Eleni Koutrianou, St. Cross College
D.Phil., Trinity Term 1997

The Emergence and Crystallization of the Poetics of Odysseas Elytis

This thesis examines the poetics of Odysseas Elytis, which, it is argued, emerged from his intense theoretical work on poetry in the period between 1944 and 1960, and was crystallized in the poems he published from 1960 to 1995. Elytis' poetics is examined in this thesis through the exploration of his ideas on the status and function of poetry, on the role of the poet, and on poetic writing; it is also examined through the exploration of the poetry in which these ideas are put into practice.

It is argued in this thesis that Elytis' poetics emerged from his effort to provide his poetry with a concrete theoretical basis, an endeavour he deliberately undertook in the 1940s and 1950s; the evolution of his thought coincided chronologically with the period broadly between 1944 and 1960, that is, the period during which he wrote poems but did not proceed to publish any book of poetry. Elytis' thought reached a point of external stabilization before 1960, since in the poetry he published that year his ideas are systematically put into practice. With the publication of these poems, his poetics entered the dynamic phase of crystallization, which prevails throughout his poetic writing from 1960 to 1995, and constitutes a process during the course of which he explored the internal perspectives opened up by the theoretical frame he set for himself in the years 1944-1960.

This thesis explores Elytis' theoretical endeavour and his poetic practice, and examines both the emergence of his ideas in the period between 1944 and 1960 and the crystallization of these ideas in the poetry he published from 1960 to 1995.

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Elytis' poetic writing from *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* onwards is conditioned by his ideas on the role of the poet, the mission, function, and status of poetry and on the practical issues concerning its production. The theoretical aspects of Elytis' poetics are explored in this thesis by focusing on his essays on poetry and visual art, and on the poetry in which his ideas are put into practice.

This thesis argues that the theoretical and creative conditions involved in the emergence and crystallization of Elytis' poetics provide the prerequisites for a methodological distinction between two periods in his poetry; the thesis proposes a distinction between his early instinctive poetry, in which expression is more intuitive, and the poetry of his second period, which is based on a firm theoretical basis.

By exploring his essays and his poetic practice, this thesis argues that Elytis' systematic approach to Surrealism in the 1940s and 1950s, his broader aesthetic concerns, and his care for poetic perfection led to the systematization and elaboration of the theoretical basis with which he wished to provide his poetry in the early 1940s. The emergence of his ideas was a process of evolution, which reached a point of external stabilization sometime before 1960, that is, before the publication of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*; yet this stabilization does not constitute a static period in Elytis' poetic formation, but is merely indicative of the completion of the phase of his most intense theoretical preoccupations, whose outcome was a concrete theoretical framework. As is argued in this thesis, from the publication of these poems in 1960 until 1995, when his penultimate poetic collection, *Δυτικὰ τῆς λύπης*, was published, his poetics further evolved in a dynamic process of crystallization. This second phase was less

theoretical than that which coincided with the emergence of his poetics, and primarily involved his experiments on the practical level. Because of his dynamic conception of poetry, this second phase was also one of evolution, a process during which Elytis worked on the internal aspects of the theoretical frame he had developed in the years 1944-1960.

It is pointed out in this thesis that the emergence of Elytis poetics was based on his study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Greek and European poetry, but his thought was nurtured by Surrealism, and Surrealist ideas and practices are traceable in his theoretical and practical endeavour.

This thesis examines the theoretical aspects of Elytis' endeavour by focusing on his essays on poetry and visual art (especially those dating from the period broadly between 1944 and 1960), while it examines its more practical aspects by exploring the poetry that he published from 1960 onwards, including *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, that is, the poetry of his second period. Parts I and II explore the development of his thought, while Part III focuses on his poetry.

Part I introduces Elytis' theoretical endeavour by exploring the views he expressed about nineteenth- and twentieth-century European poetry. In Chapter 1, his reception of non-Surrealist poetry is considered. This chapter examines his observations on Romantic and Symbolist poetry, and on non-Greek modernist poetry of his time, as well as his views on his contemporary Greek poetry. Elytis' relationship with the Generation of the 1930s and the historical, ideological and literary conditions that determined the emergence of his thought are also explored here. It is argued in this chapter that he considered non-Surrealist poetry through the lens of Surrealism, while nevertheless, assuming a personal attitude. The principal aspects of this attitude involved his metaphysical interests, which he related to the perception of nature, and are associated with his concern for the ethical role of the poet, for the mission of poetry, and for formal perfection.

The ideological positions that Elytis expressed on the social mission of art and poetry are further explored in Chapter 2, in which the development of his view of Surrealism is examined by focusing on the period that preceded the undertaking of his theoretical endeavour. This chapter examines the texts he published between 1938 and 1945, that is, those texts in which he defended Surrealism against its Greek critics, and which clearly show his theoretical bent, his aesthetic concerns and his broad understanding of the Surrealist project.

Part II explores the emergence of Elytis' poetics through an examination of the stages that marked the development of his thought. Chapter 3 focuses on the essays on visual art that Elytis published mainly in the 1940s and 1950s; since he lost or destroyed most of the theoretical texts on poetry that he wrote in this period, his essays on visual art are the main source available for information on the emergence of his poetics. Apart from these early texts, his later essays on visual art are also considered here, since they present more lucidly his aesthetic viewpoint and its philosophical background. Elytis' essays on visual art bear evidence of his metaphysical perspective, and of the stages in the development of his ideas on the ethical mission of the artist and writer. While his approach to visual art may have been inspired by the Surrealist poets, who were extremely interested in the visual arts and promoted the visual in their poetry, Elytis' own consideration of visual art significantly contributed to the development of his ideas on poetry. As is argued in this chapter, his work on aesthetics primarily affected Elytis' understanding of space.

The fourth chapter of this thesis explores Elytis' understanding of space through his view of time and myth. This chapter argues that his study of Surrealist poetry conditioned his conception of subjective time and contributed to his perception of space; moreover, Surrealism provided the theoretical background for the mechanism that instigated his mythologizing imagination, a mechanism that may also have been suggested to him by Greek tradition, though without the theoretical

basis offered by the Surrealists. This chapter further argues that his organization of myth into a system may have been stimulated by the mythical imagination and the mythical systems developed by other, non-Surrealist poets, but was cultivated through his consideration of Surrealist perceptions of reality. Elytis' main concern was the constitution of the mythical, imaginary world of vision as a model of life and as a way of thinking about life. He attempted to accomplish this through the elaboration of a theoretical basis that explains the creative process, and through a methodical approach to the poem as a work of art.

In Chapter 5, Elytis' observations on the practical issues that concern poetic writing are presented. This chapter sets out to explore his attempts to provide mental images of the poem and of its component parts, as well as his views on the creative process. It is argued here that the most important strands to emerge in his theoretical endeavour are those referring to his ideas on the unity of content and form and to the function of the poetic imagination. It was through exploring this function that Elytis developed his ideas about the poem as a totality and about its individual parts. This chapter seeks to clarify that Elytis' views on the principle of 'διαφάνεια' ('translucence' or 'transparency') emerge from the theoretical background explained in Chapter 3. Furthermore, it is explained here that a specific conceptual image of the poem, which is left implicit in his writings but plays a significant role in his thought, is that of the crystal. The image of the crystal recapitulates Elytis' theoretical endeavour and is used in the exploration of his poetry in Part III of this thesis.

Part III examines the dominant stylistic features of the poetry that Elytis published from 1960 onwards (Chapter 6) and also the extent and the manner in which visual art has been used by him in his poetry (Chapter 7). The principle followed throughout the study of his poetry in Part III emerges from his ideas on the function of poetry as an art that aspires to constitute the reality of the imagination through the primacy it yields to the visual. In Chapter 6, a certain

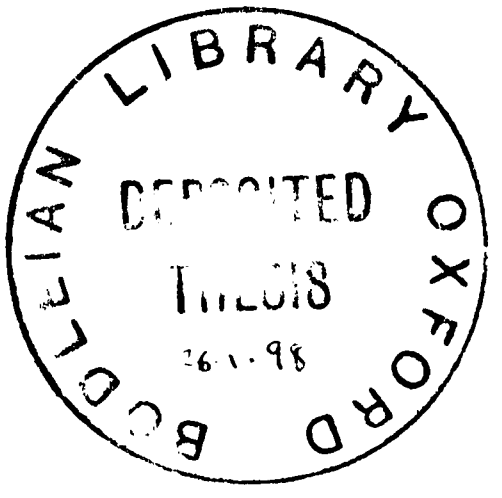
methodology and approach to style are adopted, both in order to examine the way in which Elytis exploited his ideas on the unity of content and form in his poetry, and in order to explore further his views on the practical issues that concern the production of the poem and the creative process. For the purposes of this chapter, the poems of his second period examined here are those in which he refers to poetry. In Chapter 7, the way in which visual art informs Elytis' poetry is examined by exploring various of the poems of his second period. It is argued here that his consideration of visual art is determined by his concern for the visual in both its semiotic and its semantic aspects. As is explained in this chapter, in his effort to constitute the inner reality of the imagination, Elytis foregrounds visual art and the pictorial image in the poetry of his second period.

The thesis explores Elytis' theoretical endeavour, both in the practical issues that concern his poetic writing and in the character and intensity of the visionary view of life that his poetry seeks to constitute; it argues that the models he developed on the theoretical level are systematically and consistently followed in his poetic practice. The theoretical framework that he elaborated and the consistency with which he made use of it underlie the perfection of his poetry and offer his poetics the exclusive position it occupies in twentieth-century (Greek and) European literary history.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to I.K.Y. (State Scholarships Foundation) for awarding me a three-year scholarship for the research and the writing of this thesis.

I am grateful to Professor Peter A. Mackridge for supervising my thesis and for offering me his constant support and challenging criticism. His availability for innumerable formal and informal discussions, his inexhaustible patience, and his indefatigable reading of numerous drafts of my thesis have been a source of influence that is hard to acknowledge enough.

I wish to thank Professor Jacqueline Rose, and Professor Marian Hobson-Jeanneret for stimulating and encouraging my D.Phil. studies in Oxford; I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Dr. D.F. Cram, Professor J.R. Hiddleston, and Professor Michael Worton for the discussions they have had with me and for offering me their advice, and especially to Dr. Manolis Polentas for all the discussions, his criticism, and for reading the first chapter of my thesis.

I would like to thank Dr. Stephen Henighan for proof-reading the first two parts of one of the final drafts of my thesis, and the friends and colleagues with whom I shared knowledge and experience during these years in Oxford.

Finally, I would like to thank, above all, my parents.

In this thesis, the simplified diacritic system ('monotonic') is employed and all Modern Greek texts, apart from poetry, are quoted in this system. However, bearing in mind Elytis' own reaction to the official substitution of the monotonic system for the traditional diacritic system ('polytonic') in education and the fact that semantic changes may be brought about in the case of poetry--such an example is considered in Chapter 6--all poetry is quoted in the diacritic system in which it was published (this includes texts by other Modern Greek poets). For the same reason, the titles of Elytis' visual art are also quoted in the traditional diacritic system. As a general observation regarding Elytis' poetry, it should be mentioned here that, although the poet uses the traditional diacritic system in all of his poetic (and theoretical) texts, the grave accent (*βαρεία*) appears neither in the editions of *Τά ρῶ τοῦ ἔρωτα* and *Μαρία Νεφέλη* that I use, nor in the first editions of *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας* and *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* , which I employ.

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Introduction

In this thesis the poetics of Odysseas Elytis is considered as being the outcome of his systematic theoretical work on poetry and art, work that he undertook deliberately for a period of about fifteen years, that is, broadly between 1944 and 1960. The term 'Elytis' poetics' is used in this thesis to refer to his ideas on the role of the poet, on the status and function of poetry, and on poetic writing. This term also refers to his poetry in which these ideas are put into practice, that is, the poetry he published from 1960 onwards, including *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*.[1] Elytis provides accounts of the theoretical aspects of his poetics in his essays, in his interviews and other commentaries, and in his 'poetic metalanguage',[2] that is, poetry in which he refers to poetry. He also presents his ideas on poetry, firstly, through his many and frequently extensive references to other poets and poetry not his own, which appear primarily in his essays and in his later poetry, and secondly, through his references to the relation of poetry to visual art, which are made in his essays (especially those in which he is concerned with visual art), in his own visual art, and in his later poetry.

My aim is to demonstrate that for Elytis the writing of poetry presupposed a theoretical basis, which he developed in the years 1944-1960. The poetry he published from 1960 to 1995 bears witness to the existence of this theoretical framework and also of its dynamic character, which reflects his dynamic conception

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[1] Although the first edition of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* bore the indication that the poem was published in December 1959, in reality it came out in March 1960 together with *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ* (see Daskalopoulos 1986: 270). In this thesis, the year 1959 is considered to be the date of publication for *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*. However, since it is argued here that Elytis' thought reached a point of stabilization sometime before 1960, and not on a particular date, the year 1960 in which *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ* was also published has been adopted for methodological purposes as an approximate date to refer to the end-point of the process of the emergence of Elytis' poetics.

of poetry, and is, perhaps, its natural consequence. By examining both Elytis' essays and his poetry, I argue that his poetic ideas emerged in the period between 1944 and 1960 and reached a point of stabilization sometime before 1960; in his poetry published from 1960 to 1995, his views are put into practice in a dynamic process of crystallization.

The emergence of Elytis' ideas in the years 1944-1960 was a process of continuous evolution; the stabilization which they achieved sometime before 1960 marks the end-point of this process, that is, the point at which his ideas aquired a concrete form. This point of stabilization is indicated here in order to mark the most important transition in Elytis' poetic formation; as is argued in this thesis, the poetry he published from 1960 onwards was no longer expressive of his intuitive approach to poetic writing but was based on the systematic exploration of the internal perspectives opened up by the theoretical frame he had developed. However, this point of stabilization does not bear any other significance, nor does it constitute a static period in Elytis' poetics. It is argued in this thesis that the process of the emergence of his poetics was immediately followed by the phase of crystallization, which was a continuation of this process of evolution. Neither the emergence of his poetics nor its crystallization were static; by contrast, they were dynamic processes of constant evolution and development. Yet the character of this evolution differs between these two processes. While in the first phase the developments concerned primarily the fundamental, central aspects of his poetics--indeed, the very emergence of his ideas and the theoretical framework of his poetry--in the second phase,

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[2] See Babiniotis 1991: 735.

developments were less theoretical and more practical, and chiefly concerned the transformation of ideas into poetry. During the process of crystallization, Elytis' ideas were put into concrete practice in a natural way, but also, most naturally, further evolved, reaching perfection. The term 'crystallization' is employed partly because it is connected to Elytis' own conception of the crystal, which is a central notion in his poetics, as is shown in this thesis.

Examining Elytis' theoretical endeavour and his poetry, this thesis explores those aspects of his poetics that indicate the existence of two main periods in his poetry. It is argued that these are, firstly, the intuitive period of his early poetry, which was published in *Προσανατολισμοὶ* (1940) and *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος* (1943), and, secondly, the period of poetry in which his poetic ideas are put into practice; this second period starts with *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* (1959) and *Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ* (1960) and lasts right up to his penultimate collection of poetry, *Δυτικὰ τῆς λύπης* (1995). This thesis concentrates on the poetry of Elytis' second period, in which his poetics was crystallized. The poems which may have contributed to Elytis' realization of the need for the development of a concrete theoretical basis for his poetry, that is, the published part of *Ἀλβανιάδα* (1941 [pub. 1962]),[3] *Ἆσμα ἡρωικὸ καὶ πένθιμο γιὰ τὸν χαμένο ἀνθυπολοχαγὸ τῆς Ἀλβανίας* (1943/1945 [pub. 1945]),[4] and *Ἡ καλωσύνη στις λυκοποριές* (1946 [pub. 1947]),[5] are

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[3] According to the anonymous author of the brief note 'Το "Ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο άσμα στον ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας" ', who signs as 'Ippos', in the issue of *Ιππόκαμπος* accompanying the 1945 issue of *Τετράδιο Δεύτερο* in which *Ἆσμα ἡρωικὸ καὶ πένθιμο γιὰ τὸν χαμένο ἀνθυπολοχαγὸ τῆς Ἀλβανίας* was first published, this poem constituted one part of a poem whose other parts were *Ἀλβανιάδα* and the destroyed *Βαρβαρία*, and were all written in 1941 (Ippos 1945: 8). Vitti believes that Elytis himself was the author of this note (Vitti 1984: 194).

[4] The information about this poem's year of composition is offered in Vitti 1984: 226, n. 4.

[5] This poem is considered to have been written in the summer of 1946 (see Vitti 1984: 196 and Daskalopoulos 1986: 267).

considered in this thesis as belonging to an intermediate or middle period, which followed his first period but were written before his views on poetics reached an advanced stage, indicating, in a way, the transition between his two main periods.

The existence of the first period (*Προσανατολισμοὶ* and *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος*) and of the second period (poetry published from 1960 to 1995) entails implications concerning Elytis' relation with Surrealism which have not been explored by earlier criticism. As is explained in Chapter 2, even the actual existence of two periods in his poetry, the first of which is based on intuitive expression while the second on a firm theoretical basis, seems to have been a natural outcome of Elytis' immersion in the Surrealist thought and practice. This thesis argues that, irrespective of the extent and the type of his experiments with Surrealism in his first period, Surrealism constitutes the basis of Elytis' poetic endeavour throughout the second period.

⌘

In the early 1990s, Elytis held that the art of writing was a very difficult task; the poem was a 'complex organism' and not simply a confession, while poetry was 'μια οδυνηρή δουλειά που μόνο στο τέλος αφήνει κάποια ικανοποίηση'.[6] In his interview with Analis in 1983, he admitted that his aim was novelty and that he thought that this could be achieved by questioning existing aesthetic values: 'J'ai mis à l'épreuve les conditions de l'esthétique autant qu'un croyant le ferait avec celles de l'éthique. Et chacune de mes actions, chacune de mes innovations dans l'expression, correspond à la même potentialité. Je ne parle pas de succès. *Je parle d'intentions, d'efforts*' (Elytis 1983a: 104; my emphasis). As is explained in Chapters 1 and 2, his

[6] See Platanos 1992.

wish to produce 'new poetry' encouraged his exploration of 'the practical problems of lyricism'. Around 1944 he appears to have realized that this ought to involve a full reconsideration of aesthetic rules, conventions and practices. The need to develop a firmer theoretical background for his poetic practice seems to have emerged as a natural consequence; around this time, Elytis seems to have realized that theory ought to precede the writing of poetry.

The fact that he wrote critical essays on poetry (and art) from the early stages of his poetic career may testify to his theoretical bent. But his serious and self-conscious attempts to produce a theoretical basis for his poetic pursuits took place in the period broadly between 1944 and 1960. The 'manuscripts' of 1944, mentioned in the essay 'Τα κορίτσια' (1987: 162), must have been theoretical texts. In 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963),[7] Elytis himself points out that the year 1944 marked a kind of transition in his thought, when he realized that he could develop a concrete theoretical basis for his poetry rather than simply experimenting with Surrealist and modernist ideas. As he observes:

> Δε μου αρκούσε πια η ελευθερία της μορφής μήτε η επαναστατικότητα που συμβόλιζαν οι παράτολμες [...] εικόνες. [...] Αυτά όλα που είχαμε συναποκομίσει από την περιπέτεια έπρεπε βέβαια να διατηρηθούν· *αλλά και να μπουν στην υπηρεσία ενός σκοπού, να μη χάνονται στο κενό, ή να συγκροτούν απλώς μια λιγότερο ή περισσότερο αφηρημένη ποιητική κατάσταση.* (1987: 418-419; my emphasis)

As becomes apparent from this observation, what he had in mind was the elaboration of a theoretical framework which could support a further exploration of the

[7] On the date of this essay's composition see Vitti 1984: 336.

possibilities that his earlier experiments with Surrealist and non-Surrealist ideas had opened up. As he explicitly states in the same essay, around 1950, that is, during his sojourn in France (1948-1951), he was deeply involved in developing a theoretical basis for his poetry:

> Η σημασία της θεωρητικής σκέψης τα χρόνια εκείνα ήτανε για μένα το παν. Θα μου έφτανε να καταλήξω σ᾽ ένα συμπέρασμα για το πώς πρέπει να᾽ναι γραμμένο ένα ιδανικό ποίημα, ποια πρέπει να᾽ναι η αισθητική του και ποιο το νόημά του, κι ας μην το έγραφα ποτέ. Οι σημειώσεις, που κρατούσα, πλημμύριζαν τα συρτάρια μου, τα ράφια μου, τις βαλίτσες μου. (1987: 454)

The importance that he attributed to the elaboration of a theoretical substructure to support the writing of poetry is evident in the fact that he referred to 'the ideal poem'. The 'theories' and the 'methods' to which he refers in his 'commentary' on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*,[8] indicating that he employed them in the poem (1995a: 44, 46), testify that he was developing and systematizing his poetic ideas while working on the poem prior to its publication. In fact, Elytis' stay in France may have been especially inspiring and rewarding. 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' provides his retrospective accounts of the period 1935-1945, but also refers to his sojourn in France. This essay and his essays on Picasso (1951), Giuseppe Ungaretti (1958), Pierre Reverdy (1961), and Yannis Tsarouchis (1964),[9] among others, show that his poetic ideas reached a point of stabilization before 1960. The poetry that he

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[8] Elytis' 'commentary' on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, which the poet himself never published, is reported to have been written 'for private use' (Keeley & Savidis 1974: xv); Keeley and Savidis were the first to use it in their translation of the poem into English. Although the publication of the commentary by Kechayoglou in 1995 provoked a reaction from the poet, it is a rich source of metadiscursive information, which has been used by other critics (see, for instance, Vitti 1984: 234, 237, 271-272). For this reason, this thesis draws on it when needed. As is apparent from Elytis' observations in this commentary, it is possible that at least some of its parts were written before or around the completion of the poem (cf. Kechayoglou 1995: 27-28, 30).

published from 1960 onwards indicates that his poetics entered the new dynamic phase of crystallization at that time.

In the essay 'Πρώτα-πρώτα', which was first published in 1974, Elytis expressed his reservations concerning his early poetry but did not disown it (1987: 4-5). Although he did not refer to a particular collection, the poems that he had in mind must have been those collected in the 1940 volume of *Προσανατολισμοί*. Elytis referred to the formal experiments that appear in poems of this collection by clearly attributing their inadequacies to his intuitive attempts to 'orientate' himself poetically. But his observations, with which he clearly indicated that his early poetry had ceased to be expressive of his conception of poetry by 1974, may also be taken to refer to the poems of *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος*. Although this shorter collection is thematically and stylistically more unified than *Προσανατολισμοί*, the poems constituting it resemble those of *Προσανατολισμοί*, since they are technically rather simple poems.

On the other hand, Elytis gave evidence of his dissatisfaction with poems that belong neither completely to his first period nor to his second. These are the poems of his middle period, that is, poems that do not entirely belong to the first intuitive period, since at the time of their composition Elytis had already started to be preoccupied with theory, and do not belong to his second period either, since his theoretical ideas had not yet reached that stage of external stabilization which would later lead to the achievements of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*. Of these poems, *Καλωσύνη στὶς λυκοποριὲς* and *Ἀλβανιάδα* are not

[9] Following the indications provided in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, the essays on Picasso, Ungaretti and Reverdy were written in 1951, 1958 and 1961 respectively; there is no indication concerning the date of

examined in this thesis and are considered here as having been rejected by Elytis, since he never published them in book form. On the other hand, the fact that he published *Ἄσμα ἡρωικὸ καὶ πένθιμο γιὰ τὸν χαμένο ἀνθυπολοχαγὸ τῆς Ἀλβανίας* in a separate book only after succumbing to public demand,[10] is also regarded here as being indicative of his belief that this poem did not come up to his theoretical expectations. Indeed, the poem is closer to the poetic manner of his first period, although it constitutes his first successful attempt at a longer and more composite poem. For these reasons, while it is also considered here as belonging to Elytis' middle period, it is mentioned during the examination of the poetry of his second period.



Elytis himself referred to the existence of 'three periods' or 'cycles' in his poetry in the following passage from his interview with Ivask:

> There are three periods in my poetry. I did not consciously arrange my books this way. It is only after having written them that I realize this to be the case. In my first period nature and metamorphoses predominate (stimulated by surrealism, which always believed in the metamorphosis of things). In my second period, including *The Axion Esti*, there is greater historic and moral awareness, yet without the loss of vision of the world which marks my first period. The world has remained for me the same down to the present day. I do try to change my expression, however. I do not want to write continually in the same way, because I have the feeling then of repeating myself. I want to find new forms, new ways of expression. [...] *solar* metaphysics [...] characterizes the third period of my poetry, my third cycle [...], which is represented by the collection "The Light Tree and the Fourteenth Beauty" (1971). [...] My new long poem "Maria Neféli" belongs to the third period. (Elytis 1975: 639-640; emphasis by Ivask)

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publication of the essay on Tsarouchis, which was first published in 1964.

[10] See Vitti 1984: 196.

The mere fact that in 1975 Elytis includes in his 'third period' a yet incomplete poem (*Μαρία Νεφέλη*) (1978) is enough to cause critical scepticism. Elytis' distinction between three periods in his poetry is not adopted in this thesis, for the following reasons: firstly, he made the distinction in 1975, that is, at a time when only a part of his poetry had been written. Secondly, the poet's own 'classification' should be approached with critical precaution, since it may be intended to influence the attitudes of later critics. Yet these serious reasons for being suspicious of Elytis' distinction have not been pointed out by critics, who adopt it with hardly any expressions of reservations.[11] Perhaps what deceives the critics is Elytis' suggestion that, while his vision remains the same, his aim is to change his 'expression'. Elytis' comment seems to have been the source of the critical confusion that has led to general misunderstandings regarding his poetics. There could be a contradiction in this statement, since 'expression' is definitely not the same, for instance, in the poems of *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιὰ* and *Μαρία Νεφέλη*.

As is explained in this thesis, Elytis' observation refers to his constant experiments with poetic material, experiments that make each of his collections, and often poems, resemble no other. However, with this observation, Elytis does not refer to his poetic ideas, that is, the theoretical aspects that constitute the framework of his poetics. The 'three periods' into which he divided his poetry from *Προσανατολισμοὶ* up to and including *Μαρία Νεφέλη* in fact indicate an attempt to perceive, on the one hand, thematic changes, and on the other, stylistic changes

[11] A characteristic example of the prevailing critical attitude is the following comment in which a critic observes that the poet's authority cannot be questioned: 'Διαφωνίες και ενστάσεις δε θα μπορούσαν να υπάρξουν, αφού τα χρονικά όρια αυτών των περιόδων τα καθόρισε ο ίδιος ο ποιητής' (Parisis 1997: 28). However, it has to be mentioned here that this is a critic who

between his poems (and perhaps also collections). This was an unsuccessful attempt, since, for instance, nature and metamorphoses do not prevail in his early poetry alone, but in all of his poetry. On the other hand, Elytis links poetic collections on the ground of similarities that are not always as apparent as he may have thought them to be in 1975; for instance, the problematic notion of 'solar metaphysics' seems to have a totally different function in the poems of *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιὰ* and in the poems of *Μαρία Νεφέλη*. Elytis' attempt to distinguish between these 'three periods' was unsuccessful--perhaps it was an underdeveloped idea that he conceived of around the time he gave his interview with Ivask, which may explain why he hardly again referred to these 'three periods' in the essays he wrote after 1974--and needs to be reconsidered and complemented.

The contribution of this thesis to this reconsideration is the separate distinction it proposes between the poetry of Elytis' first and his second period. As is argued in this thesis, there is a clear distinction between the poetry of his first period, which was written more or less intuitively, and the poetry of his second period, in which a firm theoretical basis supports and controls the creative exploitation of different techniques, the exploration of the possibilities offered by language and the production of the image. This is the basic, fundamental distinction that needs to be made in order to understand the principal aspects of Elytis' poetics. On this basis, further distinctions may be made by considering different thematic

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may not be reliable, since on the same page of his essay he misrepresents Elytis' statement by claiming that the 'third period' starts with *Μαρία Νεφέλη*.

'cycles' or areas, and different stylistic approaches in different poems.[12] The distinction made in this thesis between the two poetic periods of Elytis is not evaluative; emphasis is placed on the poetry of his second period in order to show the extent to which his ideas were put into poetic practice, and the manner in which this came about.



Although Elytis' poetics has not been the subject of a systematic examination, critics have perceived and referred to a kind of 'transition' or 'change', which they tend to associate with his poetics. In the fourth part of the 'Introduction' to his translations of selected poems by Elytis, *The Sovereign Sun. Selected Poems* (1974), Kimon Friar refers to a number of 'transitions' (1990: 20), which, in his view, marked the period between the end of the Second World War and the publication of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*. The transitions mentioned by Friar primarily concern Elytis' travels outside Greece in the years 1948-1951, his association with non-Greek writers and artists, such as the French Surrealists, and the official posts that the poet undertook upon his return to Greece in 1951. However, among these details, which occasionally provide incorrect and inconsistent biographical information about Elytis, Friar makes the following statement:

> The following ten years [1948-1958] were anguished ones for him, during which he traveled much, participated in many outer activities out of a sense of responsibility and national duty. *As an art and literary critic, he attempted to formulate an aesthetic and mold a way of life that would be more relevant to the world about him, yet would not lose those essential virtues which were the*

[12] But such distinctions should be made with extreme caution, and only in order to make the critical work easier; as is argued in this thesis, the poetry of Elytis' second period presents a remarkable consistency and uniformity, and any attempt of this kind is doomed to stand on very slippery ground, as Elytis' own unsuccessful attempt proves.

> *foundations of his character and poetic validity*. He said farewell to the enchanting dreams of his youth in a long and lingering departure, for *although during the years 1947-1956 he wrote many poems and essays on aesthetic matters, he destroyed almost all of them, seeing that neither his poetry nor his theories had progressed much beyond his earlier work*. Nevertheless, stubbornly resisting powers of annihilation, he struggled to formulate new standards of belief and art, thus solidly building the foundation of his mature work. (1990: 20; my emphasis)

A page later, Friar focuses on one kind of 'transition',[13] and he seems to hold that this was primarily a psychological one. He states that, although Elytis 'found it extremely difficult to make the painful transition, to merge and unite a deeper reality with an insistently encroaching outer reality [...] finally, in 1959, he published *Axion Esti*, and in 1960, *Six and One Remorses for the Sky*' (1990: 21). The logical implication emerging from reading Friar's statements is that it would be highly unlikely for a poet who took so long to overcome the 'painful transition' and who destroyed most of his poems around 1956 to have suddenly come up with so many and complex poems, written in a period of less than three years. What may have happened in this case is that Friar exaggerated information that the poet revealed to him. As Elytis makes it known in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', in 1951 he returned to Greece from France without his briefcase with the manuscripts (1987: 459); although it is not clear whether he deliberately left it behind or whether it was lost, it must, however, be true that, at some point, he destroyed a part of his (theoretical and poetic?) work. But he could not have destroyed all of his work, and certainly, at least not the manuscripts of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* (and *Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*).

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[13] Interestingly, the title ('Transitions') of Friar's introduction is translated as 'Η μετάβαση' in the Greek version of Friar's text (Friar 1978: 35).

Other critics have perceived a 'change' and a 'transition' in Elytis' poetry, which they relate to this poem, but they have not specified when this took place and what kind of transition it was. In his essay 'Elytis and the Greek tradition' (1975), Edmund Keeley observes a 'change in style' (1983: 137) between Elytis' early poetry, that is, *Προσανατολισμοί*, and *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος* and *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*. In Keeley's view, in this poem, Elytis 'translat[es] his early surrealist mode into a new style that is usually more subtle, usually more controlled, than what we have seen in his early poems, yet that still retains a lyrical vitality and a cunning arrangement of evocative images' (1983: 137). On the other hand, in the closing paragraphs of his book *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Κριτική Μελέτη* (1984), Mario Vitti stresses the need for a special study that would focus on the period immediately following *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, since, as he claims, a significant 'change' and 'transition' takes place in Elytis' poetics immediately after this poem (1984: 320-321). According to Vitti, the factors which provide evidence of 'μια νέα μεθόδευση της ποιητικής συγκίνησης' (1984: 320) concern 'τη συναισθηματική αφορμή, τη δραματική οικονομία, τους μηχανισμούς διατύπωσης', and others which he does not mention. Furthermore, Vitti makes the astute observation that the value of Elytis' poetry is maximized in those of his poems in which there are 'προαποφασισμένες μορφικές και λεκτικές επιλογές' (1984: 322), but he undermines his own argument by claiming that this happens because these choices 'βρίσκουν γερά αντερείσματα στις βιωματικές εμπειρίες και καταφέρνουν έτσι όχι μόνο να μην παρασύρουν την ποίηση σε ανεπάρκειες παρόμοιες μ' αυτές που έχουν υπονομεύσει άλλους ποιητές, αλλά και να μην αφήνουν έκθετη την αρχιτεκτονική της "μορφής"'.

Vitti's arguments, acknowledging the need for the study which is undertaken in this thesis, are based on intuitive assumptions which are verified by the results reached in this thesis. However, following Elytis' failed distinction into 'three periods', Vitti does not manage to recognize that the changes he intuitively perceives in the poetry published after *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* are already present in this poem. Keeley's observation referring to the 'change in style' between Elytis' earlier poetry and *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* proves thus to be more penetrating than Vitti's assertions. Yet, in the limited space of his essay, Keeley restricts his study to the stylistic changes that emerge in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί.* Keeley, like Vitti and Friar, refers to a change, and like Vitti, makes a kind of distinction between Elytis' earlier and later poetry. Keeley also acknowledges the existence of a 'middle period' that mediates between the early and the later poetry. As he confesses, this 'middle period' was indicated to him by the poet himself (1983: 139) and includes, in particular, *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί.*

These three critics all knew Elytis and had been assisted by him in their work, each to a different extent and manner. It is likely that Elytis' commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* was written so as to facilitate the translation of this poem into English and also critical works by non-Greek critics (Kechayoglou 1995: 28), since Keeley (and Savidis), and Friar, but also Vitti had a copy of it. It is apparent that all three critics have not only been guided by the poet to realize the 'transition' but also been misled by him, since his insistence on the 'three periods' in his poetry, adopted by all three, seems to have obfuscated their critical sight. This is clearly manifested in the fact that the only critic who has come closer to what is really at issue in Elytis'

'transition' is D.N. Maronitis, who did not consult the poet;[14] this critic, in his essay 'Ο εσωτερικός λυρισμός του Ελύτη' (1980), observes the following: 'Οπωσδήποτε το " Άξιον Εστί" και οι "Τύψεις" ορίζουν, θα έλεγα, τον μέσο και αποφασιστικό κύκλο της ποιητικής δράσης του Ελύτη. Από την άποψη αυτή όλα τα προηγούμενα μοιάζουν με προετοιμασία, ενώ τα επόμενα παραπέμπουν πια σταθερά στη διπλή αυτή μήτρα' (1984: 109). Although, in his study, Maronitis focuses on only two poems while attempting to reach rather general conclusions, the point he makes is significant, since, as is shown in this thesis, it is indeed *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ* that bear evidence of the new phase that Elytis entered sometime before 1960, a phase in which his poetics crystallized within a set theoretical frame.

Vitti's book is the best of the existing presentations of Elytis' poetry which touch upon aspects of Elytis' poetics. However, Vitti's perspective and methodology are those of a literary historian, and by nature his study is restricted to a consideration of the poet's 'βιωματικές εμπειρίες' and of biographical details, with which Vitti seems to be obsessed, so that he remains bound to his unsolved 'αρχικό πρόβλημα [...] να καταλάβω τις διαδικασίες γραφής ενός ποιήματος και το ρόλο που παίζουν στην τελική του μορφή οι βιογραφικές αναφορές του ποιητή του' (1984: 321). The historical and biographical perspective is frequently assumed by critics and scholars working on Elytis' poetry.[15] It is a perspective that may present attractive biographical details and may contribute to the reconstruction

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[14] However, Maronitis too must have read Elytis' commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, since this was used by Savidis in his teaching at the University of Thessaloniki as early as the late 1970s (Kechayoglou 1995: 28).

[15] See, for instance, Rotolo 1975: 690-695, who also relates the transition 'from the early to the later Elytis' (1975: 691), that is, the transition he perceives from *Προσανατολισμοὶ* to *Ἆσμα ἡρωικὸ*

of the historical context needed for the study of Elytis' poetics, but cannot supply the methodological principles that are indispensable to such a study. Apart from this, biographical and historical details may obscure rather than illuminate Elytis' poetics, and thus lead to misunderstandings and confusion. The critical confusion on the issue of Elytis' 'three periods' should be attributed to tendencies that are inherent in a literary historian's attitude. The uncritical adoption of this distinction by scholars to the present day has given rise to a major theoretical and methodological obstacle that has to be overcome in order to study Elytis' poetics on firm ground and to prevent misconceptions and critical inconsistencies such as those that undermine the recently published book *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Η αθέατη πλευρά του κόσμου και η καθαρότητα του φωτός* (1997) by Marilena Proimou-Erinaki. In this book, the writer, on the one hand, adopts the poet's distinction into periods, because 'έχει γίνει ευρέως αποδεκτή και από την κριτική' (1997: 24, n. 9), and on the other hand, admits, without realizing the contradiction in her statements, that her book restricts itself to the 'first two periods' because, as far as the 'third period' is concerned, 'τα δεδομένα που προέκυψαν δεν προσθέτουν δραστικά διαφοροποιημένα στοιχεία σε σχέση με τις άλλες δύο, τουλάχιστον ως προς την ουσία της ποιητικής του ποιητή' (1997: 22).[16]

Critics have not been able to express themselves with confidence on the issue of Elytis' relation with Surrealism, and this could be attributed equally to the uncritical adoption of his distinction between 'three periods' in his poetry, but also

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καὶ πένθιμο γιὰ τὸν χαμένο ἀνθυπολοχαγὸ τῆς 'Αλβανίας, to historical and psychological factors.

[16] The book by Proimou-Erinaki was published when the main body of this thesis was already completed and thus it was impossible to consider it. The book only touches upon aspects of Elytis' poetics, dealing with issues that are examined primarily in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

to the lack of a systematic study of his poetics. Yannis Ioannou's study *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Από τις καταβολές του Υπερρεαλισμού στις εκβολές του μύθου* (1991), is the best of the existing works on Elytis and Surrealism. However, in this book, the actual extent to which Surrealism has determined Elytis' thought and his poetic practice is not examined, since the book is based on pre-existing critical conclusions on Elytis' relation to Surrealism. Thus, Ioannou conforms with earlier criticism when claiming, perhaps in a more assertive tone, that Elytis' attitude towards Surrealism was one of an 'ατομικιστική-εγωκεντρική προσέγγιση [...] αναφορικά με τη διαδικασία της δημιουργίας' (1991: 20), and the product of the 'σύζευξη του υπερρεαλιστικού στοιχείου με την [Greek] παράδοση' (21), rather than reaching and offering his own conclusions concerning Elytis' relation with Surrealism. Ioannou approaches Elytis' poetry and essays by assuming this detached attitude right from the beginning of his book, and thus, he only represents in a more systematic manner conclusions reached by earlier critics of Elytis' poetry, such as Vitti (1984).

A significant observation has been made by Alexandros Argyriou, who claims that 'η γραφή του Ελύτη ήταν και παραμένει Υπερρεαλιστική' (1985a: 64); yet his statement has not been supported by a satisfactory explanation why he believes that this is the case. Several other critics have touched upon aspects of Elytis' poetics, and their contribution to this subject is taken into account in Parts I, II, and III of this thesis.[17] There also exist numerous other books (more than fifty) and

[17] Apart from essays published in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, which present a first reaction to the poetry of his first period and for this reason do not concern this thesis (a catalogue of this kind of critical work is provided in *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Βιβλιογραφία (1935-1971)* compiled by Vitti in co-operation with Angeliki Gavatha [1977]), other studies touching upon aspects of Elytis' poetics include the following: Vitti (1979), Lychnara (1980 and 1986), Lambadaridou-Pothou (1981), Meraklis

essays on Elytis; most of them simply echo Elytis' own statements, either presenting his poetry by paraphrasing his essays, or presenting his essays by paraphrasing his poetry;[18] however, it has to be mentioned that this is a rather general attitude, probably encouraged by the richness of Elytis' theoretical texts and by the consistency between his views and his poetic practice, and many of the books and essays referred to in this thesis and indicated above do the same.



Although many of the above-mentioned studies focus on specific aspects of Elytis' poetics, they do not explore it as being the outcome of the emergence and crystallization of his ideas in the period between 1944 and 1995. Thus, although aspects of Elytis' poetics are touched upon, the emergence of his thought, the poetry that bears evidence of this, and the type and extent of the developments involved in the emergence and the crystallization of his poetics are not examined systematically. This thesis explores these issues. One of the aspects of Elytis' endeavour which have become clear during my research is the remarkable consistency that his theoretical and poetic development presents. As the poetry of his second period

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(1984), Daniil (1986), Dekavalles (1990), and Dimou (1992). The following articles appearing in special issues of journals devoted to Elytis deal with aspects of Elytis' poetics: Robinson (1975), Jouanny (1975), Rotolo (1975), Iakov (1986), Paschalis (1986), Ivanovici (1986), Babiniotis (1991), Grodent (1991), Malkoff (1991), Ioannou (1991), Politi (1993), Minucci (1993), Ioannou (1995-1996), and Ilinskaya (1995-1996). A selection of other studies that touch upon aspects of Elytis' poetics are the following: Vitti (1976), Argyriou (1985a and 1985b), Belezinis (1986a and 1986b), Tsitarakis (1987-1988), Katsakos (1988), Siaflekis (1989), Georgousopoulos (1994), Minucci (1995), Leontis (1995), Mackridge (1997). Other studies which present a more general interest are the following: Zografou (1971), Thalassis (1974), Fylaktos (1974), Papachristou-Panou (1980), Karandonis (1983), Kokolis (1984), Iakov (1985), Gavalas (1987), Berlis (1992); these works inform this thesis from a wider perspective, but no specific references to them are made here.

[18] I have disregarded books or essays which may have a value on their own but whose scholarly qualities are seriously undermined by too many inconsistencies and contradictory arguments (an example is Mykoniou-Drybeta [1988]).

indicates, the poet hardly ever rejected any of his ideas and never retreated from the theoretical principles that he laid down for himself in the years 1944-1960.

One may distinguish between Elytis' general theories on the status and function of poetry, and his more practical views on the writing of poetry. Apart from being theoretical in his vision of the world, Elytis was also 'practically theoretical', to use the expression devised by Georgios Babiniotis, but with a different meaning from his.[19] Elytis was practically theoretical because in his essays and other commentaries he referred not only to his philosophical, aesthetic and poetic ideas, but also to the more practical and technical aspects of poetic composition. He also employed 'poetic metalanguage', that is, he wrote 'poetry which speaks of poetry' or, to use Savidis' term, 'poetry of poetics' (1985: 283). In this, he offers general or philosophical comments on the function of poetry in life, and also information about his poetics.

This thesis examines the emergence and crystallization of Elytis' poetics, focusing, on the one hand, on his ideas about poetry, and on the other, on the poetry of his second period. The absence of systematic critical studies on Elytis' poetics and the cardinal position that his poetics occupies in twentieth-century Greek and European poetry are the two principal reasons for selecting this subject. Elytis' poetics is an important subject not only because of its major significance for the history of Modern Greek and European literature, but also because it is a poetics

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[19] Babiniotis uses this expression to refer to the theoretical observations about poetry that appear in Elytis' poetry: 'Μ' αυτό εννοώ πως ο Ελύτης ξεκινάει με θεωρητικά επεξεργασμένες και θεμελιωμένες θέσεις για την ποίηση και τον ποιητή· [...] Έχει φιλοσοφική και μάλιστα αξιωματική θέση για την ποίηση, που την εκφράζει με σημαντική συχνότητα και στην ίδια του την ποίηση. Μιλάει στην ποίησή του για την ποίηση' (1991: 738). Apart from this view, Babiniotis' conviction that Elytis writes poetry based on pre-existing ideas deserves to be highlighted here, since it is a view that agrees with the theoretical principles of this thesis.

which has not been adequately evaluated by critics. The critical contribution to the study of Elytis' poetics has been disproportionate to his own theoretical work, since critical observations have been restricted to a partial consideration of his views about the role of the poet and the function of poetry. The emergence of Elytis' ideas on poetry and the crystallization of these ideas in his poetic practice has not been systematically explored. By exploring Elytis' essays and the poetry of his second period, this thesis examines his ideas and poetic practice and situates them in their socio-historical, ideological, literary and artistic context.

