, poets, and artists showed interest in visiting the island and travelling around pre-war and post-war Greece. They met and interacted with like-minded thinkers while also experiencing and being influenced by Greece, Greek culture, and Greek history (Arapoglou 2018. P. 56). The revitalisation of Hydra began long before with various artists and filmmakers discovering Hydra, which also allowed for rapid tourism and economic development during the 1950s and 1960s. The 1958 film *Boy on a Dolphin*, a Hollywood hit that included 18-year-old actress Sophia Loren, helped put the island on the artistic map of places to visit (Samson, Anglo-Hellenic League 2020; 17:38). In search of a climate pleasant and the warm embrace of a collective artistic vagrant community, many of the artists found Hydra by chance and others made a conscientious choice to experience Greece for short and more extended periods making a noticeable indent on the island.

A quiet and introverted person, Ghika painted and wrote about the island and often infused colour, light, shadows and deep angles for his paintings. Ghika was conscientious of his contributions to Hydra and the influx of tourism his invitations brought to the island, writing;

‘All Hydra’s tourism effectively started with the friends I brought over in 1938. There was Cartier- Besson with his wife.../Katsimbalis, Angelos Katakouzenos... Ouranis, Kimon Friar, Henry Miller..../, Seferis..../
On August nights, we sat on the terrace under a starry sky and talked about poetry, we drank wine, we swam, we rode donkeys, we played chess- it was like life in a novel; they were all exceptional people
(Ghika, Arapoglou 2018, p. 56).

His historic 40-room mansion hosted Lawrence Durrell, Norman Mailer, Edmund “Mike” Keeley, Rex Warner, and Cyril Connolly. The island’s scenery inspired painters, such as John Craxton and cartoonist Osbert Lancaster. British writer Patrick Leigh Fermor spent two years at the Ghika residence, which assisted him in writing a large part of his book *Mani: Travels in the Southern Peloponnese* (1958) and translating the Greek Resistance memoir *The Cretan Runner* (Neos Kosmos 2020). Thus, Ghika chose to actively and conscientiously play a diplomatic role in the artistic world transnationally. By hosting local and foreign artists, politicians, and other influential beings, he accepted literary activism wholeheartedly, making transnational contributions within Greece and his own home.

Having stayed on the island for only a few days, American writer Henry Miller recollected in a letter that he visited the homes of several admirals, made offerings to island saints, and prayed for the dead in the little chapel attached to Ghika’s house. Like many of the vagabonding artists, Miller inscribes playing ping pong, drinking many types of alcohol, talking about Tibetan monks, listening to George Katsimbalis’ travels and transgressions, and eating from the table Ghika’s wife laid out (Miller, Arapoglou 2018, p. 57). Greek writer George Katsimbalis was particularly close with the Ghikas, who introduced him to Henry Miller. *The Colossus of Maroussi* (1949) was dedicated to Katsimbalis and may not have come

about had Miller not stayed at the Ghika residence in Hydra. It suggests that those few days were filled with lively experiences, encounters, and exchanges. It left a lasting impression on Henry Miller, and such memorable experiences motivated writing and creating art.

This fond memory sentiment is also reiterated by Ghika when he states, ‘We had wonderful discussions about all sorts of subjects there. Drinking and talking about art, philosophy’ (Ghika, The British Museum 2018; 2:48-3:22). Such vagabonding writers and artists were on a mission of self-discovery while exploring Greece, desiring a serene location for writing and sharing insights with like-minded writers who shared a mutual love for Greece, literature, and enjoying life. Vagabonding together while each on their own journey of exploration, local and foreign writers met and interacted with like-minded individuals to experience life on Hydra collectively.

Foreign anglophone writers like Australian George Johnston, Swede Axel Jensen, and Canadian Leonard Cohen eventually bought houses on Hydra and laid the foundations of a foreign community that still exists (Hydra Island 2022). Novels such as *Peel Me a Lotus* by Charmian Clift (1959) and Leonard Cohen’s novels *The Favourite Game* (1963) and *Beautiful Losers* (1966), along with a few dozen other novels written in different languages such as Swedish, French, and Greek, proved the island's popularity in literature creation. Poems, songs, and artwork also become semiotic emblems from the interaction these artists experienced while vagabonding together on Hydra. Samson points out the number of writings about the island and the establishment of an international artistic community, positioned Hydra as a significant artistic location for creative exploration. Despite the popularity literary writers experienced on Hydra, the international visitors did not interact much with locals as there was a language divide and allowed the artists to create their collective community on the island and live among them without completely integrating (Samson, Anglo-Hellenic League 2020; 22:50-23:17).

