HELLENIC AMERICAN PROJECT
NEWSLETTER

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THE WORKS OF NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS AS GLOBAL DRIVERS OF DIVERSITY

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has fueled violence and discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in New York and across the country. The Hellenic American Project is compelled to denounce such racist acts and expressions. There is no tolerance of xenophobia or hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

In line with The City University of New York (CUNY) and Queens College, we foster education as the path to solidarity and community strength. Click here to read the statement by Chancellor Matos Rodríguez. Click here to read President Frank H. Wu's message standing against discrimination and hate crimes. Click here for President Frank H. Wu's interview with MetroFocus.

Nikos Kazantzakis was born on March 2, 1883 in Heraklion, Crete. Crete was still under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. He was baptized Greek Orthodox as a child and was fascinated by the lives of saints from a young age. He attended the University of Athens, where he earned his Juris Doctor degree in 1906 and the University of Paris, where he received his Doctorate in 1909.

Shortly after returning to Greece, Kazantzakis met Angelos Sikelianos and they travelled across Greece between 1914 and 1916. In 1922 he started sojourning across the world until his death in 1957. Kazantzakis visited France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Russia, Spain, Cyprus, England, Egypt, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, China, and Japan. Upon his return from the East, already suffering from leukemia, Kazantzakis fell ill and was transferred to Freiburg, Germany where he died on October 26, 1957. Kazantzakis is buried at the highest point of the Walls of Heraklion.

The life and contributions of Nikos Kazantzakis are too rich to abridge. This article focuses on recognizing the

works of Kazanztakis as global drivers of diversity through three parameters: language used, travel writing, and central characters.

The National Book Center of Greece lists more than 580 translations of Kazantzakis' works worldwide, establishing him as the most translated Greek author in the world. This reach is vastly different from how his writing was received in his day, when works written in Demotic Greek were controversial and there was a small market for them. Kazantzakis' use of Demotic Greek is the first parameter of diversity in his works. He recognized the plethora of Greek dialects and was especially interested in the words that laypeople used. Kazantzakis intentionally wrote in a language that could be widely understood and was personal in tone. The national dispute about whether the official language of Greece should be Demotic or Katharevousa was known as the "Greek language question" and persisted during the 19th and 20th centuries. The dispute was resolved in 1976 when Demotic was made the official language.

Kazantzakis travelled extensively and immersed himself in the culture and current affairs of the host countries. He collected his accounts of nations and cultures and published travelogues from his journeys. Kazantzakis' travelogues are the second parameter of diversity in his works. The novel-length travelogues include description, interviews, and social and political commentary.

One such travelogue is *Japan/China*. In the Prologue, Kazantzakis expresses, "When I close my eyes to see, to hear, to smell, to touch a country I have known, I feel my body shake and fill with joy as if a beloved person had come near me." The reader is taken along every part of the journey. Along the broad, asphalt-paved streets of Singapore, onboard the ship to Japan, visiting Shinto temples, and gardens that are careful, complicated works of art. Kazantzakis toured a great factory with the same interest that he participated in a tea ceremony, taking nothing for granted. In his "farewell to Japan", Kazantzakis observes, "I think there is no country in the world that reminds me more than Japan of what ancient Greece might have been in its most shining moments. As in ancient Greece, so in old Japan and here in whatever of it still lives, even the smallest thing that comes from the hands of man and is used in his everyday life is a work of art, made with love and grace. Everything comes out of agile, dexterous hands, which crave beauty, simplicity and grace–what the Japanese call in one word: *shibui* ('tastefully bare')."

Finally, the characters of Kazantzakis' novels are the third parameter of diversity in his works. In *Zorba the Greek* (1946) Alexis Zorba is a controversial figure in the social order of his day. It is fascinating how this marginalized figure became an international symbol of Greek spirit.

The Last Temptation of Christ (1955), with Christ as the protagonist, proved to be [even] more controversial; the Catholic Church and the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church openly decried the novel as blasphemous. *The Last Temptation of Christ* was included in the Index Librorum Prohibitorum of the Catholic Church. The campaign to excommunicate Kazantzakis from the Greek Orthodox Church never materialized. If we use the Oxford Languages definition of diversity, "the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc", it is clear that Kazantzakis' worldview embraced diversity and shaped his works. Perhaps this quality keeps his writing pertinent and fascinating to a global audience, writing about the *human* condition.

Kazantzakis requested that his final resting place not be situated on consecrated ground, aware that the Greek Orthodox Church would not permit the burial in a cemetery. His epitaph, a reminder that neither body nor soul can be bound by machinations, "I hope for nothing. I fear nothing. I am free."