It is assumed in this thesis that the emergence and crystallization of Elytis' poetics was affected both by intraliterary factors and by the extraliterary context. The methodology according to which the issues referring to the emergence and crystallization of Elytis' poetics are examined draws on Kristeva's conception of intertextuality as 'an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee [...] and the contemporary or earlier cultural context' (1990: 36; her emphasis). Elytis' essays and other commentaries and his poetry itself are considered in this thesis not as closed systems but as texts in which the social, the ideological, and the historical context intersect with other literary voices in what is finally a 'permutation of texts' (Kristeva 1992: 36), or an intertextuality. Elytis' ideas and poetry did not emerge and further develop in a vacuum but are embedded in their cultural, historical, literary and aesthetic context. The study of his ideas and his poetry also takes into account that these were expressed and written in anticipation of an audience, of a readership (or of viewers, in the case of his own visual art). For these reasons, Elytis' poetics is

examined in this thesis with reference to its context, by considering the extent to which it has been conditioned by other ideas and poetic, artistic and ideological practices.

These methodological principles underlie the approach of this thesis to Elytis' theoretical texts in Parts I and II, and also to his poetry in Part III. However, in this last part, Kristeva's notion of intertextuality is only presupposed in Chapter 7 (in which poetry and visual art are examined from an interdisciplinary perspective), because, although it may explain the modes and factors which determine the production of the poetic texts, it cannot offer an adequately descriptive and explanatory model for their reading and their critical evaluation. Thus, in Chapter 6 Kristeva's notion of intertextuality is set aside and a more 'traditional' (Plett 1991: 3-4) conception of intertextuality is adopted in order to explore, on the one hand, the phenomenon of intertextuality which emerges in the poetry of Elytis' second period, and on the other hand, the dynamic nature of this poetry in which other poetic voices, and primarily Surrealism, are assimilated into his own ideas.

Since Elytis' ideas emerged in the period between 1944 and 1960 and reached a point of stabilization sometime before 1960, and they went on to be crystallized in the poetry he published in the years 1960-1995, emphasis is laid on the essays that (re)appear in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*. Other texts which were published between 1935 and 1960 but are not included in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* are also examined, since their very omission from the first collective volume of his essays makes them especially significant. The later essays collected in the second volume of essays, *Εν λευκώ*, are

also examined here, since they show that Elytis' ideas did not change after 1960 but rather remained consistent with the views he expressed in his early essays.

As a general observation regarding his essays, it can be mentioned here that, on several occasions, in the versions reprinted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* Elytis omitted or modified passages from the original versions of his published texts. The most characteristic example is the omission of the footnotes to the original versions of his essays, some of which can provide significant information about his ideas. In this thesis, the original version is cited whenever such omissions or modifications have taken place; otherwise, references are made to the standard, 'definitive' edition of 1987, or else both passages are referred to in case both present an equal interest.



As far as its structure is concerned, this thesis is organized as follows: Parts I and II focus on Elytis' essays, and Part III focuses on his poetry. In Parts I and II, Elytis' ideas on poetry are explored through an examination of his essays and other commentaries. In Part I, his views are situated in their literary, social and ideological context. This part explores his reception of Romanticism, Symbolism, and of Surrealist and non-Surrealist poetry. Part II explores the emergence of Elytis' poetics in the period between 1944 and 1960, and revolves around his approach to art and its metaphysical resonances, his ideas on the temporal and spatial dimensions of poetry and his views on the poem as a work of art. Part III examines the crystallization of Elytis' poetics and focuses on the poetry of his second period for the following reasons: as was indicated above, it is this poetry which bears evidence of the theoretical framework he developed between 1944 and 1960, and also shows the

crystallization of his poetics in the years 1960-1995. Furthermore, much of this poetry employs poetic metalanguage. One chapter in Part III, Chapter 6, deals with such poetry in particular, because it shows more explicitly than other poems the consistency between Elytis' essays and his poetry. Yet that his ideas are carried out in the poetic practice of his second period can be observed throughout the poems that he published in this period, as is shown in Chapter 7.

More specific chapter content is as follows: Chapter 1 considers Elytis' perceptions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century non-Surrealist poetry, and the way in which he received Romantic, Symbolist and modernist ideas on the role of the poet and on the function of poetry. It also examines Elytis' relationship with the 'Generation of the 1930s', to which he belonged, and the ideological, historical, socio-political and intraliterary factors that conditioned this relationship. Elytis' reception of the Greek poetry of his time is also considered here. Chapter 2 examines Elytis' assimilation of Surrealism into his broader aesthetic concerns. It also examines his ideological positions to the extent that they may have affected his poetic choices and pursuits. Elytis' relationship with Surrealism is considered in this chapter as an outcome of specific historical and cultural conditions, and as expressive of his poetic orientations.

Part II commences with Chapter 3, which examines those of Elytis' aesthetic and philosophical ideas that contributed to the emergence of his poetics. The views that Elytis expressed on the role of the artist and the poet and the function of art and poetry are considered in this chapter. Also considered here is Elytis' conception of Greece. The chapter seeks to clarify the relation between Elytis' views on visual art,

their philosophical background and his contemporary ideological and aesthetic context. Chapter 4 deals with Elytis' ideas on poetic time and with their background; it also explores his employment of myth, traces it to its sources, and explains the function of the three central mythical systems of his poetry. Chapter 5 presents Elytis' views on the poem as a totality and as consisting of component parts. It also examines his ideas on the function of the poetic imagination, the creative process, and the principles determing poetic perfection.

Part III begins with Chapter 6, which deals with those stylistic features of Elytis' poetry that exemplify his views on the role of the poet and on the function of poetry. In Chapter 7, the relationship between visual art and Elytis' poetry is explored. This chapter also considers his own visual art and the interaction between the pictorial and the poetic image in his poetry. The Appendix at the end of this thesis, which consists of 35 figures with copies of Elytis' own and other visual art, is connected primarily to Chapter 7 and should be consulted whenever indicated in this chapter.

PART I

Elytis' Reception of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Poetry

Chapter 1

Romanticism and Symbolism Revisited--Modernist Perceptions of Reality

1.0 *Introduction*

The emergence of Elytis' poetics, which, as is pointed out in Part II, coincided with the period 1944-1960, was the theoretical outcome of his consideration of specific aesthetic and poetic pursuits. However, his ideas and views were conditioned by the literary and aesthetic climate of modernism, in its broader sense, and also the ideological, historical and socio-cultural conditions of his time. His views are typical examples of modernist perceptions of poetry and reality, and resonate within the theoretical perspective of the French avant-garde and, in particular, Surrealism; [20] they are also embedded in the ideological framework of the first half of the twentieth century, and encumbered with the consequences of historical and social developments in Greece and Europe during that time.

Chapter 1 focuses on Elytis' perceptions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Greek and western European poetry, which are considered in this thesis to have emerged within this general historical framework and ideological background.

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[20] For an integrated account of modernism see Berman 1983 (esp. the introd., ch. II, and ch. III); also Calinescu 1987: 13-92, and esp. his lucid analysis of 'The Idea of the Avant-Garde' (1987: 95-148).

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the ideological and aesthetic implications of Elytis' own endeavour; therefore, while it is shown that his ideas were determined by the principles and choices of French Surrealism, those of the conditions that led to the emergence of his thought and are related to the historical emergence of French Surrealism are presupposed here.[21] On the other hand, emphasis is laid on the more specific historical context and the ideological setting of Elytis' Greek milieu, that is, the 'Generation of the 1930s'.[22] Thus, this chapter examines his views on Greek and European Romanticism (section 1.1), and his consideration of French Symbolism and twentieth-century non-Greek and non-Surrealist poetry (section 1.2) and of the Greek poetry of his time (section 1.3).

1.1 *The Romantic Ideal*

Elytis' relation with Romanticism has been pointed out mainly by himself in his many comments on the Romantic poets whose work he admired. It seems that his interest in Romantic poetry was aroused by his readings in French Surrealism. Not only are the French Surrealists associated with Romanticism in much French and Greek criticism, but they had themselves expressed their admiration for Romanticism (*Manifeste du surréalisme*). Of the French Romantics, Surrealists did not acknowledge Alphonse de Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, or Alfred de Vigny, but Victor Hugo (in his later phase), Chateaubriand (in his *exotisme*) (Breton 1988: 329),

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[21] On the historical genesis of French Surrealism see Raymond 1952, Nadeau 1965, Bédouin 1961, and Pierre 1980/1982.

[22] In this thesis, the term 'Generation of the 1930s' ('Γενιά του '30') is employed as generally used by criticism. It is questioned only with regard to the ideological implications of its use (see section 1.3).

and the 'minor Romantics', such as Aloysius Bertrand. Gérard de Nerval was for the French Surrealists the example *par excellence* of Romantic visionary madness. They also acknowledged all the German Romantics, and, of the English, Coleridge (for having apparently composed the lines of *Kubla Khan* in a dream), Keats, Shelley and Blake (for his visionary automatism). In his essays and interviews, Elytis referred to the Romanticism of Kalvos, whom he considered as a forerunner of the French Surrealists,[23] and Solomos; Hölderlin and Novalis seem to have been his favourite non-Greek Romantics, whereas he also mentioned Blake, Shelley, Achim von Arnim, Keats, and Nerval.[24] As is pointed out in the next two sections and in Part II, sometimes Elytis simply mentions these poets, but sometimes his comments take the form of extensive observations or of quotations from their work.

The Romantics were acknowledged by the French Surrealists, and by Elytis, not as a source for their ideas and poetic practice, but as precursors in their views on inspiration. In the Romantics, the Surrealists recognized a tradition of thought which, however, they aspired to enrich. Thus, while in the Romantic philosophy of being, the imagination has 'une fonction de *connaissance*', the philosophy of the French Surrealists,

> jouant au niveau de l'existence et non de l'essence, des existants et non de l'être, assigne à l'imagination une fonction directrice, mais non de *re*connaissance d'un préalable voilé: elle donne de l'*existence* à ses propres

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[23] Elytis claimed that Kalvos was a forerunner of modern poetry and, in particular, Surrealism (1987: 76), because his poetic expression developed 'with and from within' his imagination and by ignoring rationalism (1987: 81); thus, Elytis implicitly placed Kalvos in the Romantic tradition. Vayenas argues that Elytis' view contributed to the critical distortion of Kalvos' poetics (1992: 132-139). The theory supporting Kalvos' Romanticism has been rejected by Tziovas, who focuses on Kalvos' Neoclassicism (1992: 241-278). The issue is further discussed by Dallas (1994: 295-309). Elytis' view of Kalvos is determined by his ideological positions, as is pointed out in section 1.3.

[24] Elytis also referred to Caspar David Friedrich (1987: 505), the German painter who, in the view of the French Surrealists, exalted inspiration.

> *formes inouïes*. L'imagination (poétique) devient, par définition, *pratique*. Le jeu de mots *doit* se faire objet (Duchamp), les formes rêvées *doivent* êtres matérialisées en un objet tangible (Breton, *Introduction sur le peu de réalité*). (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 11; her emphasis)

The Romantic ideal forced a shift from the theory of Aristotelian mimetism (the mind as 'receptor') to expressive theories of art with an objective orientation (the poem as 'heterocosm'). Concurrently, the association of poet and Nature promoted a subjective feeling and the spontaneous interpretation of it (the mind as 'projector' or 'lamp'). In the Romantic mind, objective and subjective poetry were combined in the course of the Romantic quest for the absolute.[25]

The Romantic ideal survived in the Surrealists' conception of the ideal conciliation of opposites, the *merveilleux*. The Romantic associative imagination as a means of reaching the invisible appealed to the Surrealists as a way to the poetic marvellous. The Surrealists' admiration was also excited by the Romantic idea of the poet as visionary, in the sense that Rimbaud gave to the term: the Romantic poets they admired were not those who 'stretch[ed] their visions outward and upward' but those who 'projected [their visions] downward and inward' (Balakian 1986: 40). It was intense perceptiveness, 'une sensibilité comparable' or 'une filiation inspiratrice' (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 20) that the Surrealists recognized in the Romantics. Elytis' attitude was similar to that of the French Surrealists; in the following two sections, his observations on Romantic poetry and poets are considered, and his views on the poetic perception of nature are placed against the Romantic background.

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[25] On Romanticism see Abrams 1971, esp. pp. 47ff. and 272ff.

1.1.1 *Romantic Poets and Poetry*

Of the Romantic poets, Elytis devoted most of his critical attention to Kalvos, Solomos, Novalis, and Hölderlin. Elytis started working on his essay on Kalvos around 1938-1939, at the time of the debate on poetry conducted between Yorgos Seferis and Konstantinos Tsatsos (Elytis 1987: 387). He had completed the essay, entitled 'Η αληθινή φυσιογνωμία και η λυρική τόλμη του Ανδρέα Κάλβου', by early 1942, when he read it at the newly founded 'Κύκλος Παλαμά' (1987: 394-395). In fact, Palamas' view of Kalvos, as expressed in his 1888 lecture 'Κάλβος ο Ζακύνθιος' at the literary club 'Παρνασσός' (Palamas 1913: 18-48),[26] and in his essay 'Ο Κάλβος κι άλλη μια φορά', published in *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* (Palamas 1936: 179-201), inspired not only Elytis, but also, among others, Seferis.[27] Elytis' essay was first published in 1946, in the same Christmas issue of *Νέα Εστία* in which K.Th. Dimaras' highly influential essay 'Οι πηγές της έμπνευσης του Κάλβου' (1946: 107-133) also appeared.

By 1944, when he responded to Tsatsos by referring to Solomos (1987: 484), Elytis had apparently studied Solomos' poetics; he must have been aware not only of the importance of Neoclassical poetics and the Romantic philosophy in the poetic

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[26] Elytis read Palamas' essay in *Τα πρώτα κριτικά* (1913) (Elytis 1946b: 84, n. 1).

[27] *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* stressed the association of Palamas with Kalvos; Petros Spandonidis' essay 'Οι ωδές του Κάλβου' appeared in the October 1935 issue of the periodical. Palamas' 1936 essay was published in *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* in the following March, followed by the republication of D. Kaklamanos' response to Palamas' 1888 lecture, while the essay by Andreas Karandonis (the editor-in-chief of *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*) emphatically stressed the importance of Palamas' discovery of Kalvos (Karandonis 1936: 270-271). Tsatsos' book *Παλαμάς* was reviewed by Karandonis in the February 1937 issue of the periodical, where Seferis' essay 'Δοκιμές (απορίες διαβάζοντας τον Κάλβο)' (1974: 56-63), written in December 1936, also appeared. Incidentally, Seferis' essay 'Πρόλογος για μια έκδοση των "Ωδών" ', written in December 1941, was published in 1942, the same year as Elytis gave his talk on Kalvos (Seferis 1974: 179-210).

formation of Solomos, but also of the critical discussions about the role played by foreign sources in his poetics (1987: 495).[28]

Elytis must also have read Novalis' poetry and his theoretical texts (or parts of them) by 1944, since he referred to Novalis three times in January of that year.[29] Since, as Veloudis has pointed out (1989: 91-102), Novalis influenced Solomos, especially in the second stage of his poetic formation, it could have been through him that Elytis came to know Novalis. However, it is more likely that Elytis became interested in Novalis through his readings in French literature and criticism, and especially those of the Surrealists.[30] Quotations from Novalis that appear in his early essays seem to come from Surrealist sources.[31]

The first Greek translations of Hölderlin's poetry appeared in 1921.[32] Elytis may have come across Pierre-Jean Jouve's French translations of Hölderlin's poems, some of which first appeared in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1929 and in book form in 1930,[33] or he may have read the special issue of *Cahiers du Sud* dedicated to German Romanticism, which was edited by Albert Béguin in 1937. Béguin's dissertation on Hölderlin, which was also published in the same year (*L'Ame romantique et le rêve)*, could have been another source of Elytis' discovery of

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[28] For an account of these discussions see Veloudis 1989:13-17.
[29] See Elytis 1987: 505, 127, 477.
[30] Baudelaire knew Novalis' work (Pfefferkorn 1988: 18) and the French Symbolists were influenced both by Novalis' poetry and by his ideas on poetry and language (1988: 22).
[31] Elytis claimed that the Surrealists had rediscovered Novalis (1987: 530).
[32] See Clairmont 1994-1995: 82-102; also Mygdali 1977.
[33] The first translations of Hölderlin's poetry into French appeared in 1925 (Lernout 1994: 21-22). The translator was Bernhard Groethuysen and his translations were published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and in *Commerce*. His introduction to the former publication was included in *Poèmes de la folie* (1930) by Pierre-Jean Jouve. The poems of Hölderlin's madness translated by Jouve in collaboration with Pierre Klossowski (*Poèmes de la folie de Hölderlin*), some of which had already been published in 1929, as mentioned above, were reprinted many times and were very influential, especially on the Surrealists.

Hölderlin.[34] However, the fact that he himself suggested that he discovered Hölderlin during the Occupation (1987: 398) makes it probable that Elytis first read Hölderlin in Takis Papatsonis' translations (Papatsonis 1941b: 854-857; =1966: 437-443).[35] As is apparent in Elytis' essays in which he frequently quotes non-Greek poetry in its original language, no matter how he came to know this poetry, he subsequently read and studied the original texts.[36] Elytis' earliest references to Hölderlin appear in his 1944 'chronicle' referring to Nikos Gatsos' *'Αμοργός* (1944b),[37] while in his essay 'Τα κορίτσια', written in 1944, and completed in 1972, lines from Hölderlin's 'Der Rhein' are quoted in German (1987: 172). In 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', written in 1963, Elytis quotes two lines from Hölderlin's 'Patmos' (1987: 397) in German, and the opening and closing lines of Hölderlin's poem 'Griechenland' in Greek. With only one exception, Hölderlin is quoted by Elytis in German throughout *Εν λευκώ*.[38] The exception occurs in the short essay 'Το χαμένο θαύμα', which was first published in 1963 (1992: 205). Therefore, whereas Elytis may have initially come across Hölderlin's poetry through its Greek or French translations, or as a result of

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[34] In his dissertation Béguin 'contrasts Hölderlin's treatment of the themes of night and dream with that of the romantic poets, only to conclude that the former experienced a "spiritual adventure" that differs fundamentally from the romantic one. Whereas the romantics were in love with the night, Hölderlin celebrated the morning light that signaled the end of the retreat of the gods and a new religious beginning' (Lernout 1994: 22). Elytis was aware of Béguin's *Etude sur le rêve* (1939) (Elytis 1944a: 22, n. 2).

[35] As Iakov observes, Elytis used Papatsonis' translations in his poetry (Iakov 1986: 434 and 435, n. 4). Papatsonis pointed out that he was inspired to translate Hölderlin by reading the article on the German poet published by Panayotis Kanellopoulos in *Νέα Εστία* in August 1941 (Papatsonis 1941a: 851).

[36] In his essays Elytis quotes poetry from French, Italian, Spanish, German and English.

[37] Elytis does not quote Hölderlin on this occasion.

[38] See Elytis 1992: 18-19, 182, 231, 239, and 323.

his association with Greek poets such as Papatsonis and Seferis,[39] he must have studied it in its original language sometime around 1963.[40]

In his essays of the mid-1940s, Elytis claims that what characterizes all these Romantic poets is 'ένας *αέρας ποιητικός* [which] μόνο μέσ ' απ ' τις ρωγμές της σπασμένης συμβατικότητας πνέει' (1987: 477; Elytis' emphasis); theirs was a strong and noble attitude, and this was, in Elytis' view, the characteristic of all great lyrical poetry.[41] As he observes, these poets were inspired by revolutionary ideals in their youth and by a strength 'που *ανατρέπει τα καθιερωμένα*' (1987: 62). In his later essays, Elytis maintains that the distinctive property of these poets was a white light 'αυτό το λευκό σημάδι που διασώζανε στο έργο τους, [η] λάμψη που έφερναν είτε με τρόπο ήπιο είτε με αγριότητα' (1992: 59). He explains that this was the sign of the 'golden' vision that these poets had (1992: 18 and 323). Elytis calls them 'λευκοφόροι' (1992: 59), and considers them to be saints because of their wish to save humanity.[42] He especially perceives this visionary light in Solomos, Hölderlin, Novalis, Blake and Shelley.[43]

Elytis commented on the theories of these Romantic poets and on the way they used the imagination. Thus, he saw Blake as a kind of prophet who preached the abolition of the division between body and soul and gave priority to the senses (1992: 283-284). He also compared Blake to Heraclitus and Rimbaud because all three trusted their imagination in a similar manner (1992: 130). He used many quotations

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[39] See Seferis 1977: 42.
[40] Elytis owned a copy of A. Brieger's edition of Hölderlin's work, which was published in 1950 (see Iakov 1986: 436, n. 10).
[41] Cf. Elytis' essay on Lautréamont with similar observations (1939: 264-269; =1987: 608-614).
[42] Elytis regarded Solomos and Hölderlin as his own patron saints (1992: 411).

from the Romantics in his essays. He justified this by confessing that many aphorisms ('αφορισμοί' [1987: 159], and 'ρήσεις' [1992: 411]) encouraged him at difficult times. In point of fact, most of these quotations (or aphorisms) refer to the imagination and were used by Elytis primarily when he concerned himself with Surreality.[44] He did not neglect to relate these quotations with the Surrealists, who, as he pointed out, discovered or rediscovered many of these poets (1987: 530). In his view, what the Romantics had perceived, Surrealism confirmed,[45] that is, that reality has two sides which could not and should not be approached only through the intellect but also through the imagination, since the two of them made up Surreality. Elytis claimed that the imagination, dream,[46] and love,[47] which were the means to reach Surreality, were at the centre of Romantic aesthetics. Finally, he also implicitly commented on aesthetic aspects of their poetry, by distinguishing Romantic poems that he liked,[48] and by quoting passages of Romantic poetry as examples of successful poetic expression (1992: 231-244).

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[43] In others of his essays, Elytis also perceived this light in Plotinus, Romanos the Melodist, Mozart, Rimbaud, Theofilos (Chatzimichail), Fra Angelico, Vermeer, Alexandros Papadiamandis, and others.

[44] Thus, Elytis translated into Greek and quoted von Arnim: 'Ξεχωρίζω με κόπο τα όσα βλέπω με τα μάτια μου από τα όσα βλέπω με τη φαντασία μου' (1987: 505), Blake: 'αυτό που σήμερα μοιάζει αυταπόδεικτο κάποτε δεν ήτανε παρά ένα γέννημα της φαντασίας' (1987: 168), Shelley: 'το όργανο του Αγαθού, με την ηθική έννοιά του, είναι η φαντασία', and Novalis: 'Η Ποίηση είναι το απολύτως πραγματικό' (1987: 505), and '[poetry is] Απέραντα διαφορετική από την τέχνη του γραψίματος' (1987: 127). Elytis complemented the argument of Novalis by claiming that poetry is 'a psychic function'. In 'Τα κορίτσια', Elytis quotes Hölderlin in German: 'Ein Rätsel ist Reinentsprungenes' ('a mystery is a pure figment of the imagination'; 1987: 171).

[45] Elytis also quoted Paul Eluard and Pierre Mabille to complement the Romantics' comments on the imagination (1987: 505).

[46] Cf. ' 'Ονειρο του Shelley' (Elytis 1987: 239-241).

[47] Elytis referred to Romantic love and quoted Hölderlin in Greek: 'Φως της Αγάπης! Κι επί Νεκρών ακόμη λάμπεις τον / Χρυσό σου!' (1992: 205). According to Elytis, love aspired to the union with the sacred (1992: 203).

[48] Such poems were 'El Desdichado' (Nerval), *Hymnen an die Nacht* (Novalis), 'Brot und Wein', 'Patmos' and 'Rhein' (Hölderlin), *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (Blake), *Λύρα* and *Λυρικά* (Kalvos), ''Ελεύθεροι πολιορκημένοι' and ''Η γυναίκα τῆς Ζάκυθος' (Solomos).

1.1.2 *The Poet in Nature*

In the passages of his essays where Elytis refers to the Romantics, he maintains that the poet should view life with a positive attitude and instead of lingering on everyday surface details, realize life's deeper relation with one's inner self. By drawing on the associations of inner and external reality, one should be able not only to absorb the latter but to project one's inner self upon the phenomena of everyday life. Although Surrealist echoes are clearly discernible in such statements, Romantic thought is also implicitly present, since Elytis always refers to the projection of the self onto outer reality by stressing that the only way that this can be done is by remaining close to nature, and by trying to understand its function and the correspondence this has with one's inner self.

One of the aims of the German Romantics was to create the object from the subject, that is, Nature from the Mind, rather than merely reproduce Nature (through an imitative process). By referring to the Mind, the Romantics did not mean reason but the imagination, which they conceived of either as an unconscious outburst, an emotional response to reality (Shelley), or as visionary inspiration (Blake), or as an internal source of energy, similar to that which made a plant evolve spontaneously (Coleridge) (Abrams 1971: 129, 215ff., 172). The Romantic ideas on unconscious genius and organic growth, which were based on German natural philosophy and developed out of mutual influence in England and Germany, had a major impact on the European literature of the nineteenth century and, through the French Symbolists, reached the French Surrealists.

For Elytis, the poet is a visionary whose role is to produce work that would inspire a change in man (1987: 482-483). As was observed in the previous section, he referred to the light, the 'white mark' of poets inspired by a (humanitarian) vision, and called them 'λευκοφόροι'. This light, which may be taken to refer to Plotinus' light of inner vision, was associated by Elytis with the light of the sun. He attributed to both lights (the physical and the metaphorical) a metaphysical quality or power, whose origin is irrational but, as he insisted, is not inexplicable: this power stems from the mind's perceptual faculties, which then acts as *a sun*, which, as a projector, takes the place of the Romantic metaphor of the lamp or candle. As is explained in Part II, he attached metaphysical qualities to this light by associating it with the geophysical properties of Greece and with its cultural and historical tradition.

In his introductory essay to the catalogue of the exhibition of photography by John Veltri (1971), Elytis observes that light, in its 'μυστική λειτουργία', is one of the components that constitute 'την αφανή αλλά διαρκή συνισταμένη του δεύτερου πραγματικού είναι' of Greece (1987: 600). Apart from Veltri, whom he considers 'a searcher of visions' (1987: 599), Elytis claims that Solomos, Hölderlin, Angelos Sikelianos and Yorgos Seferis also perceived this quality of the Greek light, 'τη δεσποτική παρουσία του ήλιου και την αόρατη "μηχανή" του' (1987: 602). In 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', he retrospectively refers to the 1930s, when he and other contemporary writers, identified by him as the members of the Generation of the 1930s, rediscovered the 'metaphysics of the sun' (1987: 427), a metaphysics that, in his view, had been discovered by earlier Greek poets, such as Kalvos and Solomos.

As is explained in Part II, Elytis' conception of the 'metaphysics of the sun' is a central notion unifying his aesthetic and poetic ideas.

In his essay 'Τα κορίτσια' (1944 and 1972), Elytis refers to Novalis and Blake (and Lautréamont) as his poetic companions, and claims that he tried to follow them and recover beauty out of ugliness, and positive feelings out of the horror and loss of war (1987: 159). This attempt coincided with his realization that life was deeper, more significant and more enchanting than everyday reality made it appear to be (1987: 160). Within the framework of his Surrealist investigations, Elytis came to the conclusion that life should not be regarded as an immaterial idea, but should be viewed in its potential for perpetual transformation, in its 'coming into being' ('γίγνεσθαι') (1987: 160-161).

This text reveals Elytis to be wavering between a Surrealist (and Romantic) projection of the self and a Classicist reticence (1987: 163, 166-167). He explains that he tried to follow the Surrealist principle of the 'ideal unit',[49] to pursue the ideal meeting of opposites and to be faithful to his 'internal model' (Breton's 'modèle intérieur') of reality (1987: 165). Elytis finally reached the conclusion that art imitates the interior function or the essence of nature:

> Η Ποίηση και γενικά η Τέχνη μάς δημιουργούν σφαλερά την εντύπωση ότι προσθέτουνε ή παραλλάζουνε ή ξεπερνούνε τη ζωή ενώ, στην πραγματικότητα, δεν κάνουν παρά ν' αποκαλύπτουν ένα μέρος από τη βαθύτερη ουσία της ή ν' αποδίδουν απλά και μόνο, με μιαν ένστικτη μιμητική ικανότητα, τη θαυμαστή λειτουργία της. (1987: 167)

The tension he felt was released by an appeal to Surreality, that is, the ideal interdependence of life and poetry, itself inspired by the Romantic tendency to

[49] Elytis' notion of the 'ideal unit' is explained in Chapter 5.

reconcile the subjective and the objective: following Breton, Elytis claims that the poet should be in an *état d'attente*, ready to capture but also to reveal the true essence of things (and thus to illuminate others): 'Ο αληθινός ποιητής δεν καταδέχεται να περισσολογεί, να ζωγραφίζει, να ξαναθυμίζει. Κάνει ορατό το αόρατο, αισθητό το νοούμενο, πραγματικό το μη-πραγματικό. [The true poet employs words in such a manner as] να εμπνεύσει άγνωστα οράματα' (1987: 176). In his later essay 'Η μαγεία του Παπαδιαμάντη' (1975), Elytis observes that this may be achieved not through mere nature-worship ('φυσιολατρεία'), but through the emotional response to the processes of nature, which would be the result of the 'deeper meaning' of being (1992: 92).

In 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), Elytis explains how he views the relation between nature and poetry; in his view, Greek nature, in particular, is intoxicated with secret messages and assigns the poet to his secret mission (1987: 328). He claims that, for this reason, nature constitutes a 'metaphysics', whose character is ethical. He maintains that elements of the Greek landscape made him think of the correspondences that exist between nature and the psychological and ethical disposition of human beings (1987: 327-330);[50] for this reason, he holds that nature has to be deciphered. He identifies the act of deciphering with the process of a transposition from the natural to the world of the imagination, which has a moral content, as is explained in Chapter 3. Elytis' idea of this transposition is associated with the condition of illumination: the initiated poet is illuminated, and he acquires the

[50] Cf. his later observations on the 'ορθογραφία' of the Greek landscape in his essay 'Τα δημόσια και τα ιδιωτικά' (1992: 339ff.), which was written in the 1980s. For a discussion of Elytis' views on the relation between the landscape and oral language see Mackridge 1997: 103-112.

inner light which makes him a visionary.[51] The act of the deciphering of nature and the belief in the visionary role of the poet bring Elytis very close to the Romantic quest, although, as is explained in the next section, his idea of poetic illumination derives from Rimbaud.

In his essay, Elytis extends the analogy from nature to refer to language, that is, the medium ('όργανο') of poetry, as determined by moral qualities, which he calls 'το ήθος της γλώσσας' (1987: 330). The role of the visionary poet, who becomes an initiate through the stage of illumination, is to illuminate others. In his new state, the poet creates reality by using his imagination:

> το φαινόμενο της γλώσσας, με τον ίδιο ακριβώς τρόπο που ένα τοπίο δεν είναι διόλου το άθροισμα μερικών δέντρων και βουνών αλλά μια πολυσήμαντη παρασημαντική, δεν είναι κι εκείνο διόλου το άθροισμα μερικών λέξεων-συμβόλων των πραγμάτων αλλά *μια ηθική δύναμη που η ανθρώπινη διάνοια την κινητοποιεί, ωσάν να προϋπάρχει από τα πράγματα, για να τα δημιουργήσει ίσα-ίσα*, και μόνον έτσι αυτά να υπάρξουν. [...] αυτό το όργανο, [language], κατευθύνει πολλές φορές τις έννοιες που εκφράζει περισσότερο παρά που κατευθύνεται από αυτές. (1987: 328-329; my emphasis)

The idea resonates within the Romantic context, and it responds to the Romantic principle of 'truth to nature' (Abrams 1971: 263ff.). This same principle conditioned Breton's ideas on the 'internal model' and the Surrealist ideas on poetry as an ethics.[52] However, although Elytis' views on poetry and language reflect a Romantic aesthetic viewpoint, they emerged in the historical context of mid-twentieth-century Greece

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[51] Elytis' idea is reminiscent of Novalis, who also believed in the metaphysical relation of man with his external world. Novalis believed in the existence of an enigmatic, obscure and mysterious language which demanded a process of initiation in order to be understood: 'Whoever underst[ood] it [was] automatically and justly an "initiate"[;] [...] the "initiated" [were] those who share[d] his belief in the metaphorical nature of life and in the power of poetry to reveal the transcendent through the immanent' (Haywood 1959: 13).

[52] Cf. Abastado 1986: 63.

and bore the ideological background of his generation. Hence the emphasis on Greek nature and the Greek language, in particular. In his essay, Elytis points out that it is not simply language but, specifically, the Greek language that corresponds to the lyrical function of his imagination. Thus, although the method of *συνδυαστική φαντασία* that he used was taken from non-Greeks (the French Surrealists), the elements of the Greek nature that he wanted to bring together 'δεν ήταν δυνατό να υπακούσουν σε άλλο κέλευσμα παρά μόνο σ' αυτό που πρωτόμαθαν πριν από χιλιετηρίδες, στο ίδιο αυτό σημείο και με τους ίδιους φθόγγους' (1987: 330). In his view, the reason why Greek poets have been preoccupied with Greece is because their language develops out of nature.[53]

While his observations may not have derived directly from Romantic organicism, they do echo an organicist conception of art. Elytis considered Romanticism through the lens of Surrealism; in his essays, he expresses a theory of poetry that resonates within the Romantic context, and which could be accepted by those of the Surrealists that Elytis would classify as Romantic.[54]

1.2 *Symbolist Ramifications--Surrealist Projections*

Surrealist ideas on the visionary role of the poet and of poetry as an instrument by means of which one could change life derive both from Romanticism and Symbolism.

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[53] He maintained that this was inexplicable to non-Greeks. As Mukařovský observes, it is frequent for poets to associate the language of their work with its national origin: 'the more the linguistic aspect asserts itself in a literary work, the more strongly it is bound to a given national language. Hence the difficulty in the translation--or even untranslatability--of certain poetic works, especially lyric works' (1977: 10-11).

[54] According to Elytis, 'the world of surrealism had its classicists *and* romanticists' (1975: 642; emphasis by Ivask).

Elytis' view of Rimbaud and Mallarmé, for instance, was determined by the Surrealist modes. But, more importantly, Elytis' view of other poets, who were contemporary with the Surrealists and himself, seems to have been conditioned by Surrealist principles and poetic aims. Thus, Surrealist thought projects itself in the observations that Elytis expressed on the impact of Symbolist poetics on modern poetry, and also, on the poetics of non-Surrealist poets. The following two sections examine his ideas on Symbolist and non-Surrealist poetry, in this perspective.

1.2.1 *Reconsidering Symbolism: the Poet as Visionary and Revolutionary*

Romantic ideas on the ethical disposition of the artist reached Elytis through the Surrealists. But a whole literature expressing the need for purification intervened. Edgar Allan Poe alluded to the idea of 'pure poetry' in 'The Poetic Principle' (1850), and Baudelaire referred to this idea in his 'Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe' (1857). In Baudelaire's view, there is a 'quality of innateness' in the poet but there is also inspiration, that is, 'those exquisite sensations, those states of poetic well-being which are so rare and so precious [...] visitations' (1986: 105). Baudelaire held that 'the Poetic Principle lies, strictly and simply, in human aspiration towards a supernal Beauty, and the manifestation of that principle is an enthusiasm, an excitement of the soul' (1986: 108). This Orphic view of inspiration, which reveals 'l'effort de l'esprit à la conquête de la vérité cachée' (Riffaterre 1970: 11) and presupposes 'le type du poète sacré et visionnaire', is based on the Romantic idea of the universe as a mystery which has to be deciphered by the poet. Poetry is regarded as a mystical experience

and the poet is considered to have 'un grand potentiel poétique puisqu'il incarne l'attente d'une révélation, l'obsession de l'inconnu, le sentiment de l'éternité (1970: 24).

Orphic themes, which had been common in Romantic poetry, were also used in Baudelaire's Symbolism. But his own quest to find in the external world metaphors of the spiritual world, by reading the hieroglyphic language of nature, led Baudelaire away from Romanticism. In the place of the Romantic metaphysical quest for the absolute, Baudelaire launched the Symbolist Orphic vision: the search into the depths of the unknown. This prepared the way for the Surrealist visionary ideal, perceived as the fusion of the imaginary and the real into what was 'more real than the real'. As Balakian observes, 'the basis for the poetic mysticism that [led] to Surrealism was Symbolism' (1967: 44).

Although Elytis reacted against the 'maudit' poetic climate cultivated by Baudelaire (Elytis 1987: 442), he acknowledged Rimbaud and Mallarmé as two of his poetic 'fathers'.[55] It is explained in this section that this declared 'paternity' refers to affinities of vision and to specific ideas about the functional modes of poetry.

Rimbaud was acknowledged by Elytis as a forefather of Surrealism (1987: 124), a poet who overcame the limits of conventional ethics, language, syntax, and of the 'έλλογη τάξη' (1987: 340), 'a true poet' who 'showed [his] poetic strength by writing about Nature, Love and Death' (1987: 469). Agreeing with Eluard, Elytis maintained that Rimbaud was bold enough to 'go beyond aesthetics' (1987: 422), and

[55] Elytis claimed that his 'great teachers' in the art of poetry were Hölderlin, Mallarmé, Rimbaud and Solomos (1981: 244).

included him in his list of the artists who attracted him because of 'the white mark' ('σημάδι') or the immanent 'λάμψη' of their work. As has been explained in the previous sections, this mark was regarded by Elytis as the sign of a special morality. He also associated it with the rejection of rationalism (1987: 499) and with an authenticity that enabled the poet to remain 'pure' by means of the imagination (1992: 130).

Although Elytis' essay on Rimbaud bears the indication that it was written in 1972, his points echo the views of Rivière's book *Rimbaud,* which was published in 1930; Elytis makes it known that he read the book that same year (1987: 603). As Rivière observes, Rimbaud's revolt was not 'd'ordre social, mais d'ordre métaphysique' ([n.d.]: 31): 'c'est contre la condition humaine qu'il s'élève, bien mieux: contre la condition physique et astronomique de l'Univers' ([n.d.]: 32-33). Rivière's view, which was espoused by the French Surrealists, seems to be shared by Elytis. Furthermore, it is implicitly suggested in Elytis' essays that he also read Rolland de Renéville's *Rimbaud le voyant*, published in 1929.[56]

By 1936 Elytis may have read Rimbaud's 'poetic manifestos', that is, his two 'lettres du voyant',[57] since in his 1936 essay on Eluard he shows that he is familiar with Rimbaud's 'dérèglement de tous les sens' (Rimbaud 1991: 346, 348); this may be

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[56] Elytis refers to de Renéville in his 1939 essay on Lautréamont (1987: 612), and to de Renéville's discussions of Oriental philosophy in his 1944 essay 'Τα σύγχρονα ποιητικά και καλλιτεχνικά προβλήματα' (1987: 513); as is pointed out in Chapter 2, Elytis was also aware of de Renéville's book *L'Expérience poétique* (Elytis 1987: 138), published in 1938.

[57] The first of Rimbaud's two 'lettres du voyant' is addressed to his tutor, Georges Izambard ([13] May 1871), and the second to his friend Paul Démeny (15 May 1871). When addressing Izambard, Rimbaud argued in favour of 'objective poetry' (1991: 345), that is, impersonal poetry, which was the poetry of *voyance*, since it left the door open to internal voices and spiritual perspectives. The objective poet was only the 'medium', the intermediate who should not intervene during the process of writing. Rimbaud's ideas are clearer in his letter to Démeny (1991: 346-352).

an indication that he was also aware of Rimbaud's ideas on poetic *voyance.*[58] In these letters, Rimbaud took his place in the long tradition of poets who tried to 'express the inexpressible', in de Renéville's view.

In his essay on Rimbaud, Elytis refers to the French poet's conception of 'αλχημεία του λόγου' ('alchémie du verbe'), a notion that is considered in the *Second manifeste du surréalisme* (Breton 1988: 818ff.); he observes that Rimbaud conceived of a 'διαφάνεια που μας είναι απαραίτητη για μια [...] πολυδιάστατη όραση', that is, for looking at life 'πανοραμικά—και στερεοσκοπικά' (1987: 604), in a totally different manner from that of reason. He further explains that this 'διαφάνεια' is a quality or a 'virtue' of poetry that makes it possible 'να βλέπουμε, διαβάζοντας ένα στίχο, ταυτόχρονα όλα τα στρώματα που μας συνθέτουν' (1987: 605).[59] By referring to Rimbaud's poem 'Les Voyelles', Elytis claims that Rimbaud managed to bring poetic language back to a state of innocence where miracles take place. Indeed, in his 'lettres du voyant', Rimbaud was very clear about the passage from inner vision to poetic form. He claimed that if the poet found form in his vision or inner self, then he would give his poetry this form; if he found non-form, he would give non-form. For this reason, there ought to be found a different language, a language of the soul, and therefore a universal language. Rimbaud referred to the use of synaesthetic effects

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[58] Rimbaud claimed that the poet is 'responsible for humanity', and therefore, he ought to work on himself, he ought to inspect and cultivate his soul; he ought to make himself a *voyant* (1991: 345, 348). The poet makes himself into a *voyant* by a 'dérèglement de tous les sens', by passing through 'all the forms of love and suffering and madness'. He becomes the 'Grand Savant', by 'attaining the unknown', or, in other words, by viewing his visions. Cf. the similar observations expressed by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* .

[59] Elytis' ideas on 'διαφάνεια' are examined in Chapter 5.

in poetry, something that Baudelaire consciously attempted in his own poems.[60] In Rimbaud's case, the interest lies in the fact that he associated the use of synaesthetic effects with a 'universal language', so that 'a multiplication of progress'(1991: 349) would be made possible.[61] When referring to 'Number' and to 'Harmony', he used a diction that had been employed by a long tradition of mystics and visionaries, and also 'poet-initiates', whose 'mission' was purification, and whose common language was a secret language.[62] Rimbaud was considered a *voyant* by the Surrealists and the theorists of the avant-garde because his attitude expressed an 'attempt to imagine and possibly provoke a radical change in society by his work' (Russell 1985: 5 and 39).

In Elytis' view, Rimbaud succeeded in bringing to the surface of consciousness an ignored reality by conquering 'το επέκεινα' (1987: 607), that is, to pass from 'the concrete to vision' and from the negative aspects of life to what man wishes for. By evoking the idea of the suffering poet in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', Elytis observes that 'Νά 'χεις ή όχι γράψει ποιήματα δεν έχει τόσο σημασία, όσο νά 'χεις υποφέρει, παθιαστεί, σκιρτήσει γι ' αυτά που, έτσι κι αλλιώς, οδηγούν στην Ποίηση' (1987: 319).[63] In this same essay, he associates Rimbaud and Plato, after referring to the metaphysical power of the sun's light and to his 'epiphanies'

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[60] Cf. Baudelaire's 'Correspondences' and, in general, *Les Fleurs du mal.* Of course, many other poets had done the same before Baudelaire and Rimbaud (Homer, Aeschylus, Horace, John Donne and the Romantics, among others).

[61] Cf. Shelley's and Hölderlin's idea of the infinite 'work-in-progress'.

[62] As de Renéville points out, Rimbaud's thought reflected the Pythagorian doctrines (1929: 55-57), but also Oriental (Indian) philosophy, Orphism, and Christian thought (1929: 46-47). The belief in the power of the Number and of a 'mystic language', which was known only to a privileged few, to unlock the mystic scriptures and thus to have access to knowledge and the 'Absolute Truth', descend from ancient Oriental philosophical traditions dealing with the occult, which reached Europe through ancient Greece (Pythagorianism, Orphism).

[63] In Rimbaud's view, the poet makes himself 'le suprême Savant' through an 'Ineffable torture' (1991: 348), by means of which he reaches 'the unknown'.

(1987: 443-446).[64] He does the same again, in relation to the sunlit Aegean, in 'Σχέδιο για μιαν εισαγωγή στο χώρο του Αιγαίου' (1992: 22). Poetic illumination is an Orphic theme which Rimbaud contemplated and upon which he built his theory of poetic *voyance*. As is shown in Part III, it is a recurrent theme in Elytis' poetry, and an idea associated with his views on the metaphysics of the Greek light and the moral disposition of the poet, which are examined in Part II.

In contrast to Rimbaud, Elytis referred to Mallarmé only occasionally in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, and more frequently in his later essays. Around 1944, he claimed that Mallarmé's 'strict, hermetic' and 'refined' poetic quest (1987: 630) was the opposite of the Surrealist project (1987: 124), although in both poetic endeavours Elytis perceived what he thought was the common denominator of an aestheticist approach, aspiring to poetic perfection (1987: 620 and 130). By 1979, Elytis' opinion was that Mallarmé's poetic concerns were similar to those of Solomos, since he claimed that the latter conceived of the principles of Pure Poetry, that is, 'να υποτάξει το αίσθημα στη διάνοια, να εξευγενίσει την έκφραση και να δραστηριοποιήσει όλες τις δυνατότητες του γλωσσικού οργάνου προς την κατεύθυνση του θαύματος', long before Mallarmé (1992: 327).[65] Elytis redefined his own relation to Mallarmé in 1981, when he suggested that the French poet was one of his 'great teachers' in poetic art (1981: 244).