It is noteworthy to mention that Greek writers and artists also influenced anglophone writers and had contacts on Hydra, in other regions of Greece, and globally. They facilitated vagabonding and exploration. By hosting a sizeable number of anglophone writers and artists from many nations, Ghika opened his home, inviting artists to work from there (Arapoglou 2018, p. 56). He also hosted many Greek artists, writers, and politicians which paved communicative pathways to a degree arguably not seen elsewhere in Greece during this period. He visited these artists in their countries and kept regular contact, helping Greek artists make their own mark globally. Records of such communication between writers and artists allow upcoming artists and writers to obtain knowledge and insight, understand one another on a personal level, and share knowledge in writing literature about Greece and Greek culture within Greece. All this points to Ghika's innate motivation for active literary and artistic contributions as it also transnationally positions the Greek state in a global setting. He participated in the act of literary creation and explored along with other literary vagrants in literary creation for his own benefit as an artist. He reiterated notions of national identity and shared Greek cultural knowledge and insight. By constructing and reconstructing such identity markers through socialising, hosting, and mingling with transnational artists, Ghika participates as a literary vagrant coexisting with like-minded vagrants on a mission of discovery and expression that moves far beyond national borders to become a global writer and artist.

The Literary Vagabond

Hadjikyriakos-Ghika full-heartedly enjoyed making memories, interacting and collaborating with other artists. He also embraced the role of literary vagrant. The literary vagabond is evident in Classical Greece and Hellenistic periods. Storytellers were professional vagabonds who, in Ancient Greek society, played a key role in transmitting ideas and culture throughout the Greek world and beyond. These lyrical bards, also known as *Aoidoi*, journeyed

to palaces and cities to sing epic poetry about the deeds of mythical heroes or legends since the Bronze Age. They used oral communication to transmit notions of being and understanding to groups of listeners and is deeply related to written forms of transmission through poetry (Placido; Chapinal-Heras, Valdes-Guia 2022, p. 39). Homerids of Chios reproduced lyrical verses in different locations in Greece. Such stories in song changed over time as additions and variations altered the story in epic poetry. New storytellers in varying cities recited modified versions of stories, adding personal renditions. Mixing with art such as painting and sculpting, the muses were introduced as expressive gifts for memory collecting (Placido; Chapinal-Heras, Valdes-Guia 2022, p. 40). Thus, written formations of a collection of works such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* become mnemonic forms of memory keeping for a collective group of people that formulate early human identity formations in Western society. Hence, mobile literary transactions existed long before and are a clear example of literary vagabonding.

A part of daily life and a common characteristic of modern life, ‘movement’ can be understood as ‘the action or process of moving; change of position; passage from place to place, or from one situation to another’ (Mauro, Chapinal-Heras, Valdes-Guia 2022; p. 13). A central figure in the production of modern mobility is the medieval vagrant, the shadowy figure of the vagrant (or vagabond) stands behind contemporary legal and governmental approaches to moving bodies and floats among the pages of contemporary social and cultural theorists while simultaneously haunting the origins of the modern novel (Cresswell 2016, p.239). The vagrant actively forms notions of national identity through physical exploration and ways of knowing that is experimental through movement. Usually a lone wolf, the vagabond is a mysterious figure in society exploring marginal zones and daring to extend oneself into the unknown and unfamiliar. Changes in position can affect the person in motion as there is an exchange of ideas and ways of interpreting

a group of people collectively and seeing a person individually. The vagrant heavily invests time and resources over extensive distances for creative exploration. This explorative wandering is often done alone but can be in groups. The vagabond is unpredictable, and Bauman claims:

‘You do not know where he will move to next, because he himself does not know nor care much. Vagabondage has no advance itinerary – its trajectory is patched together bit by bit, one bit a time. Each place is for the vagabond a stopover, but he never knows how long he will stay in any of them [...]. Wherever the vagabond goes, he is a stranger’

(Pierto Citing Bauman (2003); Mauro, Chapinal-Heras, Valdes-Guia 2022; p. 21).

There is no collective homogenous group that characterises those willing to position themselves as wanderers as they originate from differing places of various socio-economic backgrounds. Pierto argues that three characteristics of a vagabond prevail; movement (often aimlessly without an itinerary), the lack of a regular income, and social marginalisation and exclusion are commonly present (Pierto Citing Faber (2000); Mauro, Chapinal-Heras, Valdes-Guia 2022; p. 22). Literary movements in exploratory space are evident in literary vagabonding. Franck and Schreier argue that to examine the literary vagrant; one must reposition writers and their pieces from a stagnant rooted position to a more fluid position that transitions and shifts. Such mobile contexts permit interactions between people that bring this literary social phenomenon into existence as a new reorientation with obvious relevance to the fields of sociology and human geography, where mobilities first gained traction and became a meaningful part of society (Franck and Schreier 2022, p. 9).

As the visitor leads the narration, he/she can dictate the narration that portrays the visited land and its people. He/she is the one who looks and tells the reader what he/she sees. Thus, an imbalance of power is evident as the narrator conscientiously creates an 'Other'. It can separate the writer from what is observed, viewing it as exotic and unfamiliar. However, writers can visit Greece with feelings of association, having collected previous knowledge of

the country, its culture, and its people. The writer takes a different stance (Kindinger 2011, p. 4). The feeling of association and connectivity includes the writer and does not differentiate him/her from the country being visited. It is not an exotic place but a familiar location with which the writer feels at ease, and each travelling writer can portray different types of literature that can complement, reiterate, or counterbalance the nation's homogeneous national identity.