HELLENIC PRESENCE IN AMERICA

Mass Greek immigration to the United States begins in the Twentieth Century. However, the story of Greek arrivals to the United States begins much earlier, in 1528, with Don Teodoro Griego landing in Florida. Greek workers arrived to New Smyrna Beach, Florida, in 1768 with the promise of land. The original colony disbanded by 1777 but many of the colonists moved to neighboring St. Augustine and set up a successful settlement. The oldest wooden school building in the United States (1716) is the first school of the Greek Americans in St. Augustine, Florida. It is preserved in its original form until today. New Orleans is the first city in the United States where a stable Greek community was established and by 1866 it had the first Greek Consulate in the United States.

The first wave of mass immigration took place between 1900 and 1924. Greeks were among the last of the Europeans to immigrate to America during the Great Migration. Immigration and Naturalization Services data provide documentation that approximately 421,000 Greeks immigrated to the United States between 1890 and 1921. In actuality, this number is closer to 500,000 because many Greeks arrived with passports from other countries, including, Asian Minor and Egypt.

The second wave of mass immigration took place between 1965 and 1980. Approximately 160,000 Greeks arrived in the second wave of mass immigration. A unique characteristic of this wave is that Greeks, unlike most European groups with the exception of Italians, immigrated twice on a massive scale to the United States in the same century.

The settlement patterns of Greek immigrants show that the majority settled on the East Coast, primarily in Florida and New York, and in the industrial Midwest, in Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburg. Greeks also formed enclaves on the West Coast, working in the industries of construction, mining, and lumber. During the second wave of mass immigration, Greeks inhabited the Astoria section of Queens, New York. It has been considered the largest Hellenic settlement outside of Greece or Cyprus. Interestingly, Greek immigrants settled in or near urban centers even though they came from rural and predominantly agricultural towns and villages.

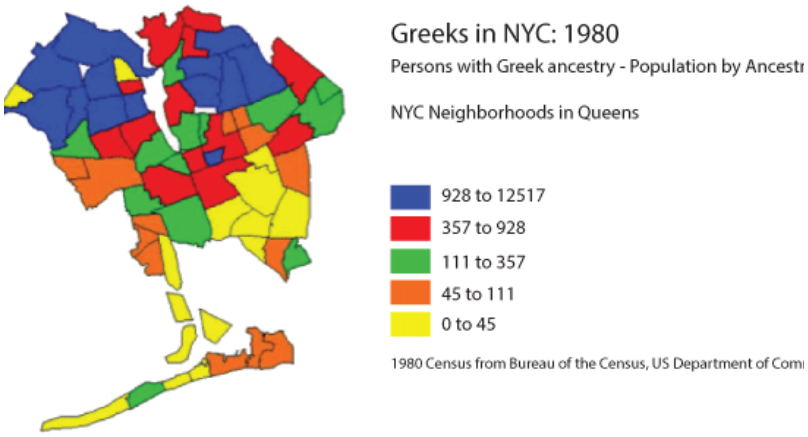
In its nearly 200-year presence in the United States, the Greek American community has undergone a demographic transition. Currently, there are more American-born Greek Americans than there are foreign-born Greek Americans. This demographic transition changes the broader identity of Greek Americans from an ethnic enclave to Americans of an ethnic background. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates, there are 1,247,142 persons of Greek ancestry in the United States, of which 88.9% (1,109, 272) are native born and 11.1% (137,870) are foreign born. Of this population, 77.0% (906,295) speak only English at home. Persons of Greek ancestry have higher educational attainment than the total population. For example, the percent with a Bachelor's degree is 28.2% among persons of Greek ancestry, compared to 20.3% in the total population. The percent with a Graduate or professional degree is 19.5% among persons of Greek ancestry, compared to 12.8% in the total population. Furthermore, persons of Greek ancestry have higher earnings than the total population. The median household income is $82,036 among persons of Greek ancestry, compared to $65,712 in the total population.

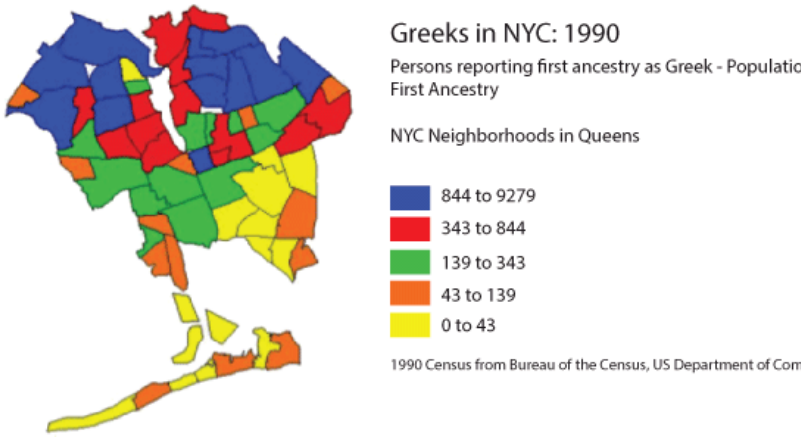
Demographic metrics are valuable tools for understanding the composition of a population. They provide accurate information for shaping and investing in the appropriate institutions, policies, and programs for the population. To this extent, in order to secure its continuity, the Greek American community has to reflect on and respond to its demographic transition. It has to address the needs and interests of the American-