In all, the poetic theories of Mallarmé played a significant role in Elytis' poetic development. The latter did not acknowledge the actual extent of Mallarmé's

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[64] In his book, de Renéville too refers to Plato; see his comments on *Phaedrus* (1929: 67).
[65] The view that Solomos wrote 'καθαρή ποίηση' was expressed in the 1940s by Linos Politis (Politis 1946: 232-233).

contribution to the formation of his own poetic theories for various reasons. One of them may have been that, within the Greek literary milieu of the 1930s, Elytis became familiar first with Valéry,[66] whereas he studied Mallarmé on a more systematic basis at a later time. A further reason may have been Elytis' early exposure to Surrealism; his enthusiasm for Surrealism (which had assimilated into its own theories Mallarmé's poetic considerations) and his defensive activity in the period 1938-1945,[67] when Elytis was obliged to prove that Surrealism was at least an equally important poetic school as that of Pure Poetry, may have stripped Mallarmé's endeavour of its apparent significance in Elytis' eyes. The most important of Elytis' reasons for trying to reduce the importance of Mallarmé may be the same as those that urged him to recognize Kalvos as a Greek forerunner of Surrealism, namely his ardent wish to question the leadership of western Europe in matters that concerned literature and the arts, and his need to prove the existence of a Greek literary and artistic tradition.[68] This may explain why Elytis compared Solomos with Mallarmé by stressing the chronological priority of Solomos' discoveries.

In the *Manifeste du surréalisme*, Mallarmé is acknowledged as a Surrealist 'dans la confidence' (Breton 1988: 329). The actual extent of Mallarmé's 'Surrealism' is manifest in the fact that many of his poetic ideas and his practice conditioned several facets of the Surrealist endeavour. Among others, the Romantic theories on the associative imagination and analogical thinking were taken over by the French Surrealists in the form in which they had been elaborated by Mallarmé, who also

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[66] See Elytis 1987: 491, 355, 367; also Elytis 1992: 297.
[67] This issue is explored in Chapter 2.

inspired the Surrealist notion of 'le hasard objectif' and the shift of focus from the poet to the reader of the poem.

In 'Ιδιωτική οδός', Elytis acknowledges Mallarmé's conception of 'le hasard' when he evokes the latter's poem *Un coup de dés*: 'Εμπρός, λοιπόν, για μια στιγμή ας παίξουμε ό,τι μας κατέβει από το νου: ζάρια, κουδούνια, πλόες, αγάπες, όστρακα. Και τα λάθη μας να τα βάζουμε κι αυτά στο λογαριασμό' (1992: 395). The writing of poetry was for Mallarmé the opposite of passivity (that is, the state of the 'impuissance' of the poet). However, he considered passivity as a 'state of grace' because, at those instances, the soul of the poet saw beauty, rediscovered purity and was 'trop imprégné[e] d'immortalité pour chercher une jouissance' (Mallarmé 1945: 261). Mallarmé went further than Baudelaire's sense of *ennui* and the *vertige*. Passivity was not for Mallarmé the synonym for sterility or occasional and accidental inability; it was rather 'un mode réactionnel de la personnalité, une attitude d'accueil toute sensuelle--et [...] finalement un moment premier, nécessaire de la création' (Abastado 1970: 10). Time was abolished, and it was then that the poet discovered eternity. This state of passivity led to the fortuitous grace, *le hasard*, which was given. *Le hasard*, which annihilated the 'absurd' juxtaposition of opposites in the finite world 'turn[ed] what we call "absurd" into reality, permit[ted] [...] the infinite to exist' (Balakian 1967: 93). Mallarmé's notion of 'le hasard' may have inspired Elytis' conception of the 'second condition' of life, which is examined in Chapter 4.

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[68] Cf. Elytis' comments in 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα', 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', 'Πρώτα-πρώτα', and elsewhere. The ideological implications of Elytis' endeavour are examined in section 1.3 and in Chapter 2.

In Mallarmé's view, the poet had to capture the given grace of *le hasard* and, therefore, the poetic condition presupposed a spiritual effort. He regarded the poetic art as a game (*jeu*), which, however, was not granted but was a spiritual quest.[69] For him, the poem was the medium for a 'transfiguration' in the course of which, 'a sensation of lightness' perfected itself:

> une insensible transfiguration s'opère en moi, et la sensation de légèreté se fond peu à peu en une de perfection. Tout mon être spirituel,--le trésor profond des correspondances, l'accord intime des couleurs, le souvenir du rhythme antérieur, et la science mystérieuse du Verbe,--est requis, et tout entier s'émeut sans l'action de la rare poésie que j'invoque, avec un ensemble d'une si merveilleuse justesse que de ses jeux combinés résulte la seule lucidité. (Mallarmé 1945: 262)

The mind reached lucidity and discovered 'l'harmonie surnaturelle' by means of analogy between man and 'le répertoire éternel de l'Ideal de tout temps' (through the 'ancient rhythm'), between things and words. In the course of this 'lecture trop sublime', the poet joins 'la divinité'. As is pointed out in Part II, these ideas appear in Elytis' thought, constituting an integral part of his poetics; Elytis' conception of the 'second condition' of life, which presupposes a condensation of time and the discovery of the world of the imagination--in the place of Mallarmé's discovery of the spiritual--and eternity by the illuminated poet, is associated with the process of transposition or the condition of 'transcendence'.

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[69] Religious and philosophical transcendental theories, Romantic mysticism, the theories on correspondences, all are present in Mallarmé. Palamas pointed to the relation of Mallarmé's hermetic mysticism and to his interest in the occult, and Dimitris Nikolareizis maintained that Mallarmé's visionary idealism was based on 'an innate Platonism' which had been the result of his exploration of his inner life (Goula-Mitakou 1993: 1498-1499).

In 1944, Elytis referred to Paul Eluard's phrase 'Le poète doit être beaucoup plus celui qui inspire que celui qui est inspiré' (1987: 121), which was taken from Mallarmé. The latter shifted the emphasis from the writing of the poem to its reading (*lecture* and not *écriture*); he conceived of the poem as meditation. In his view, 'c'est le lecteur qui doit être inspiré' and 'l'enthousiasme n'est pas un état d'âme d'écrivain'.[70] For Mallarmé, the poem did not reflect the emotional condition of the poet at the time of its production. The individual was abolished. The poet's role was simply to show the universal analogies between things, between human beings and the infinite. Therefore, poetry was not to be invented by the poet but discovered by the reader. Elytis' rejection of subjectivity in poetry, realized as the tendency of poets to write of their emotions (1987: 38-39), points equally to Mallarmé's idea of the cancellation of the individual and to the French Surrealist theories, which were based on this conception. More specific aspects of Mallarmé's endeavour are considered while examining Elytis' views on poetry in Part II.

Both Rimbaud's and Mallarmé's metaphysical quests may have contributed, together with Romantic perceptions of reality, to Elytis' ideas about an inner reality, which it is the poet's task to capture and reveal to others. Rimbaud's notion of 'voyance' and Mallarmé's idea of 'lucidity', as the means of reaching the essential, are reflected in Elytis' conception of 'translucence', which is examined in Part II. In the rest of Chapter 1, Elytis' views are placed in the literary, ideological and historical context of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

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[70] Cited in Abastado 1970: 25.

1.2.2 *Poets of the 'New Reality'*

In 1963, Elytis referred to the principle which determined his view of the lyrical horizon, a horizon that was dreamed of by the Romantics, threw the Symbolists 'Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau' (Baudelaire), and provoked the Surrealists' fascination with the automatic writing of the discourse of the unconscious, based on the chance correspondences between the inner world and external reality. Elytis defined this principle as a vertical movement, a search into the depths of the unconscious, and a parallel launching to transcendental heights:

> Ξέραμε πολύ καλά ότι ένας Έλιοτ ή ένας Λόρκα είχαν πολύ μεγαλύτερο ανάστημα απ' όλους αυτούς τους Ρεβερντύ και τους Τζαρά. Όμως, [...] υπήρχε και κάτι άλλο, [...] που εμείς το πιάναμε κυριολεκτικά στον αέρα.
>
> Ήταν μια κίνηση προς τα κάτω, προς το βυθό, όπου αναδεύονται τα πρώτα κίνητρα της λυρικής παρόρμησης–μια βάσανος της δημιουργίας μαρτυρική–, και, πάλι, μια κίνηση προς τ' απάνω, προς τον υπερβατικό ουρανό, όπου όλα τ' άστρα τα πιθανά μπορούν ν' ανάψουν, μιαν αληθινή μαγεία. Ήταν η ποίηση πριν και μετά το ποίημα, στους δρόμους, στον έρωτα, στα σύννεφα. Το όνειρο σε εγρήγορση. (1987: 377-378)

The implications of Elytis' view of a double movement that takes place on a vertical axis are considered in Part II with regard to the emergence of his poetics. What concerns this section is his manifest attempt to demarcate the limits of a poetic world which suited his temperament and shared his poetic pursuits. As is apparent from the above passage, perhaps Eliot was a poet that Elytis wanted to ignore, but he did not do the same with Lorca, since he found a way to read him in the Surrealist context. He did the same with Jouve and Reverdy, and certainly Ungaretti. These are the four poets who were contemporary with the Surrealists and attracted Elytis' attention to such a degree that he wrote a separate essay on each.

What unites these four poets is Elytis' attempt to situate them in the Surrealist context, either through implicit association (Jouve, Reverdy), or explicitly (Lorca, Ungaretti). Thus, he considered Jouve as one of the 'true poets of the new reality' (1987: 469), although one that remained outside schools after his first poetic period (1938d: 755, n. 1; also 1987: 502). Elytis discovered the poetry of Lorca during the Occupation, when he also discovered Hölderlin (1987: 398). He considered the poetry of the former 'less deep' but 'more resplendent' than that of the German poet. He claimed that Lorca's vibrant aesthetics was closer to the Mediterranean temperament (1987: 125), and maintained that Lorca had assimilated the theories of Surrealism (1987: 176, 179 and 512). In his essay on Lorca, written in 1944,[71] he holds that Lorca was influenced by both tradition and the revolutionary movements of his time (1987: 630-631). As he observes, Lorca's interest in Surrealism facilitated his movement from inner to external reality, the identification of action with dream, and the production of startling and unexpected images (1987: 631). Elytis recognized in Reverdy a poet who was a 'παρείσαχτος της ύλης', who aspired to the spiritual but also 'consciously compared the incomparable' (1987: 378). Elytis also reflected on the influence of Reverdy's conception of the image on Surrealist poets, such as Paul Eluard, René Char and Breton (1987: 648). Ungaretti was considered by Elytis as yet another of the poets of the 'new reality' (1987: 469), one who 'compared the incomparable' in the Surrealist mode (1987: 178-179).[72] In his vision, Ungaretti was regarded by Elytis as a 'belated Plotinus of Lyricism' who joined the circle 'των ονειροπαρμένων' (1987: 378), that is, the French Surrealists.

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[71] The essay was first published in 1945.

Although Elytis' essays on these poets were written over a period of twenty years, they are conditioned by a similar spirit of approach, and they focus on more or less the same issues. Except for the essay on Jouve, they all come from the period of Elytis' most intense theoretical working on poetics (1944-1960). Interestingly, in these essays, Elytis only touches upon practical aspects of poetics, while, in contrast, he concentrates on more general issues of poetic vision and subject-matter. In these texts, Elytis' own theoretical concerns are manifested in his insistence on dealing with issues which refer, on the one hand, to the way the four poets treat nature, and on the other hand, to the transcendental aspect of their poetry.

Elytis confessed that the two non-Greek poets who had awakened his interest in poetry were Eluard and Jouve (1987: 119).[73] In his essay on Jouve, Elytis stresses the significance that the realization of the importance of the unconscious had for the French poet, focuses on the transcendental aspect of his poetry, and comments on the presence of a mysterious nature in it. Elytis' essay was written at the time of the 'Dialogue on poetry' between Seferis and Tsatsos, a dialogue that, as is pointed out in Chapter 2, kindled the fire for the Greek debate on Surrealism. The problematic over the presence of the irrational in poetry, raised by the debate between Tsatsos and Seferis, is echoed in Elytis' essay, in which he observes that Jouve used the subconscious as a 'source' for poetry:

> Από την εποχή του Rimbaud και ύστερα, οι ποιητές που δουλέψανε

[72] It was through Sarandaris that Elytis came to know the poetry of Ungaretti (Tsarna [n.d.]: 43). Elytis reports that they read Ungaretti together in 1934 (1987: 345).
[73] Elytis met Jouve in Paris after the war (1987: 438) and made plans to include him in an anthology of French poetry in Greek translation (1987: 647).

> για να χειραφετηθεί η ποίηση από το ρασιοναλιστικό πνεύμα ξέρουν πολύ καλά ότι ξαναβρήκανε μέσα στο υποσυνείδητο *την αρχαία και τη νέα πηγή* και πως μ' αυτήν αποκαλύπτουν ένα σκοπό για τον κόσμο. Η μεταψυχολογία δίνει την ακαταμέτρητη αύξηση ενός καινούριου αισθήματος του τραγικού. (1987: 623; his emphasis)

Elytis' reaction against rationalism is a recurrent theme in his essays, including his recent ones. In most of them, he repeatedly emphasizes that poetry should express an emotional approach to life, as Surrealism did by exploring the subconscious. In the case of Jouve, who was not a Surrealist, he isolated and underlined the characteristic that he considered to be one of the main conquests of Surrealism, after Rimbaud. Elytis may have implicitly related the Surrealists' involvement in the mysterious and the magic elements of life to Jouve's preoccupation with the forces of his subconscious. As he observes in his essay, this new poetic attitude was the precondition for Jouve's 'new sense of the tragic', his mysticism and the metaphysical aspect of his work.

Elytis had known Jouve's *Noces* since 1928.[74] In this collection, the poet is preoccupied with the unconscious, spirituality and catastrophe (Leuwers 1984: 288), but there is also an implicit sense of a gay, youthful spirit: light, a new life, freedom and open space. What Elytis retained from Jouve may have been one of the tones of Jouve's 'conversion' towards the transcendental ideal: 'arriver à la liberté, au monde transposé, à la puissance joyeuse'.[75] It may not necessarily have been the tragically

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[74] Jouve published two small volumes of poetry (*Les Mystérieuses noces* [1925] and *Nouvelles noces* [1926]) with the addition of a few more poems in the collection *Noces* in 1928; the final volume *Les Noces* appeared in 1931. In the original version of 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T 1935', Elytis mentions Jouve without referring to *Noces* (1944a: 18); in the reprinted version of *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, the title of *Les Noces* is added. However, if his discovery of Jouve coincided with that of Eluard, as he claims in his essay, then he may have come across *Noces* (or the two volumes of 1925 and 1926) in 1928. Then, *Les Noces* could have been among the books that Jouve sent him in 1936 with his permission to translate his poetry (Elytis 1938d: 758, n. 2).

[75] Lettre by Jouve, July 1924; quoted in Leuwers 1984: 231.

emotional way in which Jouve approached this ideal, but the presence of a modern sense of the metaphysical in Jouve's poetry that Elytis perceived:[76] the edition of *Noces* that Elytis may have discovered in 1928 included the following 'Postface de l'auteur':

> Cet ouvrage porte l'épigraphe 'Vita nuova' parce qu'il témoigne d'une conversion à l'Idée religieuse la plus inconnue, la plus haute et la plus humble et tremblante, celle que nous pouvons à peine conservoir en ce temps-ci, mais hors laquelle notre vie n'a point d'existence.
>
> Le poète precise: 'La conversion porte pour moi la date de 1924. [...] la plus grande poésie et la véritable est celle que le rayon de la Révélation est venu toucher'. (1928: 155)

In 1954, Jouve claimed that his conception of 'Revelation' had not been understood by critics: 'Révélation [...] voulait dire que je voyais (au sens quasiment apocalyptique, inconscient) le système d'image nécessaire' (*En Miroir*).[77] Jouve's mysticism was enriched by his readings of the Old Testament ('Song of Songs'), of the Flemish mystic Ruysbroeck (*De l'ornement des noces spirituelles*), of the German Romantics (Hölderlin), and Blake, Baudelaire and Rimbaud. The influence of Rimbaud on Jouve is considerable; however, although he recognized Rimbaud's illuminative *mystique*, he did not accept the latter's interest in alchemy. Jouve's own experience was one of spiritual illumination,[78] and this led to the co-presence in his poetry of the elements of the dramatic and of the miraculous.

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[76] As Starobinski observes, Jouve's poetry is not irrelevant to the modernist quest: 'Le mouvement du refus originel, le passage à la vie seconde du langage, l'éveil de la conscience à une liberté accrue: tous ces actes appartiennent aussi bien à une littérature athée et désespérée, qui cherche à constituer son ouvrage comme une énigme solitaire, dans un espace vide et pur' (1966: 12).

[77] Quoted in Leuwers 1984: 288.

[78] Jouve used the word 'gaîté' to describe it, and he found a similar emotion only in the music of Mozart.

In *Noces*, the sensible world is seen in a metaphysical context, but this can happen only in nature (Callander 1965: 93). Jouve builds on the contrast between nature and the urban environment, between his ideal vision of purity and the sinful ugliness of reality. Just as Jouve maintained that the modern city fomented dark and impure elements (Jouve, of course, was echoing Baudelaire, although in a less subtle manner), so Elytis, in his later essay on Ungaretti, condemned the city as being incompatible with 'την ιδέα της καθαρότητας που θέλουμε να έχουμε για τον εαυτό μας' (1987: 639). Elytis read nature in Jouve's poetry the way Elytis himself conceived of it: as a living presence that 'witnesses' the human 'drama' and 'acts' according to 'τη μοίρα που της δίνει ο άνθρωπος. [...] Πάντοτε, όμως, σε κίνηση και σε συμμετοχή μυστηρίου και δράσης' (1987: 624). Robinson rightly notices a 'slight distortion in [Elytis'] theoretical presentation of Jouve--but it will be a significant one--[this] is the insistence on the importance of the physical world, for, though important to the thought of the poetry, it plays a lesser part in the imagery than is suggested' (1975: 681). This insistence was not irrelevant to Elytis' own poetic preoccupations, which by the early 1940s were becoming more and more theoretical.

Six years after the essay on Jouve was published, in the 1944 essay on Lorca, Elytis stresses the fact that Lorca's poetry emerged out of the poet's close relation with the landscape of his country and its people. In his opinion, this accounts for the fact that his poetry had a universal significance (1987: 626-627) while it also appealed to the common people of Spain (1987: 629). By insisting on the 'objectivity' of the world established in this poetry (1987: 632-633), which again resonates within the

context of the Greek debate on Surrealism, Elytis considered the poetry of Lorca as the example *par excellence* of modern lyricism: the poet made others see what he saw in his imagination, that is, a part of reality which is perceptible only to few people. In this reality, living and inanimate organisms participated in full motion, freed from the natural laws that bound them (1987: 633-635). Elytis' view of Lorca did not change over the years. In one of his much later essays,[79] he maintains that *Romancero gitano* reflects a vertical conception of life, that is, a fusion of the real and the metaphysical, since, in this poem, nature is 'naturally' unnatural:

> Απότοκος βέβαια του υπερρεαλισμού μπορεί να θεωρηθεί, από μιαν άποψη, και το *Romancero Gitano* [sic] [...]. Μόνον που εδώ παρεμβάλλεται η Μεσόγειος: Κι άξαφνα ο χώρος της ζωής *ορθοτομείται· μετατοπίζεται·* γεμίζει πλάσματα που αποβάλλουν τον χρηστικό τους χαρακτήρα και *υπερβαίνουν* (*φυσιολογικά*, θα έλεγε κανένας, εάν δε φοβόταν τα οξύμωρα σχήματα) *τις φυσικές τους δυνάμεις*. Οι πιο κοινοί τύποι της καθημερινής ζωής, [...] κινούνται *ανάλαφρα σαν έξω* από τη βαρύτητα, φωτισμένοι από μιαν απροσδόκητη πλευρά, με μισάνοιχτο τον εσωτερικό τους κόσμον, όπου μπαινοβγαίνουν όλα τα φυσικά και μη στοιχεία[.] (1992: 173; my emphasis)

The clarity and confidence of Elytis' statements in his essay of 1944 is repeated in the above comment in which he neither withdrew from his earlier points nor manifested any wish to express them more clearly.

Similar observations are made in Elytis' 1958 essay on Ungaretti, in which he expresses the opinion that Ungaretti aspires to capture in his soul the sanctity of the meeting of the senses with nature (1987: 636). This comment seems to complement Elytis' view of the approach to nature adopted by Jouve and Lorca. Furthermore, Elytis claims that Ungaretti's poetic attitude expresses a Plotinean vision of innocence and purity; Ungaretti's poems reflect 'τη βεβαιότητα ότι υπάρχει αρκετό απόθεμα

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[79] See the essay 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"', written in 1976.

φωτός στον κόσμο για να αντισταθμίσει το σκοτάδι και ότι, βοηθώντας να το φέρουμε στην επιφάνεια, [...] ερχόμαστε σε αρμονία με την ύπαρξη που πληροί τον προορισμό της' (1987: 639-640).

It was in *L'Allegria* that Ungaretti, illuminated by his search, set it as his duty to illuminate other people: 'Di tale ritrovata purezza il poeta deve testimoniare agli altri. Il momento della rivelazione individuato nell'aurora [...] è angosciante perché, dal momento della visione, il poeta si sente nella dimensione edenica e il rientro dall'illusione è crudele' (Baroni 1981: 24). Ungaretti believed that there was a *donnée obscure* which was not only a 'mystery' that pervaded life but also the means ('the measure') to cope with it: 'not the measure of the mystery, which is humanly absurd, but the measure of something which is in a certain sense opposed to the mystery while at the same time constituting for us its highest manifestation, the terrestial world considered as man's continual invention' (Cary 1993: 168). Ungaretti's metaphysical and existential anxiety is transformed into poetry that is surprising in its luminosity and optimism amid silence.

Ungaretti wanted to 'elevate' personal experience into ideas and myths.[80] He attempted to do this by working on both meditative and formal levels simultaneously, without subordinating one to the other (Jones 1986: 338). The meditative aspect of Ungaretti's poetry (for which he was accused of being hermetic),[81] involved a study

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[80] See his preface to *La Terra promessa* (1963: 13-18).

[81] The term 'hermetic' was used by the Crocean literary historian Francesco Flora to refer to the poetry of Ungaretti, in particular. In his book *La Poesia ermetica* (1936), Flora maintains that the hermetic poets were born of Hermes (Ψυχοπομπός) and not of Apollo; in Flora's view, they should be called 'analogists', since analogy is their art. Flora was hinting at Baudelaire and Mallarmé, acknowledged forefathers of Ungaretti. In contemporary criticism, the term 'hermetic' does not have the negative connotations that Flora wished to give it. Hermeticism refers to poetry which uses occult symbolism and which is obscure, poetry of a subjective language and imagery, in which music and suggestiveness play a significant role (Cuddon 1992: 406).

of tradition and descended from Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Leopardi. Ungaretti wanted to write 'the essential', which would be 'nominalist'. He used the word 'nominalist' when referring to Plato. Although Ungaretti is considered to have kept away from Neoplatonic idealism, since he did not acknowledge the pre-existence of any form (Jones 1986: 342), his essentialist perspective is what attracted Elytis, who clearly placed Ungaretti in the poetic tradition that pursued a Neoplatonic aesthetics.

Elytis' observations in his essay on Reverdy develop along similar lines of thought, since he recognizes the French poet's quest for purity: 'υπήρχε πάντοτε πίσω από τα λόγια του ένας βαθύς καημός, που [...] ήτανε [...] το πάθος της καθαρότητας' (1987: 642).[82] Elytis explicitly states that Reverdy's Catholicism was disastrous for the poet; as he observes, by being immersed in Catholicism, Reverdy wasted his vision, pursuing it in the wrong direction , and made no use of what he discovered in his early poetic study of Cubism.[83] These discoveries referred to the way to purity, objectivity, the de-sentimentalisation of poetry and abstraction (1987: 643), in other words, the ideas reached through the senses, and a metaphysics which involved the reconstruction of reality, that is, '[την] επαναστροφή του πνεύματος επάνω στην "εν επανασυνθέσει" ύλη' (1987: 644). By reflecting on the poem 'Voyage en Grèce',[84] Elytis claims that Reverdy wasted this metaphysics, instead of using it to write poetry in which nature would be 'παλμός ζωντανός και πρότυπο μύθων'.

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[82] Many years after his meeting with Reverdy in Paris in the late 1940s (1987: 437-438), Elytis wrote his essay 'Ο Pierre Reverdy ανάμεσα στην Ελλάδα και στο Solesmes' (1961).
[83] Elytis' comments on the influence of Cubism on Reverdy and other poets are examined in Chapter 7 in relation to Elytis' poetic practice.
[84] See Reverdy 1989: 76-77.

Elytis' views on these four non-Surrealist poets suggest the extent to which his thought was imbued with the Surrealist spirit. Apart from his interest in the unconscious, it becomes apparent from these essays--in which Elytis perceived common properties in the poetry of poets with such diverse interests and poetic orientations--that he saw metaphysics and the perception of nature as being interrelated. As is pointed out in Part II, this view emerged in the period between 1944 and 1960, while Elytis was assimilating Surrealism into the system that constitutes his own poetics. The Greek debate on Surrealism, which started in 1935 and subsided at the end of the Second World War, played a decisive role in the development of Elytis' attitude towards French Surrealism, as is explained in Chapter 2. The Greek literary and ideological context in which Elytis' ideas were nourished is considered in the following section.

1.3 *The Generation of the 1930s*

Elytis' quest for Greekness (*Ελληνικότητα*), an intrinsic aspect of his poetics, both determined his theoretical pursuits and helped to render his version of Surrealism acceptable to the Greek criticism of his time. Greekness was the issue that authorized the Generation of the 1930s to assume a leading role in the literary affairs of Greece at that time.[85] This ideological construct, expressive of the political and the social

[85] For a definition of the term 'Generation of the 1930s', which was first employed by Yorgos Theotokas, and an account of the issues involved in it see Vitti 1979: 13-15 and 46ff. The writers belonging to this generation adopted Thibaudet's distinction between literary generations and called themselves the 'Generation of the 1930s'. Many of the members of this generation, and among them

tensions of the time, acquired special connotations through its employment by the members of the Generation of the 1930s.[86] This generation turned against what they considered to be the disorientation and the feigned cosmopolitanism of their predecessors[87] and used Greekness as a magnetic point which would attract all their theoretical and aesthetic production. Although the discussions about the relation of aesthetics to tradition, Greek nature, and its autochthonous and indigenous properties (light, colours, sea and landscape) had started years earlier,[88] this generation seemed, all at once, to see Greece through a foreigner's eyes. Greece was suddenly revealed to them, not as something familiar, but rather, as *marvellous*, an unfamiliar space or 'topos' that had to be rediscovered or re-imagined.[89] By an appeal to the immanent properties of their homeland, the Greek writers (and artists) belonging to the Generation of the 1930s aspired to become equals with the (western) Europeans in their quest for their own national identity and originality in literary (and artistic) expression.[90]

Seferis and Elytis, were associated with the circle of the periodical *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, of which Andreas Karandonis was editor-in-chief.

[86] A detailed study on the emergence of the notion of Greekness in relation to the Generation of the 1930s is offered in Tziovas 1989 (see esp. pp. 38-41); also cf. Vitti 1979: 199-207. It is interesting to compare Greekness with the notion of 'Ελληνισμός' (as Tziovas suggests [1986: 136]), especially taking into account observations as that expressed by Maronitis: 'η ελληνικότητα είναι συχνά η ιδεολογική παραμόρφωση του Ελληνισμού' (1983: 188), which clearly shows the existence of intrinsic links between ideology, national identity and ethnic consciousness.

[87] These were the 'decadent' Neo-Symbolists (Steryopoulos 1980: 40-41) or Post-Symbolists (Philokyprou 1991: 1-2) or the 'Generation of the 1920s', as the writers of the Generation of the 1930s used to call the poets who published their work mainly in the 1920s.

[88] See Chatzinikolaou 1982.

[89] As Leontis points out, this generation 'reimagined their homeland as a *topos* with its own *ontologia* "*logos* of being", which demanded its own proportional *deontologia* "*logos* of moral necessity"' (1995: 12).

[90] On the issue of Greek national identity with regard to the ideological orientations of the Generation of the 1930s see the brief account by Tziovas (1989: 31-53); his conclusion is that, after the Asia Minor catastrophe, the major issue for the Greeks was no longer one of unity and continuity, but one of difference: 'πώς δηλαδή θα ξεχωρίσουμε από τα άλλα έθνη και πώς θα προβληθεί η ελληνική ιδιαιτερότητα' (1989: 51).

In his first study on Elytis, Andreas Karandonis maintained that Pure Poetry and Surrealism were the most important French poetic tendencies that had affected the 'new' Greek poetry ('τη νέα μας ποίηση') and he proposed a positive conception of influence as a 'necessary and inevitable form for the refinement of the artists' (1940: 56). Some years later, he came back to the concept of influence to compare it with the 'negative' concept of imitation.[91] The positive conception of influence, as opposed to the destructive consequences of imitation, was the major argument used by the Generation of the 1930s, both to reject Post-Symbolism and to define 'new poetry'. The aim of this generation was to produce 'new Greek poetry' and art, so as to contribute dynamically to the literary and artistic production of Europe. They held that this could be achieved by exploiting the 'living elements' of Greece, through the employment of modern means of expression. Elytis' theoretical attempt to combine these two methods appeared in his 1945 definition of the 'general spirit' of Surrealism, which is considered in Chapter 2. Elytis was not only a member of the Generation of the 1930s, but also considered himself to be one of its spokesmen. The following sections explore the ideological background and the literary pursuits that led to the emergence of his ideas.

[91] See his attempt to define and determine 'γλωσσικά και εθνολογικά' the term 'νέα ποίηση' in the introductory essay of his *Εισαγωγή στη νεώτερη ποίηση* (1958: 21ff.).

1.3.1 *Greekness and the Ideological Orientations of the Generation of the 1930s*

The quest of the Generation of the 1930s involved issues that were initially touched upon in Yorgos Theotokas' *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα* (1929),[92] and were subsequently reiterated and further developed by the writers and critics of the Generation of the 1930s, such as Theotokas himself, Seferis, Elytis, Karandonis, Dimaras, Tsatsos, and Angelos Terzakis, to name a few of the most eminent and influential members of this generation. Accounts of this quest were provided by Elytis in 1938 and in 1944.

In his essay 'Οι κίνδυνοι της ημιμάθειας' (1938), Elytis urges Greek critics to try and understand 'Greek problems', and he expresses his wish for a victory over Europhobia: 'Η βαθειά επίγνωση των ελληνικών προβλημάτων και σύγχρονα η νίκη της *φοβίας* του Ευρωπαϊσμού *ας ανοίξουν* το δρόμο...' (1938a: 428 [his emphasis]; =1987: 468). In the closing paragraph of this essay, he summarizes the pursuits of his generation:

> Γιατί δεν είναι η φοβισμένη απομάκρυνση από τον πολιτισμό της Δύσης (που καταντάει σε αρχοντοχωριατισμό από την *ανάποδη*) *μα η θαρραλέα προς αυτόν προσέγγιση, και το ξεπέρασμά του,* που θα μας οδηγήση στην *ανεύρεση* των αληθινών *ανανεωτικών* δρόμων. Την ημέρα που μια παράταξη ανθρώπων με διεθνή πνευματικό εξοπλισμό, θα προσπαθήση *να κάνη* μιαν εσωτερική και γόνιμη αυτοεκκαθάριση σκύβοντας μ' *ασίγαστον* έρωτα στην *πατρική γη* για ν' *ανάψη* από κει την καινούργια φλόγα της νόησης, την ημέρα που θα προσαρμόση *το καθαρά ελληνικό υλικό* στα εκφραστικά μέσα της σύγχρονης εποχής που πάνω από κάθε τι ζητάει θάρρος, ειλικρίνεια κι' ελευθερία θα λάμψουν από παντού οι ευτυχισμένες δυνατότητες της δημιουργίας καινούργιου *εθνικού πολιτισμού.* Τότε το θερμόμετρο της *ηθικής* θ' *ανέβη* πολύ ψηλά, και το Έθνος αυτό θα μάθη επιτέλους *να μην ανέχεται* ποτέ την κακή ποιότητα των *έργων* των ανθρώπων και των Ιδεών. (1938a: 428 [my emphasis]; =1987: 468 [the passage is slightly modified in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*])

[92] See the chapter 'Προϋποθέσεις μιας αληθινής πρωτοπορίας' (Theotokas 1988: 57-74).

In the essay 'Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935' (1944), which is republished under the modified title 'Τέχνη-τύχη-τόλμη' in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, Elytis makes another attempt to justify the causes espoused by his generation:

> Ζητώντας νάμαστε σ' αδιάκοπη επαφή με το αχτιδόβολο ρίγος της ζωντάνιας του πνεύματος, το ρίγος της εποχής μας, μπορούσαμε να μη συγκλίνουμε κατά κει που κείνο εκπορευότανε πλουσιότερα; Με την έντονη πνευματική κληρονομιά της Ελλάδας μέσα στις φλέβες, μα και με τη δίψα μιας καινούριας ζωής καθολικώτερης μέσ' στην ψυχή μας, μπορούσαμε να μην ατενίσουμε κατά κει όπου ο άνθρωπος έδειχνε να φλέγεται περισσότερο περνώντας τη βαθύτερή του δοκιμασία; (1944a: 19; =1987: 123)

In such comments, Elytis claims that his generation tried to be 'reasonable' in their aesthetic pursuits, always bearing in mind their grave duty to continue the long tradition of Greek culture. He maintains that, instead of becoming revolutionaries for the sake of revolution, he and his colleagues were drawn to more intellectual concerns: 'Τα πραχτικά προβλήματα του Λυρισμού' (1944a: 20; =1987: 124). As is explained in Chapter 2, apart from referring to the fact that, unlike the French Surrealists, Greek Surrealists refrained from actions against the Greek literary establishment, this statement reflects Elytis' primarily aesthetic concerns. It also shows Elytis' belief that the quest of his generation was inspired by ideals and was a serious endeavour, aiming to true achievements.

As becomes apparent from these passages, for Elytis the principal need was to compete with western Europe on an intellectual level rather than imitate it. In both essays, he claims that the way to accomplish this is by turning to the immanent properties of Greece while also taking advantage of and appropriating modern means of expression (which were developed mainly in western Europe). He attributes a

moral character to this endeavour: in Elytis' view, the aim ought to be the creation of a national literature, and therefore, a national culture.

Until the outbreak of the Second World War, such ideas were perfectly in line with the ideology that supported the emergence of European nationalism. Metaxas, who imposed dictatorship in Greece in 1936, aspired to the creation of the 'Third Greek Civilization', which would be the outcome of a moral disposition, a healthy spirit and the exploitation of the indigenous properties of Greece.[93] Elytis' observations, urging the Greek intellectual elite to use the experience they gained outside Greece in order to exploit 'το καθαρά ελληνικό υλικό' and thus create a 'national culture' and reach high moral standards, sound very similar to Metaxas' views. Indeed, referring to the Generation of the 1930s, Tziovas observes that 'η στροφή προς τις ρίζες που παρατηρείται μετά το 1936 μπορεί να εκληφθεί και ως αντίδραση αλλά και ως συμμόρφωση προς το Νέον Κράτος' of Metaxas (1989: 144). In point of fact, in Elytis' essays, his 'reaction' to the nationalist regime does not appear thoroughly clear.

Elytis' views are also reminiscent of the ethnocentric ideas expressed by Periklis Yannopoulos a few decades earlier.[94] His 1938 essay followed the special issue of *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* dedicated to Yannopoulos.[95] This issue republished extracts from Yannopoulos' work and stressed his significance as a figure of the Greek tradition (Karandonis 1938a: 292). This provoked the publication of another special issue devoted to Yannopoulos by *Νεοελληνικά Γράμματα*, which expressed a more

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[93] Tziovas provides a brief discussion of Metaxas' ideas in relation to views expressed by members of the Generation of the 1930s in the late 1930s (Tziovas 1989: 139ff.).
[94] Elytis read the work of Yannopoulos and Ion Dragoumis in 1934 (Daskalopoulos 1986: 264).
[95] See *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* 1938 . The publication of the special issue of *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* on Yannopoulos was Seferis' idea (Petropoulos 1996: 49).

critical attitude toward Yannopoulos. Although this issue was greeted by Karandonis (1938b: 429) as a friendly contribution to the evaluation of Yannopoulos' work, it nevertheless kindled a debate over the importance of this work. Theotokas, who at that time was distancing himself from the circle of *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, contributed to it with a provocative article against Yannopoulos, to which Karandonis reacted (1938b: 430-431; see also 1938c: 576). Paradoxically, Theotokas, whose influence on Elytis has been acknowledged by the poet himself (Elytis 1987: 358-359), was himself influenced by Yannopoulos' work. Although in his *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα*, he simply states that 'αλλάζει η γη σε κάθε χώρα και ο χαρακτήρας του ανθρώπου' (1988: 5), two years later, in his essay on the clarity of written expression, he greets the sobriety and the marvellous simplicity of the Greek light and earth: 'Σ' αυτήν τη μοναδική χώρα, όπου έχουμε την τύχη να ζούμε, η διαύγεια δεν είναι μια σχολική διδασκαλία. Είναι χυμένη στη φύση. [...] Η Ελλάδα είναι όλο πνεύμα. [...] Ολόκληρη η Ελλάδα καλεί και συνεχώς προαναγγέλλει το φως του νου' (1931a: 30).[96]

Theotokas' second book, *Ώρες αργίας* (1931), absorbed Elytis with its meditations on Hellenism, beauty, inspiration and creation, and made him exclaim that 'Πρώτη φορά έβλεπα να προσπαθεί κάποιος να συνειδητοποιήσει *ένα πνεύμα γενικότερο*, που αφορούσε τη *θαλασσινή φυσιογνωμία της Ελλάδας* και που [...] με πλημμύριζε και ζητούσε με χίλιες δυνατότητες εναλλαγής *να βρει την έκφρασή του στη γλώσσα της σημερινής ευαισθησίας, στο καινούριο ποιητικό ιδίωμα*' (Elytis 1987: 359; my emphasis). In the text entitled 'Επιστολή σε μια φίλη επαρχιώτισσα', in Theotokas' book (1931b: 51-62), one may find indeed

[96] Cf. Elytis' view of Kalvos, who 'είδε μέσα από μια διαύγεια ουσιαστικά ελληνική'

'Μαρίνα τῶν βράχων', Elytis' 'τρελλοκόριτσα' and Elytis' humanized Greek island, speaking itself of the joy and the light of life: ' "Είμαι η πιο αγνή γωνιά της Γης, λέει το κάθε Νησί. Είμαι το πιο λαμπρό τραγούδι. [...]" "Είμαι όλο φως, νιότη, χαρά και ελευθερία, λέει το Νησί" ' (Theotokas 1931b: 63). One of Theotokas' sources may have been Yannopoulos. For instance, the latter's 'χροϊκόν ιχνογράφημα' entitled 'Αιγαίου Εσπερινός' and included in the essay 'Το ελληνικόν χρώμα' (1904) contains the following passages:

> ...Αζωγράφιστος, ατραγούδιστος, ανεκλάλητος είναι τότε ο χορός των Νυμφών του Αιγαίου, στέφανος ανθισμένης ηδυπαθείας. Η Τήνος, σωρός ίων θερμοτάτων, [...] Μία ενωτική γραμμή θαλάσσης μελανή ενώνει την Τήνον με την Μύκωνον. Η Μύκωνος απαλώτατα ροδίνη, τριαντάφυλλον Απριλίου μαραινόμενον. Άλλη ενωτική γραμμή θαλάσσης ανοικτοτέρα και έπειτα η Νάξος βελούδινον, βυσσινόχρουν ρόδον διαπύρως ακμαίον. [...] Ένα θαυμάσιον περιδέραιον ανθέων κυκλώνον τον ουρανόν, έχον άνθος μεσαίον το νησίδιον του Φάρου, χρυσοβόλον δέσμην γαζιών. [...] Τα ιώδη άνθη των νήσων εν αρρήτω ηδυπαθεία μαραίνονται, ναρκούνται, νεκρούνται και είναι λευκοκίτριναι και ανθορρόδιναι προβολαί. (1963:42, 45)

This same text may have also inspired Elytis' idea of the 'land-owner' of the Aegean, an idea he expresses in the essay 'Τα κορίτσια' (1944 / 1972) : 'Την εποχή που μου δόθηκε πρώτη φορά η ευκαιρία να βρεθώ στο κατάστρωμα ενός πλοίου, διασχίζοντας τα νότια της Σαντορίνης, είχα το αίσθημα ενός γαιοκτήμονα [...] Αυτές οι σγουρές από κύματα εκτάσεις ήταν οι καλλιεργήσιμες γαίες' (1987: 188).

In order to provide a clearer view of the ideological background against which Elytis' ideas emerged, the following observations can be made.

(1946b: 87; =1987: 56).

The aesthetic nationalism of Yannopoulos, mainly expressed in his essays 'Η σύγχρονος ζωγραφική' (1902) and 'Η ελληνική γραμμή και το ελληνικό χρώμα' (1904), relied on German aesthetic theories[97] and propounded the Greek landscape as the raw material for artistic expression and the basis for a national aesthetic. Yannopoulos maintained that the singularity of Hellenism, like that of any other nation, originated in the immanent properties of the land it had occupied since antiquity.[98] Yannopoulos' ideas that the Greek land with its characteristic line ('καμπύλη'), and the Greek light with its colours ('κυανούν', silver, golden, blond, and their variations) were the raw material for clarity ('σαφήνεια') and beauty, was the inspiration for a line of thought, which reached the Generation of the 1930s as a 'message' (Elytis 1987: 354) or by supporting their quest for Greekness (1987: 448). The contrast between the city and nature (which represented the more complex opposition between modernity and tradition), of which Yannopoulos rather naïvely spoke, is a recurrent theme in Theotokas' early writings, as well as in the works of many other writers at this time. But in their case, the choice was not a short-sighted return to nature and tradition, but a 'synthesis' or a merging of the oppositions. Speaking of Europe, Theotokas claimed that in it 'Οι άπειρες αντιθέσεις συγχωνεύονται σε μια ανώτερη σύνθεση' (Theotokas 1988: 7). Of course, in 1929 Theotokas did not consciously propose the synthesis he perceived in Europe as a model for the intellectual pursuits of the Generation of the 1930s.[99] In point of fact,

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[97] See Leontis 1995: 87.

[98] In 'Η ελληνική γραμμή', Yannopoulos maintains that 'Βάσις της Ελληνικής Αισθητικής είναι η ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΓΗ. Κάθε γη πλάττει τον άνθρωπον κατ' εικόνα και ομοίωσιν Εαυτής' (1963: 16).

[99] In 1961, Theotokas referred to a kind of 'synthesis' accomplished by his generation when he denied that they had any 'προσωπολατρικ[ές]' tendencies: 'Με τέτοιον τρόπο είδαμε τη

Theotokas insisted that he preferred the city, with its cars and its jazz, to the island, pure and uncorrupted though it might be. Nevertheless, he also envisaged the synthesis of the modern and the traditional when he imagined an aeroplane flying over the Parthenon and claimed that this would create a new kind of harmony (1988: 70).

Oppositions that emerged after the establishment of the independent Greek state had taken several forms during the first century of its life. Their principal characteristic was that they always revolved around the relations between undeveloped Greece and developed Europe, the way Europeans saw Greece, the way Greeks saw Greece, and the way Greeks wanted or ought to see Greece in its relation with Europe and with antiquity. Greeks developed either a Eurocentric tendency, which proclaimed itself in their admiration for and imitation of anything that came from western Europe or a Hellenocentric attitude, which realized itself in a quest for authenticity, and which was manifested in the discovery of folk tradition, folk songs and the demotic language.[100] The impasse towards which these unresolved oppositions led was keenly felt by the Generation of the 1930s, who were determined to overcome it by resolving the oppositions through a synthetic approach. As Tziovas puts it,

> Η γενιά του '30 [...] Από τη μια πλευρά πρόβαλε την αστικο-κοσμοπολίτικη εικόνα της: αρκετά εξωστρεφή, εκσυγχρονιστική και συνάμα ανταγωνιστική προς την Ευρώπη και από την άλλη παρουσίασε ένα λαϊκιστικό πρόσωπο ανακαλύπτοντας τον Μακρυγιάννη και τον Θεόφιλο. [...] Έτσι οι εκπρόσωποί της αποδύονται σε μια προσπάθεια συμφιλίωσης του δημοτικισμού με τον κοσμοπολιτισμό, του μακρυγιαννισμού με το μοντερνισμό, του κοινού λόγου με την έντεχνη κειμενικότητα προσβλέποντας ταυτόχρονα συναγωνιστικά προς την

λογοτεχνική μας παράδοση, όχι σαν μια στενή προσωπολατρική σχολή [...] αλλά σαν μια ελεύθερη σύνθεση' (1961: 231).