Travel writing and returning narratives closely link with literary representations of home, nation, and identity. The writer negotiates home, belonging, and the Self. He or she might exoticise, romanticise, and imagine notions of the Other, but there is a deep connection with the writer's homeland. The writer notices an experience at a particular moment through his/her perceptions formulated by his/her upbringing, education, and cultural interference. Acting as a cultural translator and using the writers' national language for this translation are significant as both show the complexities of a culture as it often points to the inhomogeneities of a group of people (Bhabha, *Hawaii Contemporary* 2022; 38:30). Misunderstandings, changes in meanings and essences lost in translation will occur limiting what the foreign writer can express. However, it can also correlate and add to the target nation and its people through literary representation and expression. It offers foreign readership insight into the nation and its national identity.

These exploratory writers live within peripheral zones to create cultural, historical, geographical, and political associations and connections. Defined by interest and admiration, they seek a bond with the host country and create a new sense of belonging in their literary works. The lines between wanting to belong and belonging are then challenged thanks to transnational linkages between these places and their people; the homeland one officially belongs to and the home(land) one wants to belong to (Kindinger 2011, p. 7). Inscriptions of transnational linkages to one's homeland when writing about experiences in a new land are made.

Transnational linking of lands is beneficial for the vagrant exploratory writer or artist. By choosing to visit Greece, writers from elsewhere including vagabonding anglophone writers, explore Greece within Greek borders to transnationally interact physically and culturally within social realms in specific times and locations. Recording these experiences and transmitting them in the English language shows vagrants' desires to understand, learn, and experience such moments for oneself but also to transmit these experiences to the readers transnationally as part of their cultural obligation to society that has social, political, educational and artistic justifications for doing so. Their pieces become multi-faceted agents exemplifying cultural space, cultural interactions, mobility, and the writer's role through transnational explorations.

These cultural meetings play a key role in cultural identity formation. Memory, experience, friendship and enmity, fear and sympathy, a person's presence or absence, communication, the understanding and concept-giving of space, or the various personal and collective quests take form in writing. They reveal the unseen aspects of history and society (Polycandrioti 2005, p. 114). The works created thanks to a wandering, a journey, a movement, voluntary or forced, real or fictitious, are based on communication and contact, which describes the foreign area and its relations to "the other" posing the question of identity, in its national, cultural, individual and collective forms (Polycandrioti 2005, p. 114). It can exemplify differentiation but also togetherness, making linkages and ties. Either way, negotiations of identity personally and nationally take place by the vagrant in search of understanding.

The number of vagrants wishing to explore such exploratory space in Greece suggests that these writers seek historical ties and a more profound sense of being that they can then transmit in written form later either back in their home country or elsewhere. The act of dispersal suggests negotiations by the vagabond analyses 'a history of dispersal, the myth of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for the eventual return, ongoing support for the homeland and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship' (Polycandrioti

citing Clifford 2005, p. 115). It also suggests that Greece, both past and present, has relevant and meaningful offerings. It points to Greece's diversity and complexity. As a Mediterranean country, Greece is inhabited by people who live close to their neighbors, who gaze upon the sea from their own standpoint, and who shape societies, history, and politics (Polycandrioti 2005, p. 114). It offers variations of perceptions of being that stand apart from neighbouring nations that make global contributions independently and collectively.

Essentially, the vagrant writer actively moves into an unknown peripheral zone, which requires mobile explorations while mingling with locals, histories, and cultures to obtain new understandings and perceptions of the world. This mobile bard examines the chosen exploratory space in detail, making their own literal contributions for personal insight and enlightenment. They also negotiate meanings for transnational social transmission and for collective human memory keeping. Personal identity development occurs when new insight is gained. National identity development occurs thanks to the representations depicted in literature to be received by the readers. Through the literary vagabonding bard, new contributions and representations of personal and social identity fluidly move locally, regionally, and globally. It makes such explorations interesting, purposeful, and meaningful as new ways of understanding results. These findings complement, coincide, reinforce, or contradict stationary representations made by local writers. The visiting writer's role is to build new constructs of him/herself concerning the new culture and environment. Through travelling, new constructs and reconstructions of identity as culture changes, shifts, develops and transforms. It can be influenced thanks to new encounters in different places (Aschcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2006, p. 427). As a visitor, the writer sees the country through foreign eyes, positioning him/herself as an observer, creator, and reporter. Time constraints, accessibility, and limitations to a culture and its concepts will all impact the writer's ability to negotiate the visiting writer's place in society. Nevertheless, the writer is reclaiming and reinscribing

notions of citizenship and belonging (Tan 2015, p. 31). Analysis of what negotiations influenced or impacted the literary piece provides insight and understanding into the place and its people at a specific time (Tatouli, 2023). To do this, analysing the works of significant anglophone writers and how they contributed to Greek nationhood and formulating the Greek identity over the years will indicate the extent to which external vagabonding literary writers make contributions to Greece and national identity through negotiated space. It is also important to note that writers who opened exploratory space played a crucial part in permitting Greece to receive such exploratory vagrants for the benefit of all. Thus, Ghika's literary vagabonding role allowed him to not only host artists, travel to other countries, and welcome diplomats and scientists, but he also embraced the role of literary and artistic ambassador for diplomatic purposes.