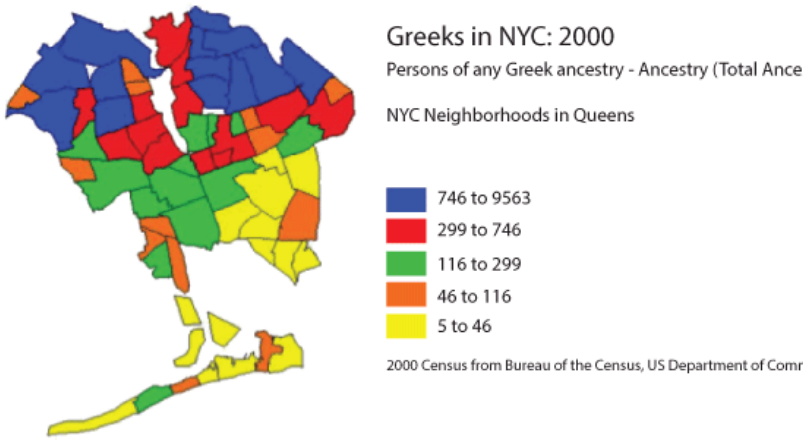
born generation(s). The transition has implications on ethnic attachment. A key measure of ethnic attachment is language. The question at hand is: How can the Greek American community incentivize and promote learning the Greek language for the American-born? To reach the best answer, other, pertinent questions need to be answered, including: Is there a clear bidirectional relationship between ethnic identity and language, whereby ethnic identity and language are interlinked through self-reinforcing processes? What is the educational landscape for Greek language instruction? What role can technology play? In addition to formal instruction, what needs to be in place at the community level to foster language acquisition?

Finally, this is an opportunity to reorient Modern Greek Studies in higher education. If Modern Greek Studies programs want to remain relevant in the era of multiculturalism, they have to be enduring cultural institutions for students of diverse ethnic and academic backgrounds. Greek American letters and culture can be expanded into studies of diaspora and diversity. This reorientation requires satisfying certain conditions, including: making Modern Greek Studies degrees marketable, expanding Modern Greek Studies scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships, working with the Greek American community to establish work experience internships, and viable partnerships between American and foreign universities for immersive learning and study abroad programs.

HAP not only documents the immigration experience of Greek Americans, it has proposed to include the history of Greek Americans in the broader educational curriculum. Promoting an understanding of the Greek American community builds bridges to the experiences of other immigrant communities and Diasporas. Although Greek Americans comprise a small number of the total population they have major contributions in social, cultural, and labor movements and few people are aware of these contributions. The time to fill this void is now.







THE SOLACE OF ANTIQUITY

The Hellenic American Project (HAP) presents the virtual exhibition "The Solace of Antiquity: Sketches and Drawings by John 'Yanni' Fotiadis".

Fotiadis was invited to present the 21 works featured in the exhibition to commemorate 200 years since the start of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. He started creating his sketches in 2019, while visiting Greece, and completed them in 2020, in New York, during the lockdown due to the pandemic. He uses black and white charcoal, graphite, and Prismacolor pencils to create the sketches and drawings on paper. Fotiadis' sketches transport us through time and space. Written passages and spoken words from seminal figures of the Greek War of Independence and poems by various poets are presented alongside the works. This approach pairs landscape with language to present the influence of classical antiquity in the Greek War of Independence.

Any serious discourse about classical antiquity must be treated with care for, at least, two reasons. The first reason is the value of historic context. Historic context is information about the period, the place, the people, the events that created or influenced the specific event or idea. The goal is discovering how the past can inform the present, and imagine the future, not making the past conform to the present. The second reason is the relevance it bears to present-day populations.

In creating the sketches presented in this exhibition, John "Yanni" Fotiadis, a Greek from the American diaspora, an architect by training and profession, reminds us about the necessary and fundamental principles of equilibrium among developments in scientific, economic, or artistic fields, and respect for nature and democracy. He is continuing a long line of preservation that has proven invaluable in the past. From the fifteenth century onwards, when Western travelers rediscovered Athens, there was an international fascination with Greek antiquity, the ruins of Athens, and an increasing interest in ancient literature.

The numerous manuscripts, journals, sketches and paintings by the travelers visiting Athens preserved crucial documentation for the city, which otherwise would have been lost over time. To a large extent, it was due to the precise documentation in the sketches and paintings by the travelers that assisted in the restoration of the Parthenon, which was extensively damaged in 1687 by the Venetians during the Morean War against the Ottoman Turks.