[100] Yannopoulos condemned 'ξενομανία' in 1903 (1963: 9-13).

Ευρώπη. (1989: 52-53)

These writers and thinkers wrote in the demotic language while continuing to speak other European languages, marvelled at the Greek islands and the Greek sea while having studied in western European capitals, admired traditional Greek furniture and art while travelling by cars and aeroplanes, and praised Makriyannis and Theofilos while following the literary and artistic developments abroad. Their theorization of the whole issue may appear overstretched today--attached to a psychological disposition and heavily connected to their ideological positions--but, at that time, it was not a unique phenomenon, from an international perspective.[101]

In 1945, Karandonis referred to the 'responsibility of a European Greekness' (1945: 10), an observation that was also made by Elytis that same year in his essay 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα':

> οι ίδιοι λόγοι που είχανε προκαλέσει το ανανεωτικό αυτό κίνημα [Surrealism] στην Ευρώπη, ισχύανε και σ' εμάς εδώ, σ' εμάς μάλιστα πολύ περισσότερο, *γιατί κλεισμένοι στον εαυτό μας κι' απομωνομένοι,* [sic] *ή πάλι δεμένοι μ' ένα κακό Ευρωπαϊκό παρελθόν θα μας ήτανε αδύνατο να ζήσουμε και να εκτιμήσουμε τις αυτόχθονες δυνάμεις μας. Έπρεπε πρώτα να συνειδητοποιήσουμε τον αγώνα των ανθρώπων εκείνων που -όπου κι' αν εκδηλωθήκανε- στρέψανε οι ίδιοι τα όπλα εναντίον αυτού του κακού παρελθόντος κι' από κει βοηθημένοι ν' αξιοποιήσουμε με μια καινούρια πια νοοτροπία τις εθνικές μας πηγές.* (1945a: 349; my emphasis [the passage is omitted in *Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά*]

When Elytis referred to the struggle of some people against the 'bad European past', he apparently had the French Surrealists in mind, and also their revolt against the tradition of rationalism.[102] But, Yannopoulos, Ion Dragoumis, Sikelianos and Angeliki

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[101] For instance, a similar theorization over the indigenous properties of the national natural landscape led to Alejo Carpentier's theory of 'lo real maravilloso' (*El reino de este mundo* [1949]) in Latin America (see Henighan 1996).

[102] Cf. the following statement, made by Elytis in 1975: 'I and my generation--and here I include Seferis--have attempted to find the true face of Greece. This was necessary because until then the true

Chatzimichali, among others,[103] could also have been in his mind. In the closing paragraphs of the same essay he exclaims:

> Ο πόλεμος αυτός σημείωσε για τους αληθινά σκεπτόμενους ανθρώπους μας, πλάϊ σε άλλα πολλά και το *τέλος* της συμπλεγματικής τους κατωτερότητας απέναντι σ' ό,τι καλά ή κακά ονομάστηκε μια φορά Ευρωπαϊκό πνεύμα. Όσοι φοβήθηκαν να το πλησιάσουν ας μη δοκιμάσουν τώρα τη χαρά και να το ξεπεράσουν. Όμως εμείς, ωσάν στα βάθη, εκεί όπου άλλοτε χάϊδευαν τα γένεια τους οι παπούδες μας να σήμανε άξαφνα καμπαναριό κρυφό γυρίζουμε το κεφάλι μας κατά την Ανατολή, ναι κατά την Ανατολή, και προσμένουμε από κει νάρθει το πνεύμα της να δροσιστεί πάλι μέσ' στα νερά του Αιγαίου, ίδια καθώς σε κείνες τις ωραίες, τις τόσο γνωστές στη φυλή μας ανελικτικές εποχές. Ο Γιαννόπουλος κι' ο Δραγούμης είκοσι ή τριάντα χρόνια μετά τον άξαφνο θάνατό τους, δεν έχουνε όχι, δεν έχουνε ακόμα πει τη στερνή τους λέξη. (1945a: 361-362; his emphasis [the passage is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*]).

As is apparent from this passage, not only did Elytis espouse the ideological pursuits of his generation, but he also actively supported them. The passage is quoted here, despite its length, for its over-enthusiastic comments on the Greek 'East',[104] alluding to Byzantium and the Greek culture that had developed in Asia Minor before the catastrophe of 1922, and also stressing the opposition between Greece and western Europe; the references to Yannopoulos and Dragoumis that appear in this passage are interesting, especially since the passage is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*. In fact, comments on Yannopoulos or Dragoumis that may appear in the original versions of Elytis' essays are usually omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*; the only essay in which these

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face of Greece was presented as Europeans saw Greece. In order to achieve this task we had to destroy the tradition of rationalism which lay heavily on the Western world. Hence the great appeal of Surrealism for us the moment it appeared on the literary scene' (1975: 631).

[103] Cf. Karandonis 1938a: 294-295.

[104] When Elytis referred to the 'East', he simply meant the (Greek) culture of the area east (and west) of the Aegean. Elytis did not refer to the tradition and the culture of the Orient (the Far East), since his, as well as his generation's, ideas were Eurocentric, in the broader sense.

two writers are mentioned in this volume is 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), which was never published before.[105]

By referring to isolation in 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα', Elytis may have been referring to the Europhobic tendencies he had perceived and denounced seven years earlier, in 1938. It was in that same year, that, responding to the conservative proclamations of the so-called 'Ακαδημαϊκοί',[106] Engonopoulos maintained that 'όσο μια τέχνη έχει πιο τοπικό χαρακτήρα τόσο και πιο παγκοσμίου ενδιαφέροντος είναι. [...] όσο είναι πιο προσωπική τόσο κι έχει πιο πανανθρώπινη σημασία. Κι όσο είναι περισσότερο του καιρού της τόσο και το περιεχόμενό της είναι πιο αιώνιο' (Engonopoulos 1987: 81). Engonopoulos also stressed, on the one hand, that the artist's duty was to contribute to the achievements that artistic tradition offered him, and on the other hand, that one should not be negative towards the concept 'modern', which, as he clarified, meant contemporary ('σημερνό'), since this would only be indicative of one's single-mindedness and ignorance of one's present and past. In his 1944 essay 'Τα σύγχρονα ποιητικά και καλλιτεχνικά προβλήματα', Elytis reformulated exactly the same argument:

> *Το έργο τέχνης, όσο περισσότερο βυθισμένο βρίσκεται, σαν ουσία, μέσα στις ρίζες και στις πηγές ενός τόπου συγκεκριμένου και, παράλληλα, όσο περισσότερο προσαρμοσμένο είναι, σα μορφή, στο γενικότερο αισθητικό πνεύμα μιας εποχής, τόσο καλύτερα κερδίζει το έπαθλο του παγκόσμιου ενδιαφέροντος, τόσο αποτελεσματικότερα καταφέρνει ν' αντισταθεί στη φθορά του χρόνου.* (1987: 497; his emphasis)

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[105] Only a small section of this essay was published in 1973.

[106] These were a group of (insignificant) artists who rejected modern art. In 1938, they published their proclamations and, apart from Engonopoulos, no other important artist responded to them.

To the above observation Elytis added the comment that the writers who preceded his generation, developed an 'inferiority complex' with regard to the literary developments in Europe, which they considered superior, but they never reacted to it. In contrast, the 'moderns' were not afraid of this reality,[107] a reality which also involved an appreciation of the achievements of Greek writers, such as Solomos, Kalvos, Alexandros Papadiamandis, Palamas, C.P. Cavafy and Sikelianos; this made them better equipped to turn to what the 'East' had to offer them.

Elytis was obviously referring to the Post-Symbolists and his views reflect the hostile attitude of his generation towards those they called the Generation of the 1920s.[108] What he implied was that the Post-Symbolists' 'cosmopolitanism' was a cover for their actual xenophobia; in his view, this made them feel secluded from the rest of the world, which, nevertheless, they only managed to imitate. Elytis' comments, presupposing the ideological background of the Generation of the 1930s, in fact addressed those of the Post-Symbolists who were the most serious critics of this generation and of Surrealism, as is discussed in Chapter 2. But, without realizing it, Elytis also revealed his generation's ethnocentricity and competitive tendencies (towards western Europe), that is, the underlying motives for an attitude which they thought at that time to have freed them from any xenophobic characteristics.[109]

In his later essay on Tsarouchis (1964), Elytis still expresses the same view of the ideological pursuits of his generation:

> Ήταν ο μόνος τρόπος να ξαναγίνομε, οι Έλληνες, Ευρωπαίοι. Με το να συνεισφέρουμε και όχι να δανειζόμαστε. Με το να επαναφέρουμε

[107] The term 'μοντέρνος' was employed by Elytis on very rare occasions.
[108] For more details about the attitude of Elytis' generation towards the Post-Symbolists see Philokyprou 1991: 316ff.
[109] See Elytis 1987: 511.

> την τάξη και όχι να την ανακαλούμε στη μνήμη, πληρώνοντας απλώς ένα φόρο στη νοσταλγία της. Με σεβασμό προς τις κατακτήσεις των άλλων αλλά και με τη συνείδηση του πλούτου, που ένας κρυφός αγωγός αιώνων εκχύνει αδιάκοπα μέσα μας. (1987: 572)

In this text--which was written when Elytis was fifty-three years old, at a time when his ideas had reached a point of external stabilization--he expresses himself in a more self-contained and confident manner than in texts written twenty years earlier. But his main point has not changed. Elytis' positions are examined more closely in Chapter 2, when considering his views on the social mission of art.

1.3.2 *The Quest for 'New Poetry'*

Elytis' ideas on Greekness appear to correspond to the ideological orientations of his generation; however, his poetic preferences prove that his aesthetic considerations, although not unaffected by the ideological choices of his milieu, were determined primarily by his own poetic and aesthetic criteria and by his own reflections upon the conception of 'new poetry'. Elytis' ideas on poetry are best exemplified in the views he expressed on the Greek poets of his time, especially Palamas, Sikelianos, Cavafy, Seferis and Kostas Karyotakis, whom he treated differently from the rest of the Post-Symbolists. His observations show that, on the one hand, he distinguished between 'old' and 'new poetry', and on the other hand, he clearly perceived two distinct poetic manners in the latter. But these distinctions are not clear, since he also acknowledged some common ground between 'old' and 'new poetry'. Elytis stated that the poetic manner of Cavafy and Seferis was distinctly differentiated from his

own, while he regarded the 'old poetry' of Palamas and Sikelianos as expressive of poetic ideas that were similar to his own.

The concept 'new poetry' was used rather vaguely by the Generation of the 1930s to distinguish their own poetry from the 'old poetry'; the notion 'new poetry' was frequently preferred to the socially and culturally marked concept 'modern'. The distinction appears in critical and theoretical texts of the 1930s, and it is used in the debate between Seferis and Tsatsos.[110] Rather than being simply a chronological distinction, it refers to a difference in attitude which caused a kind of schism between two distinct poetic trends. The critic of the Generation of the 1930s who explained this most clearly is Dimitris Nikolareizis. In his essay 'Παλιά και νέα ποίηση', written in 1953, Nikolareizis observes that a change in poetic attitude emerged out of the pursuits of Pure Poetry. In his view, Mallarmé and Valéry paved the way for this change, which took place after the failure of their followers and imitators, and the achievements of their successors, that is, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Laforgue, Apollinaire and Supervielle. As Nikolareizis observes, the 'νεώτεροι' know that 'ο ποιητής, και όταν ακόμα φαινομενικά *εξιστορεί* και όταν ακόμα φαινομενικά *περιγράφει*, πρέπει σε τελευταία ανάλυση να φανερώνη την ιδιότυπη ουσία του εαυτού του. Το κέντρο όπου διασταυρώνονται όλα τα νήματα πρέπει να μένη η ατομική του συνείδηση, ο εσώτατος πυρήνας του υποκειμένου' (1983: 92; his emphasis). Nikolareizis explained that the characteristic which distinguished 'new' from 'old poetry' was not a preoccupation with subjective psychic states, but the aesthetic effect that this had on poetic expression ('Η έκφραση έπαθε σημαντικές αλλοιώσεις') (1983: 108). A definition of 'new poetry', which may

[110] See, for instance, Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 93.

have been favoured by Elytis, was offered by Maronitis in 1964: 'Νέα ποίηση ονομάζουμε εκείνη που οι ρίζες της τράφηκαν στο υπέδαφος του υπερρεαλισμού' (1964: 25).[111]

When Elytis celebrated 'new poetry' in 1945, on the one hand he rejected the poetry of his immediate predecessors (the Post-Symbolists, including Karyotakis), and condemned them for their 'cosmopolitanism' and negative life posture. On the other hand, he acknowledged the poetic abilities of Karyotakis and singled him out from the rest of the Post-Symbolists whenever he spoke of aesthetics. Therefore, 'new poetry' was not for Elytis only an ideological issue, a matter of attitude and a specific psychological disposition, but was also associated with an aesthetic line, as Nikolareizis would later explain. As is explained in Chapter 2, in 1944, Elytis argued with Tsatsos that, whereas 'old poetry' privileged reason, 'new poetry' focused primarily on emotion, thus implying that (the) new poetry (of Surrealism) was based on a new perception of the reasoning activity of the mind. Already in 1936, Elytis referred to the distinction made by Benjamin Crémieux, according to which 'old poetry' aimed to produce an emotional effect through the mind, while 'new poetry' aimed to affect the whole of man, irrespective of the function of the mind (Elytis 1987: 619).

Elytis' conclusions regarding 'new' or 'modern poetry',[112] were formulated in his 1944 essay 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935'. In this essay, he attributes seven characteristics to 'modern poetry', in which he summarizes points that were

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[111] Cf. the employment of similar terminology by Stergopoulos (1967: 7-8ff.), and the definitions of 'modern poetry' by Dallas (1959: 165ff.) and Vayenas (1983: 21-53).

[112] This is yet another rare instance in which Elytis refers to the 'μοντέρνοι ποιητές και καλλιτέχνες' (1987: 141); as was observed in the previous section, he rarely used the term 'modern'.

expressed in the essays he published during the critical debate on Surrealism. The seven principles of Surrealism that Elytis defined in 1945, and which are considered in Chapter 2, simply extended and complemented the characteristics of 'modern poetry'. In these characteristics, Elytis stresses the importance that the subconscious and the emotional approach to life have for 'modern poetry' (1987: 141-142). His view of 'new poetry', in opposition to the 'old', seems to have been conditioned by his consideration of these two principal features. This becomes apparent from the views he expressed on other Greek poets of his time.

In his essays, Elytis referred to some extent to Palamas, Sikelianos, Cavafy, Karyotakis, Seferis,[113] and also to his friends, that is, Andreas Embirikos, Nikos Gatsos and Nikitas Randos (or Nicolas Calas), whereas he almost ignored Nikos Engonopoulos.[114] His comments on the last four are usually related to the Surrealist endeavour, in an acknowledgement of their attempt to express the 'new reality' of poetry. Elytis' observations on the first five poets are more interesting in that they give a clear view of his ideas on 'new poetry'. Of the Greek poets whom he recognized as the most significant of his time, Elytis clearly considered Sikelianos

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[113] In his essay 'Πέντε κορυφαίοι νεοέλληνες λυρικοί' , Elytis referred to the first three poets mentioned above (Palamas, Cavafy and Sikelianos) but in the place of Karyotakis and Seferis he considered, on that occasion, Solomos and Kalvos (Elytis 1945e: 20-25).

[114] Perhaps following the example of Kazantzakis, who wrote his 'Report to Greco', Elytis wrote a 'Report to Andreas Embirikos' after the latter's death, thus showing his respect for the poet and friend who was ten years his senior (see Elytis 1992: 109ff.). He also wrote an essay on Gatsos (Elytis 1992: 295ff.), and the preface for the poetic collection that Randos published in 1977 (Elytis 1992: 224ff.). Elytis' earliest references to Engonopoulos appear in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' and in 'Τα κορίτσια', essays that were not published before 1973/1974. Engonopoulos did not belong to the immediate circle of the Generation of the 1930s, at least not until 1944, when he published *Bolivár*. On Elytis' attitude towards Engonopoulos see

as coming closest to his own idea of poetry. On the other hand, Elytis' observations on Post-Symbolist poetics in general present the most perspicuous of his accounts of 'new poetry', elucidating the actual extent to which his ideological position determined his choices, but also the impartiality and moderation that his concern for poetic perfection dictated to him.

Palamas and Sikelianos were included by Elytis in the class of the older major Greek poets who supported and encouraged younger poets with their poetic accomplishments (1987: 91, 477, 497). Elytis maintained that by 1940 the poetry of Palamas expressed an era of Greek poetry that was finished (1987: 392). In Palamas, he recognized the poet who continued the 'psychological current' of Hellenism (1987: 294), and one who drew on the tradition of folk song (1987: 90). He claimed that Palamas was a respected poet for his generation (1987: 347, 396, 416) both for his poetic achievements and for his critical acuteness (1987: 93); Palamas served for them as an example to support the idea that the influence of non-Greek literature was a positive impulse for the development of Greek literature. In Elytis' opinion, both in his views (1987: 495) and in his poetry (1987: 497), Palamas (among others) demonstrated that the work of art should be closely connected with its native land but, at the same time, take advantage of the literary developments in Europe. Yet, although Elytis admired Palamas' 'ascetic' work on poetry (1992: 55) and his care for the lyrical expression (1992: 235, 237), he was not attracted by his traditional aesthetics (1992: 126).

Ambatzopoulou 1987: 27-28; for Engonopoulos' relation to the Generation of the 1930s see Koutrianou 1997b.

In Elytis' view, Sikelianos, just like Palamas, was close to the common people of Greece and to folk tradition (1987: 90; 1992: 210), and felt the 'psychological current' of Hellenism (1987: 294). He recognized Sikelianos' ambition (1987: 373) and his imposing personality (374-375, 394), but clearly distanced himself from some of the poetic ideas and pursuits of the older poet: 'Η θεοκρατική του π.χ. αντίληψη για τη Δύση και τον προορισμό του ποιητή, στέκεται ανάμεσά μας σαν ένα ανυπέρβλητο εμπόδιο. Η κατάχρηση της αναφοράς του σε σύμβολα μυθολογικά [...] επίσης' (1945a: 357, n. 2).[115] Elytis held that, although with Sikelianos 'αγγίζουμε σε παραπάνω από ένα σημεία', their poetic methods did not agree (1987: 528). But Sikelianos was also regarded by Elytis as a poet who 'χάρη σ' ένα ταμπεραμέντο ισχυρότατο, ετοίμαζε [in 1935] πλούσιες εκπλήξεις και προεχτάσεις άξιες να τον φέρουν *αν όχι τόσο με την αισθητική, όσο με την κοσμοθεωρητική του ανάταση*, ανάμεσα στις γραμμές των νεώτατων, ανάμεσα και πέρ' ακόμη από τις γραμμές μας' (1944a: 20-21; my emphasis).[116] It is precisely in his vision and not in more practical aspects of poetics that Sikelianos' endeavour appealed to Elytis.

The points of divergence between Sikelianos and Elytis are illustrated, to an extent, in the brief encounter of the two poets. In his 1944 essay 'Πώς βλέπω τον υπερρεαλισμό', a response to the Greek debate on Surrealism whose main spokesman was Elytis,[117] Sikelianos claims that the Surrealists unsuccessfully intruded into the territory of his own quest. Sikelianos' attitude is ambivalent in this essay. On the one hand, he clearly rejects Surrealism as a school or 'technique' or 'system' or

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[115] This footnote does not appear in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.
[116] The italicized lines are omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.

'method', since, in his view, its exploration of the 'depth' of the subconscious is superficial (1944: 249); he holds that the social and the metaphysical revolution can take place in the soul of the individual, leading to an 'authentic' Surreality ('Υπερπραγματικότητα'), without the need to follow a specific theory (1944: 252). But, on the other hand, Sikelianos explains his own theory: in contrast to the Surrealists who invented an impressive array of possible means to 'metamorphose the world completely in a split second', Sikelianos believes that the success of the endeavour demands an 'αγρυπνία' (1944: 251), during the course of which, 'all layers of the subconscious' lead to the 'awakening' of a 'ψυχική ενεργητικότητα' and to a 'πάνσοφη εγρήγορση' (1944: 252). Significantly, Sikelianos concluded his article by pointing out that the young Greek poets who were enthusiastic about Surrealism had already surpassed the ready-made 'system' or 'method' of Surrealism. Although Sikelianos did not mention any names, he may have had Elytis in his mind. In his response, Elytis did not appear to be flattered by Sikelianos' conclusion but rather offended by the older poet's attitude towards Surrealism. Thus, although he stressed that Sikelianos was indeed pursuing the same target as the Surrealists, he also accused him of having rejected Surrealism because of its methods (1987: 528).

A convergence between the poetic ideas of Sikelianos and Elytis appears in Sikelianos' 'Preface' to *Λυρικὸς βίος*, which was first published in 1942.[118] Here he presents his Orphic view of poetry as a compilation of various theories centred around the idea of the universal soul. He evokes Orphic and Pythagorean mysticism

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[117] In this article, Sikelianos stressed that he responded to the debate over Surrealism only because Yorgos Katsimbalis (another member of the Generation of the 1930s) asked him to do so, and also, because he felt that he had the chance to challenge the 'devil's stone', that is, Surrealism.
[118] The 'Preface' was published in *Νέα Εστία* in 1942, with the omission of a small section.

to support his ideas about the 'αισθαντικότητα' of the poet,[119] who is in a 'μυστική συμβίωση με το Παν' (1965: 16), in a lyrical participation with nature and the universe,[120] and therefore, with their law, which is Rhythm (1965: 17). In Sikelianos' view, the poet in nature follows a process of ascesis ('άσκηση') (1965: 19) and is thus illuminated (1965: 22) and is able (as an initiate) to recognize the true essence of things (1965: 23). It is in particular 'το πάθος και την ένταση της καθαρής ελληνικής [...] βίωσης' (1965: 27) that the poet feels, the primordial collective consciousness, which leads to 'μια τέλεια διαφάνεια και μια κάθαρση του νου' (1965: 28). The result is a 'Cosmic attitude' (1965: 29), an 'existential participation' ('υπαρξιακή μέθεξη') in the 'Mystery' (1965: 34) of the 'natura naturans'. In 1945 Elytis pointed all this out when he claimed that Sikelianos:

> πέτυχε να κλείσει μέσα του και σαν ιστορία και σαν ιδέα και σα φύση τον τόπο του ταυτόχρονα και αδιάσπαστα, λες και μια μυστική δύναμη τον όπλιζε με την ευχέρεια να καταργεί το χρόνο και να σαρκώνει τα ιδανικά του σ' ένα αιώνια πραγματοποιούμενο παρόν. Επάνω σε μια παρόμοια συμφιλιωτική των αντιθέσεων απόπειρα εργάζεται ακατάπαυστα το πνεύμα του Σικελιανού, και φιλοδοξεί να υψώσει το ιδανικό ενός ανθρώπου [...] έτοιμου πια να ταυτισθεί με τους ρυθμούς του ίδιου του Σύμπαντος. Εξοικειωμένος με την ατμόσφαιρα των Ορφικών μυστηρίων, [...] επιχειρεί να συνθέσει μια πραγματικότητα από το μυστικιστικό ρεύμα της Ελληνικής ψυχής στο διάστημα όλων των αιώνων[.] (1945e: 24)

Cavafy was one of the poets who aroused Elytis' interest in poetry (1987: 334-335), but he was also a poet who 'σαν αντίληψη, και σαν επιδίωξη και σαν

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[119] The word 'αισθαντικότητα' employed by Sikelianos is reminiscent of Elytis' later comments on 'συναισθηματική και ψυχική αγωγή' (1987: 479), and also of his notion of 'διαύγεια του συναισθήματος' (1987: 470), expressed in his earlier response to Theotokas, as is pointed out in Chapter 2.

[120] Sikelianos referred to the 'organic evolution of the world' by using the Romantic organic metaphor of the seed (Coleridge) (Sikelianos 1965: 16).

αποτέλεσμα βρίσκεται στους αντίποδές μας' (1944a: 20, n. 2).[121] Elytis approved of Cavafy's reaction against traditional poetic form (1987: 125), but the poetry of the older poet inspired in him only 'a deep interest' and 'a deep admiration', and never 'a fascination' (1987: 334). The reason for this was, on the one hand, his initial repulsion towards the 'decadence' (1987: 101) expressed in Cavafy's 'wrinkled' poetry of 'the old age of the world' (1987: 336), and on the other hand, Elytis' later conclusion that Cavafy's poetic expression was 'flat' (1992: 49, 51).[122] Elytis acknowledged Cavafy's ability to absorb the world and create another one (1992: 175), and also to produce 'lexical magic' (1992: 267) and poetic aphorisms (1987: 413). But, as he insisted, the poetic pursuits of Cavafy were 'completely the opposite' of those of the lyricism of Elytis' time, since, in his poetry, Cavafy was indifferent to the image produced by the resolution of two realities, and to nature (1946b: 93, n. 9).[123] Furthermore, Elytis observed that instead of producing a new mythology that would refer to the future, in Cavafy the development of the imagination was limited to the temporal dimension of the past, thus resulting in a consolidation which 'μυθοποιεί το ιστορικό παρελθόν', in a fashion similar to that of Eliot (1946b: 99, n. 12).[124] Elytis' own approach to myth is examined in Part II.

The 'new era' for Greek poetry seemed to Elytis to have opened up with Seferis' *Στροφή* and Embirikos' *Υψικάμινος* (1987: 132). Elytis regarded Seferis as the 'last teacher' of poetry (1987: 387) and maintained that Seferis' conception of poetry was close to his own, in spite of the fact that Seferis' poetry was not

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[121] Elytis' observation is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.
[122] Elytis' distinction between 'flat' and 'prismatic' poetic expression is considered in Chapter 5.
[123] Elytis' view is expressed in a footnote in the original version of the essay, which does not reappear in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.

'revolutionary' (1987: 356). As a result of this view, Seferis was never included on Elytis' lists of poets of the 'new reality', that is, poets who were influenced by Surrealism or were close to it. Elytis never explicitly claimed that Seferis' view of poetry was contradictory to his own, but he implied this when he referred to the 'flat' expression of Seferis' poetry after *Στροφή* (1992: 49-50). Elytis recognized in Seferis a poet who created a new world out of the existing world (1992: 176), and one of the Greek poets with whom he shared a poetic sensibility, since he claimed that Seferis perceived the characteristic 'transmutation' ('μεταστοιχείωση') of ancient Greek culture into a living modern Greek reality (1992: 210). After Seferis' death, he included him on his list of Greece's major poets (1987: 602; 1992: 329).

Karyotakis was one of the Post-Symbolist poets that Elytis did not reject.[125] In him, he recognized a good poet, who, however, paved the way for the bad poetry of 'Karyotakism' (1987: 511). In 1944, he considered post-Karyotakian poetry to have marked the end and 'the disintegration of a world, and the need for the birth of a new one' (1987: 125); his ideas are reminiscent of the views expressed by Karandonis in his 1935 essay 'Η επίδραση του Καρυωτάκη στους νέους' (1935: 478-486). Elytis did not accept the 'aesthetic tone' of Karyotakis (1987: 323) and the 'absence of pride' that this involved (1987: 334). However, the role of 'anti-Karyotakis' (Savidis 1991: *νζ΄*) that Elytis is supposed to have played may have been imposed on him by his critics (Argyriou 1983: 52). Karyotakis, 'ο πορθμός ή ο δίαυλος' (Lorentzatos 1961: 97) between 'old' and 'new poetry', may have provoked an 'anxiety of influence' (Bloom 1973: 6ff.) on Elytis. The latter must have struggled to

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[124] Elytis' observation appears in a footnote, which is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.

recover from it and surpass it (Koutrianou 1996), since he was anxious to diminish the poetic figure of the older poet: 'κι ο Καρυωτάκης πολύ μακριά, σμικρυμένος, σα να τον έβλεπα από το αντίστροφο μέρος μιας διόπτρας' (Elytis 1987: 339). In his first poetic stages, Elytis tried to avoid the Karyotakist 'shadow', that is, the attraction of the psychological disposition involved in what Vitti calls the 'βίωμα' of Karyotakis (1979: 109ff.). However, later he included Karyotakis in his 'Notebook of a lyrical poet' (1992: 234, 244), which is an indication of his final 'recognition' of Karyotakis' aesthetics. Although Elytis may have shared the 'vision' of Karyotakis, he could not have recognized his example of the suffering poet, since this did not correspond to Rimbaud's description in the 'lettres du voyant' (Koutrianou 1996). With his suicide, Karyotakis proved that he did not manage to outlast the Promethean torment prescribed by Rimbaud, and reach the ideal dream of 'l'éternité' (Rimbaud) or 'αθανασία' (Elytis).

The Generation of the 1930s searched for its own identity by turning against the Generation of the 1920s, and in particular against the poetics of the Greek Post-Symbolists. On the one hand, the Post-Symbolists' detachment from the act of writing poetry and from the poem as a work of art was tacitly rejected by Elytis, who viewed the writing of poetry as a serious and tormenting process leading to the perfection of a 'transparent crystal', and the poem as the medium ('όργανο') for the change of man.[126] On the other hand, the Post-Symbolists' concurrent alienation from nature and their indifference to urban society, which led to their 'ambiguous relationships between poetry and reality' (Philokyprou 1992: 236) was exactly the

[125] The other two were Tellos Agras and Napoleon Lapathiotis, whose poetics he considered to belong to the old era of Greek poetry (Elytis 1987: 323, 325, 392).

opposite of Elytis' own attitude. Furthermore, the Post-Symbolists' rejection of collective memory (Philokyprou 1992: 238) contrasted with Elytis' acknowledgement of it. Post-Symbolist tendencies to alienation from society and the present time were foreign to Elytis, who used the Surrealist conception of dream as a means for his integration within society, and a better understanding of his own self, the 'living poem' (Octavio Paz), that is, a paradigm for Surreality, the elevated 'second condition' of life.[127]

Elytis' rejection of Greek Post-Symbolist poetics is the example *par excellence* of the ideological posture of the Generation of the 1930s: Post-Symbolism was for them both the scapegoat for their nationalist and literary and artistic aspirations, and the poetic example they needed to supersede in order to establish themselves in the Greek literary and artistic scene. As Philokyprou observes, the Post-Symbolists' rejection of collective memory may have been expressive of the repulsion they felt for the nationalism of Palamas and of the poetry of his time, and this may have led to their 'cosmopolitanism' (1992: 238). Within the context of the Generation of the 1930s, Elytis acknowledged Palamas and rejected the European Cosmopolis in favour of the 'living elements of the Greek tradition' (1945a: 351). In November 1945, Elytis greeted the national holiday of 28 October as 'a great date for a nation', a date with 'a double meaning: a historical meaning and an ethical one' (1945g: 1), which 'δίνει βάρος σε κάθε εξαιρετικό γεγονός και το καταχωρεί μέσα στη συνείδηση της φυλής με την οριστική λάμψη του συμβόλου'. This instance shows that Elytis attributed a moral content to the role of the poet that was not

[126] Elytis' views are examined in Part II.

simply humanistic, since he attached the poet to the fate or the struggle of his 'φυλή'; it seems that Elytis subscribed to this role by adhering to a nationalist perspective.

Elytis' views on the Greek poetry of his time show that, on the one hand, he needed to recognize a poetic environment that justified and supported his high poetic aspirations; Elytis' praise of Palamas and Sikelianos evokes his attempts to acknowledge Kalvos and Solomos as the Greek forerunners of Surrealism and Pure Poetry respectively. On the other hand, Elytis' observations on the poetry of Cavafy and Seferis are indicative of his attempt to dissociate himself from an idea of poetry that did not correspond to his own Romantic and idealist views. Elytis' reaction against Greek Post-Symbolism best illustrates, not only his synchronization with the broader pursuits of his generation, but primarily his own resistance to accept anything that seemed to him to be far from his own elitist criteria. Greek Post-Symbolist poetics may have presented to Elytis neither the 'transparence of the crystal' nor the power of symbol, which are two of the principal aspects of his theoretical and poetic endeavour. Nor were they intoxicated by the same idealism as that inspiring Elytis' visionary view of poetry.

1.4 *Conclusion*

Elytis' reception of nineteenth- and twentieth-century non-Surrealist poetry was determined by two principal factors, an ideological and an aesthetic one. The first involved Elytis' realization of a dichotomy between western Europe and Greece, both

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[127] Elytis' assimilation of the Surrealist ideas into his own poetic views is pointed out in Chapter 2 and is explored in Part II.

on a historical and a social level and with regard to aesthetic and literary production. Like the rest of the members of his generation, Elytis perceived in Europe the norm against which all efforts for an aesthetic and social upgrading ought to be measured and evaluated and towards which they should aim.[128] Rather than imitating this model, Elytis aspired to participate in its functions and contribute to its achievements as any other western European poet would do. Greece was thus seen by him as a source of energy and a tradition which bore the potential for exploitation. As is explained in Chapter 3, Elytis turned to the immanent properties of Greece (nature, light, culture, history) in order to develop an aesthetic theory on which to base his poetic (and perhaps artistic) pursuits. He developed his ideas by focusing on what he considered to be the two principal properties or features of Greece, both exemplified in the moral content he attached to the inheritance of Plato and Plotinus (who 'perceived' in a Greek way), and in the cultural and the literary and aesthetic achievements of the Greek people: the beauty of the natural landscape, and the transcendental tendencies of the Greek soul. It was while formulating these ideas that his views on western European and Greek poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were expressed; this may explain why he was attracted by the Romantic ideal of a transcendental approach to nature and the Romantic views on the ethical role of the poet, and why he focused his attention on the transcendental feeling of poets in whose poetry nature was given a privileged role.

Elytis' reception of European poetry was conditioned by his consciousness of the dichotomy between western Europe and Greece. As becomes apparent from his

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[128] In this respect, Elytis and his generation did not avoid doing precisely that for which they condemned the Greek Post-Symbolists.

observations on Romantic, Symbolist and other European non-Surrealist poetry, he considered Surrealism as yet another norm, this time a poetic and artistic norm. Elytis regarded Surrealism as the most significant and influential literary and artistic movement of his time, and this was the second factor that conditioned his exploration of nineteenth- and twentieth-century non-Surrealist poetry. But, as the Greek debate on Surrealism made him realize, the western European origins of Surrealism posed a problem that had to be overcome in order, on the one hand, to make it acceptable in Greece, and on the other, to use it more constructively in the production of Greek 'new poetry'. Thus, Surrealism had to be naturalized, instead of simply being given a visa. The reason why Elytis claimed that Kalvos was a forerunner of Surrealism (and, later, that Solomos had conceived of Pure Poetry before Mallarmé) was precisely that he wanted to prove that it had been only a matter of historical coincidence that Surrealism (and Pure Poetry) appeared in France and not in Greece. Elytis' reception of Surrealism is explored in this light in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Surrealism as an Essential Impulse

2.1 *Introduction*: *Elytis' Defence of Surrealism*

Although Surrealism had been known to Greek writers since the early 1920s,[129] Greek Surrealism was launched with the publication of Embirikos' Υψικάμινος in 1935. The initial reception of the Surrealist poems of this collection was extremely negative and marked the beginning of a long critical debate, whose target was Surrealism but which involved a more general consideration of modern or 'new poetry'.[130] The debate reached its culmination around 1938-1940 and started subsiding around the time of the Liberation of Greece and the beginning of the Greek Civil War. Elytis defended Surrealism when it was attacked by Greek writers and critics both as a moral attitude and as a poetic and aesthetic movement. At that time, Elytis maintained (and stressed in his later essays) that the movement which brought a revival to European letters and art contributed to literature principally by giving

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[129] In a number of articles, mainly in newspapers of the time, Surrealism was mentioned as one of several contemporary European artistic and poetic tendencies. Although most of these articles present a confusing and incorrect evaluation of Surrealism, they nevertheless show Greek writers' awareness of the existence of the Surrealist movement. The earliest known references to Surrealism, in which the Greek term 'Υπερρεαλισμός' was used, appeared in September and October 1924 (see Karaoglou 1985: 42-43). But, until 1931, when the essay 'Ο Υπερρεαλισμός κι' η [sic] τάσεις του' by Dimitris Mentzelos was published, Surrealism was neither completely ignored in Greece nor accurately defined (see Karaoglou 1987: 622-632, Vayenas 1984: 618-626, and Panayotou 1984: 536-542).

[130] For a critical historical account of the Greek debate on Surrealism see Karavidas 1983: 1-84. Also Trivizas 1996: 27-81, which is less detailed, but provides a useful bibliography, covering the period 1935-1940 (1996: 207-269).

free rein to the imagination and by revealing aspects of life that had been undermined by reason.

The story of Elytis' discovery of Surrealism and of his apprenticeship in it, is offered in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963): the 'symbolic character of the event' which took place in the small Kauffmann bookshop in the late 1920s, when he discovered the poetry of Paul Eluard and Pierre-Jean Jouve and Surrealism, the French movement whose disciples declared an obsessive and absolute faith in 'objective chance', *le hasard objectif* (1987: 336);[131] the article on Surrealism published by Mentzelos in 1931 (1987: 338-340);[132] Elytis' study of Surrealism, which was enthusiastic though not methodical in the beginning, but systematic and thorough after he met Embirikos, then gradually 'wiser' as he realized the disruptive tendencies of automatic writing (1987: 364); his friendship with Embirikos and their exchange of enthusiasm for Surrealism and fidelity to it (1987: 347-352); his defensive or, as he called it, 'combative' ('μαχητική') activity (1987: 531) by writing his articles in defence of Surrealism (1987: 380-432).

In his articles dating from the period 1938-1945, Elytis presented himself as a well-qualified defender of Surrealist theories and practices, although he occasionally insisted that he was not a Surrealist himself.[133] In the series of articles that he published between 1938 and 1940, and in 1944 and 1945, he defended rather than

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[131] Elytis refers to this discovery also in his 1944 essay 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ 1935.' (1987: 120).

[132] Elytis was grateful to Mentzelos for this article (see Vitti 1979: 128).

[133] On some other occasions, Elytis spoke as a Surrealist (as in his response to Tsatsos; see Elytis 1944c: 98).

presented Surrealism. Thus, his points should not be regarded and criticized as expressive of his conscious appropriation of the title of the expounder of Surrealism in Greece, but should be valued for what they are, that is, as responses to usually biased negative criticism by Greek critics who isolated and focused on specific aspects of the Surrealist endeavour, unwilling to study Surrealism in detail and thus unable to understand the way Elytis or other poets might have conceived of it in the late 1930s. The Greek critics' motives varied in the reasons and the degree of their interest and the extent of their understanding, and they were conditioned by the ideological and the political ferment of the time. Elytis' responses are interesting as far as this thesis is concerned, not as detailed accounts of Surrealism, but to the extent that his comments show his understanding of the Surrealist quest and his assimilation of its principles into his own poetic endeavour. It appears in these articles that Elytis was not only aware of the developments within the French Surrealist movement, and of the constantly changing perspectives of the Surrealist project, but that he was also in a position to present a critical account of it (and not an apologetic exegesis or an over-enthusiastic apotheosis of it), and to assimilate it into his broader consideration of the Greek literary and aesthetic tradition and of the historical consciousness of his generation.

Elytis was quick to catch up with the 'spirit' of the *περιρρέουσα ατμοσφαίρα* of Greek literature in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The rather moderate tone of his breakthrough in 1935, when he published his first poetry, which was not Surrealist, was succeeded by a passionate and rather aggressive attitude around 1938, an attitude that was not very different from the Surrealist manner of *non-*

conformisme (Breton 1988: 346). But very soon this changed, not to *conformisme*, but to Elytis' adjustment to the tunes of the Generation of the 1930s.

In the early stages of his 'combative' activity, Elytis decided that he might have to pursue an 'aristocratic' idea of art. He stressed the importance of the imagination and the function of emotion, and although he appeared to reject automatic writing, in fact he always favoured the idea and the theories that this involved. Under the pressure of the political and the social tensions of the time, Elytis was obliged to make concessions and frequently hide his enthusiasm for Surrealism (as when he denied that he was a Surrealist in his response to Theotokas). By the end of this 'combative' period, he acknowledged the general impact that the Surrealist theories had had on aesthetics, but he no longer supported the French Surrealist 'School'. There may have been many reasons for his attitude. Already in the early 1930s, successive eruptions started undermining the nucleus of the French Surrealist movement and, just before the war, signs of an approaching decline were felt.

In the years 1943-1945, there appeared simultaneous tendencies towards conciliation on the part of both the Greek Surrealists and the Greek critics. Apart from the special conditions created by the war, which may have encouraged tolerance on both sides and a joining of forces against the common enemy, there were other reasons which played a significant role in reconciling the conflicting parties. Firstly, unlike the French Surrealists, the Greek Surrealists were obviously uninterested in politics, or they could not do otherwise. They never joined the Greek Left, and they

seemed to have been concerned only with aesthetics.[134] Even during the dramatic developments from 1943 to 1945, when writers and artists were pressed by political conditions to make a decision and take the side either of the Left or of the Right, Greek Surrealists did not join the Left, which at that time was following the Soviet line. They had already dismissed this line and had dissociated themselves from (Soviet) Communism as, in any case, the French Surrealists themselves had done since 1934-1935.[135] Thus, in contrast to the French Surrealists, the Greek Surrealists never had to face the accusation of having mixed politics with poetry.[136]

The second reason for the abatement of the debate on Surrealism in Greece in this period was the association of Greek Surrealists with the Generation of the 1930s, which at that time had strengthened its power over the literary affairs of Greece. Most of the Greek Surrealists, and Elytis was the first among them, had joined the literary circles of this generation, in the mid-1930s. Unlike the French Surrealists' subversive attitude towards the French literary establishment (at least in the early stages of their movement), not only had the Greek Surrealists given evidence that they did not want to sabotage or dissociate themselves from the literary affairs of their country, but they had made explicit from the beginning that they wanted to become an essential part of it. But, perhaps already in the late 1930s there was not really any other choice for the Greek Surrealists but to join the

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[134] Elytis and Embirikos, however, flirted with Communism sometime before 1936, as is pointed out in section 2.2.

[135] See Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 99ff.; also cf. Embirikos' comments in his 1936 interview with Bastias (Embirikos 1984: 130; cf. section 2.2), and in his 1967 interview with Skarpalezou (1976: 13-14).

[136] Later, they were accused of having excluded this vital aspect of Surrealism from their Surrealist quests (see Vitti 1976: 77-79); for a response to this accusation see Argyriou 1985b: 33-37.

Generation of the 1930s,[137] and espouse its aesthetic and ideological choices, such as the employment of demotic (instead of *katharevousa*), the promotion of tradition and the positive aspects of Greek life, the views about the Greek landscape, and the immanent properties of Greece, and the moral principles attached to the role and the national responsibility of the poet.

The quest for Greekness is associated with similar ideological and political implications in the national quests that emerged around the same time in Italy, Germany, and even Spain and Latin America.[138] In his retrospective essay of 1963 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', but also in 'Πρώτα-πρώτα' and in several other essays written or rewritten after the 1960s, as well as in interviews, Elytis observes that ideas about Greekness appealed to him and led him, together with other Greek poets, to make out of Surrealism '"κάτι άλλο", που απέχει πολύ απ' την αρχική θεωρία, κάτι μοναδικό σε παγκόσμια κλίμακα, και που παρουσιάζει γι' αυτό, εξαιρετικό ενδιαφέρον' (Elytis 1965).[139] Later, he stated: 'I never was a disciple of the surrealist school. I found certain congenial elements there, [...] which I adapted to the Greek light' (1975: 642). Surrealism became a scapegoat as soon as it appeared in Greece. What mediated between the initial hostility and Surrealism's final acceptance as a major contribution to aesthetics was precisely Surrealism's baptism in the Aegean sea, Greek tradition and Greek nature. After its christening,

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[137] There was a 'παρέα' or 'συντροφιά' (Ambatzopoulou 1987: 22-23) of Greek Surrealists in the 1930s (Elytis 1987: 368), but this was not a Surrealist group like those existing in other countries outside France. They were never recognized officially by Breton. When in 1936 Breton was sent a telegram by Elytis, Embirikos and other poets and artists, who had organized the 'First Surrealist Exhibition of Athens' (Elytis 1987: 364), he did not even reply, although he knew Embirikos. This was strange, since Breton was extremely interested in seeing Surrealism spreading on an international level, and this exhibition was one of the first ones to be organized out of Paris.