Literary Diplomacy

As literature actively partakes in society's memory keeping and representation, literature also plays the role of 'ambassador' of an entire civilisation or nation. Greek poet Nikos Graikos believes 'the smallest phrase contains an entire world: a lingual and cultural tradition, the speaker's history. His stances, his gestures, and the tone of his voice are the agents of a history (Voulgari citing Graikos 2017). Graikos argues that by learning Greek, a person actively chooses to return to 'some roots, to some history' (Voulgari citing 2017). Vissariokos adds that language changes as it is a living organism, stating that language adjusts with circumstances and responses. Language transforms along with the people who interact using the language as a means of communication in a country and with everything that they have encountered within that space in time (Vissariokos 2024; 14:10-14:50). Therefore, language is a key communicative tool in transmitting cultural ideologies.

The role that literature has played in diplomacy is reciprocated in the role diplomacy has played in literature. In the European context that modern-day Greece partakes in, literature has been used to formulate and reformulate states of being and association culturally, religiously, and politically. Tracing literary diplomacy also examines cultural representations opening pathways for discourse, theory, imaginings, and debates on cultural identity and nation formation within Europe (Hampton 2011, p. 3). Through declarations, decrees, treaty formations, poetry, essay writing, and more, official, and unofficial cultural representations collectively and effectively depict thoughts and elements of a national group through literary form. It makes the imagined envisionings of nationhood more pragmatic and concrete.

Literary form is a dynamic tool of cultural transmission for effective communication. Literature becomes semiotic pieces of cultural representation. Imaginings and recordings of national significance allow literary artists to become social and political diplomats as well as artists in society. This role entails identifying, imagining, expressing, and negotiating representations in literary contexts (Hampton 2011, p. 65). Transnational literary history indicates intercommunication within a society and between different nations. Literary diplomacy has been evident in the transmission of ideologies, formation of alliances, and declarations of defiance. Its usage includes encouraging a collective group to support, question, celebrate, reject, and reform notions of national identity that must be considered. Literary diplomacy, often seen in official documents, is also evident in letter communication, poetry, and song. They become literary testaments of a national consciousness at a given time and place of a specific group of people.

In many ways, literary writers and translators become ‘Cultural Diplomats’ when writing about national space, and national cultural representations in a specific location and time. The act of creation takes place in the space of negotiation and these literary diplomats seek meaning and transcribe relevancy through words to assist in cultural memory as ‘we are what we

remember' (Anderson citing Assman 2006, p. 67). Writers conscientiously accept the role of 'Cultural Diplomats' as part of the writer's obligation to society, both at home and in other countries. They express personal beliefs while illustrating cultural transmissions through the written word to encourage readers to consider notions of cultural identity. Individual and collective choice and emotional ties are relevant in the selection of imaginings of 'the Self'. Orientation and direction are dictated through literary pieces (Anderson citing 2006; p. 68). Several anglophone speaking literary writers became vigilant and wilful national diplomats through their literary contributions of Greek nationhood and the modern Greek identity. Certain highly esteemed literary artists are well received in their home country and in locations they write about globally. Greek literary writers have also received such esteem.

The promotion of anglophone art within Greece and also of Greek art in England and elsewhere can be seen in the invitations, letter exchanges, and exhibitions that occurred in Ghika's lifetime. In 1955, Ghika visited London with John Craxton and returned inviting many friends to stay in his home in Hydra. A Greek newspapers noted:

'Heavy traffic on the islands. Particularly Hydra... Some days ago Margo Fonteyn was there with her husband, the ambassador of Panama in London. Now en route to the island on the yacht of Mr Yannis Karras are Mr and Mrs Hadjikyriakos-Ghika with the excellent English actress Ann Todd. Also summering on Hydra are the guests in Mr Hadjikyriakos-Ghika's house, including Maurice Bowra ... Cyril Conolly... and Lord Kinross

(Arapoglou citing Fermor 2018, p. 66).

These recorded interactions occurred regularly and consistently across borders, facilitating ideas, collaboration, and unity. They are clear examples of transnational literary interactions that occurred in Greece.

Another clear example of how Greek literary diplomacy plays a significant role in transcultural literary diplomacy globally is the diplomatic work by Greek poet, George Seferis. A very close friend of Ghika, Seferis visited Ghika on several occasions. Apart from winning the Nobel prize in literature in 1960, Seferis also served as a diplomat for Greece for over 40

years. He assisted in managing complex issues affecting Greece before, during, and after World War II (1939-1945) and served Greece in Albania, Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq. He was the Greek ambassador to England between 1957-1962 (Charalampidi Tovima 2024). During Seferis' time of diplomat service, Greece was in transition, as significant political and economic instability occupied Greece during this period. When Greece was occupied by a military dictatorship, also known as a Junta, Seferis publicly spoke out against the regime from abroad and within Greece at the risk of his own safety. His funeral served as an act of resistance in 1971 as thousands of mourners carried his coffin through the streets of Athens reciting his poetry, which the dictatorship banned (Chysopoulos, *The Greek Reporter* 2024). Beaton argues that Seferis' literary and diplomatic voice represented 'The Greek Voice' of the Twentieth Century (Beaton 2003; xi). In commemoration of Seferis, national diplomatic and literary exhibitions both in Greece and in London celebrated his efforts as a Greek intellectual, poet, and diplomat (Charalampidi 2024).