This art exhibition is the fourth such presentation by HAP. It seeks to continue commemorating the bicentennial anniversary of the Greek War of Independence, and reveal to the community, locally and internationally, the significance of the arts, and the creative imagination of the Hellenic Diaspora. The long occupied Hellenes took solace in antiquity. When they started fighting for their liberation, they cultivated a national consciousness. Fotiadis' "Solace of Antiquity" reminds us that Greek antiquity is revolutionary art, as long as we keep discovering a meaning, which always awaits us. In our present liquid modernity, the solace of antiquity can help us as individuals and as a collective consciousness, to resolve the conflicting demands of our historical circumstances.

The exhibition is available on the HAP website, click here to access the exhibition.

Photo & Sketch: John Fotiadis

ARTS & CULTURE

As part of HAP's ongoing efforts to present the Greek American community, Arts & Culture features Greek American artists, writers, and poets.

Theodosis Athas was born in Kastoria, Greece on January 14, 1936. World War II and the Greek Civil War (1943–1949) marked his childhood. As a result of the war, Athas' family moved to the mountain village of Kypseli, in the Kastoria region, where he attended school. He started composing poetry during his school years. Athas arrived to the United States in February of 1954, at the age of eighteen. He lived in Lynn, Boston with his father and enrolled in Northwestern University, studying to become an engineer. During this transition, he did not stop composing poetry. In 1960, upon completing his military service but before obtaining his degree, Athas answered poetry's calling and moved to New York. Prior to his arrival, Athas was corresponding with poet Nikos Spanias. Spanias was impressed by Athas' poetry and became a mentor figure and a promoted his works to local, Greek-language newspapers.

In 1963, Athas began working at the radio program "Greek Voice of New York" with is own four-hour segment named "New Wave". His warm voice, eloquent use of the Greek language, and characteristic greeting to his radio audience made Athas a household name in the Greek American community. His segment included news coverage, social and political commentary, interviews, music, and witty humor. Radio was a flourishing medium of ethnic media for the Greek American community at the time. *The New York Times* of December 12, 1984 (pp. C1, C16) featured the article "From Ethnic Radio Stations, Touch of America and 'Home'" about ethnic radio stations. The article includes the success of Athas' colleague Tina Santorineou and the "Sounds of Greece" program. Athas developed ties with the Greek writers of New York City, including Nitsa Kappa, Regina Pagoulatos, Stathis Titelis, and Theodoros Yiannakoulis, to name a few.

The poetry of Athas can be described as solemn. He conveyed his childhood experiences through poetry, without seeking to justify them or reconcile them. Any element of negotiation in Athas' works is of a secondary nature; it is the negotiation of writing and creating in Greek while living in the United States. He translated E. E. Cummings' poetry to Greek, also.

In 1971, while George Zampetas was visiting New York, Athas invited him to the radio program. After the interview, Athas shared that he had poems that he wanted Zampetas to see and if he liked them, he could keep them and turn them into songs. Athas visited Zampetas at the hotel where he was staying and brought the poems, included was the poem "Jack O'Hara". Indeed, Zampetas kept the poems and set them to music. "Jack O'Hara" performed by Zampetas became a hit of the Greek rebetiko repertoire and was part of Zampetas' album *Peripeteies*.

Theodosis Athas died in New York in 1973.

AN AMERICAN PHILHELLENE: EDWARD EVERETT

In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence (1821–2021), HAP is featuring American Philhellenes and their contributions.

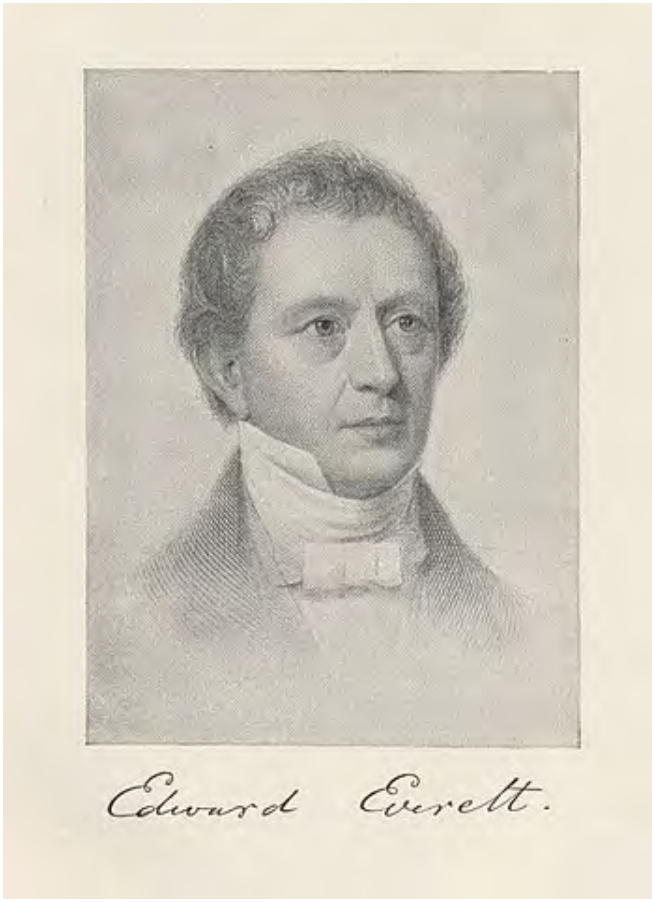
Edward Everett (April 11, 1794 – January 15, 1865) was an American, educator, Unitarian pastor, politician, and an exceptional orator who served as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, 15th Governor of Massachusetts, United States Minister to the United Kingdom, 20th United States Secretary of State, and United States Senator. Everett was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts to Reverend Oliver Everett and Lucy Hill Everett. He attended Boston Latin School, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Harvard College from which he graduated in 1811 as valedictorian of his class. He earned his M.A. from Harvard College in 1813 and the oration he gave at the commencement ceremony was on the subject of Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire, titled, "On the Restoration of Greece". He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Göttingen, Germany, in 1817. Everett was the editor of the *North American Review* from 1822–1825 and served as president of Harvard from 1846–1848.