[138] Cf. the notions of 'Italianità', 'Hispanidad', etc.

[139] Elytis referred to his generation; but, apart from them, there was also the 'second generation' of Greek Surrealists (cf. Argyriou 1985a), and also the experiments of writers and artists in the 1960s.

Surrealism was given a Greek identity and it was expected to lead a Greek life. Thus, although this 'something else' that was created out of Surrealism in Greece, in Elytis' view, is only one of the international transpositions of Surrealism, it is nevertheless conditioned by inherently Greek ideological, cultural and socio-historical conditions.

Elytis' views, as expressed in the articles in which he defended Surrealism, significantly contributed to the developments within Greek Surrealism. They are considered here as expressive of his own aesthetic quests and poetic choices. Elytis' endeavour is heavily marked ideologically; although the critique of his ideological standpoint does not concern this thesis, his ideological positions are considered in section 2.2 to the extent that they seem to converge with and/or diverge from the French Surrealists' political standpoints, and to have affected his view of poetry and his aestheticist approach to it. Section 2.3 focuses on the way Elytis presented those aspects of Surrealism that are involved in his conception of 'new poetry'. Although he only responded to Greek criticism of Surrealism rather than analysing the Surrealist project itself, the aspects that he touched upon manifest the way he worked with Surrealism and those of its features that he observed and further cultivated. Section 2.4 concentrates on the seven principles that Elytis attributed to 'new poetry', in an attempt to prove that Surrealism was a mode of thinking about poetry and not simply a 'school' of poetry.

2.2 *The Social Mission of Art*

Elytis' endeavour to connect modernist quests and purely Greek elements (tradition and landscape) has been questioned both in his theoretical approach to the issue, and in his poetic practice.[140] His ideological viewpoint has also been criticized.[141] Although the critique of Elytis' ideological positions does not concern this thesis, a few observations can be made on his attitude within the context of his time and his milieu, since his ideology determines his aesthetic standpoint and has conditioned the emergence of his ideas on poetry.

The Greek debate on Surrealism broke out in 1935, at a time of strong political tensions that led to the imposition of the dictatorial regime of the fascist Ioannis Metaxas in 1936. In that same year, Embirikos denied that he was a Communist (1984: 130-131). On the other hand, the political positions expressed in *Foyers d'incendie*, published by Nicolas Calas in France in 1939, follow the lines of the manifesto proclaiming the independence of revolutionary art (*Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant*), written by Trotsky and Breton and signed by the latter and Diego Rivera in 1938, but Calas' book focuses more on psychoanalytic than on ideological issues (Siaflekis 1985: 44). Elytis mentioned Calas' book in 1940, when, in his response to Papanoutsos, he referred to the French Surrealists' concern for objectivity in art (1987: 475); Calas' stress on the importance of the psychological element in life is evoked in the observations that Elytis expressed on Marxism six years later.

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[140] Cf. Leontis 1984: 100-111 and 1995: 172-217. See also Dimiroulis 1986: 314-334. I have not had access to the dissertation by Martha Klironomos (*Formation of the Nation/State: Hellenism in the Poetry of Ezra Pound, William Butler Yeats, and Odysseas Elytis.* Ohio State Univ. [1993]).
[141] Cf. Maronitis 1986: 109-129.

Elytis' political position was the most typical of the bourgeois youth of his time; he initially flirted with Trotskyism when still a university student (1987: 322); much later, he stated that his ideas were half-anarchic and half-conservative and no political party was expressive of them (Elytis 1979b).[142] In fact, in the mid-1940s, Elytis' ideology appears to have been more conservative than anarchic, and this is apparent in the views he expressed in the articles in which he defended Surrealism. During the period 1938-1945, when these texts were published, Elytis' main concerns involved aesthetics and revolved around the practical aspects of lyrical poetry ('Τα πραχτικά προβλήματα του Λυρισμού') (1987: 124). Surrealism was viewed by him, in this perspective, as an aesthetic revolution and as a new poetic way of approaching life. In these essays, he avoids referring to politics extensively and his few comments on it are usually brief and ambiguous. Only at the end of this period did he provide a clearer account of his ideas on the social role of the poet and the artist. It was in a number of articles published in 1945 and 1946, in which he did not concern himself with Surrealism, that he expressed his views with disarming sincerity; apart from indicating possible influences by other members of the Generation of the 1930s, his points reveal how deeply the Surrealist endeavour had affected his thought.

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[142] In his 1983 interview with Analis, Elytis insists on expressing his dissatisfaction with the existing political parties and claims that he is an anarchic (Elytis 1983a: 104); his observations are reminiscent of Embirikos' statements in his 1967 interview with Skarpalezou, mentioned above (cf. also Embirikos 1985: 635).

In 'Τελεία και παύλα' (1938), Elytis not only expresses his anger at the disparaging comments of Greek critics against the Surrealists;[143] he also seems to have developed bitter feelings towards them. The conclusion he reached from that phase of the debate on Surrealism (1935-1938) is the following:

> εκείνος που θέλει να φτιάξει κάτι το στερεό και το υγιές σ' αυτό τον τόπο, πρέπει να το πάρει απόφαση πως θα το φτιάξει *μόνος* του, μελετώντας τη ζωή, παλεύοντας με τη ζωή, αλλ' ακούοντας ανεπηρέαστος τη φωνή της συνείδησής του. Σήμερα, η αληθινή τέχνη –τουλάχιστον στα χρονικά περιθώρια της γέννησής της– είναι αριστοκρατική. (1938b: 583-584; his emphasis)

It must have sounded strange for a poet who appeared to believe so intensely in the Surrealist revolution to declare that he favoured, or would pursue, an 'aristocratic' art. Certainly, this would have seemed an absurd assertion to any of the French Surrealists any time in the 1920s, when they were seriously involved in politics and leaning towards Communism. Nevertheless, it is true that, although the French Surrealists claimed that art could be made by everyone, the structure of the Surrealist Parisian circle had an aristocratic and elitist character. As Chénieux-Gendron observes, 'c'est l'ambiguïté incontournable du surréalisme qu'il ait finalement renforcé le droit privilégié du sujet qui parle, au sein d'un groupe lui-même privilégié. Le surréalisme a réinventé, en effet, comme lieu de surgissement privilégié de la "merveille", le *groupe* constitué autour d'une personnalité dominante' (1984: 14; her

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[143] Numerous articles had been published in Greece since the publication of Embirikos' *Υψικάμινος*, and critical observations were normally extremely derogatory of Surrealism. Potis Psaltiras gave a talk at *Παρνασσός* in 1937 in which he ridiculed Surrealism, and E. Liakakos, Christos Levandas, Vasilis Dedousis, Napoleon Lapathiotis, Nikos Papas and many others wrote articles against Surrealism in the same spirit. Elytis' 1938 article 'Οι κίνδυνοι της ημιμάθειας' expressed his reaction to this general attitude in a rather aggressive style; his article raised violent reactions by many critics, such as Napoleon Lapathiotis, S. Pamphylos, G.M. Mylonoyannis, Christos Levandas and others (see Elytis 1987: 380-381).

emphasis). Perhaps Elytis only wanted to refer to the failure of the Greek Surrealists to form a group and to incite a viable movement; the reasons for this failure were never explained. However, anyone else who knew Surrealism as well as Elytis did, and who did not wish to blur any further the image of Surrealism in Greece, would have cautiously avoided using the term 'aristocratic', which would immediately have been recognized as characteristic of an arrogant and self-centred posture. However, perhaps this was not a mistake on Elytis' part but an indication that what he meant was either still unclear even to him or too provocative for him to declare more openly. A few years later, he appeared willing to explain clearly his ideas on the social responsibility of the poet and the artist.

Elytis ended his article on 'the contemporary poetic and artistic tendencies' (1944) with a brief and rather indifferent and cold comment on politics, which for the French Surrealists had been a crucial aspect of their revolution. Elytis' model for the social and the political role of the poet was that the latter ought to serve his nation and its people by making his art 'better and more true':

> πραγματικά, ο ποιητής μπορεί και πρέπει να εξυπηρετεί το λαό του και το έθνος του, αλλά [...] ο μόνος τρόπος για να το επιτύχει είναι να κάνει, όσο μπορεί και όπως μπορεί, καλύτερη και αληθινότερη τέχνη. Πιστεύουμε ακόμη ότι, γι' αυτό, δε χρειάζεται να κατεβαίνει στην Αγορά και να οσμίζεται ποιες ιδέες κάθε φορά έχουνε τη μεγαλύτερη ζήτηση, αλλ' αρκεί ν' ακούει ανεπηρέαστος τη φωνή του καλλιτεχνικού του ενστίκτου και να βάζει πλώρη, με τη διαίσθησή του και τη μελέτη του, ίσια κατά την καρδιά της ανθρώπινης ολότητας. (1987: 513)

In his essay 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935', of the same period, he specified what he meant:

> Ωστόσο η ποίηση, αυτό φάνηκε, δεν ήτανε μια ειδική κι απο-

> μονωμένη αισθητική αναζήτηση· δεν ήταν ένα πείραμα διανοητικό με κλειστά όρια και σκοπό την αυτοϊκανοποίηση· δεν ήταν μια υπόθεση πάρεργη και ιδιωτική, δεν ήτανε, πάλι, και αυτό φάνηκε επίσης, ένα όργανο παραπάνω στα χέρια των ανθρώπων εκείνων που θέλανε, όσο μπορούσαν καλύτερα, να διακηρύξουνε κοινωνικές, πολιτικές ή φιλοσοφικές πεποιθήσεις. (1987: 126)

Elytis' claim that, by contrast, poetry should be a revolutionary instrument in the service of the imagination (1987: 127) is reminiscent of Breton's view, expressed in the first issue of *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (1930) on the occasion of Mayakovsky's death, that the life of the proletariat and the life of the mind were two completely different dramas. In his essay 'Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη νέα μας ποίηση', also published in 1944, Elytis expressed the view that there were temporal and local factors in history which determined the superiority of one tendency in art over others. In his view, these factors conditioned the aesthetic sensibility of people. And since this sensibility determined what was considered to be beautiful, there was one kind of art that came closer to the prevalent ideas of the beautiful, and another kind of art that did not coincide with the prevailing aesthetic standards (1987: 489-490). However, concluding his essay, Elytis suggested that the artist ought to serve his art and not its theories, and that he should adapt his ideas to the most recent developments in aesthetics.

In 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα', published in July 1945, Elytis addressed Markos Avyeris,[144] referring to Breton's rejection of Bukharin's definition of 'Socialist Realism' (1945a: 356, n. 1). In the following November, he responded to the survey on 'Η τέχνη και η εποχή', organized by *Νέα Εστία*. In this case

[144] In articles written in *Πρωτοπόροι*, from August to December 1943, Avyeris rejected Surrealism in favour of a Realism that reflected the content of Zhdanov's address to the Congress of Soviet Writers in

too, his comments on the relation between art and politics were brief and clear. Although, among the writers who responded to the survey, the observations of Panayotis Kanellopoulos (1945: 564-565) in the July issue of the periodical, and those of Seferis (1945: 635-636), Pandelis Prevelakis (1945: 636-637), Theotokas (1945: 637-638), all published in the August issue, and that of Elytis himself, follow the same lines of thought, Elytis was the only one who explicitly referred to the Marxists. As he observes in his response, art is a revolution in its essence, since it establishes the emotional communication between people: as long as dream and action are considered to be two separate functions, art will be man's most irreconcilable 'act of freedom', that is, a revolution 'που αφορά ολάκαιρη τη ζωή του ανθρώπου πέρα ως πέρα' (1945f: 1027), and not a social revolution.[145] Since this text is not included in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, the following extract, which reveals Elytis' viewpoint, is quoted here, despite its length:

> Η Τέχνη είναι [...] μια επανάσταση που δίνει τη μάχη της στα πιο προχωρημένα φυλάκια της ψυχικής και συναισθηματικής πάλης του [of man] γι' απολύτρωση, για καθαρή ζωή, για χαρά, και που δεν έχει καμμιά σχέση με την άλλη, τη συνονόματή της, αυτή που κάτω από τη μια ή την άλλη σημαία πολεμάει για αιτήματα δίκαια ή άδικα, πάντως αιτήματα, που μόνο και μόνο με το να γίνονται σχέδια προγραμματικά μιας ορισμένης ομαδικής δράσης, τείνουν κι' αυτά να μεταβληθούν σε συμβατικότητα. Η φράση αυτή ας μην παρεξηγηθεί. Δε σημαίνει ότι ο καλλιτέχνης που είναι και πολίτης μιας χώρας και μέλος μιας κοινωνίας πρέπει να την αρνείται αυτή την τελευταία επανάσταση. Σημαίνει ότι είτε την αρνιέται είτε όχι, κι' ανεξάρτητα από το γεγονός αυτό, είναι ανάγκη νάχει αδιάκοπα μέσα του τη συναίσθηση ότι μιλεί για λογαριασμό του βαθύτερου πόθου

1934. Cf. also his 1944 essay 'Ο Συρρεαλισμός και η κρίση των μορφών' (Avyeris 1976: 112-116).

[145] Elytis maintained that 'η τέχνη που δεν κρίνεται ποτέ από τις καλές ή κακές της προθέσεις αλλά πάντοτε και μόνο από τα καλά ή κακά της αποτελέσματα, κατέχει ακριβώς αυτή τη δύναμη: Να συνενώνει τις αποχωρισμένες από την υλική διάταξη του κόσμου καταστάσεις που με λαχτάρα εντελώς αφιλόκερδη αναζητάει πάντοτε το πνεύμα, και να τις συνθέτει σε μιαν ύψιστη ενότητα. Έτσι, και μόνον από τη φύση της λειτουργίας της, η Τέχνη γίνεται η πιο αδιάλλαχτη "πράξη λευτεριάς". Είναι αυτή που επιχειρεί πρώτη να σπάσει τους φραγμούς της συμβατικότητας κοινωνικής, πολιτικής, ή αισθητικής, αδιάφορο' (1945f: 1027).

> λευτεριάς που κατοικεί κάθε άνθρωπο, κι' ότι ο πόθος αυτός δεν ανέχεται να εκδηλώνεται στον εξωτερικό κόσμο με τα διακριτικά σημάδια μιας μόνον παράταξης που ερμηνεύει τη φύση του με αποκλειστικότητα, εντοπισμένη μέσα στο χρόνο και την ιστορία. Σημαίνει ότι πρέπει να προχωρεί πέρα από την Ανάγκη –ακόμη κι' αν αυτή δεν έχει λυθεί– κι' ας φαίνεται αυτό με την πρώτη ματιά σκληρό ή απάνθρωπο. Σημαίνει ότι πρέπει να πείθει. Και πείθει ο καλλιτέχνης μονάχα όταν προχωρεί αποσπασμένος από ατομικό ή ταξικό ή άλλο συμφέρον, όταν προβάλλει ντυμένος με ό,τι τόσον εύστοχα *ένας αισθητικός μας ονόμασε ήθος της αφιλοκέρδειας*.
> (1945f: 1027; Elytis' emphasis)

Elytis turns against the materialists, who, in their 'αδεξιότητα', succeeded in equating art with such characteristics as indifference towards the human being, 'αριστοκρατισμός', enclosure in an ivory tower and withdrawal from reality.[146] In his view, artists who were characterized by 'το ήθος της αφιλοκέρδειας' did not deserve such negative criticism;[147] his comment reflects his bourgeois ideology by revealing how uncomfortable he may have felt with the criticism of the Left: 'Τέχνη για την Τέχνη δεν υπάρχει, δεν υπήρξε ίσως ποτέ, κι ο ίδιος ο όρος θα παραμένει στην ιστορία σαν ένα άτυχο σχήμα λόγου' (1945f: 1027). As is apparent from his observation in 'Τελεία και παύλα' pointed out above, Elytis attached to the notion of 'aristocracy' rather positive connotations.

In his response to the *Νέα Εστία* survey, Elytis also claims that art is 'a simple manifestation of life, one among many others' (1945f: 1027) and, since every expression of life is not independent but always relevant to all the others, they all communicate with each other, just like the 'communicating vessels' (of the

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[146] In August 1945, Nikos Karydis referred to the Greek Surrealists as 'intellectual aristocrats' who were indifferent to the suffering of the people, enclosed as they were in their 'ivory towers' (1945: 9). Karydis addressed, in particular, the group of the short-lived *Τετράδιο*, which succeeded *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* (Karandonis was its editor-in-chief), although not all of these writers were Surrealists.

[147] Prevelakis used the expression 'το ήθος της ανιδιοτέλειας' to refer to the work of art, in his own response to the survey (1945: 636-637). Prevelakis maintained that, at that time, art was responding to the moral pressure of the need to build a better world. I.M. Panayotopoulos also mentioned the 'ανιδιοτέλεια' of art in his response (1945: 832). The responses of both Prevelakis and Panayotopoulos preceded Elytis' own response.

Surrealists). As he explains, each of these communicating vessels exists by virtue of the existence of the others, and each functions because the others function too. Thus, together they form life. As long as art is kept away from 'την ωφελιμιστική μανία της κηθημερινής αγοράς' (1945f: 1028) and remains close to the climate of the spirit ('στο κλίμα του πνεύματος'), art will view human beings as they are, that is, as universal beings, not distinguished by any social or national differences. As he observes, the result of such an attitude would be 'να παραμερίζεται και να σβύνει ό,τι αποτελεί "μέσο" ή "προϋπόθεση", και να λάμπει στη θέση τους ό,τι είναι, κι έχει ταχθεί να είναι παντοτεινά "σκοπός" της ζωής'.

Continuing his response to the *Νέα Εστία* survey, Elytis further maintains that the Marxists (and not Marx), made the mistake of condemning art to being preoccupied with the prerequisites of life and not with the purposes of life. In his view, this was a serious mistake, especially since Marxists proclaimed that they were interested precisely in the purposes of life. He claims that they did not want to let art accomplish its role but rather preferred to use it as an instrument for the revolution and the reconstitution of man. The 'tragic antinomy' of Marxist aesthetics was its inability to understand the serious role that the psychological factor played for people.[148] He pointed out that this inability of the Marxists had already been criticized by Mayakovsky but also, by other Russian and western European writers. Obviously, Elytis was referring to the Second International Congress of Revolutionary Writers that had taken place in 1930 at Kharkov. Louis Aragon and Georges Sadoul, who participated in it, had been persuaded to sign the

[148] In his comments, Elytis was not only addressing Avyeris and Karydis, but also Varnalis, who in 1944 held that, in its emphasis on the unconscious and the irrational, Surrealism was expressing 'the

condemnation of Freud's theories as 'dangerously idealist'. Their bourgeois attachment to Freudian psychoanalysis is manifest in the fact that the Surrealists always recognized Freud as their precursor, and they rejected propaganda (*Du temps que les surréalistes avaient raison*) (1935). As Chénieux-Gendron observes, 'l'art selon les marxistes peut *à la limite* devenir art de propagande: c'est un scandale aux yeux des surréalistes' (1984: 208). The Surrealist conception of the relation between poetics and politics was clearly presented in the *Situation surréaliste de l'objet* (1935), and also in the Breton-Trotsky manifesto. As becomes apparent from his comments, Elytis was aware of both.

In his response to the same survey, Elytis utterly denounced totalitarian regimes, including Soviet Communism. He concluded his response by proposing that perhaps the only measure that could be used to evaluate art was the result of personal experience: '*μια διαύγεια*', like that of the people who had fought in the war. And this experience should also lead to a personal morality, the morality of 'Beauty', which was the morality of art.[149] It is not strange that Elytis did not take the opportunity, offered to him by Papatsonis in July of that same year, to discuss the relation of Surrealism with Communism,[150] since, in his articles in *Ελευθερία* in that same July and August, he stated that the Left had proved unable to support the needs of young people, who thus took the side of the Right (1945b, 1945c, 1945d). Although he also observed that the conflict between the extreme Right and the

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reaction' (cited in Karavidas 1983: 78).

[149] This was yet another allusion to the points that had been expressed by Prevelakis.

[150] Robinson sees this as 'symptomatic of the Greek attitude' (1981: 135, n. 26); in his view, for the Greek Surrealists, the relation of Surrealism with Communism 'was a non-issue'. Papatsonis acknowledged the poetry of the Greek Surrealists in his otherwise negative article on Surrealism (1945: 340-346).

extreme Left had generated the upheaval, his comments were clearly inimical to the Left.

Following the rise of the Greek Left during the Occupation, many writers and artists in Greece were expected to take one of the two political sides. Although Elytis emphasized that, at least, 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα' had been written in November 1944, that is, a month before the bloody events of December 1944, it is apparent that he had been hesitant to speak openly of his position before the turn of events in 1945.[151]

The view expressed by Elytis in November 1945 that art and political action were two different means which, however, could lead to the same achievement, that is, the liberation of man,[152] was similar in principle to the view expressed by Benjamin Péret in February 1945. The booklet *Le Déshonneur des poètes* (1945) was Péret's answer to the publication of the collection of poems of the Resistance *L'Honneur des poètes* (1944) by Eluard and Jean Lescure. According to Péret, 'la poésie n'a pas à intervenir [...] autrement que par son action propre, par sa signification culturelle même, quitte aux poètes à participer en tant que révolutionnaires à la déroute de l'adversaire nazi par des méthodes révolutionnaires' (Péret 1995: 12).[153] After the war, Péret, Breton and many other members of the

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[151] For the principal role that the Greek Left played in the Greek Resistance and the events that followed the end of the war and led to the Greek Civil War (1945-1949) see Clogg 1986: 140-165. It is characteristic of Elytis' attitude that his response to the survey 'Η τέχνη και η εποχή', a text in which he refers to politics and his ideology, was not included in the rest of 'Τα κείμενα' in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, which is a volume of essays on aesthetics.

[152] Cf. the view of a contemporary critic, who observes that 'Το μέγιστο μάθημα που μπορεί να προσφέρει σήμερα ο υπερρεαλισμός, είναι ότι οι δρόμοι της τέχνης δεν συμπίπτουν με τους δρόμους της πράξης, αλλά προχωρούν παράλληλα, και ότι το όνειρο δεν αντικαθιστά τη δράση, αλλά την τέμνει.' (Ambatzopoulou 1976: 48)

[153] Péret was answering accusations that the French Surrealists had abstained from the resistance. Of course, he himself had fought in the Spanish Civil War. In his booklet, he went on to claim that the poet should not ever forget 'que cette oppression correspondait au voeu, avoué ou non, de tous les

French Surrealist movement (although not Eluard and Aragon) completely dissociated themselves from Soviet and French Communism.[154]

Considered in its historical evolution, French Surrealism opens up into two perspectives: 'Au sens le plus étroit, le surréalisme est un procédé d'écriture, au sens large une attitude philosophique qui est en même temps une mystique (ou qui le fut), une poétique, et une politique' (Raymond 1952: 282). As Chénieux-Gendron observes, Surrealism wanted to be 'une philosophie, mais "de vie", un mode de vivre et de penser, une folie de vivre et de penser qui, refusant le monde tel qu'il est, car le "réel" n'est souvent que l'habituel, se propose tout à la fois de "transformer le monde" (Marx) et de "changer la vie" (Rimbaud), en une révolte à la fois politique et poétique' (1984: 18). The synthesis of the poetic and the political to which the French Surrealists aspired by invoking both Marx and Rimbaud also served them so as to define Surrealism: 'Le mouvement se présente comme une attitude devant la vie, un choix dans l'existence personelle et sociale, bref une ethique. [...] Le surréalisme élabore une philosophie de l'action et une philosophie de la connaissance' (Abastado 1986: 35-36). But the assertions referring to the qualifications the Surrealists claimed for themselves have been rejected by Jean-Louis Bédouin (1961: 8-9). The combination of the political and the poetic action was not simply an initial aim, which the Surrealists were soon to abandon; Rose traces the reasons for their break with the Communists to the fact that Surrealism 'was a form

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ennemies --nationaux d' abord, étrangers ensuite-- de la poésie compris comme libération totale de l'esprit humain car, pour paraphraser Marx, la poésie n'a pas de patrie puisqu'elle est de tous les temps et de tous les lieux' (1995: 12). The association between Elytis' and Péret's views is made by Vitti (1984: 180, n. 5).

[154] When Elytis met Breton in Paris after the war, he told him that he was an admirer of the poetry that Eluard had written before his break with the Surrealists and his final adherence to Communism (1987: 438-439).

of idealism. It did not, nor could it, given its premises, really accept any kind of materialism, despite professions to the contrary. This was why the Surrealists and the Communists could not make common cause for long' (1991: 322). As Chénieux-Gendron further points out, due to the fact that politics always involve reasoning and rational thought, the marriage of Surrealism with politics was impossible. The logic of a political party was incompatible with the workings of the individual imagination (1984: 196). In Surrealism, 'poetics always englobes politics' because 'la poésie est déjà *action*--écriture en acte, et non pas recherche conceptuelle d'une vérité' (1984: 148).

The political aspect of Surrealism never really appealed to Elytis, or any other Greek Surrealist of that time, for various reasons; among these were the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1941), the French Surrealists' early break with the P.C.F. and their renunciation of the dogma of 'art for the proletariat' (Socialist Realism), and the suspicious or inimical relations between the Greek intelligentsia and the Generation of the 1930s.[155] Elytis' ideas about the social mission of art (which are significant for the understanding of his poetic ideas) were consistent with the views of the Generation of the 1930s as expressed around 1945; indeed, his was perhaps the most clearly presented position of that generation.

[155] See Vitti 1976: 72-79.

2.3 *Surrealism and the Aesthetic Problematics of 'Lyricism'*

Elytis' decision to confront 'the practical problems of Lyricism', that is, the technical and theoretical problems of the art of poetry, was deliberate and serious; Elytis was determined to ignore the relation of poetry with politics and to devote himself to his aesthetic concerns, which were based on his systematic readings in Surrealism. It emerges from these articles that Elytis was aware of existing literature on Surrealism until the late 1930s,[156] but also that he must have secured early access to documents and other information on the developments within it even in the early 1940s.[157] Of course, the features of Surrealism considered by him in these articles are not so much aspects of his choice but those that he felt he needed to touch in order to defend Surrealism against its Greek critics. In fact, the Greek critics of Surrealism and Elytis were separated by different viewpoints and approaches. The former were still trying to understand the Surrealist manifestos, whereas the latter had already assimilated not only them but also the poetic practice of poets such as Eluard and Breton into his broader aesthetic considerations. Although his observations concern the very general and indeed fundamental aspects of Surrealism (since he was responding to comments by critics who were not very well-read in Surrealism), the way he presented them proves that he knew what he was talking about in much greater detail than he may have let it become apparent. In these

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[156] See for instance, the sources Elytis uses for reference in his response to Avyeris in 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα' (1945a: 352-354).

[157] His announcement of the foundation of *G.L.M.*, the publishing company in Paris which was associated with the Surrealists (1938e), may imply that he was in contact with the company. Of course, Calas was in Paris (and then in New York), and he was corresponding with Elytis (see Konstantoulaki-Chantzou 1989: 33).

articles, Elytis did not explain the Surrealist project in detail, and this may prove that his aim was not to present Surrealism in Greece.

All in all, the way he defined Surrealism, and primarily the constitution of Surreality and automatic writing, is indicative of his own poetic orientations. In his approach he aimed not to explain through simplification, but to stress his conviction that Surrealism mainly involved a certain life attitude and a specific view of poetry. Thus, even extended generalizations, which may reflect his more personal view of Surrealism,[158] do not misrepresent the Surrealist endeavour, but prove his assimilation of the Surrealist quests into his own ideas. His comments show that he conceived of the revolutionary function of poetry as constitutive of what he gradually came to define as the 'third condition', that is, the condition of poetry,[159] and also that he regarded automatism not as a technique practised for its own sake, but as one of the possible means that could be employed to liberate the imagination, that is, as one of the initial stages of poetic production.

Elytis repeatedly emphasized that French Surrealism was the only avant-garde movement that had offered complete theories of artistic creation.[160] On the other hand, in almost all of these articles, he stressed the priority given to emotion and to the imagination by the French Surrealists.[161] In his article 'Οι κίνδυνοι της ημιμάθειας', published in the April-May issue of *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* in 1938,

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[158] On Elytis' personal and 'individualistic' view of Surrealism, see Ioannou 1991: 17-25.
[159] Elytis' ideas on poetry as 'a third condition' are considered in Chapter 4.
[160] This view was already expressed in his essay on Eluard in 1936 (1936a: 228; =1987: 615).
[161] Already in his 1936 essay on Eluard, he explained how the outflow of the subconscious and the abolition of the reasoning faculty of the mind led to the production of exquisite images, and created '[την] ατμόσφαιρα του μαγικού και του υπερλογικού' (1936a: 229; =1987: 617).

which launched Elytis' involvement in the Greek debate on Surrealism,[162] he used an explicitly aggressive discourse to address the Greek critics who had spoken against Surrealism. His tactic was similar to the Surrealist politics of aggression,[163] expressed in acts directed against the literary establishment in France in the 1920s.[164] In this article, Elytis claims that he is not an 'orthodox' Surrealist, since he does not accept certain of the principles of the French movement (1987: 465-466).[165] This comment probably referred to automatic writing, and it was expressed rather hurriedly, as if Elytis wanted to avoid the subject; but he returned to it in July of the same year in order to respond to the negative comments on Surrealism made by Theotokas in his article 'Τι είναι ο υπερρεαλισμός' (Theotokas 1938a).[166] In his response, Elytis

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[162] Elytis'comment that the term 'Σουρρεαλισμός' used by the critics was a false one was later added in the text of *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* (1987: 465). In 1938, Elytis exclaimed that the critics generalized by labelling everything new in poetry as Surrealist, that they took on the airs of a superficial superiority against Surrealism, which they considered delayed in its 'transplantation' in Greece, and finally, that they wrongly identified Surrealism only with automatic writing (1938a: 426-427 and 1987: 465-466). Many critics still refer to this 'delay'; for instance, see Vitti 1979: 124 ff., and 126 n. 1. Vayenas (1994: 353-363, 346) criticizes this attitude and also provides useful Greek and international bibliography; for a similar approach see Siaflekis 1989: 13-23, and Argyriou (1985a: 92), who, however, carries the argument further than the issue examined here.

[163] Elytis' aggressive attitude toward particular Greek critics is also reminiscent of the aggressive and assertive style of Theotokas' essays, and especially of the high tones of *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα*. Elytis' article was considered both aggressive and offensive (by openly accusing the Greek critics of sciolism and by using a caustic diction whose irony certainly irritated many of them), as well as provocative (by defending the scapegoat of the time, Surrealism). As was pointed out in the previous section, a series of counter-arguments were subsequently published. Elytis' answer followed immediately. In 'Τελεία και Παύλα', he was equally vehement and categorical in answering that those who wrote on Surrealism were in most cases prejudiced and unread. Apart from those of the Greek critics who were mentioned in the previous section as being completely negative towards Surrealism without really knowing what it involved, there were others who tried to understand its principles and methods. Among the most serious critics of Surrealism in Greece were the Post-Symbolists, who rejected the disruptive tendencies of automatism and the Surrealists' rejection of reason (see, for instance, Ouranis 1935: 540); Kleon Paraschos (1936: 1092) and Mitsos Papanikolaou (1996: 117-119) were the only Post-Symbolists who expressed a positive attitude towards Surrealism. Elytis paid particular attention to another critic of Surrealism, Emilios Chourmouzios, who rejected Surrealism's 'individualism' but praised Elytis' poetry (see Chourmouzios 1937 and 1938).

[164] On this issue, see Short 1997.

[165] Karavidas offers a brief presentation of the incoherent attempts of Greek critics to distinguish between 'orthodox' and other types of Surrealism (1983: 48-50).

[166] In an article published in the December issue of *Europe* in 1937, Theotokas distinguished between the 'Surrealists' (e.g. Embirikos), and poets that were only influenced by Surrealism (e.g. Elytis), as two of the four tendencies he perceived in contemporary Greek poetry (1937: 547). However, Theotokas was very negative towards Surrealism in his article 'Τι είναι ο υπερρεαλισμός (1938a: 1,3).

points out that Surrealism has surpassed the practice of automatic writing after having accomplished a new way of 'νοείν' and 'μια νέα λειτουργία ψυχική στον τρόπο της διατύπωσης', which Elytis calls 'διαύγεια του συναισθήματος'. Apparently, Elytis appropriated and remodelled Theotokas' own argument that clarity in expressing one's own ideas ought to be the primary characteristic of art (Theotokas 1931a: 24-30), by adding an extra dimension to it: not only clarity of ideas but also of emotions was a prerequisite for art. Elytis believed 'στο "γεγονός" της αυτόματης γραφής και στην αποτελεσματικότητά του' (1987: 470), but, in his view, there was also needed 'μια επέμβαση βουλητική [...] που θα εξουδετερώνει τα παράσιτα και θα κατευθύνει από κάποιο σημείο προς κάποιο άλλο σημείο τη ροή αυτή' (and 1987: 471). These comments evoke the attitude of Aragon, who had been very critical of Breton's ideas on automatism since the early 1920s.[167] They are also indicative of Elytis' positive attitude towards automatic writing.

That Elytis did not reject automatism is revealed in his essay on Lautréamont, published in 1939, in which he claims that Lautréamont's poems cast 'ένα φως αποκαλυπτικό' on modern life and incarnated the 'εναντίωση στην παραδομένη πίστη, την καταστροφή των μικροαστικών μεθόδων της σκέψης' and 'το παράδειγμα του *μη συμβιβασμού* ' (1939: 265 [his emphasis]; =1987: 610). The date of publication (1868) is greeted as the year which gave birth to 'everything challenging, new and revolutionary' (1987: 609) and led to '[την] αναθεώρηση των

[167] While for Breton automatism ought to follow blindly the first 'given' phrase, for Aragon 'la première phrase automatique propose un rythme, fait image, ou fait sens: cette image ou ce sens sont alors assumés comme tels, et développés dans une combinatoire où la conscience a toute sa place' (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 71).

αξιών, [το] *non-conformisme*, [την] εικονολατρεία, [το] θάρρος, [ένα] κλίμα ονειρικό, [την] αυτόματη γραφή, [την] παρανοϊκή κριτική, [την] υπερπραγματικότητα' (1939: 266; =1987: 610-611 [modified in the version of *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*]). Lautréamont is held to be the poet who:

> ιδρύει την ποιητική λογική, τέτοια που ν' ανταποκρίνεται πιστά όχι στην τάξη του εξωτερικού κόσμου αλλά στην τάξη του συναισθήματος και του ονείρου. Αυτός ανανεώνει το στυλ, εγκαινιάζοντας την ποιητική μεταφορά, προσεγγίζοντας δυο ή περισσότερες απομακρυσμένες πραγματικότητες για να πετύχει την υπερπραγματικότητα. (1939: 265-266 [his emphasis]; =1987: 610 [slightly modified in the republished version])

With this double reference, in which he stressed the priority of emotion and dream, and the Surrealist conception of the image, which alludes to automatic writing, Elytis names those elements of Lautréamont's poetry which made him the forefather of 'modern lyricism' (in the words of Aragon, as quoted by Elytis).

Elytis returned to the issue of automatism in 1944, when he revealed a hitherto semi-revealed or latent appreciation of the method. In his essay 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935', in which he was only indirectly responding to the issues raised in the critical debate on Surrealism, he holds that the psychic associations ('ψυχικοί συνειρμοί') of automatic writing, which, in his view, are possible for every man,[168] depend on various psychological factors and may not always bring successful poetic results. But he maintains that, while automatic writing in itself proved to be a restricted method, it nevertheless helped the poet to 'liberate his inspiration' and surpass any moral, social or aesthetic limitations. Automatic writing proved, firstly, that the mind was able to perceive the most inconceivable

[168] As Elytis observes, automatic writing is possible for every man, 'αφού κάθε άνθρωπος είναι

associations between things so as to reveal their unity (1987: 137-138), and secondly, and most importantly, that:

> για να καλύψουμε ολόκληρο τον κύκλο του πνεύματος ο μόνος τρόπος δεν είναι να διευρύνουμε, χάρη σε μιαν εντατική προσήλωση, το σημείο της συνείδησης που βρίσκεται στο κέντρο του, όπως το υποστήριζε η Καθαρή ποίηση· μπορούμε και να το καταργήσουμε, που είναι σα να το τοποθετούμε οποιαδήποτε στιγμή σε οποιοδήποτε σημείο του κύκλου του πνεύματος, όπως το υποστήριζε ο Υπερρεαλισμός. (1987: 138 [reformulation of the original passage])

The distinction between the methods used by Pure Poetry and Surrealism respectively was taken from Rolland de Renéville. The first chapter of his book *L'Expérience poétique* had been translated by Seferis in 1938 because, in his view, it was 'ένα ντοκουμέντο, που διαφωτίζει όχι τόσο τον υπερρεαλισμό, αλλά τις σχέσεις ή τις επιδιώξεις των δύο τυπικών ποιητικών τάσεων του καιρού μας' (1938: 549). According to de Renéville, although the methods used by Surrealism and Pure Poetry were different, the results were the same. Thus, whereas Surrealism 'abolit le centre de conscience au profit de l'étendue sans borne de l'esprit', Pure Poetry 'accroît ce centre et lui fait dévorer successivement les zones qui le limitaient, jusqu'à leur complet évanouissement devant sa progression. Conscience absolue et inspiration deviennent synonymes, et représentent la fin identique à laquelle concourent ces méthodes inverses' (de Renéville 1938: 25-26). Perhaps Seferis had his own reasons for translating this text,[169] of which Elytis seems to have been unaware, since he simply and rather naively alludes to Seferis' translation.

φορέας μιας υπόκωφης ροής εικονοφόρων λόγων στον ξύπνο του, και λειτουργός μιας αφιλόκερδης δράσης του κόσμου μέσα στον ύπνο του' (1987: 133).

[169] Vitti believes that Seferis' intention was to diminish Surrealism, since he had already left behind Pure Poetry, after having discovered Eliot (Vitti 1979: 133, n. 37.10).

In the same text, Elytis claims that the Surrealist metaphor, the product of automatism, is able to show the mental nature of things, as they are at the time of their birth (1987: 138), and he observes that, by using automatic writing, the Surrealists confirmed three basic principles: 'την απόλυτη πραγματικότητα του πνεύματος, την αδιάκοπη μεταμόρφωση της ζωής μέσα στην ίδια της κίνηση, και την ύπαρξη των αφιλόκερδων συσχετισμών ανάμεσα στα στοιχεία του κόσμου' (1987: 139). Automatic writing gave birth to 'a psychic function', which, in his letter to Theotokas, he had already called 'clarity of emotion' ('διαύγεια του συναισθήματος'). Thus, by focusing on aspects of Surrealism touched upon by its Greek critics, Elytis summarizes its fundamental acquisitions. In his view, these are as follows: firstly, Surrealism had turned against the 'theocratic' view of nature and of the role of the poet; secondly, it aspired not to cancel out the concept of beauty, but to give it a different meaning; thirdly, Surrealism wanted to show that poetry should not be limited only to artistic dexterity; fourthly, the poet ('ο δημιουργός') could rearrange the order of things which were available to his senses, and fifthly, Surrealism believed in Surreality, which represented the unity of all things (1987: 140). This was indeed an objective, although extremely schematic, account of the Surrealist endeavour.

Already in his 1938 response to Theotokas, Elytis had rejected the latter's assertions that Surrealism was the indication of a cultural crisis (1987: 468-469) by claiming that, instead, the French movement offered a new way of viewing reality, which was based on specific theories and produced authentic new art that had not yet been evaluated and appreciated. Elytis' attitude towards automatic writing in his 1944 essay, reflected his debate with Theotokas; it was also a rather belated

response to Seferis' view of Surrealism. Apart from his translation of the first chapter of de Renéville's book, in his 'Διάλογος για την ποίηση' with Konstantinos Tsatsos, which was published in August 1938, that is, a month after Elytis' response to Theotokas, Seferis excluded Surrealism from all consideration by maintaining that the school 'που πρεσβεύει τον απόλυτα απρόσωπο χαρακτήρα της έμπνευσης και την "αυτόματη γραφή" [...] είναι αδύνατο να κριθεί, σα σχολή, με κριτήρια αισθητικά' (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 16). The 'dialogue' between Tsatsos and Seferis on modern poetry had been provoked by the debate raised by Surrealism. Tsatsos explicitly accused the Greek avant-garde of cultivating the irrational element in poetry, of having excluded reason from it, of having abandoned tradition and of having disregarded the idea of the beautiful (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 6-13). Seferis put Surrealism aside with his single comment with which he rejected it. In his later 'Δεύτερος διάλογος ή μονόλογος πάνω στην ποίηση' (1939), he completely dismissed Surrealism as 'facile poetry' (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 94), and went on to ignore the philosophical arguments put forward by Tsatsos and express his own viewpoints on poetry. The problematic over the presence of the irrational in poetry, raised by the debate between Tsatsos and Seferis, is echoed in Elytis' essay on Jouve (October-December 1938), in which Elytis stressed Jouve's preoccupation with the subconscious, as was observed in Chapter 1. The same problematic was also considered by Elytis in his brief exchange of views with Tsatsos in March 1944, when he tried to evade the argument over the juxtaposition of the rational and the irrational in poetry by claiming that a poem

could very well depend either on 'emotional associations' or rational ones, and that the poet ought to develop perception apart from his conceptual abilities:

> ο ποιητής αν είναι αληθινά προικισμένος με κάτι που τον ξεχωρίζει από τους άλλους ανθρώπους είναι ακριβώς με την ικανότητα να συλλαμβάνει κατά τρόπο υπερδιανοητικό, δηλαδή: άμεσα ποιητικό, τις δυσκολοσύλληπτες και φευγαλέες διασταυρώσεις των στιγμών της ψυχής του, και των στιγμών της ψυχής του υλικού γύρω του κόσμου. (1987: 487 [modified version of the original essay])

In his response to Tsatsos, Elytis agrees with him that coherence is necessary in a poem, but he argues that this does not have to be rational. As he points out, 'meaning', which presupposes reasoning, should not be a precondition for the writing of poetry. Repeating the distinction made by Benjamin Crémieux, to which he had referred in his 1936 essay on Eluard (1987: 619), as was pointed out in Chapter 1, Elytis explains that the tendency of the 'old poetry' was precisely to express the 'surreal' essence of the world by focusing on 'meaning'. In his view, the novelty of 'new poetry' is that it can involve either a 'νοηματική' or a 'συναισθηματική αλληλουχία', depending on the case. He defines the aims of 'new poetry' as follows:

> [new poetry] ζητάει να εφαρμόσει τους όρους της σύλληψης στους όρους της εκτέλεσης, προκρίνοντας και στη διατύπωση την αμεσότητα, πρώτα μ' έναν μονόπλευρο και κάπως φανατικό αποκλεισμό του νοήματος (αυτόματη γραφή) αργότερα με την παροχή μιας διαζευκτικής ευχέρειας για τη χρησιμοποίηση -ανάλογα με τις ανάγκες- είτε της νοηματικής είτε της συναισθηματικής αλληλουχίας, είτε και των δύο μαζί. (1944c: 99; =1987: 487 [automatic writing is not mentioned in the republished version])

Elytis completely disagrees with Tsatsos' assertion that there exist certain preconditions that make coherence possible, and in fact, he uses automatic writing, in

which 'meaning' is not always totally excluded, as an example: 'Ακόμη και σ' ένα κείμενο αυθαίρετο υπάρχει αλληλουχία' (1987: 488). He makes it clear that he himself is not interested in achieving 'νοηματική αλληλουχία' only, but also, 'συναισθηματική ή λυρική ή ονειρική ή εικονοπλαστική'. As he observes, this is the case with 'contemporary' ('σημερινή') poetry, which:

> βάζοντας στη σωστή θέση της την Έμπνευση, και μετατρέποντας αυτοστιγμεί τη σκέψη σε συναισθηματικά αντίστοιχη εικόνα, πλησιάζει με αγάπη την έννοια *φύσις* και προτιμάει από τον ατομικό ρεμβασμό επάνω σ' ένα ηλιοβασίλεμα π.χ. ή σε μια ωραία γυναίκα, να δώσει με τα δικά της μέσα το ίδιο το ηλιοβασίλεμα ή την ίδια την αίσθηση της γυναίκας, έτσι που μέσα τους να μπορεί να βρίσκει ο θεατής, του δικού του κόσμου και της δικής του ευαισθησίας (πάντοτε βέβαια κάτω από την οπτική γωνία που θα ορίσει ο ποιητής) την αξιώτερη εντύπωση. (1944c: 100 [his emphasis]; =1987: 488 [slightly modified in the republished version])

With this observation, which echoed de Renéville's ideas, Elytis did not insist any longer on the different means used by Pure Poetry and Surrealism, but on the target that both pursued. As becomes apparent from his essay 'Τα σύγχρονα ποιητικά και καλλιτεχνικά προβλήματα', also published in 1944, Elytis was now stressing that Surrealism was not restricted to the 'French School' but was a broader tendency of modern art, '[ένα] γενικότερο πνεύμα' (1987: 509). The association of Surrealism with 'the general spirit' of contemporary art is reminiscent of Elytis' 'defence' of the 'γενικότερ[ο] πνεύμα[...] που χαρακτηρίζει την τεχνοτροπία των μοντέρνων καλλιτεχνών', in his letter addressed to Papanoutsos (1940) (1987: 475).[170] In his 1944 essay, Elytis appears to be more confident in expressing his

[170] Elytis turned against Papanoutsos when the latter gave a lecture on modern art (1940) in which he repeated the arguments he had already expressed in his previous studies 'Ο Κυβισμός' and 'Ο Εξπρεσσιονισμός', published in *Το Νέον Κράτος* in October and November 1939 (see Papanoutsos 1939a and 1939b). Papanoutsos' ideas were similar to those put forward by Tsatsos in his debate with Seferis. In his turn, Elytis simply repeated his own arguments, as they had been formulated

point of view than in his letter to Papanoutsos. His confidence was not raised only because Tsatsos, an eminent philosopher, discussed the issue of Surrealism with him,[171] but also because, in his *Δοκίμιο για την ποίηση* (1943), Dimaras appeared to share his views.[172] Elytis' confidence is apparent in the essays he published in 1944 in which he argues less with the Greek critics of Surrealism and expresses his viewpoint more clearly.