Poetry provided Seferis with opportunities to make representations using language, but a more versatile representation of Seferis as a cultural, social, and political thinker arises due to his works in diplomacy. Seferis stated, 'I think that poetry is necessary to this modern world in which we are afflicted by fear and disquiet. Poetry has its roots in human breath – and what would we be if our breath were diminished?' (Charalampidi citing Seferis 2024). Choosing poetry as a means of artistic expression, Seferis provides a social service that goes beyond borders and includes a broader global audience. Poetry's ability to connect human existence globally over time suggests poetry's relevancy for human expression. By choosing to become a literary diplomat through poetic means, Seferis is partaking in active social diplomacy for the collective whole that also permits self-express as an individual.

The interactions anglophone writers recoded of Seferis and Ghika shows the close relationship they all held. Lawrence Durrell, Patrick Leigh Fermor, and Henry Miller all note a

tight bond between like-minded vagabonding artists, and each played politically or culturally diplomatic roles, much like Seferis and Ghika did. An example of anglophone literary diplomacy meshing with political diplomacy can also be seen in the actions of Patrick Leigh Fermor. Fermor first visited Greece in 1939, crossing into Greece on January 1st on his way to Mount Athos. During the Second World War (1939-1945), Fermor joined the Irish Guards before being transferred to the British Intelligence Corps, thanks to his knowledge of the Balkans. Initially stationed with the Greek forces as a liaison officer fighting the Italians in Albania, he later fought in Crete and mainland Greece. Fermor was positioned within occupied Crete in 1942 and remained there for two-and-a-half years. He was part of the resistance known for his Greek-speaking capabilities as 22,000 German troops occupied the island (Chaini 2021).

On April 19th, 1944, disguised as German corporals, Fermor directed an operation to capture the island's military commander, Major General Karl Kreipe. The intent was to abduct General Kreipe, head of the German occupation in Crete, stopping his car and kidnapping him. Hijacking Kreipe's staff car, Leigh Fermor and his British and Cretan comrades drove through the capital city, Heraklion, successfully negotiating 14 checkpoints over eighteen days. They hid in the Cretan mountains, avoiding German search and rescue operations (Mastorakis, Radioarvyla 2012; 0:40-1:06; 12:48-13:10). After three weeks of hiding in the hills, they finally accompanied the general by boat to Cairo, Egypt (Unknown BBC 2011) and Fermor received *The Officer of the Order of the British Empire* award in 1943 for his contributions in the war (Chaini 2021).

The objective of the mission was to 'inflict a tremendous insult against the German prestige in Crete .../ to destroy their moral and booster our own ... so we decided to capture the commander of the island (Fermor; Mastorakis Radioarvyla 2012; 12:40-13:18). Fermor considers this mission as one of the riskiest of World War Two and a success stating:

'Among us the Cretans! Of course, I considered myself a Cretan by then. Our morale shot up by a thousand miles in the air and optimism reigned

through the whole of Crete despite all the terrible things that happened afterwards’.

(Fermor; Mastorakis Radioarvyla 2012 16:40-17:00).

This quote indicates Fermor’s deep associations with Greece, especially with Crete. Despite being a member of the British forces, Fermor recalls how hundreds of Cretans helped the abduction group to hide. They fed them, guided them, and protected them without fail (Fermor, Mastorakis 2012; 18:16). Despite his work allegiance to his own country, Fermor appears to be tied by the heart to Crete and the Cretan mission for liberation, vagabonding and rebelliously defying German occupation with locals, thereby becoming Greek himself. Through his loyalty and through this shared experience of vagabonding on a mission, Fermor strongly feels he made national contributions to Greece, the United Kingdom, and Europe.

After the war, Fermor remained in Greece, exploring remote areas and taking up a post at the British Council in Athens, where he met his wife, Joan Reiner (Ross 2014; 41:00) and likely met Ghika through his friendship with fellow writer and work colleague Rex Warner. Fermor continued to actively participate in cultural exchanges connecting British and Greek culture within Greece. Thiong’O argues that national interactions form real and meaningful connections and assist in developing more economic, political, social, and even environmental growth for both nations (Thiong’O 2000, Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2006, p. 391). These exchanges helped nations like Greece and Britain to interact, influencing each other culturally and ensuring regular contact.

Like his long-time friends Ghika and Seferis, Fermor understood the role literary diplomacy has in society. He embraced a transnational role that went beyond British and Greek diplomacy yet remained loyal to both nations until his death. His books depict British desire to embrace Europe and the world and to record and write back while also being national representatives of culture at home and abroad. Translating Greek works into English, such as *The Cretan Runner: His Story of the German Occupation* (2015) by George Psychoundakis, Fermor is taking a

diplomatic role in merging identity transnationally and opening communication politically, socially and culturally. Thus, Fermor used transnational literary diplomacy to elicit notions of Greece and the Greek identity for local, regional, and global audiences. It solidifies literary diplomacy as a key component in national identity negotiations that literary artists both local and foreign embrace and open pathways for a surplus of transnational representations of Greece and the Greek identity to coexist.

