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Language and Literature

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### Culture

Before we started reading the novel and started this project, I thought that it would be impossible to understand a different culture from an outside perspective. However, you can figure it out. You just need to understand that people want and/or need something to believe in. Without belief, everything we do becomes meaningless. If you don't believe your life will get better, then why continue? If you don't believe that you will go to heaven if you are good, then why be good all your life? If you don't believe you can do something, then why do it? The religion, culture, traditions, and customs are just a manifestation of someone in the past wanting to believe in something, and it being passed on. The Greek culture is no different.

The history of religion in Greece is very interesting. As you may know, Greek religions started with the belief in the Olympian gods, meaning Zues, Poseidon, Hades, Demeter, Hera, Aphrodite, and all that. However, in 49 AD a man by the name of Saint Paul came to Greece and started preaching Christianity. People started converting, but in small amounts. Then, Emperor Constantine the Great established Christianity as the prominent religion in Greece and the surrounding area. With the Division of the Eastern and Western church, Greece took the side of the Orthodox rather than the Catholics. This leads us right into the culture.

Let's start with architecture. The old world of Greece definitely resides with the style of temples and marble, much like the Roman style of that time as well. The temples of that time were dedicated to the gods that I mentioned earlier. Today, the temples in Greece are dedicated to the Christian religion. The Greek islands are 2,000 strong, yet only 168 are inhabited. Because of their severe proximity to the sea, Greeks have developed a fondness for it, one of their main trades being seafood and all manner of marine-based products. Music plays a very important role in Greek culture, thanks to the combination of music from Europe and Asia. Greece has offered the world many famous artists, one of them being Manos Hatzidakis. He wrote and performed music for many ancient tragedies as well as things for the modern taste, light and folk songs which provoked a revival of folk music. With the everyday experiences of music, we can transition straight into the traditions and customs of the Greeks.

The Greeks are very superstitious and believe a lot in religion but also in supernatural or paranormal phenomenon. Of course this varies from island to island and village to village, but overall, Greeks are very superstitious and believe in black cats crossing your path, opening a umbrella indoors, walking under a ladder, and the like. One Greek tradition is for the engagement period to last much longer before actually getting married. Sometimes the engagement time can last up to years. After the ceremony, the ring will actually be worn on the right hand. Also in Greece, there is a tradition called a Carnival, but on the island they call it "Apokries". In this celebration, there are parties everywhere. In houses, bars, even in the streets. During this 2 week period, the participants will party and feast and drink to their heart's content. Historians are split whether this arises from the Dionysus celebrations of old, the god of wine and feasts, or just from paganism religions. Easter in Greece is possibly the most important

holiday of the year, even more so than Christmas. On Good Friday, the day of mourning, the Epitaphios, the tomb of Christ with its icon, decorated with flowers, is taken out of the church and carried around the village followed by a slow procession. After the procession returns to the church where the believers kiss the image of the Christ. That's everything. Thanks for reading!

#### Works Cited

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