Elytis was the first writer who responded to the survey organized in 1944 by *Καλλιτεχνικά Νέα*, under the general title 'Τα σύγχρονα ποιητικά και καλλιτεχνικά προβλήματα'; in fact, the questions of the survey were formulated by him, in cooperation with Avyeris. Elytis may have been responsible for the new dimension given to the problem of the relation of Surrealism with Greek literature by focusing on the positive effect of 'foreign influences' over tradition in these questions.[173] In his own response, published in January 1944, Elytis repeats the assertion that Surrealism refers to a dynamic conception of life and that it is a life-attitude, but this time he is more specific: 'Ο Υπερρεαλισμός είναι ένα πνεύμα που πιστεύει στη ζωή, πιστεύει στην αδιάκοπη μεταμόρφωση της ζωής μέσα στην ίδια της την αιωνιότητα, και φιλοδοξεί για τον εαυτό του την ανάγκη να υποστεί ισάριθμες μεταμορφώσεις για να βρίσκεται οπωσδήποτε

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on other occasions. He rejected Papanoutsos' assertion that art was in a crisis, and pointed out that Papanoutsos neglected to refer to certain aspects of modern art. Moreover, he rejected Papanoutsos' belief in the 'stability' of art, which, as Elytis pointed out, proved that Papanoutsos had not understood the spirit of 'contemporary art' (1987: 475). Finally, Elytis criticized Papanoutsos for having blamed 'contemporary art' for 'άκρατο υποκειμενισμό' and 'άκρατο ιδεαλισμό που μας απομάκρυνε από το αντικείμενο'.

[171] See Elytis' observation, expressed in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', that the exchange of views with Tsatsos made him realize that he had to ignore 'τις φθηνές επιθέσεις' and turn to the problems of lyricism (1987: 418).

[172] Elytis mentions Dimaras' book and his views in 'Τα σύχγρονα ποιητικά και καλλιτεχνικά προβλήματα', published in January 1944 (1987: 509).

[173] Ambatzopoulou claims that with his questions Elytis dictated a specific approach to the issue of Surrealism in Greece (1976: 44).

κοντά της' (1987: 503). He claims that Surrealism is not just 'a new Romantic school', but 'ένας κόσμος ολόκληρος "εν κινήσει", που αντιτίθεται σε όλα τα στατικά φαινόμενα' (1987: 504), and aspires to bring together 'σε μια ανώτερη πραγματικότητα' all the opposed elements of the deceptive contradictions in human life.[174] He points out that the Surrealists do not avoid reality but aim to intensify it. He further explains that for the Surrealists, as for the German Romantic poets and philosophers, there is an 'inner reality', of which thought, feelings and dreams form a vital part, and he finally observes that after the Surrealists realized the dichotomy between the inner and the outer reality, they tried to reconcile them (1987: 504-505). In this way, they managed to surpass subjectivity through an 'ερωτική στροφή προς το αντικείμενο' (1987: 510):

> για τους υπερρεαλιστές, ένα ποίημα είναι τόσο περισσότερο αντικειμενικό όσο καλύτερα καταφέρνει, κάθε φορά με διαφορετικό τρόπο, να ζήσει στη φαντασία του αναγνώστη, να κινητοποιήσει τους ξέχωρους κόσμους των πόθων και των ονείρων του, να προσαρμοστεί στις διαθέσεις του, μ' ένα λόγο, όσο μπορεί πιο καίρια να πετύχει την *ενεργό συμμετοχή* του τελευταίου τούτου στην κατάκτηση της λυρικής αξίας του κόσμου. Ο ποιητής είναι όχι μόνο εκείνος που εμπνέεται μα κι εκείνος που εμπνέει τους άλλους. (1987: 511; his emphasis)

Following Breton,[175] Elytis distinguishes between two periods in the life of the Surrealist movement. As he observes, the first, the 'intuitive' period ('διαισθητική'), lasted for five years (1919-1924) and it was mainly devoted to research and experimentation revolving around the issues of inspiration, desire, the conscious and the unconscious, dream and reality. During the second, the

[174] Elytis emphasized the importance of this aspect of Surrealism which, as he pointed out, also explained the Surrealists' interest in Orphism and the Pythagoreans (1987: 504).

'reasoning' period ('λογικευόμενη'), 'μία τρίτη πραγματικότητα' became the principal preoccupation of Surrealism. In Elytis' view, this was 'το σημείο που συνθέτει [...] τους αντιμαχόμενους κόσμους του ιδεαλισμού και του υλισμού, της αισθητικής και της κοινωνικής αντίληψης της ζωής, της δράσης και του ονείρου, της ζωής και του θανάτου' (1987: 507). He explains that the Surrealist works of this period exploit the experience gained through automatic writing and dream, and aim to transform the world instead of interpreting it. He ends his article with an enthusiastic over-estimation: 'ακόμα και η παραμικρότερη φωνή που ακούστηκε τα τελευταία χρόνια, και είχε κάποιαν απήχηση, βρίσκεται από τη μεριά τη δική μας, τη μεριά που αχτιδοβόλησε κάτω από τα σήματα του Υπερρεαλισμού' (1987: 512), a view that is either left implicit or is overtly manifest in his essays on poets who were not Surrealists, as was observed in Chapter 1. As is explained later in this section, the 'reasoning period' of French Surrealism seems to have encouraged Elytis' own theoretical endeavour; on the other hand, the Surrealist idea of 'a third reality' is closely related to Elytis' own notion of 'the third condition [of poetry]', as is pointed out in Part II.

Similar observations were expressed in his essay 'Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935', also published in 1944. In this essay, he presents a more personal account of his discovery of Surrealism, but he claims that this was a kind of 'βιολογική, [...] σύγκορμη κατάφαση' (1987: 129) for the members of his generation. Elytis implicitly identifies Surrealism, in its all-encompassing activity, with the mission and the purpose of poetry itself (1987: 126). As he observes, Surrealism refers to 'μια

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[175] In his lecture 'Le Surréalisme', given in Brussels in 1934, Breton distinguished between two periods in the life of the Surrealist movement (Breton 1992: 231); the lecture was issued as a pamphlet with the title 'Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme?'. In his essay, Elytis refers to this lecture (1987: 505).

δεύτερη κατάσταση' of things and actions, which he calls 'super-real' ('υπερπραγματική') (1987: 117).[176] He explains that this is a different way of conceiving reality; Surreality is a new way of seeing things, and it does not involve a permanent state of affairs but, rather, the dynamics of evolution and constant change (1987: 118). He claims that it is not only life that is irrational, but lyrical poetry itself ('το παράλογο τούτο φαινόμενο που ονομάζεται "Ποίηση"') (1987: 122), which can be used as a revolutionary instrument in the service of the imagination, by taking a form that would reveal beauty and the 'essential value of life'.[177] And he exclaims that this was precisely the Surrealist project, which, as it turned out, had primarily affected poetry, above all other arts.

Elytis spoke of a new way of understanding, and therefore interpreting, poetry in 'Ποιητική νοημοσύνη', which was a 'chronicle', partly inspired by his reading of Gatsos' *'Αμοργός* (1943), and partly by that book's reception by Greek criticism. In this text, also published in January 1944, Elytis claims that the understanding of poetry is not dependent on the intelligence, but on the quality of 'ποιητική νοημοσύνη' (1987: 479). In his view, this quality or ability could be the product of a 'σωστή συναισθηματική και ψυχική αγωγή', or else it could be related to the existence of an innate 'good quality of sensitivity' or of a real need 'για ποιητικό πέταγμα'. As he observes, when reading a Surrealist poem such as *'Αμοργός*, in which the poet achieved a 'γενναία μεταμορφωτική επέμβαση στις συνθήκες ενός παρόντος' (1987: 477) via the imagination, which is the only way

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[176] Elytis' concept of the 'second condition' of life is examined in Chapter 4.

[177] As Elytis points out, poetry "Εμοιαζε νά 'ναι όργανο ψυχικής λειτουργίας κατάλληλο ν' αντισταθεί σε μια κακήν ηθική [...] όργανο ριζικά και αδιάκοπα επαναστατικό' (1987: 127).

to 'capture the miracle', one should not aspire to interpret it by using reason, but to 'reveal' the poem's 'hidden and lyrical meaning'. These observations anticipate the views he would express in his response to Tsatsos two months later, which have been considered above.

The conclusion that can be reached at this point is that the year 1944 marks a very important transition in Elytis' thought. As becomes apparent from the observations he expressed in the essays of 1944, he had entered a phase of maturity, and his ideas, although equally consistent with the views he presented in his earlier texts, were now becoming more concrete, confident and clear. This confidence is manifest in the fact that he no longer simply reacted to criticism, but took the initiative to reveal his own view of Surrealism (and Surreality); thus, it is no coincidence that the most lucid and decided exposition of his ideas on Surrealism appeared a year later, as has already been pointed out in section 2.2. The essay 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα' was published in July 1945 and even its title indicates that Elytis was completely aware of the change in his attitude; indeed, this was a deliberate one.[178]

In his essay, Elytis observed that in the fifteen [sic] years that Surrealism had existed, the Surrealist theories had been thoroughly elaborated and developed. In his view, by 1945, the credos and pursuits of the French Surrealists were as follows:

> Στην ποίηση, να μεταχειρίζεται ο ποιητής εικόνες *δοσμένες* και όχι χαλκευμένες· επίσης, να τις συνθέτει σύμφωνα με μιαν αλληλουχία, όχι πάντοτε νοηματική, αλλά και συναισθηματική [...]. Να τις συνθέτει, όμως, συνειδητά του πια, με το ιδανικό μιας μορφής, σε όλα της ανεπανάληπτης. (1987: 525; his emphasis)

[178] Elytis appears to have realized that the period of the 'orientations' was finished, the poet (and thinker) had been 'illumined' and was now ready to concentrate on and develop his ideas.

Surely, Elytis' last assertion sits rather awkwardly with the rest of the aspects of the Surrealist project which he pointed out. The 'ideal of an unprecedented form' was not really one of the aims of Breton or Aragon, who both stressed that Surrealism was primarily a state of mind and less a matter of techniques or styles. As Robert Short observes, 'The Surrealists [...] resorted to art because [...], it remain[ed] the best way of recording the inner life, or endowing subjective imaginings with the forms of reality and of projecting desire. But the work of art [was] still a *means* for Surrealists rather than the end of their activity' (1991: 306; my emphasis). One should take Elytis' comment referring to the fifteen years of Surrealism not as an error resulting from his confusion but as an intentional observation, pointing to Surrealism from 1930 until 1945, that is, a phase when the initial revolutionary enthusiasm of the French Surrealists had given place to more individually orientated aesthetic concerns (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 103).[179] In fact, Elytis pointed this out in the essay 'Τα σύγχρονα ποιητικά και καλλιτεχνικά προβλήματα' when he made the following observation: ''Οσοι περιορίστηκαν να σχηματίσουν μιαν αντίληψη για τον Υπερρεαλισμό από τη μελέτη του *Πρώτου Μανιφέστου* του Αντρέ Μπρετόν θα δυσκολεύονται ίσως να με παρακολουθήσουν. [in the mid-1930s] ο Αντρέ Μπρετόν [...] κατάλαβε πως η εποχή του γκρεμίσματος είχε τελειώσει κι ότι μια δράση θετική όφειλε πια ν' αρχίσει' (1987: 505-506).

[179] By 1945, when the disintegration of the Surrealist group had already progressed and the degradation of the movement was apparent, individual artists and poets had indeed acknowledged the status of the work of art; but this realization was far removed from the initial programme and goals of French Surrealism, and in fact, it had only meant the end of the movement.

Elytis' observation is above all indicative of his own concerns; it shows, on the one hand, that his view of Surrealism was much broader than the Surrealist manifestos would allow, and on the other, that he had felt the necessity to ground his poetic practice on a concrete theoretical basis. Breton's distinction between the 'intuitive' and the 'reasoning' period of Surrealism may have helped him become aware of the fact that, in order to go further from his early poetry, which was intuitive rather than based on a firm theoretical basis, he needed to think more constructively and organize his ideas. As is explained in Part II, around 1944, Elytis was not only considering the 'ideal of an unprecedented form', but, more importantly, he was consciously leaning towards the idea of the poem as a perfect unit. It was this idea that made him hesitate between a Romantic and a Classicist conception of art in his essay 'Τα κορίτσια', a hesitation that was pointed out in Chapter 1. While this crucial hesitation still lasted, Elytis provided the most elaborate formulation of his conception of Surrealism. As is shown in the following section, the ideas he expressed at that time present his clearest account of Surrealism and are indicative of the aesthetic direction he was taking while assimilating it into his broader poetic and aesthetic quests.

2.4 *The Surrealist Elements of Elytis' Conception of 'New Poetry'*

The basic points that Elytis made in his articles in which he defended Surrealism concern the privileging of emotion and of the imagination over reason, the reconciliation of the inner and the outer reality through Surreality, and the dynamic

character of Surrealist theories. In these articles, not only does Elytis appear to be aware of the developments within the French Surrealist movement, and of the constantly changing perspectives of the Surrealist project, but he is also in a position to present a critical account of it, based on his individual viewpoint and personal choices. His view of Surrealism, which emerged within the context of the Generation of the 1930s, involved an appreciation of the more general conquests of the Surrealist endeavour, his historical and cultural awareness (also conditioned by the ideological ferment of his time) and his more general problematic concerning the features of 'new poetry'. Already in his 1938 article 'Οι κίνδυνοι της ημιμάθειας', apart from urging Greek writers to consider 'the possibilities for the creation of a new national culture', as was observed in Chapter 1, Elytis commented on the 'new poetry' of Surrealism (1938a: 427; =1987: 466).

Elytis was finally drawn to consider Surrealism as expressive of the 'general spirit' of modern art, a tendency and not a set of theories limited to the 'School', that is, the group of the French Surrealists and their manifestos, declarations and tracts. It is true that, in any case, already in the 1930s, individual French Surrealists followed their own choices and pursuits, as was observed in the previous section. In 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα' (1945), Elytis tried to define Surrealism with a care for accuracy similar to that he expressed when referring to the seven principles of modern poetry, mentioned in Chapter 1. This time he offered seven principles which he introduced with the following clarification of his conception of Surrealism; the paragraph is omitted from the collective edition of *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* and, for this reason, it is quoted here, despite its length:

> Μ' αυτό τον όρο [...] μπορούσαμε βέβαια *να* εννοούμε από τη μια μεριά μια ωρισμένη Σχολή που έδρασε σε καθωρισμένα πλαίσια, με ωρισμένους οπαδούς και συγκεκριμμένες πραγματοποιήσεις, αλλά μια σχολή που σήμερα δεν μας ενδιαφέρει *αν* εξακολουθεί ή όχι *να* υπάρχει πια. Κι' από την άλλη μπορούσαμε *να* εννοούμε *ένα Γενικό πνεύμα* που *να* ξεπερνά τα τοπικά και χρονικά όρια μιας ομάδας τόσο, που ν' αγκαλιάζει στα κύρια χαρακτηριστικά της όλη τη ζωντανή σύγχρονη τέχνη (παρ' όλες τις επί μέρους της διαφορές ή αντιφάσεις) μια στάση απέναντι στη ζωή, μια νοοτροπία που υπήρχε και πριν από τον ονοματισμό της και που θα υπάρχει και μετά πάντοτε όπως ακριβώς είχε συμβεί μέσα στην ιστορία του πνεύματος και με άλλες παρόμοιες περιπτώσεις, με τον Ρωμαντισμό π.χ. ή με τον Συμβολισμό, που ενώ με τη στενή ερμηνεία τους σημαίνανε μιαν ωρισμένη Σχολή μέσα στην ιστορία της Ευρωπαϊκής γραμματολογίας, με την πλατειά τους ερμηνεία όμως σημαίνανε κάτι άλλο πολύ πιο γενικό, πολύ πιο αποσπασμένο από ειδικούς κανόνες, πολύ πιο καθολικό, κάτι που υπήρχε και θα υπάρχει πάντοτε για *να* χαρακτηρίζει ωρισμένο τρόπο του "σκέπτεσθαι" και του "εκφράζεσθαι". (1945a: 349-350; his emphasis)

Elytis' explanation seems to respond to the observations expressed by K.Th. Dimaras in the essay with which he contributed to the survey organized by *Καλλιτεχνικά Νέα* in 1944. In fact, Elytis' statements confirm and complement Dimaras' view, which was made explicit in the following comment:

> άμεσος κληρονόμος [of Romanticism] είναι φυσικά ο υπερρεαλισμός [...] Αν θέλουμε μπορούμε *να* πούμε ότι ο προορισμός του υπερρεαλισμού τελείωσε όπως τελείωσε ο προορισμός του ρωμαντισμού. Αλλά από δω και πέρα για μια περίοδο [...] η τέχνη θα είναι ουσιαστικά ρωμαντική και υπερρεαλιστική. Ο υπερρεαλισμός δηλαδή και ρωμαντισμός αποτελούν πια μια αναφαίρετη πρόσκτηση του νεώτερου κόσμου. (1976: 107)

The above passage is cited by Elytis a few lines after his seven principles of Surrealism (1945a: 351; =1987: 518). Elytis' own view of the 'broader meaning' or of the 'general spirit' of Surrealism is presented meticulously in these principles, which are as follows:

> (1) Εμβάθυνση και κατάκτηση της πραγματικότητας.

(2) Άρση του ανθρώπου πάνω από τον κατατεμαχισμό που μια διαλυτική κοινωνία κατώρθωσε να του επιβάλλει, συνένωσή του με τη φύση, κι' αντιπροβολή του μέσα στις ηθικές έννοιες του εθνικού και κοινωνικού συνόλου.
(3) Σύμπτωση "επί το αυτό" και συμφιλίωση του φανταστικού με το ρεαλιστικό στοιχείο. Αδιάκοπη εξερεύνηση κι' αποκάλυψη του "θαυμαστού" (merveilleux).
(4) Πορεία πέραν από τον σκεπτικισμό, τη δεξιοτεχνία, την ατομική ενδοσκόπηση, και γενικά επιστροφή στις πηγές του πνεύματος, στις δημιουργικές δυνάμεις της πίστης και των ιδανικών. Μαχητικό πνεύμα.
(5) Σύλληψη και αποτύπωση του γοητευτικού ή του δραματικού στοιχείου της ζωής μέσα στην αινιγματική στιγμή της συμπαρουσίας δύο ή περισσοτέρων πραγμάτων απομακρυσμένων μέσα στη συμβατική αντίληψη της ζωής. Αναζήτηση και παγίωση ενός αντικειμενικού κόσμου τέχνης με τη δημιουργία κοινών συμβόλων.
(6) Συναισθηματική αποτίμηση του κόσμου, δηλαδή κατάλυση της απολυταρχίας του λογικού στοιχείου επάνω στην ποίηση και την τέχνη (που καιρό τώρα τις αποστράγγιζε από κάθε χυμό και τις παράσερνε μακρυά από τη κατανόηση του μεγάλου κοινού) κι' επαναφορά σ' ένα σωστό μέτρο του "άλογου" στοιχείου, που αυτό, με κοινή βάση το Συναίσθημα και τη Φαντασία μπορεί πραγματικά να επιτρέψει την πλατειά συνενόηση όλων των ανθρώπων.
(7) Αξιοποίηση των ζωντανών στοιχείων της ελληνικής παράδοσης, και ξανακαινουριωμά τους μέσα στα ελεύθερα, σύγχρονα εκφραστικά μέσα. (1945a: 350-351; =1987: 517-518 [the text is modified in the republished version])

Although these principles are very general indeed, they are, nevertheless, indicative of Elytis' conception of Surrealism and of the attitude that he was going to maintain in the following years. The first principle is reminiscent of Elytis' efforts to persuade critics that Surrealism does not reject reality but rather focuses on it and aims to go beyond it. The second principle evokes the Romantics' quest for the reunification of man and nature; it seems to have emerged from Elytis' elaboration of the Surrealist ideas on the interdependence of nature, aesthetics and ethics, as pointed out in Chapter 1, and also from his ideas on the mission of art, which were developed within the context of the Generation of the 1930s. The third principle presents the Surrealists' attempt to bring together the imaginary and the real by means of a 'coincidence' based on the power of the Surrealist image to reveal the

magic power of chance (*le hasard objectif*). The ultimate achievement is the revelation of *le merveilleux,* which is sensed lyrically. With the *insolite*, elements of the real are seen in the light of the 'super-real' via the unexpected workings of objective chance. Elytis laid heavy stress on the Surrealists' uncompromising attitude of *non-conformisme*, which is the basis of their *comportement lyrique,* and which is implied in the fourth principle. Elytis' mention of 'ideals' (although contravening his definition of Surrealism as a spirit which stays close to matter and the object) again evokes Breton's individualist and aristocratic claims, what has been criticized as his 'idealist belief' in the actuality of perpetual revolution.[180]

The 'enchanting' or 'dramatic' aspects of life, considered by the Surrealists as effects caused by the 'fortuitous meeting' of distant realities, are viewed differently by Elytis in the fifth principle in which he regards the meeting of distant realities as mysterious ('enigmatic') rather than fortuitous. Elytis' view is rather closer to Reverdy's conception of the image, and thus he suggests that the poet should 'work' on this meeting, which will not be 'fortuitous', that is, a mere recording of the workings of the subconscious, but the product of a procedure that has two stages: 'σύλληψη' and 'αποτύπωση'. On the other hand, the search for and discovery of objectively defined symbols only makes sense within the Surrealist context when considered in view of the Surrealist problematic on myth, as is explained in Chapter 4. The sixth principle refers to the more general poetic consideration of the function of the irrational in art. The Surrealists emphasized the significance of cultivating the irrational by giving free rein to the imagination and emotion; in this sense, this

[180] Cf. the criticism by Sartre (*Situation de l'écrivain en 1947* [1947]) and Camus (*L'Homme révolté* [1951]), which is rather dated today.

principle is 'Surrealist'. From a Surrealist's point of view, the seventh principle provided by Elytis is also 'Surrealist'. Greek tradition and its 'living elements' may be regarded as an equivalent to those forms of art that were uncorrupted and closer to nature and the natural man and that the Surrealists were searching for in Oceanic and pre-Columbian art. However, the Surrealists were not interested in Greek traditional art.[181] From this perspective, the development of the living elements of Greek tradition by means of modern expression that Elytis proposes in his seventh principle is more personal than Surrealist, as Robinson observes (1981: 130).

It is obvious that these principles, which correspond to the points expressed by Elytis in his previous writings on Surrealism, are removed from the proclamations of Breton's Surrealist manifestos or of the works of Louis Aragon (*Une vague de rêves* [1924] and *Traité du style* [1928]). On the other hand, however, Elytis' conclusions present a view of Surrealism that runs parallel to the developments, modifications and changes of attitude within the French Surrealist group between 1930 to 1945. In his own principles of Surrealism, Elytis is rather reserved and seems to have been trying to associate the Surrealist with more general modernist quests. On the other hand, Elytis incorporates a genuinely Greek quest (Greekness) into the Surrealist project. His explanations, as quoted above, are illuminating. Also revealing is another paragraph of his essay, in which Elytis gives an account of his contribution to the Greek debate on Surrealism; this paragraph is also omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*:

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[181] Moreover, they had reacted against classical Greek art, whereas they had shown hardly any interest in Byzantine art--apart from Hodler's interest in Byzantine mosaics.

> *Καμμιά προσήλωση σε μανιφέστα, σε Ακαδημίες, σε ξένες ομάδες δεν μας χαρακτήρισε ποτέ,* [...] *σαν Έλληνες ζητήσαμε, προσηλωμένοι πολύ περισσότερο στην ουσία παρά στους τύπους, να τα προσαρμόσουμε όλ' αυτά στις δικές μας ανάγκες και στις δικές μας πηγές της παράδοσης. Φυσικά ένα τέτοιο πράγμα μπορούσε να μην ήτανε πια Υπερρεαλισμός, αλλά "Νεοσυμβολισμός" ή "Νέα Ποίηση" ή απλούστατα Ποίηση,* όπως την είπανε μερικοί. *Μα οπωσδήποτε ήτανε κάτι καινούριο.* Κι' έπειτα εγώ, προσωπικά, είχα την εντύπωση ότι οι τελευταίοι αυτοί όροι ήσαν πολύ αφηρημένοι. [...] (1945a: 350; my emphasis)

In Elytis' view, what was important was not the name Surrealism and its manifestos, but the 'general spirit' involved in it, something that could be further cultivated and enriched. With this observation, Elytis seems to be responding to Sikelianos, who, in his 1944 essay considered in Chapter 1,[182] observed that the work of art cannot be accomplished 'με την προσήλωση στο γράμμα μιας θεωρίας' (1944: 248). Perhaps Elytis omitted the above paragraph in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, as well as the one in which his comments evoke Dimaras, because he thought that his observations were too closely bound to the context that led to their emergence; or he may have omitted them in an ostensive manifestation of his view that his ideas had not been determined by the views that Dimaras and Sikelianos had expressed a year earlier. In 'Απολογισμός και νέο ξεκίνημα', Elytis simply agrees with the former, whereas he criticizes the latter for having referred to Surrealism while knowing only the theories of Breton: 'και μάλιστα τα πρώτα-πρώτα μόνον' (1945a: 357; =1987: 527 [the last word is omitted in the reprinted version]).

As Elytis presented it, the 'general spirit' represented by Surrealism, on the one hand, involved and was dependent on each individual poet's or artist's experiments, whereas, on the other hand, it presupposed that these experiments

[182] See Sikelianos' essay 'Πώς βλέπω τον υπερρεαλισμό' (1944).

were subject to the seven principles he provided in his essay. In other words, these principles were given by Elytis as points that constitute a general frame for his conception of Surrealism or 'new poetry', as this had developed by 1945. Elytis never amended or withdrew this definition or description which, on the one hand, shows his keen understanding of Surrealist theories, and on the other, is indicative of Elytis' own intention to use Surrealism rather than merely follow it.

French Surrealism was not a complete, that is, a static, theory. Elytis stressed in his articles that it did not involve a systematic application of a pre-determined set of rules, but was rather open to individual contribution; it was thus conditioned by the writers' and artists' creative temperaments, whereas it also allowed for (or highly encouraged) individual development. He also stressed that the important and central feature of Surrealism was not its methods or techniques, but the primacy it gave to the imagination and the approach to reality through it. Indeed, as Caws observes, 'No single quality is alone sufficient to classify a text as surrealist, neither polar opposites and their dialectical resolution, nor manifestations of the unconscious in the realm of the conscious, nor the power of the analogical image, nor language as an alchemical work. Breton claimed that the distinction of a surrealist work was its surrealist motive' (1970: 6).

In his seven principles, Elytis apparently focused on the more general quests of the Surrealist project, those that he thought represented the more 'general spirit' of Surrealism, as he explains in the paragraph quoted above. He deliberately omitted its more specific programmatic. On the other hand, Elytis presented his own view of Surrealism. In other words, in his seven principles, with which he tried to define

Surrealism in very general terms, Elytis did not offer a comprehensive presentation of Surrealist ideas and theories, but what he thought it had left behind, that is, the more general impact of Surrealism on poetic thought and practice. Thus, Elytis attempted to work out the effect that Surrealism could have on modern (or 'new') poetry, and in particular, new Greek poetry (and art).

Seeing Elytis' definition of Surrealism in this perspective, one can hardly agree with Karavidas that Elytis' critical contribution to the Greek debate on Surrealism may have harmed the Surrealist cause in Greece or that his seven principles and his general attitude may have 'diluted' Surrealism (Karavidas 1983: 92). Elytis specified what he meant, and his contribution to the Greek Surrealist debate may have proved rather profitable, as in the case of automatic writing (Koutrianou 1997a). Especially after 1935, when Embirikos chose silence (for personal reasons, which remain unexplained), which might have resulted in the victory of 'sciolism' and the rejection of Surrealism, Elytis crucially intervened in defence of the spirit of Surrealism, without, however, ignoring the letter. Even when Elytis subscribed to the 'censoring of automatic writing', he was completely aware of the problematic nature of the method and knew that, despite Breton's obstinate insistence, other French Surrealists had either amended or had already withdrawn from the theory of automatism. As for Elytis' failure to attach due importance to many of the Surrealist techniques or theories, this should not be attributed to his indifference or his inability to understand and explain them, but rather to the critics' 'half-learnedness' and their unwillingness to be informed, and to the fact that Elytis' aim was not to offer a comprehensive presentation of French Surrealism (which would

presuppose a detailed approach of it), but to defend it (by focusing on the basic aspects of Surrealism that had been raised and discussed in the critical debate on it). Elytis' selective approach to specific elements of Surrealism and his generalizations were the result, on the one hand, of the inimical attitude of the Greek critics and writers, which from the beginning (1938) may have discouraged him, and on the other, of Elytis' understanding and assimilation of the Surrealist theories into his own poetic concerns. As Short observes, in Surrealism, 'states of mind and not techniques are the real issues at stake' (1991: 302). This is precisely the position held by Elytis.

However, as Elytis was careful to clarify, his seven principles were not a Surrealist manifesto, like those issued by poets within the French Surrealist circle. By 1945 Elytis did not consider himself a follower of the 'French School', nor did he wish any longer to be a member of a Surrealist group by joining (along with other Greek Surrealists) the line of 'international Surrealism' (Breton's indifference may have played a role in this). He did not acknowledge Breton or any other Surrealist (including Eluard) as a leader.

2.5 *Conclusion*

One should not decide whether Elytis was Surrealist or not by comparing his principles with the Surrealist manifestos, or with the individual theories of certain Surrealists, which appeared earlier than, at least, 1930. The results of the influence of Surrealism on Elytis are more substantial than, for instance, his employment of

the technique of automatic writing would have been, and, for this reason, demand a close and careful study: Elytis, who lived far from Paris and got to know Surrealism in its later phase, in fact at a time when its decline was dangerously visible,[183] was an outsider, and as such, he (as well as other Greek Surrealists) viewed Surrealism from a neutral position. Thus, he was able to use Surrealism without following it. In this light, it is fruitless to try to decide whether he was a Surrealist or not. Elytis' published poetry (apart from the automatic texts in 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935') is not Surrealist in the strict sense, nor are his theoretical points expressive of Surrealism as it had been defined and re-defined by 1930. On the one hand, the theories of French Surrealism were an essential impulse for Elytis' poetic considerations, a much stronger influence than Romanticism, Symbolism, and other modernist ideas; the 'general spirit' of Surrealism, that is, Surrealism in its broader sense, helped Elytis find and follow a theoretical line which he further cultivated and enriched. On the other hand, Surrealism offered him a theoretical basis with a whole array of ideas and theories to choose from and further develop, as is explained in Part II.

It is apparent that the chief element that Elytis retained from (French) Surrealism was its 'systematization' (Supervielle) of pre-existent ideas, the views on life and ethics. Years later, in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), he clearly explained his Surrealist point of view: 'με τον τρόπο που έβλεπα τη Φύση, το θέμα καταντούσε να μην είναι πια η Φύση. Από το όραμα έβγαινε μια αίσθηση και η αίσθηση αυτή οδηγούσε πάλι σ' ένα όραμα. Είχε σημασία η κίνηση. Θέλω να πω, η παράλληλη κίνηση της ψυχής· ή, αλλιώς, η

[183] This assumes that the decline of the movement coincided not with the end of the Second World War,

αεικινησία μέσα στο Ασάλευτο και το Αιώνιο' (1987: 327). Secondly, Elytis retained from Surrealism and further elaborated poetic ideas that were far more significant than, for instance, Breton's views on automatic writing or the Surrealists' initial commitment to political action. Elytis retained many of the Surrealist theories, such as inner vision, Breton's notion of the 'internal model', analogical thinking and making use of the associative faculty of the mind, the notion of *asepsie* or purity, which leads to the Surrealist conception of limpidity, the exaltation of love, a faith in the possibilities offered by language, 'double vision' or the theory of the identification of opposites (with the dialectics that aspire to an intentional unity, which then leads to another pair of opposites, etc.), the 'sublime point', a view of myth as a projective model of life, simplicity, and a sense of personal ethics. Even his fascination with visual art, the way he used it in his poetry,[184] and his theoretical work on aesthetics, which is considered in the following chapter, show that his ideas and poetic practice are imbued with both the Surrealist spirit and the Surrealist theories. As is pointed out in Part II, Elytis' poetics emerged from his assimilation of Surrealism into his broader views on poetic art, and conversely, his 'Surrealism' was a natural outcome of his broad view of poetry and art.

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but with its beginning, that is, when Breton and other Surrealists fled to America.

[184] This subject is examined in Chapter 7.

PART II

On Poetry and Visual Art: The Emergence of Elytis' Poetics

Chapter 3

Elytis' Essays on Visual Art

3.0 *Introduction*

Elytis' consideration of Surrealist perceptions of reality and his ethico-philosophical attempt to express in his poetry the inner reality of the imagination are the principal aspects of his more 'theoretical' work on poetry. These efforts would not have been completed, or else their outcome would have been different, had Elytis not been interested and involved in visual art, and without his consciousness of and strong support for the idea of a Modern Greek identity. Elytis' ideas on poetry and visual art emerged while he was working on his poetics, in the period broadly between 1944 and 1960. As is explained in this chapter, his consideration of visual art affected the formation of his aesthetic and poetic ideas to a considerable extent; it was also through his study of visual art that Elytis developed a view of Greece which, apart from its ideological implications, most effectively complemented his ideas on the status and the function of poetry. Furthermore, since the manuscripts containing his theoretical work on poetry were apparently lost upon Elytis' return to Greece from France in 1951 (Elytis 1987: 459), his texts on art are valuable evidence for the development of his ideas in the period 1944-1960. Thus, the dearth of theoretical texts on poetry in the period between 1944 and 1960 can be counterbalanced by his essays on art,

which, although limited in number, present a very clear picture of his theoretical development. By reading these essays, one may follow the stages in the development of his views on matters that also appear in a definitive form in his later writings on poetry. These texts show that in the mid-1940s, he had clearly perceived and was steadily following a particular direction in his quests; it is also manifest in these texts that by the early 1950s he may have found the answers he was looking for, and that his ideas reached a point of stabilization sometime before 1960.

As happens with his essays on poetry, in Elytis' essays on art there is a consistency in the gradual exposition of the arguments. It becomes apparent from both types of texts that, on the one hand, Elytis was steadily following a specific direction in his theoretical pursuits, and on the other, his thought developed gradually while he systematically and methodically studied poetry and art.

In section 3.1, some preliminary observations about Elytis' writing on art are made. Section 3.2 presents the current of modern art which is associated directly or indirectly with the art that attracted Elytis' attention. For methodological purposes, section 3.3 deals with his later essays on art. Their examination precedes the consideration of his early essays, which is pursued in sections 3.4 and 3.5, for two reasons: on the one hand, his later essays clearly present his aesthetic viewpoint, which remained the same throughout his writing on art, but is less clearly presented in texts written before 1960, while his ideas were still developing. On the other hand, the fact that in these late essays Elytis did not become involved in matters of poetics proves that the problem of connecting aesthetics and poetics preoccupied him in the years between the end of the Second World War and the publication of *Τὸ Ἄξιον*

Ἐστὶ and *Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*. In section 3.4, his early essays on art are examined so as to highlight the development of his thought. It is shown in this section that his ideas were the product of intense theoretical work during the period 1944-1960. Section 3.5 concludes the examination of Elytis' aesthetic views by showing that his aesthetic viewpoint conditioned his view of Greece, which, in turn, he considered from an aesthetic perspective.

3.1 *The Essays on Art*

Elytis' enthusiasm for the visual arts exceeded mere interest or simply a fascination with art history. In his case, visual art was a passion and an obsession,[185] one overtly manifested in his paintings and collages, and also in his art criticism, and with a functional importance in the development of his literary poetics. In his writings on the visual arts, Elytis himself explicitly points to the distinct manner in which he integrated the visual into his poetry.

Elytis published art criticism from 1936 to 1948 on a systematic basis and with a care for some kind of expert precision.[186] However, the fact that he was an amateur and that his bent was towards theoretical reflection seems to have obstructed his development as an art critic. When arguing in favour of Kanellis (1936b) or Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas (1947a), for instance, he was persuasive less as a critic than as a theorist whose competence in dealing with the aspects of art history of his choice

[185] See Friar's comparison of Elytis' division between painting and poetry with that of Cavafy between history and poetry (1978: 76).

increased over time.[187] On the other hand, Elytis' own confidence in criticism and his enthusiasm for it were apparently eliminated gradually and finally gave way to purely theoretical considerations after 1948. Interestingly, Elytis' art criticism was confined to the visual art which he seemed to like, while he did not write about art he did not admire.

Apart from his art criticism, Elytis also wrote texts on visual art of a more theoretical character. In fact, after 1948, when his friends may have persuaded him that he had failed as an art critic (1987: 436), or as a result of his extended stay in France (1948-1951), Elytis no longer showed any interest in being an art critic.[188] In contrast, he never stopped writing essays on the visual arts in general; some catalogue *σημειώματα* for various art exhibitions written until late in the 1980s are to be considered among his essays rather than as critical texts. Nevertheless, Elytis never really admitted his failure in art criticism, which perhaps further supports the argument of this thesis: Elytis was not interested in visual art simply so as to judge and appreciate the work of others, but used it for his own purposes. As is explained in Chapter 7, on the one hand, visual art joins his poetry in the presentation of a poetic vision and, on the other, it provides a theoretical and a technical background which accommodates the aims of his poetry.

Elytis' supposed 'failure' in art criticism, must be attributed to the fact that, in his criticism, he only responded impressionistically and as an amateur to the work of

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[186] His early passion for visual art is indicated by the fact that he started publishing his art crtiticism in the same year as his essays on poetry; both the essay on Eluard and the one on Kanellis were published in 1936.

[187] Characteristically, in his first critical essay, Elytis said that he responded to Kanellis' work 'emotionally' and regardless of its technique (1936b: 929).

[188] However, he represented Greece in the 'Congress of the International Association of Art Critics' in 1949.

art, instead of giving an expert view on its aesthetic value. The comparison of Elytis' art criticism with his theoretical texts on the visual arts, and also with the rest of his essays, proves that he may have 'failed' in art criticism because instead of 'evaluating' visual art he used it, in some sense, in order to exemplify his own arguments about the role and the function of poetry and art in general. In his texts on art, Elytis' aim was neither to express his appreciation of visual art nor to exhibit his critical abilities; in fact, both in his art criticism and in his theoretical texts on art, he approached and treated art in the same manner. For these reasons, both his art criticism and his non-critical writings on art can be considered as essays on art. In this perspective, his early essays on art can be identified as belonging to the genre of *poésie critique*. This twentieth-century genre was inaugurated by Guillaume Apollinaire in his *Les Peintres cubistes* (1913).[189] However, Elytis' comments on visual art gradually became more sophisticated and by the mid-1940s his essays on art resembled the kind of art criticism established by Reverdy and other French writers, such as Breton and Char.[190]

Elytis did not become involved in a consideration of the difference between poetry and visual art, or their incompatibility.[191] Nor did he really concern himself with questioning the nature of the visual sign; what interested him was a specific function of the visual and he regarded this as common to poetry and painting,

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[189] An early example for Apollinaire was Baudelaire's reflections on nineteenth-century painting (Baudelaire 1976: 351-775), although his knowledge of visual art made his writing more penetrating than that of Apollinaire. Both Baudelaire and Apollinaire were examples for Elytis (Elytis 1987: 436).
[190] According to a critic of Reverdy's work, this is criticism 'in which a creative writer sensitive to the plastic arts records his successive reactions (meditative, imaginative, analytical) before a single work or series of works' (Greene 1967: 94).
[191] This was expressed, for instance, by Lessing (*Laocoön*), who distinguished between the simultaneity or synchronicity of painting and the diachronicity of the signs of poetry, and thus suggested that the

although he recognized that it is more important in painting.[192] In his essays on art, he invariably exposes his ideas on this particular function, which he identifies with the essential values of art.

In general, in his essays, Elytis concentrated on the visual arts and poetry (he did not refer extensively to music[193] and he gave the impression that he was rather indifferent to prose).[194] But his viewpoint does not merely serve the principle of 'ut pictura poesis';[195] his is a modernist's aesthetic position, expressive of the inter-discursivity of the arts. In his essays on visual art, he tends to consider both poetry and painting as systems related to super-sensual reality in a manner that reveals that his perspective involved a metaphysics of perception in which the processes of the imaginative faculty (of the poet or the artist) are preferred to the 'perceptualist account' of reality.[196] His attitude refers to the phenomenology of perception and his perspective is ontological, dealing with questions of Being.[197] Plato and Neoplatonism echo throughout Elytis' essays, and especially those on the visual arts,

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static visual element should be avoided in poetry, while narrative should be avoided in painting. The distinction made by Lessing has not yet been surpassed within modern aesthetic theory.

[192] Interestingly, Elytis rather exclusively focused on 'τέχνη της ελαφράς ύλης' (see his essay with this title in 1992: 221-223) and he almost ignored sculpture, at least on a theoretical level. On the other hand, as is explained in Chapter 7, he was fascinated with cinematography and wrote an article on the animated pictures of Disney. He also wrote essays on photography. Although he started making collages as early as the 1930s, he hardly ever wrote any essays on collage. The essay 'Οι συνεικόνες' was a preface accompanying the catalogue of his retrospective exhibition in 1980.

[193] Elytis referred to Breton's indifference to music ('Ο Breton την εξόριζε από την πολιτεία του, όπως ο Πλάτων την ποίηση') (1987: 401). Elytis' own attitude is indicative of a certain eclecticism. In his essay on Mozart, for instance, he made a very definite point on music's relation to poetry; cf. also his poem '*Mozart*: *Romance* από το Κοντσέρτο για πιάνο αρ. 20, KV 466' (1980b: 31), and his comments on the music of certain composers in *Εν λευκώ*.

[194] Elytis was interested in prose only when it either had a poetic character (e.g. the short stories by Papadiamandis) or expressed ideas that were close to his poetic vision (see his remarks on the prose of Breton and Camus, in Elytis 1987: 23-24).

[195] Horace, *Ars poetica* 361.

[196] The notion is used by Bryson (1991: 62-63) to refer to Gombrich's approach to the 'psychology' of perception in *Art and Illusion* (1960).

[197] Cf., for instance, the quotations from Heidegger appearing in the essay 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"' (1976), and his reference to Husserl's study *Ideen zu einer Reinen Phaenomenologie und Phaenomenologische Philosophie* in his essay 'Ποιητική νοημοσύνη' (1944b: 64).

which present ideas that have emerged synchronically with the development of his poetic ideas. Although his self-proclaimed idealism may be perhaps the least modern aspect of his poetry, in all, it is also a seminal force which fertilizes his poetic and linguistic quests, and at the same time, a unitary principle that determines his aesthetic and poetic orientation. It is this idealism that conditions his view of life and poetry and seems to be involved in the ideas that contributed to the emergence of his poetics.

3.2 *The Principle of Purity in Painting*

The theoretical foundation of Elytis' ideas on art is to be traced to a specific trend in modern art, which concerns nineteenth-century reflection on Neoplatonic theories, and revolves around the idea of the inner light of the artist-creator.[198] This current of modern art involves formal experiments whose common principle and aim is purity.