In 1815, Everett was named Harvard's first Charles Eliot Professor of Greek. Everett travelled to Europe and the Ottoman Empire, where he met Lord Byron and became a committed supporter of the Greek cause. When Everett returned from his travels he founded the Boston Committee for the Relief of the Greeks. In 1823, in the *North American Review* for October, Everett published an appeal to the people of America for the Greek cause, containing an entire translation of the Constitution of Epidaurus. He delivered a poignant speech advocating American support for the Greek cause to the Boston Committee for the Relief of the Greeks on December 19, 1823. Everett's actions were noted by statesmen Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Henry W. Dwight, who also expressed their support.

City relief committees, such as the one founded by Everett, were organized in several major cities of the United States, including Philadelphia and New York. The committees were invaluable drivers of material and monetary support for the Greek cause.

On January 9, 1865, while speaking at a public meeting Everett caught a cold that made him very ill for several days. He died in Boston on January 15, 1865 and was interred at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

The Edward Everett House, located at 16 Harvard Street in Charlestown, was designated as a Boston Landmark by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1996. In Athens, an anaglyph bust of him appears on the American Legion monument to American Philhellenes.



Edward Everett
Portrait c. 1850 by R.M. Staigg
This work is in the public domain in the United States

OPINION: SISYPHUS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

At the time this article is being written, the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is the dominant strain in the United States. According to Johns Hopkins University data, the United States records 34M total confirmed cases and more than 613K deaths. Vaccination is free and available to everyone over the age of 12. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 49.8% of the population of the United States is fully vaccinated. Worldwide, more than 200M total cases are recorded and over 4M deaths. The CDC recommends masking and social distancing regardless of vaccination status.

We are living with the virus. 2019 feels like a lifetime ago and in the same breath it is a privilege to be able to talk about life. The medical community has reached the consensus that the SARS-CoV-2 virus will be with humanity for the foreseeable future. What remains unknown is how the virus will change.

The first year of the pandemic was a scientific marathon. The scientific community delivered, on December 11, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization for Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine; the Moderna vaccine followed on December 18, 2020 and the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine on February 27, 2021.

The second year of the pandemic is a psychological marathon. Scientists [particularly behavioral scientists] are already writing about the extent to which the pandemic will permanently change human behavior. How many of the changes brought about by the pandemic will be lasting changes? A world with better hand hygiene is a happy thought. A world where essential workers are reasonably compensated with salary and benefits is a happy thought. A world where remote work can satisfy post-pandemic needs and a healthy work-life balance is a happy thought.

All of the above is possible, if we do not rush back to "normal". Normal is perceived as, well, normal because it is familiar. Familiar does not necessarily mean fulfilling, or productive, or healthy. The pandemic is an opportunity for reckoning. We may not be able to change the world in one fell swoop, however; we can change our world. Small changes are easier to achieve and to maintain. When small changes are successful and bring rewards they are repeated, forming habits. In turn, habits create patterns, which become a familiar structure in our life over time.

Albert Camus (November 7, 1913 – January 4, 1960) offers insight that can help us reach the mindset for change. In the philosophical essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) Camus introduces his philosophy of the absurd, where the absurd occupies the space created by the [human] nature to attribute meaning to the life and the unreasonableness of the world. First, we are asked to acknowledge that life is ephemeral. Second, we are asked to acknowledge that the circumstances of life are not ideal. These truths create the obvious dilemma of how to make the best of life with the given circumstances. Camus resolves this dilemma by referencing the myth of Sisyphus.

Sisyphus cheated death, Thanatos, twice. As punishment for his trickery, Sisyphus was allocated punishment in the underworld. His punishment was to endlessly roll a huge, enchanted boulder up a steep hill. The boulder rolls away from Sisyphus before he reaches the top. Thus it came to pass that interminable activities are sometimes described as "Sisyphean". Camus' philosophical insight is that fate, like happiness, is a human matter. Sisyphus' fate belongs to him. "His rock is his thing…But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks…The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

The take away is that acknowledging the truth is acknowledging failures; the same way we accept achievements. To not give in to circumstantial disappointments in our interminable efforts to fulfill our potential. At the foot of the mountain, rather than focusing on the mountain, let us tend to the journey.