On May 25th 1956, Fermor wrote a letter to George Seferis mentioning Greek politics and referenced their mutual friend Greek writer George Katsimbalis. In his letter, Fermor discussed the relationship between Greece and Britain in reference to the Cyprus question that they are all connected to. He questions the approach newspapers have taken stating:

‘Nothing but extremes remain, an hysterical world of fantasy only populated by saints, martyrs, heroes, tyrants, butchers, and traitors. If I were a Greek peasant in Epirus/, brought up with patriotism as a religion my mind unencumbered by any reading except the newspaper, the kaphenion wireless my only link to Athens.../I am convinced I would be a violent fanatic.../ and supposing you in Athens had written an article suggesting a different and milder policy towards the Cyprus question ... I would probably be in the front of an indignant mob in Iperidou Street, throwing sticks and stones to your window and shouting ‘Out with Seferadis! Agent of the executioner Von Harding! Traitor! Stool pigeon of the English!’
(Fermor, Sisman 2017; p. 128).

By living within Greece amongst Greeks both within and outside of Athens, Fermor relates to local perceptions and sentiment in comparison with other more transnational viewpoints. He can express this sentiment in global memory keeping as part of the literary diplomatic role. Fermor spent two years working and socialising in Ghika’s house, even when Ghika was away. Fermor wrote regularly to Ghika giving gratitude for their stays at his home in Hydra, their arrangements for the Fermor wedding in London, and reminiscing small events like losing Ghika’s keys. He regularly reported back in letter communication, even advising on how Ghika could improve his house or ideas for paintings (Llewellyn-Smith 2018, p. 96).

Ghika, Seferis, and Fermor also spent much time with Henry Miller, Katsimbalis, and Lawrence Durrell. Throughout his time in Greece, Durrell was an active citizen. Like Ghika, he hosted artists like Henry Miller and Patrick Leigh Fermor and made literary and diplomatic contributions to the Greek nation and identity. Written communication indicates Durrell's appreciation for Ghika. By meeting up and inviting Ghika to his home, Durrell too played the role of artistic, social and cultural ambassador putting soft diplomatic skills to good use. He made literary and communal contributions wherever he resided and participated within Greek society as a British citizen within Greece.

Apart from writing, Durrell socialised and created lifelong friendships with Ghika and the others (Lillios 2004, p. 21). Essentially, Durrell was creating his home in Greece and built his own sense of community that served a multitude of purposes. He shared food and insight, gained knowledge, and experienced life in Greece. Durrell likely had a fluid conception of home, making several locations home (Lillios 2004, p. 18). This flexibility served him during Greece's time of political and social change, and it also served him well as a travelling literary vagabond. He was constantly searching for home and self through travels and through writing.

Another aspect of Durrell's time in Greece is his active diplomatic role which slightly conflicts with Seferis' diplomatic efforts. In July 1954, Durrell became the Director of Information Services for the Cyprus government. Responsible for government press releases and publications, including the *Cyprus Review*, Cyprus Tourist office, and Cyprus Broadcasting. This political act caused a great strain between him and his dear friend, George Seferis. As a Greek diplomat, Seferis avoided seeing his friend in Cyprus due to opposing views on political matters. Seferis told a mutual friend, English translator Edmond Keeley 'I just don't really understand what Durrell was doing on the island' (Lillios 2004, p. 27). British influence on the island contradicted Greece and Cyprus's ideals of independence and national sovereignty. After warnings of personal harm and bomb detonations in and around his

residence, Durrell departed Cyprus on August 26th 1956 claiming that he did not achieve much during his time of service to the British Crown (Lillios 2004, p. 27).

Seferis Fermor and Durrell's political diplomatic efforts coincided with their literary diplomatic efforts. Ghika himself played a more social and cultural diplomatic role. Nevertheless, all took on these positions with intentions of being full and active citizens within Greece. They also become active global citizens. Ghika's soft skills and social diplomacy for the arts acknowledges the need to come together and collaborate.

Ghika's Semiotic Literary Contributions Inscribed in Anglophone Writings

Many people, in return, also played their own literary diplomatic role, making social and cultural contributions to Greece and the Greek identity because of Ghika's soft skills as a collaborating host and cultural ambassador. Novels, songs, and poems by various writers, both Greek and foreign, become semiotic rememberings of Greece and 'Greekness' and exemplify Ghika's contributions globally. As this is a vast field of study, two anglophone examples follow.

The first example of Ghika's literary contributions can be seen in Henry Miller's *The Colossus of Maroussi* (1941). Miller heavily inscribes Greece at the time right before the start of World War Two, elaborately and grandiosely pointing to Greece as magnificent yet minute. It is unique compared to other nations in that it 'culminates expression of the spiritual achievement of the human race' (Miller p. 89-90). Contemplating the struggles humans have within, Miller writes:

'Who put the demons there? That is for each one to ask himself. Let every man search his own heart. Neither God nor the Devil is responsible, and certainly not such puny monsters as Hitler, Mussolini et alia.../ Who put the demons in our heart to torture us? A good question, and if the only way to find out is to go to Epidaurus, then I urge you one and all to drop everything and go there – at once

(Miller 2016, p. 69).