The type of modern art admired by Elytis is normally identified with the quest for purity as expressed, for instance, in the Post-Impressionism of Cézanne, the colour experiments of Matisse, the Cubism of Picasso and finally the abstraction of Rothko. The trend is usually associated with the route to abstraction, conceived as a kind of great simplicity, accomplished on 'a seemingly unproblematic and compact surface that nonetheless enclosed a complex and extensive essentialist metaphysics

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[198] The idea of the inner light of the poet-creator appears in the Greek literary context, as in Nikolareizis' essay on Homer and modern Greek poetry ('Η παρουσία του Ομήρου στη νέα Ελληνική ποίηση' [1947]), where he speaks of the 'light' that appears in the poetry of Homer and Sikelianos: 'το φως εκείνο [...] πιο πολύ διανοητικής παρά υλικής προέλευσης, αποτέλεσμα της ενάργειας στην έκφραση και της ανάγλυφης καθαρότητας του ποιητικού οράματος' (1983: 218-219). Cf. Elytis' similar comments, for instance, in his essay on Theofilos (1987: 285).

that powered the initiation of abstract painting to a very considerable, but not exclusive extent' (Cheetham 1991: xi).[199]

In the history of modern art the starting point of the pursuit for purity is Plato's rejection of mimesis in art.[200] According to Plato, one may gain access to Truth (the imperceptible, intelligible and immortal Ideas) instead of being contented with and thus remaining bound to appearance (common reality), and memory is the eidetic faculty which may lead one to truth. Plato's ideas are primarily expressed in *Phaedo*, in which he develops his Theory of Forms (or Ideas); in the *Republic*, he employs the example of the cave to explain the process in the course of which human beings may realize the essential difference between the shadows of appearance and the immortal Ideas. In the Neoplatonic tradition, this process is identified with the attainment of consciousness and illumination. Plotinus contributed considerably to Plato's understanding of the role of memory with his own conception of memory as a mirror, which reflects higher truth (*Enneads* IV, 3, 30).

Schopenhauer's reading of Plato in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1819), which was translated into French in 1886, was extremely influential in the nineteenth and twentieth century and inspired many of the ideas that are associated with the idealism of a particular trend of modern art. According to Schopenhauer, those who go out of Plato's cave and then return to tell the rest what they have seen, are not believed by the latter because, being accustomed to the real light of the sun, they refuse to recognize the distorted shadow-images (or pseudo-forms) projected on the

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[199] By 'essentialism', Cheetham refers to 'the search for immutable essence or truth and the concomitant ontological division between reality and mere appearance' (1991: xii).
[200] Cf. Elytis' comments on 'Eastern' art, which, in his view, is non-mimetic, in comparison to 'Western' art, which is mimetic (in 'Απ- και εικονίζω' [1992: 211] and elsewhere).

walls of the cave. Thus, they are considered mad by the people who never broke their chains and never left the cave. In Schopenhauer's view, this madness, which is the condition of the poet,[201] is the evidence of genius, and therefore, the Idea, in Plato's sense, originates from the self: not from what one sees but from what one carries in one's mind or soul (1958: 185ff., 233-234ff.).[202]

Neoplatonic ideas were widespread in nineteenth-century Europe; modern art emerged out of a combination of nineteenth-century Neoplatonic doctrines and Spiritualist ideas. The first artists who made the association in the nineteenth century were the Symbolists and the Nabis.[203] Later, not only Symbolist poetry but also Surrealism and other tendencies were influenced by the admixture of such ideas pervading the arts. A common attitude was the combination of metaphysical ideas with mathematics, geometry and other related areas. Mondrian was influenced by Blavatsky's idea that 'God Geometrizes', which echoed Platonic insights. While Kandinsky was working for the development of a 'science of art' (*Kunstwissenschaft*), he wrote his essay *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (1911). Abstraction developed out of Spiritualist beliefs in inner vision: Kandinsky, Kupka, Malevich and Mondrian were Theosophists.[204] Malevich believed in the fourth dimension and the language of *zaum*,[205] and Kupka was a medium of 'sacred geometry'. Matisse, Picasso and Rouault were interested in Spiritualist ideas. A general belief in the occult and the

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[201] In Plato's *Ion*, the poet is possessed by God when producing poetry (534e) and for this reason he is 'κατεχόμενος καὶ μαινόμενος' (536d) and also 'θεῖος' (542a): 'κοῦφον γὰρ χρῆμα ποιητής ἐστι καὶ πτηνὸν καὶ ἱερόν, καὶ οὐ πρότερον οἷός τε ποιεῖν, πρὶν ἂν ἔνθεός τε γένηται καὶ ἔκφρων καὶ ὁ νοῦς μηκέτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνῇ' (534b); the poet's work is the result of 'θείᾳ μοίρᾳ' and 'θείᾳ δυνάμει' (534c) and 'θείᾳ [...] κατοκωχῇ' (536c).

[202] Bergson would later say that it is the eyes' rays that reach and constitute the object.

[203] The word is Jewish for 'prophets' (Atkins 1993: 142).

[204] The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and many artists and writers belonged to it.

mystical was shared by many Surrealist artists (Duchamp, Arp, Picabia). By the end of the Second World War artists retreated from Spiritualist preoccupations.[206] On the one hand, the emergence of Existentialism[207] which denounced the mystical and the occult, and on the other hand, the development of Formalist and Structuralist criticism, which attacked the idea of the artist or poet as creator, downgraded the role of the author (or artist) to that of a producer, and finally neutralized it.

Although Spiritualism and the belief in the occult developed out of Neoplatonism, they are far removed from Plato's ideas. In his essays, Elytis links modern art directly to Plato's (or Plotinus') metaphysics, bypassing and almost utterly ignoring the possible association of modern works of art with Spiritualist ideas.

3.3 *The Transcendental in Art*

In a number of his later essays, published in *Εν λευκώ*, Elytis lucidly expresses his ideas on art, and gives a clear account of his aesthetic viewpoint. In the later texts, his reflections, which appear in a fragmentary and underdeveloped form in his earlier essays on art, present a clear view of his theoretical angle, and situate his thought in its international context.

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[205] This is an unintelligible sort of language, a language 'beyond the mind' ('zaumny yazyk'); the term 'zaum' was invented by the Futurist poets Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh (Cuddon 1992: 1050).

[206] This was the time when, after having been accused of mainly by materialist critics, Breton withdrew from his alchemist experiments.

[207] Surrealism and Existentialism are based on incompatible philosophical principles; as was observed in Chapter 2, Camus and Sartre criticized Surrealism. Cf. Bataille's essay 'Le Surréalisme et sa différence avec l'existentialisme' (1946: 99-110). Elytis expressed his reservations not about Existentialism, which he considered 'ένα εξαιρετικά σοβαρό φιλοσοφικό κίνημα' but about the 'anti-poetic spirit' it inspired in young people (1987: 439).

In these late essays, Elytis explicitly states that purity ought to be the highest principle and aim of art, and the criterion for its evaluation. His comments on Plato are strikingly frequent; he even wrote an essay on the notion of 'the divine light' in Plotinus,[208] and one entitled 'Ο δάκτυλος του υπερβατικού'.[209] The fact that Elytis pursued a Neoplatonic idea of art is manifest in those of his observations that refer to Plato's idea of the possibility of raising oneself to the superior reality of the world of the Ideas or Forms;[210] Elytis considered this as a kind of a vertical movement ('ορθοτόμηση'), a transposition ('μετατόπιση') from everyday reality to the primary reality of forms, during the course of which the artist or poet gains consciousness, or as the raising of everyday reality to this superior world. In other words, he referred both to the process, the vertical movement itself, and/or to the result of this movement. In the first case, he employed terms such as 'geometry' and 'transcendence', and in the second case, terms such as 'originality', 'simplicity', 'translucence'. Elytis' comments, on the one hand, may allude to this transposition, as when he refers to the 'πρωτογένεια' of the art of certain artists, and the 'invisible geometry' of the artwork, which, in his view, results in 'ultimate simplicity' and translucence. On the other hand, in many of his observations, he explicitly assumes the aesthetic perspective of metaphysics when he proclaims that the artefact ought to exceed reality and to reflect 'a sacred mystery', while the artist ought to insist on embodying an archetypal image of the world that can be reached through memory. The idealism of Elytis' belief in the transcendental is moderated by the fact that he viewed the pre-existent forms psychologically, that is, as residing in the unconscious.

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[208] 'Το θεϊκό φως κατά τον Πλωτίνο' (Elytis 1992: 311-312).
[209] Elytis 1992: 278-280. The essay was first published in 1988.

Elytis replaced Plato's world of the Ideas with the psychological reality of the unconscious or the imagination, and he clearly indicated that the transposition he referred to also presupposed some kind of mental (noetic) activity.

In 'Ο διαιρέτης "Κ" στη σύγχρονη ζωγραφική μαζί μ ' ένα "μικρό φανταστικό μουσείο"' (1982), which is one of his most important essays on art, Elytis replaces the aesthetic criteria for the evaluation of art with the 'divisor K', which stands for 'καθαρότητα' (purity) (1992: 188)[211] and is manifest in the 'διαφάνεια' (translucence) and the 'mystery' of the artwork. [212] His metaphysical perspective is made explicit in this essay, since he considers the 'divisor K' as a 'more permanent' criterion, and one that is 'πιο χειραφετημένο από τις ιστορικές ή κοινωνικές συνθήκες'. In order to illustrate his argument, he refers to the examples of Piero della Francesca and Vermeer, in whose work the parts of the 'intelligible architectural edifice' correspond to reality, but the edifice itself exceeds reality and reveals a transcendental feeling ('ένα αίσθημα θεϊκής τάξης και θεϊκού μυστηρίου'). In Elytis' view, the purpose of art is to reach a certain degree of purity by subsuming matter into an 'invisible rhythm' and by 'subjecting' it to a 'transcendental order' ('η απεικόνιση του εξωτερικού κόσμου δεν είναι νοητή παρά σαν υπαγωγή σε μιαν υπερβατική τάξη') (1992: 189). Painting should not represent reality but reconstitute the permanent state of things: 'Η ζωγραφική είναι ζωγραφική. Διορθώνει, παρά που αποδίδει την πραγματικότητα' (1992: 193).

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[210] For an analysis of Plato's ideas see Annas 1981: 217-241.
[211] As Elytis explained, the divisor 'K' could stand for purity ('καθαρότητα') or for the classical ('κλασικό'), but, of the two, he decidedly focused on purity.
[212] See also Elytis 1987: 25.

Elytis' demands concerning the preponderance of purity in art dominate his exposition of the procedure of artistic creation: the impressionism of emotion should be surpassed by the artist's consciousness (1992: 192) so that an inner, super-sensual reality is established in the place of common reality (1992: 191). As a result, translucence or lucidity can be attained and purity can be achieved; a crucial factor in this process is memory. Elytis specified that memory referred to childhood reminiscences, thus acknowledging the significance of Jungian thought for his own ideas. But his attachment to Platonic metaphysics is also apparent from his observation. The philosophical background hinted at by Elytis' comment is Plato's answer to the Heraclitean 'flux' of sensible reality through an appeal to the non-sensible Forms, which reflects his quest for unity and stability.[213] Significantly, Elytis introduces this essay by referring to Plato's eidetic numbers and by claiming that, had this theory been completed, it would have been adequate for the understanding of the function of art.[214]

In this and others of these essays, Elytis comments on the 'invisible geometry' and the strict control of mathematics as the requisite underlying regulative mechanisms for the structure and the function of the work of art (1992: 172-173).[215] He also insists on the 'πρωτογένεια' of art (1992: 277)[216] and poetry (1992: 178),[217] that is, their power to reflect the primary reality of the archetypal forms, and he identifies the process leading to this reality with an 'ορθοτόμηση' (rectitude) and

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[213] See Lovibond 1991: 35-55; also, for a discussion of Plato's 'metaphysical epistemology' see White 1992: 277-310.

[214] Plato developed the theory of eidetic numbers on several occasions, in his effort to understand language (see Bostock 1994: 10-27, for a brief discussion of Plato's points).

[215] 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"' (1976).

[216] 'Gris-Arp-Rothko. Για μια πρωτογένεια'; there is no indication in *Εν λευκώ* about the date of this essay's composition.

'μετατόπιση' (transposition); this is a process in which matter is purified of the superfluous weight of everyday life. Both the terms 'ορθοτόμηση' and 'μετατόπιση' refer to the concept of 'υπέρβαση'; the three notions are employed by Elytis on different occasions to refer to his understanding of Plato's theory of Forms as a vertical movement, during which the artist (or poet) gains consciousness or is illuminated. As he explains, the transposition to a higher reality is of a moral quality, follows a 'vertical path', and functions by means of analogy. The mechanism of analogy develops through metamorphosis and the personification of the natural elements (1992: 173-179; 1992: 19-21). It runs on a vertical double course: 'ο πραγματικός καλλιτέχνης [...] βουτιέται με τα μούτρα στο ανάποδο για ν' ανασύρει την ίσια μεριά' (1992: 181).[218] The idea resonates not only within Romanticism and the Symbolism of Rimbaud and Mallarmé, but primarily within the Surrealist philosophical and aesthetic positions. Elytis' detailed description of his idea of the vertical movement on the axis of consciousness directly points to the Surrealist conception of the process leading to the superior stage in which oppositions are resolved. Echoing the Surrealists, Elytis claims that, practically, this resolution (illumination or the gain of consciousness) depends on the associative faculty, the imagination or the unconscious.

That the notions of 'ορθοτόμηση' and 'μετατόπιση', that is, 'geometry' and 'transcendence' were seen by Elytis as being interrelated is explained in his interview

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[217] 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"'.

[218] Surely, this observation is reminiscent of Rimbaud's ideas. Elytis also refers to this transposition as 'Η παράλληλη και ταυτόχρονη ανύψωση του ταπεινού σε θεϊκό μέγεθος και η κατάβαση του θεϊκού στο απτό και το καθημερινό' (Elytis 1992: 20), which evokes Heraclitus: 'ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὠυτή' (Fr. 60), and echoes the theoretical observations of Mallarmé and those of the Surrealists.

with Analis, in which he stresses that he conceives of 'transcendence' in combination with 'geometry':

> La transcendence, en tant que telle, serait un jet de rayons jusqu'à l'infini, qui nous donnerait une image trouble [...] la géométrie, [...] elle ne constituerait qu'une figure linéaire [...]. Par conséquant, j'entends parler de la transcendence *avec* la géométrie; l'une donant naissance et, simultanément, naissant de l'autre. (1983a: 98)

As he observes in the same interview, 'geometry' does not refer to composition, but 'to the way one conceives and uses one's materials' (1983a: 100) and to 'the function of the soul'.

Elytis stated that his preference for 'pure texts'[219] (1992: 230) was the result of his need to insist on creating a particular kind of image of the world. He stressed that he did not refer to the metaphysical visions of religious people (1992: 228-229) but to the ability to perceive the grace of the earth or nature. In his view, the earth holds the message, the 'secret meaning' of the sanctity of the senses (1992: 204).[220] But one has to be ready to receive this grace (1992: 175).[221] It is interesting that, while in his texts on Surrealism he persistently referred to the imagination, in his essays on art he only mentions it occasionally, as the means for arriving at the image he tries to define. The focus of these texts is not the process, the process of transposition or 'transcendence' (and 'geometry'), but the image itself. This seems to be a psychological image, the unconscious prototypical figure expressed by Jung's

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[219] See his essay 'Imago terrae' (1981).

[220] See the essay 'Το χαμένο θαύμα' (1963). It is because of the nature of the message that its bearers become transparent, as, for instance, the cicadas in 'Σχέδιο για μιαν εισαγωγή στο χώρο του Αιγαίου' (1973) (Elytis 1992: 17) or woman in 'Οι συνεικόνες' (1980) (Elytis 1992: 259). In 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"', the angels are child-women, whose wings are transparent like those of the cicadas.

[221] See the essay 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"'.

concept of the 'imago',[222] as the title of Elytis' essay 'Imago terrae' suggests.[223] Elytis' observations refer either to Jung's notion of the personal unconscious (Jung 1977: 63-78), which Elytis invokes in 'Ο διαιρέτης "Κ" στη σύγχρονη ζωγραφική μαζί μ' ένα "μικρό φανταστικό μουσείο"', when he associates memory with childhood, or to the collective unconscious.[224] His ambiguous comments on 'τη μεθοδολογία της εξωτερίκευσης' of Rimbaud , in the essay 'Ευχαριστώ, Wolfgang Amadeus' (1992: 251), and his rather cryptic observations on 'the light of the eye' (1992: 311) in 'Το θεϊκό φως κατά τον Πλωτίνο', seem to point to Jung's theories on the unconscious prototypical images. Elytis' point is that, although Rimbaud had never seen the sea, the sea was in his mind,[225] while 'the light of the eye' emanates neither from the external nor from the inner world, and that, in fact, it has no source (1992: 310-311). Unless Jung's theories of archetypes are evoked,[226] Elytis' principal statement is extremely obscure:

> Βγαίνοντας [the sun, just like the light of the eye] πάνω από τον ορίζοντα

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[222] According to Jung, the 'imago' is an imaginary set which is acquired during childhood and becomes a stereotype or 'unconscious projection' (1977: 185).

[223] In 'Imago terrae', the 'parental imago' is that of the mother-earth (cf. Jung 1977: 184).

[224] In the earlier essay on Kapralos, written in 1972 and published in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, he associates the distinct ways in which the Egyptian, the Greek and the Byzantine peoples conceived of *ρυθμοποιΐα*, that is, of the method of connecting the parts with the whole, with the contents of the collective unconscious, which provides 'ένα απόθεμα γραφιστικών παραστάσεων που μιλεί στην ψυχή κάθε λαού μ' ένα ιδίωμα καταγωγικό, εμβαπτισμένο στο μυστήριο, καίριο' (1987: 585). He relates this to the function of memory, conceived as the mechanism of 'φυσικοϊστορική μνήμη' which concerns the intersection of the timeless, that is, the time of nature, with the horizontal time of history. In fact, in this essay, Elytis offers a definition of art as totally depending on memory: 'η τέχνη, στο βάθος, είναι μετατροπή κάποιας μνήμης σε παρόν. Με τη διαφορά ότι η μνήμη ¬πρέπει να το προσέξουμε αυτό¬ έχει κι εκείνη τη σύσταση ακριβώς του φυσικού κόσμου' (1987: 584).

[225] The observation that the sea was in Rimbaud's mind, although he had never seen it, was made by Seferis in 'Μονόλογος πάνω στην ποίηση' (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 111).

[226] According to Jung, 'In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche [...], there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It constists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents' (1968: 43).

> [...] προσφέρεται στα βλέμματά μας. Τον ατενίζουμε. Όμως από πού μπορεί να προβάλει Αυτός που απλώς εικόνα του είναι ο ήλιος; Τίνος ορίζοντα τη γραμμή ν' ανέβει για να φανεί;
>
> Όχι, Αυτός δεν έρχεται από κάπου, όπως θα το περίμενε κανείς. Ή, κι αν έρχεται, είναι δίχως νά 'ρχεται. Τον βλέπεις σαν κάτι που δεν έρχεται, αλλά είναι κιόλας εκεί πριν από καθετί άλλο, πριν καν το διανοηθείς...
>
> Και βέβαια είν' ένα θαύμα αυτό! Δεν ήρθε, και όμως νά τος! Δεν είναι πουθενά και ωστόσο δεν υπάρχει μέρος όπου να μην είναι! Μπορεί βέβαια μ' αυτά όλα ν' απορείτε. Όμως, όποιος *ξέρει* θ' απορούσε, πιστεύω, με το αντίθετο. Ή μάλλον ¬κι εδώ θ' απορήσετε ακόμη περισσότερο¯ δε θα του ήτανε πια δυνατόν ν' απορήσει. (his emphasis)

Although, in such comments, Elytis' aesthetic point of view appears to be metaphysical in a theological sense, in reality it is not. The primordial imago, the unconscious content of the sea, a psychological symbol for the mother (Jung 1968: 81), is considered to have been inside the psyche of Rimbaud. Similarly, 'Αυτός', whose image is the sun (in a theological context, God, but also the archetype of the hero and the symbol of male creativity) (Jung 1977: 68) resides in the personal unconscious. There is, of course, a certain theology involved in similar theoretical or poetic statements of Elytis. This is a personal theology, which is based on certain theological systems but, as is explained in Chapter 4, is not identified with them.[227]

Elytis' ideas were not always as clear and systematic as he presented them in *Εν λευκώ*. They developed gradually as he studied visual art and poetry and while he was experimenting chiefly with poetic form, but also collage and painting.[228] In the following two sections, his early essays on art are examined, since they explicitly show the emergence of his ideas and the stages in their development.

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[227] Cf. Elytis' comments in his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί* (1995a: 34).
[228] Elytis' poetic experiments with visual art and his own collages and paintings are examined in Chapter 7.

3.4 *Ethics and Aesthetics*

One of the principal aims in Elytis' theoretical undertaking was the correlation of metaphysics with purely formal poetic and artistic concerns. Elytis' early essays on art are valuable, since they show that he was seriously engaged in considering ways of rendering the transcendental in appropriate form from the mid-1940s until sometime in the 1950s, when the achievements of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ*[229] may have proved to him to be satisfying solutions. The most important strands to emerge in these essays, concerning both poetry and painting, concern Elytis' view of technique as an outgrowth of the ethical disposition of the artist (or poet), which, as was pointed out in the previous section, is based on the exploitation of memory (the personal and the collective unconscious). It seems that Elytis responded to the quest of linking aesthetics with ethics, expressed both by the French Surrealists and his generation, by turning to Plato and Neoplatonism.

The association between the soul of the artist and the material world was made by Elytis as early as 1936. In his first critical essay on art, he observes that the

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[229] Cf. also *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὁμορφιά*, which must have been conceived sometime in the 1960s (if not even earlier); according to Vitti, these poems were written in 1969 and 1970 (1984: 336-337), while Daskalopoulos (1986: 273) seems to take this information from Vitti. In all probability, the poems of this collection and also *Τὸ μονόγραμμα*, *Ἥλιος ὁ ἡλιάτορας*, 'Villa Natacha', and 'Θάνατος καὶ ἀνάστασις τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου Παλαιολόγου', which were all published in 1971, took much longer than Vitti suggests. In 1965, Elytis himself claimed that 'Όπως ξέρουν οι στενοί μου φίλοι, δεν γράφω ποτέ μου ένα ποίημα από την αρχή ως το τέλος. Έχω πάντοτε πολλά στη μέση, που τα προχωρώ σιγά-σιγά και συχνά το ένα με ξεκουράζει από το άλλο ή με κάνει να το βλέπω πιο καθαρά. [...] Έχω λοιπόν στη μέση αρκετά ποιήματα που ελπίζω κάποτε ν' αποτελέσουν, και από την άποψη της μορφής και από την άποψη του περιεχομένου, μια σειρά με ομοιογένεια.' (1965). In the same 1965 interview, he also mentioned *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, which was published thirteen years later. The fact that Vitti does not comment at all on Elytis' poetic production for the years 1960-1969 is a telling silence.

mysterious lyrical energy of Kanellis' paintings is the result of the painter's exploitation of images that come from both an external reality and an internal, instinctual pulsation ('τον εσωτερικό παλμό') (1936b: 927-928).

The primal mystery of Kanellis' paintings was also perceived by Elytis in the painting of Theofilos. In this case too, he claimed that it emanated from the concurrence of the artist's feeling and the nature of his chosen materials. However, in the essay on Theofilos, there reappears an idea that Elytis introduced in 1944 with regard to the poem. The following paragraph belongs to the article on Theofilos which he published in 1947, and is omitted in the complete version of the essay on the same painter (1965), as published in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*:

> Ο σοφός συνδυασμός, η έξοχη ποιότητα των στοιχείων που συναπαρτίζουν ένα πίνακα, δεν είναι αρκετά για να του εξασφαλίσουν πάντοτε την επιτυχία. Χρειάζεται επιπλέον τα στοιχεία αυτά, με τον ιδιαίτερο τρόπο που εκδηλώνονται, ν' αντικατοπτρίζουν σ' ένα άλλο επίπεδο τον τρόπο με τον οποίο εκδηλώνονται συνήθως μέσα στον ψυχικό ορίζοντα του καλλιτέχνη τα αισθήματα. Έτσι λέμε ότι όσο μεγαλύτερη είναι η ανταπόκριση ανάμεσα στη φύση των πραγμάτων που κινητοποιεί η ευαισθησία ενός καλλιτέχνη και στη φύση των μέσων που κατεργάζεται αυτός για να τα εκφράσει, τόσο μεγαλύτερο είναι επάνω μας το αποτέλεσμα της μαγικής του χειρονομίας, τόσο περισσότερες οι πιθανότητες ν' ανταποκριθούμε οι τρίτοι εμείς, σαν θεατές, στην *ενέργεια* του ρυθμού του έργου του που κι' αυτό είναι μια μικρογραφία του ρυθμού του Σύμπαντος. (1947b: 11-12: his emphasis)

The paragraph may be awkward and clumsy,[230] but it is also revealing. Elytis refers to the reflections of emotions, the correspondences between the nature of things and the artist's sensibility, and the magic of art. The intrinsic energy of the rhythm of the artwork is compared to the rhythm of the universe; in fact, the work of art is seen as a miniature version of the universe. As is explained in Chapter 5, the conception of the

[230] The typical obscurity of Elytis' early essays on art is reminiscent of Sikelianos. Many ideas of Sikelianos also appear in these texts by Elytis, as for instance, the emphasis on the mystery of a

poem as universe marked the first stage in the evolution of Elytis' ideas on poetry. But the coincidence in the views expressed about the poem and the work of art may show that he was working at the same time both on aesthetics and poetics.

Elytis' essays on Panayotis Zografos, Theofilos, and Nikos Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas, which were all written around the same time, reiterate observations that are more or less similar. Central among them is the insistence on the power of art to reveal more than what exists in everyday reality by recourse to internal ideas or archetypes. However, in the text on the painting of Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas there appear references to 'mathematical accuracy' and 'architectural meaning' and rhythm,[231] which are indicative of those of Elytis' theoretical preoccupations that led to the emergence of his ideas on poetic composition.

In the complete version of his study on Theofilos, Elytis refers to the senses, which Theofilos 'τις δέχεται όπως ένας χριστιανός τα μυστήρια' (1987: 267).[232] Theofilos is raised to a Platonic example of moral conduct and love, who competes with the phenomena of nature in his effort to paint 'όσα χωράει ο νους μας από την πραγματικότητα, και όχι μόνον όσα χωράει το μάτι μας' (1987: 305). In Elytis' view, Theofilos' painting is different from Western art because the artist's mode of feeling is different, and closer to the modes of feeling of the Christian East and to the Byzantine conception of art (1987: 284).[233] In the work of

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'lyrical energy' and the rhythm achieved in particular paintings, and also the function of collective memory.

[231] Similar observations were made by Sikelianos in his 1944 talk entitled 'Αρχιτεκτονική και μουσική', in which he linked the researches of his contemporary mathematics and architecture with early twentieth-century Spiritualism (1983: 140-143).

[232] Cf. Elytis' similar observations on Papadiamandis (1992: 93).

[233] The fact that, while in his 1946 essay on Zografos Elytis pointed to the influence of Persian and Syrian art on Byzantine art, in the essays on Theofilos and Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas, which were both published in 1947, he did not comment any further on the identity of the art of the 'East' but, instead,

Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas, Elytis recognizes the quest for the 'σύνθετη και πνευματική' nature of the Greek landscape and the Greek people (1947a: 352). In his view, the painter has a vision manifest in his attempt to express 'the initial mathematical accuracy of the world of forms' (1947a: 355); thus, his painting is 'faithful to the idea that gave birth to it', since vision is used as the 'leader of the senses' and not simply as an interpreter of the object of perception.[234] Elytis' point that the artist gives form to reality (matter) by drawing on inherent qualities and by using them as rules for the arrangement of its structure is a fundamental idea of his poetics, and is repeated in his later essays on art.[235] The idea draws equally on organicism and Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, as was pointed out in the previous section.

By 1952, Elytis had conceived of some of the central aspects of his poetics that were analogous to researches within the visual arts, and which may have been inspired by visual art. In a letter of that year, he admits that before that time he was preoccupied with rendering the purity of the Greek natural landscape in an aesthetic form. But by 1952, he was able to make those connections that linked the natural

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focused on the transcendental aspects of the Greek aesthetic tradition, may suggest Elytis' awareness of such texts as the 1946 essay *Γλώσσα και λαϊκός πολιτισμός των νεωτέρων Ελλήνων* by Stilpon Kyriakidis. But the ultra-right wing political ideas of Kyriakidis were not shared by Elytis, whose conservatism (and nationalism) was much more moderate than the scholar's, as was explained in Chapter 2.

[234] Elytis praised the art of Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas as non-mimetic (1947a: 355; 1987: 556), while he rejected naturalism (1947a: 352).

[235] Cf. the similar views of Pikionis, as expressed in his 1946 essay 'Το πρόβλημα της μορφής'. The essay echoes Yannopoulos in its celebration of the Greek landscape, the Greek people, the Greek line and the Greek light; Pikionis' argument is that the proper (Greek) form can be achieved by means of a structure that is based on the principles of nature (1985: 223). As Leontis observes, 'When Elytis refers to the successful "plastic" rendering of the Hellenic landscape, he assumes that [form] is a shaping principle that derives from nature. Although apparently mutable with the passage of time, it is nevertheless a transcendental essence, the ideal organization of a living organism. [...] What remains immutable, however, is the rule of immanence; principles of structure must derive from nature' (1995: 196-197).

element, and in particular the Aegean landscape, with the ontological and the formal problematic which first appeared in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and was developed in his later poetry. He found that the term 'natural metaphysics' most appropriately defined his ideas:[236]

> J'y ai retrouvé cette notion de pureté qui réunit ce que l'hellénisme nous a légué de plus authentique [...]. La notion de la mer Egée a pris de tout temps chez moi ce sens, mais je m'attardais surtout sur son aspect esthétique. Maintenant que je suis en état de dépasser ce stade, c'est son *équivalent moral* que je tâche de définir et vers lequel je dirigerai probablement mes recherches dans le domaine poétique. La correspondance de la loi physique et de la loi morale me conduit vers une "physique métaphysique", [...] très féconde puisqu' *elle rejoint, sur le plan naturel, les archétypes que je nourrissais intuitivement en moi depuis toujours* et que j'aimais: l'héroïsme qui parvient à vaincre la mort, la victoire du bien, sur le mal, *le mystère de la matière*, la nostalgie du ciel, la géometrie platonicienne. (cited in Spyridakis 1954: 144; my emphasis)

One of the concepts Elytis was working on while elaborating the transposition of 'the archetypes that he always nourished intuitively' was his notion of 'transcendence'. This is apparent in his 1951 essay on Picasso. For him, Picasso is 'le premier Réaliste des temps nouveaux' (1987: 592), who managed to surpass common reality by conceiving of the real in a totally new manner. Picasso's work is 'une table d'équivalences multiples' (1987: 590), which reflects 'a kind of physical and moral health', and naturally, 'archetypes' (1987: 593-594). These observations show that Elytis conceived of the combination of 'transcendence' and 'geometry', or 'la géometrie platonicienne', as a psychological process, which he identified with the creative process.

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[236] Cf. his later comment on the 'ανάπτυξη "μέσα στην ίδια στιγμή" των δύο ροπών που με διακατέχουν. Και εννοώ την ακατάπαυστη και μυστική επικοινωνία μου με την ύλη,

The Greek term 'πλατωνική γεωμέτρηση' is used by Elytis in his 1964 essay on Tsarouchis to refer to what he calls in the letter quoted above 'la géometrie platonicienne',[237] that is, the process of the transposition of the poet from the natural elements to the archetypal images of an Ideal (and mysterious) world (1987: 570). In this essay, the identification of technique with ethics is explained with a clarity that had been rather unusual for Elytis until this time. He now claimed that 'πλατωνική γεωμέτρηση' can be achieved by the artist who 'δεν έμαθε ακόμη να ξεχωρίζει την τεχνική από την τέχνη και την τέχνη από το ήθος' (1987: 572). The notion of 'πλατωνική γεωμέτρηση' was identified with the requisite condition for the processes of art and was given a moral content, which was associated with the notion of purity.[238] This was one of the first occasions when Elytis explicitly linked ethics with the transcendental and this with aesthetics, an idea that he retained and further elaborated, as was pointed out in the previous section.[239]

Elytis' aestheticization of the work of art entails an ideological stance, whose structure is metaphorical, depending on sets of conceptions which stand for others (Eagleton 1991: 52). The epitome of his theoretical endeavour was his attempt to reify the abstract concept of Greece in the 1950s by devising the metaphor of Greece as an 'αίσθηση'. However, as is explained in the following section, his definition of

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από το ένα μέρος, και από το άλλο, τη συνεχή τάση μου προς το υπερβατικό' (Elytis 1981: 244).

[237] As becomes apparent from his essays in *Εν λευκώ* and also from the comparison of the French and the Greek texts of his interview with Analis, Elytis obviously identified the notions of 'geometry' and 'γεωμέτρηση'.

[238] In the introductory essay to *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, Elytis specifies that he refers to 'μια καθαρότητα που το μεταφυσικό της νόημα είναι υπερτοποθετημένο ακριβώς επάνω στο ηθικό και αυτό, πάλι, ακριβώς επάνω στο αισθητικό' (1987: 37).

[239] For instance, when Elytis speaks of Papadiamandis' 'μυστικοπάθεια' he observes that 'in the end, his aesthetics is [...] an ethics' (1992: 94), since, in his work, there is 'μια διαρκής μετατόπιση παλινδρομική ανάμεσα στην αίσθηση και στην καθαρότητα της αίσθησης, ένα είδος

Greece as an 'αίσθησηη' was as abstract as the concept of Greece itself. But his idea of Greece conditions Elytis' understanding of space and is inextricably connected with his view of the *αίσθησηη* as the underlying mechanism for poetic production. The following section considers these ideas, which led to Elytis' systematization of his views on ('the second condition' of) life and ('the third condition' of) poetry.[240]

3.5 *Greece as an 'Αίσθησηη'--The 'Αίσθησηη' of Space*

Elytis developed his argument on Greece alongside a diachronic survey of what he regarded as the essence of Hellenism. He focused on the two characteristics that he assigned to Greekness in order to determine it: on the one hand, aesthetic originality, and on the other hand, psychological singularity. Both were dependent on personal and collective memory; as was pointed out in the previous sections, he conceived of memory either psychologically (Jung) or metaphysically (Plato). Both of the above characteristics and, as is explained in this section, their determinants concerned Elytis' own idealist belief in the excellence of everything Greek (nature, people, history), and presupposed the idea of a common psychology of the Greek people. But, above all, they are indicative of his attempts to give a theoretical basis to the Surrealist idea of 'inner vision' and turn it into a working principle for his poetry.

In the essay on Zografos, Elytis singles out three features of Greek painting that distinguish it from western European art. The first is its psychological

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αντικατοπτρισμού στο ηθικό επίπεδο, που του είναι ήδη στο αισθητικό προσφιλής' (1992: 81).

[240] Elytis' notions of the 'second condition' of life and the 'third condition' of poetry are examined in Chapter 4.

substructure, the second refers to its non-mimetic tendencies, and the third concerns properties that pertain to its nature; he considers this last feature as typical of everything Greek (1987: 538). In order to explain the psychological singularity of the Greek artist and the aesthetic uniqueness of Greek art, he elaborates the idea of a distinctive quality pertaining to the Greek people. He defines this as 'μια ειδική αισθαντικότητα' (1987: 547). In the essay on Theofilos, while he insists on his point on 'τον ειδικό τρόπο του *αισθάνεσθαι* που χαρακτηρίζει τους ανατολικούς λαούς' (1987: 283; his emphasis), which he explicitly relates to Jung's notion of the collective unconscious ('ομαδικό φυλετικό υποσυνείδητο') (1987: 292),[241] he makes a further distinction between two trends in the special mode of Greek feeling: an 'αισθητικό' and a 'ψυχολογικό' (1987: 292-293). Elytis' idea was based on phylogeny and on the tradition of applying organic theories to the ontogeny of art. In the essay on Zografos, echoing Yannopoulos,[242] Elytis maintains that this 'ειδική αισθαντικότητα' emanates from the special properties of Greece itself: Greek people are different because they live in Greece; Greece is different because of its 'φως και ύπαιθρο' (1947a: 352). Greece is '[η] θέρμη του ήλιου και το ξύπνημα των αισθήσεων' (1987: 293). At this stage, that is, in 1946-1947, when these two essays were published, the light of the sun had not yet acquired the metaphysical dimensions it would take on later in Elytis' thought, as is also suggested by his comments in the letter of 1952 quoted in the previous section.

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[241] Cf. Sikelianos' mention of 'Ελληνικό ομαδικόν υποσυνείδητο' in the 'Preface' to *Λυρικὸς βίος* (1965: 78).

[242] And perhaps also Theotokas, as was pointed out in Chapter 1.

It was during his sojourn in France in 1948-1951 and especially after his meeting with Albert Camus in 1950,[243] that Elytis may have conceived of his ideas on the metaphysics of the sun. Camus' reflections on the mystery of the Mediterranean light, as expressed in *Noces* and *L'Eté*, appealed to Elytis (1987: 447, 453).[244] When asked by Camus and René Char[245] to contribute to their journal *Empédocle*, Elytis decided to write the essay 'Pour un lyrisme d'inventions architecturales et de métaphysique solaire'. As he reports, only the title survived and the essay was never completed.[246] The concept of 'the metaphysics of light' or of 'solar metaphysics' seems to have replaced the notion of 'natural metaphysics', since in his interview with Ivask Elytis refers to the former without even mentioning the latter (Elytis 1975: 639-640). The notion of 'solar metaphysics' is not only much more impressive than that of 'natural metaphysics', but also more specific in its suggestiveness, and as is shown in Chapter 5, integrates Elytis' ideas of the poem as a solar system. It seems that the notion emerged sometime between 1951 and 1963; apart from his letter to Spyridakis, dated 1951, 'natural metaphysics' is also mentioned in Elytis' 'Δήλωση του '51',[247] and in his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί* (1995a: 34), whereas the

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[243] See Daskalopoulos 1986: 268.

[244] One may compare, for instance, the idea that 'A certaines heures, la campagne est noire de soleil' expressed in 'Noces à Tipasa', written in 1936-1937 (Camus 1993: 11), with Elytis' views on the 'mystery of light' (1975: 642).

[245] Elytis was equally 'interested' in the poems of Char and in the essays of Camus, for their 'purity' and 'translucence' (1987: 447).

[246] Elytis felt that the subject was too demanding for him (1987: 449); he confessed that 'το ναυάγιο του *Εμπεδοκλή* ένιωθα ότι μ' έβγαζε από μια κακοτοπιά, ανίσως όχι από ένα σίγουρο αδιέξοδο'. Indeed, the French journal had a very brief life since it ceased being published in 1950, a few months after Elytis met with Camus and Char. Only eleven issues saw the light of day, from April 1949 to July-August 1950. The inaccuracy that the journal was never published, unjustly attributed by Vitti to Elytis (Vitti 1984: 229 and 271, n. 1), is probably the result of the critic's misunderstanding of the use of the word 'ναυάγιο', which refers to the unsuccessful sailing of a ship and not to its launching.

[247] Elytis 'declares', among others, the following: 'Από τον βασιλικό δρόμο των αισθήσεων [...] μου έτυχε να βγω πάλι στο σημείον όπου η "μεταφυσική" μου ελέγχεται να είναι "φυσική"' (1992: 206).

supposed title for the essay for *Empédocle*, in which the term 'solar metaphysics' is employed, is provided by him in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', written in 1963. Thus, it seems improbable that Elytis was asked to write the particular essay for the first issue of *Empédocle* in 1948,[248] unless he intended to write an essay with a similar title but without mentioning the idea of 'solar metaphysics', which must have been conceived later than 1951. For, if an essay on 'solar metaphysics' could be written in 1948,[249] then his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, in which Elytis refers to 'natural metaphysics' (1995a: 34), must have been written before 1948, which appears impossible.[250] The metaphysical role attributed to the sun in this poem must most probably be attributed to the fact that it draws heavily on tradition.[251]

But the idea of 'solar metaphysics' had already been conceived before 1963 when Elytis referred to the year 1943, claiming that it was the time when the members of his generation 'Ξαναμπαίναμε στη δοκιμασία του υπαίθρου, όχι με την έννοια της φυσιολατρίας, αλλά της αντοχής στη μεταφυσική δύναμη του ήλιου. Που σημαίνει ότι ξαναμπαίναμε από την πίσω πόρτα στην παράδοση' (1987: 427). The correlation of tradition with 'solar metaphysics' is not strange. Palamas and other poets of his time also celebrated the sun and discovered folk tradition. In 1882, N.G. Politis published his study on the function of the sun in folklore mythology. In this study, by drawing on Ancient Greek mythology, he

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[248] Tsitarakis misreads Elytis' comments, as expressed in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, and believes that the poet was asked to write his essay for the first issue of *Empédocle*. There is no evidence in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* or in the interview with Ivask (on which Tsitarakis also draws) either for this or for the date of Elytis' meeting with Camus, which Tsitarakis holds to have been 1948 (Tsitarakis 1987-1988: v-vi).
[249] This is implied by Tsitarakis (1987-1988: v-vi).
[250] Cf. Kechayoglou 1995: 28.
[251] Elytis pointed out that the notion of 'solar metaphysics' conditions his poetry of the 'third period' (1975: 640), thus implying that it is not one of the principles conditioning *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό.*

presented a list of Modern Greek folklore traditions and, among them, stories of the sun as a human being (1921: 111ff.), the sun as a source of beauty (1921: 130ff.), as an eye (of God) (1921: 133ff.) and as an object of adoration (1921: 140ff. and 146ff.). Elytis may have been influenced by Politis' study, as Meraklis seems to imply (1984: 33-34). Indeed, from *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* onwards, the sun and its light bear a metaphysical quality: the sun is given anthropomorphic characteristics, and occasionally, the identity of a deity.[252] But, apart from Greek folk traditions, in specific philosophical and religious traditions, the sun is both regarded as a natural element and associated with metaphysics.[253] It seems that the theoretical mechanism of 'solar metaphysics', which underlies Elytis' later poetry, involves philosophical ideas that are made to blend naturally with Greek tradition.[254]

In the 1964 essay on Tsarouchis, Elytis tries to explain why Greece is different from western European countries not only by recourse to the collective memory of the *Γένος* (1987: 568), but also to the metaphysical dimensions of the Greek sun. In this case, his argument is more concrete than in the essay on Theofilos: the view that there is a 'special manner of (Greek) feeling' is now complemented by the idea that there is a special *αίσθηση* (1987: 569), which is a quality pertaining only to a Greek (1987: 571). On this principle, Elytis claims that ' Ἕλληνας σημαίνει να

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[252] See also Lychnara 1986: 116.

[253] In the *Corpus Hermeticum*, 'τὸ ἀγαθόν', that is, God is called 'τὸ ἀρχέτυπον φῶς' whose emitted rays are those of the Mind and Truth (Scott 1993: 140), while the sun, 'ὁ δημιουργός', 'τὴν [...] ὕλην ἀνάγων [...] πᾶσι [γ]ὰρ τὸ φῶς ἄφθονον χαρίζεται' (1993: 266).

[254] Cf. the role attributed to the sun in *Ἥλιος ὁ ἡλιάτορας*, and the 'lunar metaphysics' of *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά*.

αισθάνεσαι και να αντιδράς κατά έναν ορισμένο τρόπο· τίποτε άλλο' (1987: 575).[255]

In his study of the 'cultural artefacts' of nationalism and of other related notions, Anderson defines a nation as 'an imagined political community' (1991: 6); [256] he claims that 'Communities are to be distinguished [...] by the style in which they are imagined'. In 1958, Elytis imagines Hellenism[257] not as an idea but as an 'αίσθηση' underlying the production of art, and functioning on a metaphysical plane: 'Η ποίηση, πιστεύω, γράφεται με ό,τι συγκινεί ιδιαίτερα την ιδιοσυγκρασία του καθενός μας [....] [*Ο*] *Ελληνισμός δεν είναι* [*ιδέα*] [...] *για μένα* [...] *είναι πολύ περισσότερο αίσθηση, και λειτουργία μεταμορφωτική, και μηχανή μεταφυσική* στοιχείων' (1958: 411; my emphasis).[258] In the essay on Tsarouchis, he observes that by means of the *αίσθηση* one can reach the 'Idea'; it is apparent in this comment that Elytis refers to the Platonic notion of the intelligible Ideas and not to the faculty

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[255] It should be noted that a similar idea is expressed in 'Η σύγχρονος ζωγραφική' by Yannopoulos, who maintained that non-Greek artists can only produce inauthentic images of Hellenism (1963: 40-41). Elytis' comment may explain what he meant when he claimed that, although the sun may have a metaphysical dimension in the countries around the Mediterranean in general, non-Greek people could not easily perceive this 'solar metaphysics' (cf. Chapter 1). He pointed to a few exceptions, such as Hölderlin, Reverdy, Camus, Picasso and Veltri. He considered Plotinus to have been the major exception for having spoken of 'the light within the eye' (1992: 311). It is interesting that Plotinus, who was born in Egypt but wrote in Greek, was considered by Elytis as non-Greek: obviously, for Elytis, it was not only the use of the Greek language that made a Greek.