PHILIP TREVEZAS: A BRIDGE BETWEEN CALIFORNIA AND ASTYPALAIA

Mr. Philip Trevezas is a distinguished member of the Greek American community in California. He retired as a Professor of Economics at California State University Long Beach.

Mr. Trevezas is the president of the Hellenic Library of Southern California in Bellflower, California. The library opened its doors in 1986 and its mission is to preserve and promote Hellenic art, culture and education in a current and contemporary context. Services available to members, patrons, and the community include a lending library of 6,000 volumes in English and Greek, Greek language programs, access to the library's multimedia archive, and a 1,200 sq. ft. multi-purpose facility that can accommodate art exhibitions, group meetings, and social gatherings. Click here to learn more about the library.

A recent initiative of the Hellenic Library of Southern California was establishing a bridge between California and the Greek island of Astypalaia. Astypalaia belongs to the Dodecanese in the southeastern Aegean Sea. The island covers an area of 97 km^2 with 1,334 residents according to the 2011 census. Astypalaia has a (9-hour) ferry connection to the port of Piraeus in Athens and an airport that operates flights to/from Athens. In an effort to promote education and access to education in remote and/or high need schools, the Hellenic Library of Southern California made a donation to the Gymnasium-Lyceum of Astypalaia that allowed the school to install Wi-Fi and purchase six projectors. Internet access and Internet literacy are just the beginning of the rewards reaped by the students and faculty. To learn about the enrichment made possible from the students and faculty of the school, click here.

In 2018, the Hellenic Library of Southern California organized the musical and poetic event "Roads of Longing" about Greeks living abroad. In 2017, the library organized a concert featuring the poetry of Nikos Kazantzakis, Nikos Gatsos, Odysseas Elytis, and the music of Manos Hatzidakis. In 2016, the library in conjunction with the Kostis Palamas Foundation in Athens, Greece organized a tribute to Kostis Palamas. These events are valuable, interactive ways to present the Greek culture to the community. The Hellenic American Project looks forward to co-organizing a virtual symposium with the Hellenic Library of Southern California in the future.

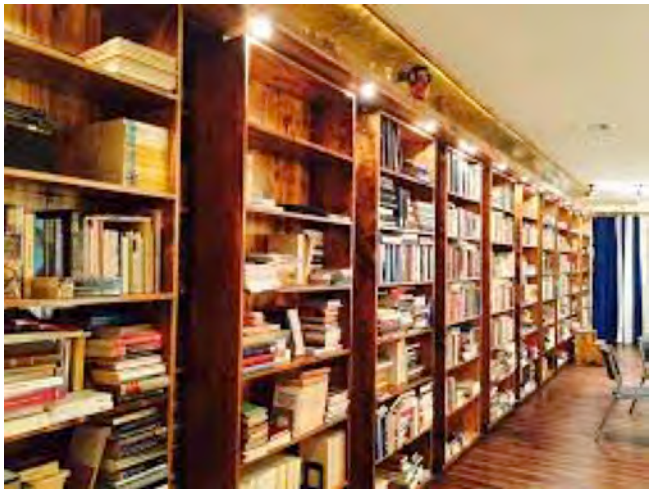


Photo: Hellenic Library of Southern California

The current initiative of the Hellenic Library of Southern California reinforces the bridge between California and Astypalaia in a stellar way. Lambrini Gregory, Principal of the Gymnasium-Lyceum of Astypalaia, describes the initiative in her letter, below. The letter has been translated from Greek into English by HAP for the purpose of featuring in this newsletter.

April 9, 2021

The British astronomer Michael Ovenden, after studies and calculations, credits Astypalaia with the early astronomical observations and the design of the constellations. The island of Astypalaia is surrounded by many rocky islets, with which the position of each constellation on the horizon can be associated. According to the reputable astronomer, the only island that combines the necessary qualifications –a high mountain with a 360-degree horizon at the top, many rocky islets near the 36th parallel– is Astypalaia. He even wonders whether the modern, slang name of the island, Astropalia, is not actually slang, but hides a connection with early astronomy in the Aegean.

The observations of the British astronomer motivated us to deal more with the part of observing a world so close to us but also so far away from us. Unfortunately, in the modern Greek school, Astronomy is not a separate subject. Talking to the children, we thought of introducing it to our academic curriculum and to our daily lives.

Our thought is to buy a telescope, to train the interested teachers in its use and to organize stargazing nights not only for the students but also for the inhabitants of the island and for the visitors during the summer months. Ideally, after the observation, discussions could take place around topics of astronomical interest and small groups could be formed.