Miller invites his entire readership to vagabond and explores human existence and meaning for life by coming to Greece and finding out through exploratory means that can only be done by vagabonding. Like his fellow comrades, Miller praises the Ghika's hospitality on page 48 of his novel and records interactions. More precisely, by visiting Ghika on Hydra, Miller discovers that he is now on a path of musical creation that does not need direction. He realises that he needs to accept earthly flows to glide the artist along, stating, 'the Earth became illuminated by her own inner light' (Miller 2016, p. 47). Thus, it is on Hydra and by visiting Ghika that Miller understands that the Earth itself guides the exploratory space a creator must go through.

A second recorded recollection of Ghika's anglophone literary contributions is inscribed in Patrick Leigh Fermor's *Mani* (1958). Fermor refers to the collaboration by referring to Durell's letter to Miller. Miller published this letter in an appendix, as Durell requested. It describes the Cocks of Attica in which a group of friends, that included George Katsimbalis and Lawrence Durell, collectively making a call for social action. Drunk after a night of socialising, the group goes up to the Acropolis only to find it closed for the night. Katsimbalis began making loud rooster noises calling out into the city of Athens and, eventually, the group heard the return call from miscellaneous Athenians as a joke (Miller citing Durell 2017, p. 201-202). More and more return calls from the city followed, much to the delight of the group. Durell imagined that all of Greece and beyond could hear the cock-a doodle-doing and Durell played with this notion and expanded the notion globally. The rooster calls turn into a social call for action to live and be present and collaborate in the creative process. Fermor reformulates this vision of Durell's focusing on the winds carrying the sounds to Mani, Libya, the Persian Gulf, the Nile, and even the Bering Straits (Fermor 2004, pp. 123-124). The Athenian message directly from the Acropolis would then go throughout the entire world (Fermor 2004, p. 125). It is uncertain if Ghika was present that night. However, the emphasis on how significant the

spontaneous act initiated by George Katsimbalis and recorded by those present suggests that these writers wanted the message to be spread throughout Greece and even globally. The message begins its transmission on the Acropolis and is then sent world-wide signifying heritage links.

Conclusion

Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika played a significant transnational role in vagabonding within literary and artistic diplomacy, which was advantageous for him as an artist and an individual. It also benefited Greece and promoted the Greek identity elsewhere. He took it upon himself as a global citizen of this world to use his soft skills for Greek cultural diplomacy. His social, political, and economic outreach allowed him to become an active representative of Greek hospitality and 'Greekness' during his lifetime, which went far beyond Greek borders. It extends throughout Europe and the wider world. He made insightful contributions that are seen within anglophone literary works and became much more than a Greek artist and citizen of his time. Ghika conscientiously and actively positions himself as a transnational representative and a global citizen, making meaningful contributions worldwide.

The descriptions of Greece and the Greek identity are recorded in anglophone pieces of literature in which Ghika's contributions are remembered, extending far beyond the tiny island of Hydra. Concepts and images of Athenians, islanders, and mainlanders and the land's essence are prevalent in many published anglophone pieces. It promoted elements of Greece that inspired future vagabonding literary writers also to make the pilgrimage to discover Greece for themselves. It solidified Greece as an artistic literary hub. Writers like Victoria Hislop and Polly Samson, who spend considerable amounts of time in Greece writing about Greece today, imply that the contributions made by Ghika and like-minded vagabonding Greek artists continue today. The transmission of literary notions of modern-day Greece and the Greek

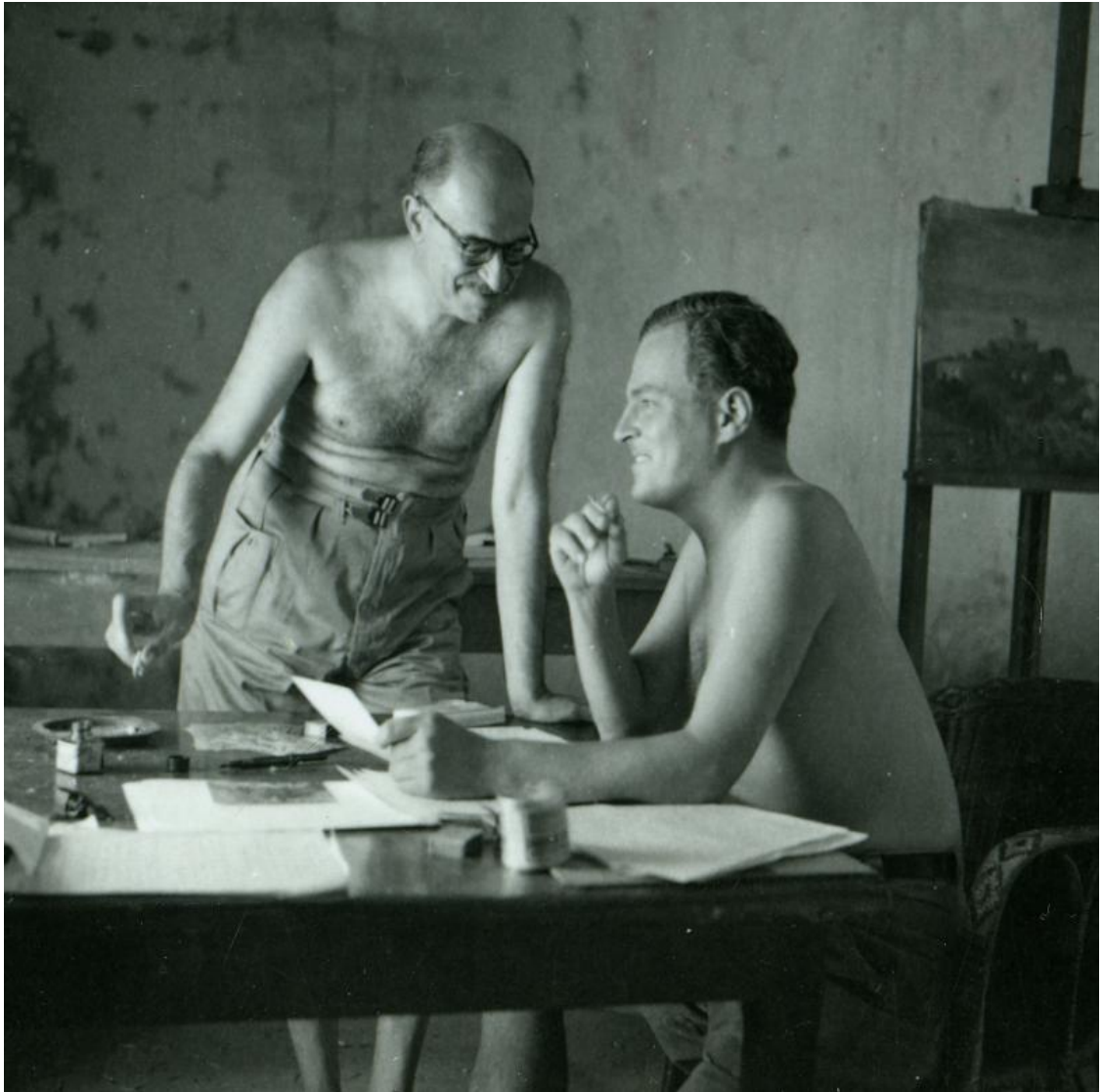
identity are numerous, and as such, significant relevancy is evident. Current novels such as *Half the Perfect World* (2018) by Paul Genoni and Tanya Tanzeill and *Leonard, Marianne and Me* by Judith Scott (2021) reexamine literary contributors' time on the island, which indicates a new reemergence of inviting artists to experience Greece and Hydra's historical past continues.

The Greek nation and government can explore new possibilities for local and foreign artists to use artistic expression within Greece for cultural, social, political, and economic gain. Emphasis on the encouragement of transnational literary interactions within Greece should be concretely examined and promoted as literary tourism plays a significant role in promoting Greece as a cultural and literary hub. It places Greek culture and Greek identity in a significant role globally as universal human truths are unveiled by doing so. Social media and the acceleration of technology, such as the Internet in today's modern world, will continue to be used in nation-building and national identity creation. The speed of transnational exchanges will accelerate even more. Investments into how and where literary tourism can benefit regional Greek localities have the potential to boost local economies and promote international awareness. Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika was aware of Greece's role in literature and actively promoted transnational literary interactions for global representations during his lifetime. We can move forward and continue the tradition well into the 21st century.

Word Count: 7520

Appendix

1.1



Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika and Patrick Leigh Fermor in Ghika's studio, Hydra 1955
Benaki Museum / Ghika Gallery, Photographic Archive

(Benaki Musuem, Ghika Gallery Photo Archive G651).



(From left) Niko Hadjikyriakos-Ghika along with Natasha Spender socialising with Patrick Leigh Fermor and Maureen Leatham at Vasienas Tavern in Piraeus in 1954

(Benaki Museum, Ghika Gallery Photo Archive G473).



Henry Miller and Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika in Kastalia fountain at Delphi, during an excursion in 1939. Copy from the book: Χρονικό φιλίας Ν.Χατζηκυριάκος Γκίκας - Χένρυ Μίλλερ, Αθήνα 1992

(Benaki Museum Ghika Gallery Photo Archive G40).



Henry Miller, Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika and Lawrence Durrell, 1939.

Photo by Robert Snyder. Copy from the book: Χρονικό φιλίας Ν.Χατζηκυριάκος Γκίκας - Χένρυ Μίλλερ, Αθήνα 1992

(Benaki Museum, Ghika Gallery Photo Archive G137).



George Seferis (Right) with his friend Rex Warner (left) in Woodstock, United Kingdom 1952.

The George Seferis Photographic Archive of the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece © Olga-Dafni Krinou

1.6



In front of Rex Warner's residence in Woodstock, United Kingdom. (Left) Cl. Norton, Osbert Lancaster, John Betjeman, Maro Seferis, Nikos Hadjikyriakos Ghika Ms. Cl Norton, and George Seferis, October, 1952.

The George Seferis Photographic Archive of the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece © Olga-Dafni Krinou



Acheiropoietos Monastery in Lamboussa, Cyprus. (Left) George Seferis, Lawrence Durrell, Antoinette Diamanti, Maurice Cardiff as well as artist Diamanti and his young son (behind).

The George Seferis Photographic Archive of the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece © Olga-Dafni Krinou



Henry Miller and George Katsimbalis on the island of Hydra in November 1939.

The George Seferis Photographic Archive of the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece © Olga-Dafni Krinou

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