Observing the stars in Astropalia will definitely be something magical. Our intention is to introduce a culture of respect for the universe, to reflect on the existence of other cultures and worlds beyond our own, to bring people together under the starry sky of our place.

We have already thought of a name for the school team who will run this project: the Astrofyeis (a blend of the words "star" and "intelligence"). Are we the only ones with reason and intelligence in this starry universe? How were the stars born? These are questions that require answers. A magical journey of observation and research begins.

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY LOOK AT THE ALBATROSS

Albatrosses are large seabirds in the order Procellariiformes, family Diomedeidae. The family name was assigned by Carl Linnaeus and references the mythological figure Diomedes, a hero of the Trojan War and the favorite warrior of Athena. There are several legends about Diomedes that involve albatrosses. One legend is based on the Tomb of Diomedes on San Nicola Island of the Tremiti Archipelago, where upon his death the men of Diomedes cried so bitterly that Venus transformed them into albatrosses to guard his grave. This legend is mentioned in Federico Fellini's film *8½*, (Scene 8) with a cardinal telling the story to Marcello Mastroianni's character. The Tremiti Archipelago is also called "Isole Diomedee" in Italian. Albatrosses are classified across four genera and while the number of species is a matter of debate, consensus among researchers is 22 species and further research is necessary.

The largest of the Procellariiformes, albatrosses have the longest wingspans of any living flying birds, reaching up to 12 feet. The bill of albatrosses is strong and sharp with two tubes along he sides of the bill. These tubes allow the albatross to measure airspeed in flight, a measurement that is necessary to perform dynamic soaring. While most birds depend on their sight to locate food sources, Procellariiformes use their sense of smell. Albatrosses are carnivores with a diet including fish, squid, crustaceans, and offal. Their diet varies from population to population. Albatrosses drink seawater and have a salt gland at the base of their bill that removes the salt from their system. Another feature of albatross morphology that contributes to them being the most spectacular gliders is a special tendon in each shoulder. The tendon locks their wings fully extended so, provided there is a breeze, they do not need to flap their wings. As a result, soaring requires minimal energy and they can travel up to 620 miles per day.

Midway Atoll in the Hawaiian archipelago is home to the world's largest colony of albatrosses. Albatrosses come ashore only to breed, most range in the Southern Hemisphere, some in the North Pacific, and one species in the Galápagos Islands. They have become extinct in the North Atlantic. When albatrosses return to their colony the young nonbreeding birds practice the breeding rituals with potential mates until, after several years, the females choose a partner. Albatrosses establish pair bonds that last for life, a rarity in the animal kingdom. According to the National Science Foundation, "Scientists now estimate that only about three to five percent of the approximately 4,000+ mammal species on Earth practice any form of monogamy." Furthermore, "Scientists now believe that about 90 percent of bird species are socially monogamous (rising offspring and spending time together), and that true monogamy among birds is the exception rather than the rule." The world's oldest known wild bird and the world's oldest banded bird is an albatross named Wisdom. She was banded at Midway Island in 1956 and is 70 years old this year. Her most recent chick hatched on February 1, 2021.

Of the 22 species of albatross recognized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, 15 are threatened with extinction, and eight species are either endangered or critically endangered. Longline fisheries currently pose a serious threat to albatross as they are attracted to the bait and become hooked on the lines and drown. Another cause for albatross mortality is consumption of marine debris, mainly plastic, that is mistaken for food. In order to raise awareness and establish protections for the albatross, June 19, 2020 was the first-ever World Albatross Day. Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) inaugurated a World Albatross Day, to be held annually from 2020 on 19 June, the date the Agreement was signed in 2001. The chosen theme for 2021 is "Ensuring Albatross-friendly Fisheries", more information is available on ACAP's website, www.acap.aq.

Although albatrosses are considered good omens for seafarers, the word "albatross" is metaphorically used to mean a burden, a psychological burden, which takes the form of a curse. This metaphor alludes to Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" published in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). The poem, along with others in the volume, marks the shift to modern poetry and the beginning of British Romantic literature. There is a plethora of references to the metaphorical albatross in literature, film, and music, including: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, D.H. Lawrence's *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1939), *The Sea Hawk* (1940), Pink Floyd, Fleetwood Mac, and Iron Maiden.

In Charles Baudelaire's "L'Albatros" there is a different application, there is no good or bad omen associated with the albatross; rather, the albatross is a symbol. It can be said that Romantic poetry comes full circle with the albatross, beginning with Coleridge-Taylor and closing with Baudelaire, who is considered the last of the Romantic authors.

The Romantic Era gave the world the likes of William Blake, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Jane Austen, Brontë Sisters, Alexandre Dumas, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Théophile Gautier, Nikolai Gogol, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Victor Hugo, Giacomo Leopardi, Edgar Allan Poe, Alexander Pushkin, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In the spirit of Baudelaire, at the cost of an enlightened soul that is closer to the sublime, the Poet is a misunderstood entity among the masses but a king in his element. After all, given the choice, why walk when you can soar?

L'ALBATROS

Souvent, pour s'amuser, les hommes d'équipage
Prennent des albatros, vastes oiseaux des mers,
Qui suivent, indolents compagnons de voyage,
Le navire glissant sur les gouffres amers.

A peine les ont-ils déposés sur les planches,
Que ces rois de l'azur, maladroits et honteux,
Laissent piteusement leurs grandes ailes blanches
Comme des avirons traîner à côté d'eux.

Ce voyageur ailé, comme il est gauche et veule!
Lui, naguère si beau, qu'il est comique et laid!
L'un agace son bec avec un brûle-gueule,
L'autre mime, en boitant, l'infirme qui volait!

Le Poète est semblable au prince des nuées
Qui hante la tempête et se rit de l'archer;
Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées,
Ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher.

Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857)

The Albatross

Often, to amuse themselves, the men of a crew
Catch albatrosses, those vast sea birds
That indolently follow a ship
As it glides over the deep, briny sea.

Scarcely have they placed them on the deck
Than these kings of the sky, clumsy, ashamed,
Pathetically let their great white wings
Drag beside them like oars.

That winged voyager, how weak and gauche he is,
So beautiful before, now comic and ugly!
One man worries his beak with a stubby clay pipe;
Another limps, mimics the cripple who once flew!

The poet resembles this prince of cloud and sky
Who frequents the tempest and laughs at the bowman;
When exiled on the earth, the butt of hoots and jeers,
His giant wings prevent him from walking.

William Aggeler, Translator, *The Flowers of Evil* (1954)

JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth was recognized as a federal holiday on June 17, 2021, when President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law. The name is a blend of the words "June" and "nineteenth". It commemorates the announcement of General Order No. 3 by Union Army Major General Gordon Granger, proclaiming and enforcing freedom of enslaved people in Texas on June 19, 1865. Texas was the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery.

Celebrations commemorating Juneteenth have been in place since 1866 in Texas and spread across the United States as African Americans migrated to other parts of the country. African American populations across Texas collected money to buy property to secure the celebration of future Juneteenth celebrations. In Houston, Texas this initiative was lead by Baptist Reverend Jack Yates who established the Colored People's Festival and Emancipation Park Association. In 1872, the association raised $1,000 to secure ten acres of land, which they named Emancipation Park. Emancipation Park was the only municipal park African Americans could use at that time. By 1918, it had been acquired by the City of Houston. On June 7, 1979, the State of Texas enacted legislation declaring Juneteenth to be a state holiday. The first state-sponsored Juneteenth holiday took place the following year, in 1980. Emancipation Park continues to serve its neighborhood today.

Freedom is [still] not reconciled in the Untied States. It is used in two, opposing senses; the first is securing freedom by extending democracy, the second is protecting the property of elites by restricting popular control. It is evident that we refer to the former sense if we wish to pursue progress in the representative democracy that is the United States.

As a federal holiday, Juneteenth creates a nationwide opportunity for meaningful conversations about race relations. Furthermore, it is an occasion to integrate race relations into the formal education curriculum. Finally, it offers a pathway to reaching national consensus on American history rooted in lived and documented experiences.

HAP NEWS

- Apostolis Zoupaniotis donated the eighteen-year (2003–2021) electronic archive of *GreekNews Greek-American Weekly Newspaper* to the HAP Archive. Zoupaniotis is the editor and publisher of the bilingual, independent weekly newspaper.

- HAP commemorates the Bicentennial Anniversary of the beginning of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. Below is a chronology of the events conducted in the first six months of this year.

  - January 2021, "Ode to the Greek Light and Landscape: Works by Dimitris Diamantopoulos", HAP Virtual Exhibition, available here.
  - February 21, 2021, "The Hellenic Revolution, its Effects on the American Abolitionist Movement, and Beyond" EMBCA Webinar, available here.
  - May 7, 2021, "The Legacy of the Hellenic Diaspora in the Hellenic Revolution of 1821", EMBCA Webinar, available here.
  - June 2021, "The Solace of Antiquity: Sketches and Drawings by John 'Yani' Fotiadis", HAP Virtual Exhibition, available here.
  - June 27, 2021, "1821: Revolution and Poetry in Motion", EMBCA Webinar, available here.
  - Each issue of the *Hellenic American Project Newsletter* has featured American Philhellenes and their contributions. Past issues of the *Hellenic American Project Newsletter* are available here.

- HAP's virtual exhibition "The Solace of Antiquity: Sketches and Drawings by John 'Yanni' Fotiadis" was featured in *The QView* of July 2021, click here to access the issue.

- HAP is 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization located in Queens Hall, on the Queens College, CUNY campus. All monetary donations are welcome and go towards ongoing interviews and digitization of materials to continue documenting the Greek American community. Click here to make your donation.

- *We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a safe, healthy, and pleasant summer.*