[256] Anderson explains that nations are imagined 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 1991: 6).

[257] Cf. the observation of Tziovas (1989: 136-137) that certain members of the Generation of the 1930s preferred the term 'Ελληνισμός' to the term 'Ελληνικότητα', and that this was a choice that had been underlined by Theotokas in 1962.

[258] Elytis' was a rather belated contribution to the issue of Greekness, which, as has been pointed out in Chapter 1, was raised in the 1930s, and was discussed in the debate between Seferis and Tsatsos. Interestingly, in his debate with the idealist philosopher Tsatsos, Seferis stressed his empiricist viewpoint by observing that he did not work on ideas but on the impact of his senses on his soul and body, while, on the other hand, he alluded to the poetic perception, that is, inner vision (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 110-111). The issue of Greekness was reconsidered by members of the Generation of the 1930s for a long time after this debate; the views of the two representatives of this generation that may have been significant for Elytis are those of Theotokas and Seferis. Both seem to have kept arguing in favour of a 'dynamic' conception of Hellenism (expressing the continuity of the ancient and the modern

of reason : 'Ω ναι, από την Αίσθηση φτάνεις πιο εύκολα στην Ιδέα. Κάτι περισσότερο: μόνον από την Αίσθηση φτάνεις σίγουρα στην Ιδέα. Είναι η αναγωγή αυτή, η λειτουργία αυτή, το κυριότερο μυστικό που μπορεί να κάνει οποιονδήποτε άνθρωπο Έλληνα' (1987: 574). This idea reappears in his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, when he imagines Greece itself as an *αίσθηση*: 'Η Ελλάδα [...] είναι [...] μια ειδική και μοναδική *αίσθηση*, ζωντανή και πάντοτε παρούσα, ένας τρόπος να αντιλαμβάνεσαι τη ζωή και να την εκφράζεις, που δε μοιάζει με κανέναν άλλον' (1995a: 33; his emphasis).[259] In the introductory essay to *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, his metaphysical viewpoint is revealed in the suggestion that there ought to be a mathematical formula to measure Greece or give a precise account of it:

> Η Ελλάδα, έχω καταλήξει από καιρό σ' αυτό το συμπέρασμα, είναι μια συγκεκριμένη αίσθηση –θ' άξιζε να βρεθεί γι' αυτήν ένα γραμμικό σύμβολο–, που η ανάλυσή της, η εύρεση των αντιστοιχιών της, σ' όλους τους τομείς, αναπαράγει αυτόματα και σε κάθε στιγμή την ιστορία της, τη φύση της, τη φυσιογνωμία της. (1987: 19)

In the later essay on Romanos the Melodist (1975), Elytis complements his views on the 'special manner of feeling', as developed in the essay on Theofilos, by referring to '*έναν* ειδικό τρόπο του εκφράζεσθαι', which in poetry is 'prismatic form' (1992: 49-50).[260] This was a belated expansion of his argument on the singularity of Greek art, which was thus made to include the special nature of Greek

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Greek world) as a unity of style, depending, among others, on the psychology of the Greek people (Tziovas 1989: 136-138).

[259] Elytis further observes that 'η αληθινή Ελλάδα κείται κάπου αλλού [...]. Στην αρχή της αλήθειας αυτής υπάρχει μια *αίσθησις* αΐδια και αναλλοίωτη στη φυσική της πραγματικότητα, στο ήθος των ανθρώπων της, στα μνημεία του λόγου και της τέχνης που έχει γεννήσει. [...] Η "αίσθησις" αυτή, στο βάθος, είναι μια αντιστοιχία της φύσης. Και η αντιστοιχία της πάλι στον τομέα της αισθητικής και της ηθικής, είναι ακριβέστατη –αρκεί να γνωρίζεις να τη διακρίνεις' (1995a: 47).

[260] Elytis' ideas on 'prismatic form' are considered in Chapter 5.

poetry. In a way, Elytis seems to have followed Yannopoulos' deterministic attitude; where the latter located the cause and the reason for everything Greek in the Greek line and Greek colour, Elytis added the Greek *αίσθησση* and the Greek poetic form.

As has been explained in Chapter 1, Elytis used the (Greek) sun and the light of the sun as metaphors for the transcendental light. While in the essay on Kanellis he maintains that the (Greek) light plays on consciousness, which has to be pure in order for the artist to be able to capture and reflect it (1936b: 928),[261] in the essay on Tsarouchis, he implies that the metaphysical aspect of this light is itself an effect of the reflection of the sun on the physical landscape of Greece, which is endowed with special properties. This reflection, or interaction between land and light, in its turn, conditions the collective memory of its people.

The phenomenon described by Elytis may be compared to what in visual art is called 'texture', that is, 'the way [...] in which light behaves when it strikes a particular surface' (Gombrich 1977: 38). Thus, following Elytis' observations, light reveals its metaphysical character when it strikes the surface of Greece and the imaginary space occupied by the collective unconscious. In its turn, the play of this divine light purifies the Greek landscape and the Greek people; this seems to be the idea underlying Elytis' notion of 'solar metaphysics'. Texture in art depends on the material quality of the canvas and on the brush technique(s) employed. For Elytis, metaphysics is natural, that is, it depends on the physical properties of the landscape; even the collective unconscious on which the metaphysical light plays is conditioned

[261] This may have been an allusion to the mirror of Plotinus, which reflects higher Truth. However, Elytis may not have read Plotinus, at least on a systematic basis, before the late 1940s or early 1950s (cf. Elytis 1995a: 36). In any case, whether this is intentional or not, as was observed in Chapter 1, the

by the natural landscape.[262] The geographically specific space of Greece becomes a transcendental space that has to be deciphered by the poet. Plato's metaphysics and Jung's conception of the collective unconscious are combined in Elytis' attempt to connect the Surrealists' conception of the unconscious, and the Romantic, Symbolist and Surrealist notions of inner vision with his own ideas on the national mission of the poet.

In order to understand the texture of Greece, that is, what Elytis means by the *αίσθησση* of Hellenism, one needs the ability to read texture as in visual art. Elytis' suggestion, expressed in a later essay, was that, for this purpose, one ought to be able to read the 'correct spelling' ('ορθογραφία')[263] in the script of the Greek landscape and the nature of the Greek soul;[264] the idea may have been inspired by the Surrealists[265] or by Plato. As he observes in his interview with Analis,

> Ce que je voyais n'était d'aucune manière un simple 'paysage'. C'était un alphabet d'éléments naturels et dont, plus tard, je tenterais de rechercher l'équivalence éthique sur l'esprit. Et non pas uniquement ça, mais aussi, et avec leur assistance, former des syllabes, des mots, des phrases, des vers, de telle manière que la métamorphose du monde psychique puisse exprimer la métamorphose du monde physique que je suivais à peine. [...] Voilà quel était le principe: l'unicité en son devenir. (1983: 97-98)

Elytis' theoretical endeavour to unite aesthetics, poetics, and metaphysics by claiming the originality of autochthonous properties and the uniqueness of people and their visual art (or poetry) is a typical project in which idealism meets with

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allusion to the light of Plotinus recurs in Elytis, as for instance, in his essays on Papadiamandis and Theofilos, in whose work he perceives the light of a pure consciousness ('φωσάκι').

[262] Further philosophical implications of these ideas do not concern this thesis.

[263] See his essay 'Τα δημόσια και τα ιδιωτικά' (Elytis 1992: 337). Elytis attributes a negative moral sense to the notion of 'ανορθογραφία' ('Μέθοδος του "άρα"' [1992: 171] and 'Imago terrae' [1992: 230]).

[264] This is explained by Elytis in his introductory essays to *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* and *Εν λευκώ*.

ethnocentrism,[266] and this with individualism. The *αίσθησση* of Greece conditioned Elytis' own understanding of space. The *αίσθησση* of space too refers to the metaphysics of perception and is presupposed in the metaphysical and psychological aspects involved in his ideas on 'the second condition' of life, which underlies 'the third condition' of poetry; both of these ideas are examined in the following chapter, which focuses on Elytis' attempt to overcome the limits restricting him to an individualist approach by transposing his subjective feeling on to the consciousness of a Modern Greek collectivity.

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[265] Cf. the way Aragon connected nature with the unconscious, an issue that is examined in Chapter 4.
[266] Cf. Tziovas 1989: 17-18.

Chapter 4

Time and Myth: A Vision of the World

4.0 *Introduction*

As becomes apparent from his essays on art, Elytis worked systematically on his poetics in the period broadly between 1944 and 1960, in a conscious attempt to provide it with a theoretical basis. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, his views about visual art not only support his ideas on poetry, but also show the stages in the development of his thought. In Chapter 4, it is explained that his ideas on the moral disposition of the artist, which presuppose his conception of 'transcendence' and 'geometry', and on the transcendental and psychological feeling of space, both of which emerged while he was considering visual art and developing an aesthetic view of Greece, constitute the background for his view of poetic time and space.

In this chapter, Elytis' ideas on the spatial and temporal dimensions of the interrelated phenomena of life and poetry are considered as having emerged in the period between 1944-1960. As is explained in section 4.1, Elytis' understanding of time effectively supported his conception of space and the establishment of the mythical space of Greece in his poetry. In section 4.2, it is pointed out that this space, the fictional outcome of his elaboration of primarily Surrealist quests and of his exploration of the cultural elements of Greece, is endowed with a special kind of sanctity and is occupied by fictional entities. Their character and identity vividly

portray an ambitious attempt to balance, on the one hand, the transcendental against the cultural element, and on the other hand, Elytis' poetic pursuits against his ideological standpoint. It is explained here that this balance depends on the development of a problematic on myth, which supports Elytis' view of the superior poetic reality of the 'second condition' of life. As is pointed out in the conclusion of this chapter (section 4.3), this same problematic constitutes the basis for his ideas on poetry, which he regarded as a 'third', mythical 'condition'.

4.1 *Time Pre-visited and Time Regained*

Elytis' view of time emerged early in the 1940s (although he may have developed preliminary ideas before that), was developed throughout the 1950s, and significantly affected the evolution of his ideas on poetry. While Surrealism and Freud's ideas on the interpretation of dreams are presupposed in Elytis' understanding of time, the theories of Gaston Bachelard on poetic time seem to have provided the main theoretical background for the formation of Elytis' viewpoint; naturally other ideas, within the context of the Generation of the 1930s, may have provided complementary support. The metaphysical depth of the instant, in which time past and time future meet, is the focus of Elytis' conception of time. On the one hand, the way he perceived the instant in the 1940s determined the systematization of the ideas that led to the emergence of his views on poetry. On the other hand, his conception of Greece as an *αίσθησση*, or of the *αίσθησση* of space early in the 1950s significantly affected the development of his views on the instant.

Elytis explained his ideas on time in a lucid manner in his essay 'Τα κορίτσια' (written in 1944 and 1972). Some further comments also appear in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963). Although no original version of these essays was published before 1974, and probably, both were revised early in the 1970s, prior to their inclusion in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, they nevertheless show that his views on time took a very specific form in the period between 1944-1960. This is also proved by certain of his observations in the original versions of other essays of 1944 and in his essay on Kalvos (1946). These comments have not been noticed by critics because they are usually omitted in the final versions of these essays in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*. Elytis gave a retrospective account of his ideas in *Εν λευκώ*, and especially in ' Ένα εικοσιτετράωρο για πάντα', 'Τα δημόσια και τα ιδιωτικά', 'Χρόνος δεσμώτης και χρόνος λυόμενος' and 'Πρόσω ηρέμα'. The essays in *Εν λευκώ* testify that his ideas did not change over time.

When he put the finishing touches to the essay 'Τα κορίτσια' in 1972, Elytis revealed that his unsuccessful attempts to produce a poetic theory 'από ένα βιολογικό φαινόμενο' (1987: 163) had preceded his discovery of Bachelard's work. Given that those aspects of Bachelard's theories that seem to have affected Elytis' thought were known to him before January 1944, when he first referred to Bachelard's book on Lautréamont,[267] Elytis' comment must point to ideas that he had

[267] In a footnote of his 1944 article 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935', which is omitted in the version of the essay that appears in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, Elytis exclaims that 'Ο Gaston Bachelard, καθηγητής στο Πανεπιστήμιο της Dijon, έδειξε μια θαυμαστή κατανόηση των μυστικών της μοντέρνας Λυροσοφίας και το έργο του επάνω στον Lautréamont [...] δείχνει το διεισδυτικό πνεύμα του σοφού εκείνου επάνω στα τόσο λεπτά προβλήματα' (1944b: 27, n. 2). This detail seems to have passed unnoticed by Ioannou who has drawn the groundless conclusion

entertained before 1944. He explained what his problematic was[268] and he modestly admitted that it was resolved by the theoretical conclusions of Bachelard.

The route that Elytis seems to have followed in his quest could very well have coincided with that of Bachelard. Elytis pointed out that he was considering Baudelaire's 'Correspondences' (1987: 162) and Freud's theories on the interpretation of dreams (1987: 163), in his effort to succeed in the 'διατύπωση κανόνων που νά 'χουν την ίδια πέραση στην ύλη και στο πνεύμα'. In Bachelard's *Lautréamont*, published in 1939, Freud's theories are considered,[269] and so is Baudelaire, whose sonnet is given special mention in Bachelard's essay 'Instant poétique et instant métaphysique', also published in 1939. This essay could have been known to Elytis by 1944, since Bachelard refers to it in *Lautréamont.*[270] Since Bachelard's theory of the instant, as expressed in *Lautréamont*, seems to have provided an answer to Elytis' problematic on the question of time, he may also have tried to obtain Bachelard's other works on the theory of the instant, and especially the above essay.[271] Apart from the latter, these were in particular *La Dialectique de la durée* (1936), also mentioned in *Lautréamont* (1939: 74, n. 1) and *L'Intuition de l'instant: étude sur* La Siloë *de Gaston Roupnel* (1932), which was the first of Bachelard's books in which his theory of time was formulated.

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that Elytis' theoretical working on the concept of the instant followed a parallel line with that of Bachelard (Ioannou 1995-1996: 53-58).

[268] As Elytis points out, his preoccupation at that time was to develop a poetic theory that would involve certain central aspects: 'Η αμεσότητα, η αντικειμενικότητα, η νομιμοποίηση της υπερπραγματικής εικόνας, η αξιοποίηση της μνήμης, ο μορφολογικός δυναμισμός, η διάχυση στον εξωτερικό κόσμο, ο μύθος της νεότητας, έβλεπα να παίρνουν την έκταση και τη σημασία κεφαλαίων αυτόνομων όπου τον πρώτο λόγο είχε πάντοτε η ιδανική μονάδα η ικανή να περικλείνει τ' αντίθετα χωρίς άλλα ίχνη' (1987: 162).

[269] See for instance, Bachelard 1939: 57-58 and 83.

[270] Bachelard 1939: 74, n. 1, and 112, n. 1.

[271] In spite of the war conditions, Elytis was in a position to have read *Lautréamont* by 1944, which implies that it was not impossible for him to be supplied with books or periodicals from abroad.

Bachelard's central idea is that time is discontinuous and that it is constituted of instants with no temporal depth. As Vadée observes, for Bachelard, 'Le temps d'une chose est alors conçu comme un temps plus ou moins "lacuneux", et l'idée de rythme devient le véritable contenu de l'idée de temps' (1975: 124). In *La Dialectique de la durée*, Bachelard develops his 'doctrine pluraliste du temps' (1950: 61), which rests on the presupposition that the time of a thing is a deficient idea (1950: 66). Bachelard worked on the verticality of consciousness, the central idea of Neoplatonism, although he rejected the idealism involved in it;[272] he was preoccupied with the meaning of archetypal images (in Jung's sense). The idea of rhythm lies behind the idea of subjective time; for Bachelard, 'vertical time' is associated with the search for 'les rythmes élevés, rares et purs, de la vie spirituelle' (1950: 94). Since continuity is the result of 'temporal superpositions' (1950: 91), 'Les temps idealisés ont [...] des constances sans cependant avoir une continuité' (1950: 110).

In his essay 'Instant poétique et instant métaphysique', Bachelard observes that poetry is 'an instantaneous metaphysics' (1970: 224), and 'In every poem, one may find the elements of a halted time' which he identified with vertical time (1970: 224-225). The poetic instant 'is essentially, the harmonious relation of two contrary things' (1970: 225), producing 'magic' and 'ecstasy' by their contraction into a dynamic 'ambivalence' which renounces the common conception of 'successive time': 'Le but, c'est la *verticalité*, la profondeur ou la hauteur; c'est l'instant stabilisé où les simultanéités, en s'ordonnant, prouvent que l'instant poétique a une perspective métaphysique' (his emphasis). The poetic instant is 'inevitably complex', since it

[272] Bachelard rejected both realism, which recognizes only the data of sensory experience, and idealism, which only makes the mental real.

organizes many simultaneities on a vertical axis. For this reason, the accumulation of the ambivalences has to be an ordered one.[273] Bachelard maintains that the metaphysical depth of the poetic temporal stability is established in the tension emerging when opposing emotions are brought forward simultaneously; this effect of compression is characteristic of the poetic instant and is alien to horizontal time, which depends on the succession of emotions:

> Les instants où ces sentiments s'éprouvent *ensemble* immobilisent le temps, car ils s'éprouvent ensemble reliés par l'intérêt fascinateur à la vie. Ils enlèvent l'être en dehors de la durée commune. Une telle ambivalence ne peut se décrire dans de temps successifs, comme un vulgaire bilan des joies et des peines passagères. Des contraires aussi vifs, aussi fondamentaux relèvent d'une métaphysique immédiate. On en vit l'oscillation dans un seul instant, par des extases et des chutes qui peuvent même être en opposition avec les événements. (1970: 230; his emphasis)

The way Elytis expressed himself on this subject not only echoes the ideas of Bachelard but also corresponds to his manner of presenting them. In 'Τα κορίτσια', on the one hand, Elytis rejects '[το] φαινομενικά ευθύγραμμο παραλήρημα' (1987: 190) as a manner of expressing in literature aspects of life, while on the other hand, he stresses '[την] εξαιρετική σοβαρότητα των φευγαλέων πραγμάτων' (1987: 193). As he observes, the poet 'γράφει ξεγράφοντας το εφήμερο μέρος του' (1987: 163),[274] while his aim should be '*η απομόνωση της αίσθησης και η αυταξία της μέσα σε μιαν ισόβια στιγμή·* το τέλειο, που δεν αξιωνόμαστε, παρεχτός σε μιαν αστραπή, στην ελάχιστη διάρκεια που χρειάζεται για ν' ακυρώσει την

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[273] As he explained, 'les simultanéités accumulées sont des simultanéités *ordonnées*. [...] L'ordre des ambivalences dans l'instant est donc un temps. Et c'est ce temps vertical que le poète découvre quand il refuse le temps horizontal, c'est-à-dire le devenir des autres, le devenir de la vie, le devenir du monde' (Bachelard 1970: 226).

[274] Cf. Elytis' later comment in 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"': 'Η επικαιρότητα, για να σωθεί, δεν έχει άλλον τρόπο παρά να ενσωματωθεί σε κάποιου είδους διάρκεια, όπως είναι η διάρκεια του ψύχους ή του καύματος' (1992: 178-179).

καθημερινή αθλιότητα' (1987: 162; his emphasis). In the essay on Kalvos, Elytis comments on the poets whose poetic expression is determined by 'an unusual rhythm' (1946b: 99), thus establishing 'έναν κόσμο που χάρη σε μια εξαιρετική στιγμή χαρισμένη από τη συναισθηματική ένταση, γίνεται άξαφνα ορατός μέσα στην ίδια [...] ανώτερη πραγματικότητα.'[275] He goes on to dismiss the poetry of Cavafy and Eliot because, in his view, their mythicizing imagination is indirect and refers only to the past, and thus it is static rather than dynamic:

> η φαντασία τους αντί να είναι άμεση ως προς τη μυθοποίηση των κοσμικών στοιχείων, και κινητική ώστε σε κάθε στιγμή να τινάζει λυρικές σπίθες, ακολουθεί άλλο δρόμο, δημιουργεί μια πάγια και μοναδική ατμόσφαιρα, όπου κινεί τα έργα και τις ημέρες των ηρώων της. (1946b: 99, n. 12 [the footnote is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*])

He further claims that the personae of these poets are 'μυθικοί ηθοποιοί ενός δράματος που παίζεται επάνω στη μια διάσταση του χρόνου'.[276]

Bachelard's theory of the system of the poem as constituted of simultaneities, which depend on many concurrent oppositions, is reflected in Elytis' conception of the poem as expressed in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας'. In this essay, Elytis maintains that the poem ought to be an 'ideal unit' 'ικανή να περικλείνει τ' αντίθετα χωρίς άλλα ίχνη, [...] με την ίδια αυτονομία και την ίδια σύμπτωση επί το αυτό ενός πλήθους από ετερόκλητα στοιχεία' (1987: 162). Elytis' point that the poet should invent an architectonics ('Αρχιτεκτονική'), which would not be a 'nostalgic return to the old meticulous care for form' (1987: 450), so that the poem as a whole reflects eternity while its parts are in constant movement, directly points to

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[275] Elytis' observation is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.

[276] As Elytis observes, Cavafy, just like Eliot, '*μυθοποιεί* το ιστορικό παρελθόν και τοποθετεί μέσα του τις σύγχρονες ανάλογες συναισθηματικές του καταστάσεις' (1946b: 99, n. 12; his emphasis).

Bachelard's view. In this case, Elytis defines the 'ideal poem' as a miniature solar system, appearing to be immobile, but in fact depending on the mobility of its parts. He holds that the focus of the poem (its central 'idea' or 'image') ought to develop according to the rhythm which renders time perceptible. This view of the poem is considered in Chapter 5. But the ideas of a rhythmical mobility-within-immobility evoke Bachelard, who refers to the temporally closed system of modern physics, as 'figuré dans ses rythmes comme une chose est figurée dans ses limites spatiales. [...] A chaque partie d'un système convient un rythme temporel caractéristique des variables en évolution' (1950: 61). Bachelard employed this theory in the analysis of the poem as a system, which is an ordered accumulation of many simultaneities on a vertical axis; this idea is evoked in Elytis' explanation of his conception of 'transcendence' and 'geometry', as given in his interview with Analis, quoted in Chapter 3. In that case, Elytis referred to the 'image trouble' (1983a: 98) of 'transcendence', and he used the example of the black and white grains of photography to explain what he meant. Both this idea and his conception of the 'linear figure' of 'geometry' correspond to Bachelard's view of vertical linearity, since in *L'Intuition de l'instant*, the French theorist points out that 'La ligne qui réunit les points [the instants] et qui schématise la durée n'est qu'une fonction panoramique et rétrospective' (1966: 33). Many other observations made by Elytis in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' reflect Bachelard's ideas, and resonate within the same Neoplatonic line of thought.[277]

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[277] In 'Τα κορίτσια', Elytis states that 'perfection has a moral meaning' (1987: 181). In 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας', he further observes that 'είναι μια κόψη του ηθικού και του πραγματικού κόσμου ο ποιητής. Το μέρος του σκότους, που εξουδετερώνεται μέσα του από τη συνείδηση, προσμετράται σε φως, που επαναστρέφεται ξανά επάνω του, για να κάνει ολοένα πιο καθαρό το είδωλό του –το είδωλο του ανθρώπου' (1987: 452). These ideas point to Bachelard, who claimed that 'Nuit et lumière sont des instants immobiles, des instants noirs ou clairs, gais ou tristes, noirs et clairs[.] [...] *toute moralité est instantanée.* L'impératif catégorique de la

As in his essays on visual art, in the essay 'Τα κορίτσια', Elytis holds that poetry reveals 'a part of the deeper significance' of life (1987: 167) by raising everyday reality to the world of archetypal ideas or forms; it does this by means of the imagination. The creative imagination is complex in its internal nature and in its unfolding ('στην ανελικτική της πορεία') (1987: 168), and while it depends on memory, it 'turns towards the future'. In other words, the imagination regains lost time, to evoke Proust's idea, and casts glimpses at what is going to happen, pre-visiting the future. The following passage, written in 1944 (according to Elytis), appears to be confusing, but it is revealing, since it evokes Plato,[278] from Bachelard's point of view:

> Για να συλλάβει κάθε φορά η φαντασία μια συγκεκριμένη μορφή, οποιαδήποτε κι αν είναι αυτή, ξαναδοκιμάζει πρώτα, σ' ένα μίνιμουμ χρόνου, τη διαδοχική σειρά από τις μορφές που ανταποκριθήκανε στο γίγνεσθαί της. [...] Υπάρχει λοιπόν πραγματικά μια δυναμική γραμμή φαντασίας που ξεκινάει από έναν πόλο βαθύτατα θεμελιωμένο μέσα στη ζωντανή ύλη, περνάει από τον κόσμο των πραγματοποιημένων μορφών, ύστερα από τον κόσμο των πιθανών (όπως μέσα στα όνειρα) μορφών, για να καταλήξει σε μια ολοένα και πιο φωτεινή συνείδηση της πνευματικής παντοδυναμίας. (1987: 182-183)

Bachelard maintained that 'C'est dans le temps vertical d'un instant immobilisé que la poésie trouve son dynamisme spécifique' (1970: 232). Just as Bachelard drew on the temporal rhythm of a closed system in physics to develop his arguments on poetry, Elytis referred to the conclusions of modern physics in order to explain how movement can be conceived within the stability of the poem:

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moralité n'a que faire de la durée. Il ne retient aucune cause sensible, il n'attend aucune conséquence. Il va tout droit, verticalement, dans le temps des formes et des personnes. Le poète est alors le guide naturel du métaphysicien qui veut comprendre toutes les puissances de liaisons instantanées' (1970: 231-232; his emphasis).

[278] In his *Timaeus*, Plato held that time is 'a moving image of eternity' ('αἰῶνος εἰκὼν κινητὴ ὁ χρόνος'; 37d).

> Ένα γνήσιο έργο τέχνης εξακολουθεί βέβαια να εξαρτά την επιτυχία του, όπως άλλοτε, από τη δύσκολη εκείνη ισορρόπηση, αφομοίωση και ταύτιση ενός σωρού αντιφατικών και από τη φύση τους απειθάρχητων στοιχείων. Μόνο που σήμερα φιλοδοξεί από το ισόρροπο αυτό αποτέλεσμα και κάτι άλλο: να μην αντιπροσωπεύει πια την κατάσταση της ηρεμίας [...], αλλά τον παλμό της ίδιας τους κίνησης, την αντίστοιχη και τελική *δυναμική γραμμή*, την ικανή να συμβολίζει όλες τις μερικότερες εξορμήσεις που υποκινηθήκανε ίσαίσα με τον μοναδικό, κατά τα άλλα, σκοπό να συμπήξουν ένα μικρό και τέλειο Σύμπαν. (1987: 181; his emphasis)

The 'dynamic line of the imagination' of the previous passage, and the'dynamic line' emphatically used by Elytis in this case, cannot be other than the vertical axis of consciousness, the central idea of Neoplatonism, as elaborated by Bachelard.

In 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935', Elytis evokes Bachelard when he comments on the speed of the Surrealist (automatic) image, which 'δίνει πραγματικά την ιδέα ενός χρόνου καινούριου, του "χρόνου-φαντασίας" όπου μέσα του, τίποτε δεν αντιστέκεται πια στην επίδειξη της αυτομεταμόρφωσής του' (1944a: 27).

Bachelard traced the 'epistemological consequences' of Surrealism in his literary criticism (Abastado 1986: 37). By comparing the 'material correspondences' (Bachelard 1939: 73) of Baudelaire with the 'formal correspondences' in the poetry of Eluard, he concluded that the former unfold in a time which is vertical but 'intimate and internal', while the latter, which depend on multifold transformations or deformations, opened up by 'projective poetry', take place 'dans un temps franchement métamorphosant, vif comme une flèche, qui court aux bornes de l'horizon' (1939: 73-74). The impact that Bachelard's ideas about 'projective poetry' had on Elytis is examined closely in Chapter 5; the above comparison between Baudelaire and Eluard presents a clear working example, and Elytis may have

considered it in his poetic experiments, whose first results appeared in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*.

The French Surrealists' conceptions of time range between the two central versions of Aragon and Breton. On the one hand, Aragon perceives time as a set of instants which are 'tous équivalents entre eux, équivoques, dans leur place relative et toujours effritables' (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 178). On the other hand, for Breton temporality 'is conquered in its continuity' (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 179). Eluard's 'exceedingly transforming time' lies in between: each instant is perceived dynamically in its metamorphosing power, raising the details of an ephemeral reality to the 'objective' state of which Elytis spoke in the writings in which he defended Surrealism. Naturally, it is not a matter of objectivity in this case, but of the subjective 'third condition' of poetry,[279] which, by its definition, presupposes an excess of feeling, since through the imagination, the poet aspires to participate in the common feeling--in the case of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, the Greek feeling, an immanent property contributing to the *αίσθηση* of Greece.[280] Bachelard altogether rejected the objective reality of worlds imagined or perceived. That it is the subjective experience of time that is at issue in Elytis' poetics has been observed by Malkoff (1991: 895).

In his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, Elytis explains that in ''Ανάγνωσμα πρῶτο' he referred to his personal experience because it was for him an archetypal scene: 'Μια σκηνή αιώνια επαναλαμβανόμενη μέσα στην ιστορία του Γένους, σε σημείο που να καταργείται η διάκριση του χρόνου' (1995a: 54).[281] Unlike

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[279] The notion of the 'third condition' of poetry is examined in section 4.3.

[280] In 1949, Elytis wrote in his diary: 'Να συλλάβω όχι τις παράξενες πλευρές της ψυχής του ανθρώπου, αλλά το μυστήριο της ψυχής στο σύνολό της' (Daskalopoulos 1986: 268).

[281] This same idea must be the underlying principle in *Ὁ μικρὸς Ναυτίλος*.

Bachelard, Elytis acknowledges the idealism of his attitude (1995a: 50), and makes a clear point when he explains his aim in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*: 'Σήμερα που γράφω, πρέπει ν' ανεβώ την Ιστορία για να βρω τη στιγμή που θέλω να περιγράψω. Αλλά και: ανεβαίνοντας την Ιστορία τη σβήνω, για να γίνω ο φυσικός άνθρωπος ή, αλλιώς, να ταυτισθώ απόλυτα μαζί της, σε σημείο που να είναι σα να μην υπάρχει' (1995a: 51).

In 'Τα κορίτσια', Elytis refers to the diachronic value of certain 'apophthegms and phrases' (1987: 163).[282] By reflecting on the metamorphoses of emotion (1987: 180), he describes the poetic process as follows: the starting point is 'απλές, συμπυκνωμένες αισθήσεις' (1987: 174), which are the result of perception. However, they are not identified with the function of the senses, but with the contents of the unconscious. Subsequently, 'Στην αίσθηση γρήγορα έρχεται να υποκατασταθεί το συναίσθημα. Ύστερα ¬κι αν η προσήλωση συνεχίζεται¬, στο συναίσθημα έρχονται να υποκατασταθούν τα συνειρμικά ανάλογα, μ' ένα πλήθος από εικόνες'.[283] These ideas are related to Jung's archetypal images on whose meaning Bachelard had reflected.[284] They are also relevant to Freud's theories of the unconscious, and especially of the mechanisms governing the contents of the instincts, that is, mainly 'condensation'[285] and 'displacement',[286] which are both evident in the analysis of dreams.

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[282] He gives a two-pages example of what he means (1987: 163-165); this is a perfect example of the 'accumulation of simultaneities', in Bachelard's sense.

[283] This explanation of the poetic process appears in one of the passages of the essay 'Τα κορίτσια' which were written in 1972.

[284] See *La Psychanalyse du feu* (1938) and *La Poétique de l'espace* (1957).

[285] According to Laplanche & Pontalis, 'condensation' is that functional mode of the unconscious in which 'a sole idea represents several associative chains at whose point of intersection it is located' (1988: 82).

[286] 'Displacement' refers to 'The fact that an idea's emphasis, interest or intensity is liable to be detached from it and to pass on to other ideas, which were originally of little intensity but which are related to the first idea by a chain of associations' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1988: 121).

The poetic process then involves a movement on the vertical axis of time, in which perceptions of reality depend on (subjective) association and not on the 'objective' experience of horizontal time. This movement may be related to dream analysis, that is, the process during which a dream narrative (images that appear one after the other and have a manifest content but are not necessarily coherent) is organized into discourse by revealing the latent content of the dream.[287] The subject's associations are organized in poetry into rhythmical arrangements, which may depend on the exploitation of the integral visual resonances of the image. Following the conclusions of Chapter 3, it may be argued that in Elytis' poetics this is an internal rhythm (or order, in Bachelard's words), achieved by means of number, which is associated with memory, and is an immanent quality of the poetic matter. The first stage of the poetic process involves the processing of the *αίσθησση*, which is connected with objective chance ('το τυχαίο') (1987: 162), and with illumination; through an instantaneous revelation, the essential meaning of a particular *αίσθησση* is realized. It is either the individual or the collective unconscious that then comes to the foreground. Thus, the *αίσθησση* of an entity, state of affairs or condition (for instance, the *αίσθησση* of Greece) is revealed through a process, during which an unconscious content comes to the surface of consciousness. The poetic process then involves the conscious elaboration of the contents of the unconscious.

The term *αίσθησση* was used by Elytis indiscriminately to refer both to the *αίσθησση* of Greece or of space, an entity, a state of affairs or a condition, and to the immediate result of perception. The *αίσθησση*, the unconscious content that starts

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[287] See Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *On Dreams.*

becoming conscious after a moment of revelation or instantaneous introspection,[288] should be distinguished from the function of the senses. Usually critics fail to make this distinction. It should be made clear that this *αίσθησση* is not identified with an 'instantaneous impression' (Elytis 1975: 641), and it is not merely the product of perception, but the personal, and therefore subjective, intelligible counterpart of the archetypal image (in Jung's sense) of space, an entity, a state of affairs, or a condition.

When Elytis referred to the *αίσθησση* of space, an entity, a state of affairs or a condition, he associated it with memory, and through Jungian psychology, with the Platonic metaphysical recollection; thus, the *αίσθησση* was related to a conception of monumental time, that is, of the time of eternity or vertical time. When he referred to the *αίσθησση* as the immediate result of perception, he linked it but did not identify it with horizontal time. In both cases, the *αίσθησση* starts becoming conscious in a single moment, at the intersection of time with the timeless, as a distillation of experience, or as illumination (1987: 442-446). In other words, the *αίσθησση* is the means of touching, not the Absolute of the Romantics, but the unconscious: it is the meeting point of consciousness with the unconscious.

The poetic process thus involves the 'development of instantaneity', a procedure for which Elytis gave a brief and rather simplified explanation: 'an event which happens in a split second [...] can be made to include much more; the instant can be enlarged upon' (1975: 641). The development of the instantaneous impression by analysing (as in dream association) the essential *αίσθησση* involves the 'enlargement' or the expansion of the instant. As Caws observes, expansion and

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[288] Elytis was familiar with the *Symposium*, where 'τὸ θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν' (211d) appears 'ἐξαίφνης' (210e), as 'στιγμιαία ενόραση' (Georgopoulou 1994: 147).

extension are two of the aims of Surrealist poetry, which is concerned with 'the metamorphoses of the instant' (1970: 33-34), and the associations of French Surrealist poetry with cinematography are frequently mentioned by critics of French Surrealism on such grounds.[289] In Chapter 7, examples from Elytis' poetry are examined in order to show that references to dream and cinematography reveal aspects of the creative process rather than being accidental allusions.

In Elytis' poetry, the instantaneous impression or illumination acquires a nominalist content so that the relative continuity of ephemeral things is rejected and replaced by a metaphysical duration. Thus, aspects of daily life are raised to the sphere of monumental time in search of correspondences with the archetypal forms. This is what is called subjective time.

As has been pointed out in the Introduction of this thesis, the conclusions of Elytis' theoretical quest over the period 1944-1960 are manifest in his writings of this period, but are presented much more lucidly in his later essays, which appear to be retrospective accounts of his poetics. This has already been observed about his essays on art, in Chapter 3. Here, it should be noticed that the same happens with his comments on his view of time.

In an interview in 1985, Elytis renounces the continuity of horizontal or historical time in favour of the duration existing within vertical or eternal time; this is the time of Surreality, or of the 'second condition' of life, as realized in the 'third condition [of poetry]';[290] as he observes,

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[289] See the bibliography edited by Yves Kovacs in *Etudes cinématographiques* 40-42 (1965).
[290] Elytis' notions of the 'second condition' of life and the 'third condition [of poetry]' are examined in sections 4.2.2.3 and 4.3 respectively.

> Η έννοια της αιωνιότητας δεν ταυτίζεται με την έννοια της διάρκειας που αφορά την προσωπική μας ζωή [...] για μένα, η αυταξία μιας στιγμής που υπερκαλύπτει με τη δική της διάρκεια τον τρέχοντα χρόνο, αποτελεί προϋπόθεση για όποιον προσπαθεί να εντοπίσει αυτό που αποκαλούμε "ποιητική αλήθεια" ή αλλιώς "υπερπραγματικότητα". (Dimou 1992: 152)

Elytis' clearest explanation of his conception of time appeared in 'Χρόνος δεσμώτης και χρόνος λυόμενος'. In this essay, not only did he reject the teleology of horizontal time, but he also presupposed the interpolation of the imagination as that transforming and metamorphosing intermediary to reconstruct a sequence of instants so as to highlight the archetypal or 'oneiric nature of life' (1992: 358).

In 'Τα δημόσια και τα ιδιωτικά', the poet travels in his imagination (1992: 407-408): the time of eternity is lived by him in his transhistorical experience of Greece, which becomes a transcendental space to be deciphered by the poet.[291] The poet assumes the role of the initiate (of a 'solar metaphysics'), who can turn perceived time into a perception of the metaphysics of eternity. In this way, time is lived by the poetic subject only to be ultimately pushed (or compressed) into a vertical depth (or height). Through the accumulation of many instant revelations, time present is expanded to include both the past and the future. In other words, time present, time past and time future are compressed into the dynamic arrangement of many simultaneities. In 'Χρόνος δεσμώτης και χρόνος λυόμενος', this *αίσθηση* of time, that is, ' Όλος ο χρόνος, ο πριν, ο μετά' (1992: 381) is identified by Elytis with the eternal: 'εκμηδενισμένοι, καμωμένοι αθανασία'.[292] As he observes

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[291] Cf. also Elytis' comments on the solitary journey of the poet in 'Πρόσω ηρέμα' (1992: 411).

[292] In this essay, Elytis gives a series of events loosely connected with reality, since on the one hand, their chronological sequence is not definite, and on the other, it is not certain that they are real events or products of the unconscious. In fact, these 'events' resemble the dreams recorded in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* (1987: 203ff.).

elsewhere, the aim is to reach the essential: 'το τελικό "ένα", που βγαίνει από τις διαδοχικές ταυτίσεις μιας και της ίδιας πραγματικότητας' (1987: 599).

Elytis' later essay 'Ένα εικοσιτετράωρο για πάντα' is yet another example of his conception of time: although, as Bachelard put it, 'plusieurs groupements d'instants, plusieurs durées superposées, qui soutiennent différents rapports' (1950: 90) constitute a temporal phenomenology, the central time perspective is vertical, an abnegation of the ephemeral and an aspiration to the eternal ('για πάντα'). In this essay, the poet groups together several instantaneous impressions, which, by their 'ordered accumulation' are raised to a subjective view of eternity. [293]

In Elytis' poetry, the conception of time is reflected in the form of the poem. Following Bachelard's theory and the correspondence between form and what is expressed in the form that it presupposes, but also following the Surrealists' conceptions of the instant, for Elytis the poem may unfold in an archetypal time through the accumulation of many constancies of a subjective temporality whose vertical linearity points to the duration of eternity.[294]

The tripartite structural division of many of Elytis' poems and poetic collections may foreground the subordination of the three temporal dimensions of present, past and future to an archetypal time, which is not 'unredeemable', as in Eliot's case, but redeemed, a time pre-visited and regained: 'μια ισόβια στιγμή' (Elytis 1987: 162), 'μια ακριβής στιγμή' (1987: 189 and 452), or 'μια λαμπερή

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[293] In poems of his later period, such as *'Ημερολόγιο ένός ἀθέατου 'Απριλίου*, the poet 'ανακαλεί τις διατηρητέες παραδειγματικές στιγμές and 'απευθύνεται σε αρχετυπικές καταστάσεις, ξεχωρίζοντας τις πρωταρχικές αισθήσεις' (Ilinskaya 1995-1996: 160 and 162). Cf. also Daniil (1986: 7), who observes that 'στο χώρο που αποκάλυψε η αστραπή, ο χρόνος δε μετράει' (1986: 66).

στιγμή' (1987: 17), or, in Bachelard's terms, 'complet', 'féconde' (1966: 64-65) or 'plein' and an 'heure divine' (1966: 48).

Elytis' view of time was enriched by Bachelard's thought. The results appear from *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* onwards. This enrichment occurred because Elytis was already well acquainted with French Surrealist poetry when he read Bachelard. The Surrealist influence can be observed in the poetry of his first period. Elytis' reflections on the instant appear in his earliest poetry (Lychnara 1980: 35-36) and especially in *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος*, where horizontal time and history are rejected for the first time (Vitti 1984: 92). Present time is prolonged, in a manifest attempt to control and preserve the impact of instantaneous impressions and of their emotional equivalents. At this stage of his quests, he came across Bachelard's theories where he found the theoretical support that he needed.

In Bachelard, Elytis found the model for the idea of 'the development of instantaneity'; the first modest experiments on his enriched ideas on the instant appeared in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* (e.g. 'Τὸ Δοξαστικόν') and in *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν ουρανό*,[295] and the idea was further elaborated in his later poems.[296] But in Bachelard Elytis also found a theory of vertical poetic time, which corresponded to his own poetic quests. Bachelard's ideas on poetic time were for Elytis sound enough to ground his ideas on the 'instantaneous impression', which are presupposed in his elaboration of the conception of the *αίσθηση*. The elaboration of the idea of the

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[294] In the case of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, for instance, Malkoff points out that 'Αν και μπορούμε να βιώσουμε μόνον μία στιγμή τη φορά, η αντίληψη της μορφής [...] μας υπενθυμίζει πως όλες οι στιγμές του ποιήματος υφίστανται ταυτοχρόνως' (1991: 903).

[295] See for instance, Vitti's comments on the poem 'Καταγωγὴ τοῦ τοπίου' (Vitti 1984: 268).

αίσθησση of space, which depended on the *αίσθησση* of Greece was of major theoretical significance for the development of Elytis' poetics. This idea emerged in parallel with Elytis' views on the *αίσθησση* as the raw material for poetry.

The following section examines how Elytis' investigations on the *αίσθησση* of space and on the *αίσθησση* of an entity, state of affairs, or condition further informed his theoretical pursuits, since the way he conceived of space played a central role in the function of his mechanism of myth, and conditioned the fabrication of his mythological systems.

4.2 *The Problematic of Myth*

In 1951, Elytis stated that he was only using the 'interior function' by means of which the ancient myths had been produced, and not their symbols: 'Δε στηρίζομαι στα σύμβολα των αρχαίων μύθων αλλά στην εσωτερική λειτουργία που οδήγησε στη γέννηση των μύθων αυτών. Και ζητώ, με τη σειρά μου, να την εφαρμόσω στα σημερινά δεδομένα, υποκαθιστώντας στην ομάδα το άτομο και στην "άνωθεν εντολή" τη συνείδηση' (1992: 206). He explained that this was the result of his 'Greek education' and of his relation with Surrealism. This is confirmed in his 'Δήλωση του '66', in which he defines poetry as follows:

> μια πηγή αθωότητας γεμάτης από επαναστατικές δυνάμεις, που αποστολή μου είναι να τις κατευθύνω επάνω σ' έναν κόσμο απαράδεκτο για τη συνείδησή μου· ελπίζοντας, μέσ' από συνεχείς μεταμορφώσεις, να τον κάνω πιο σύμφωνο με τα όνειρά μου.
>
> Μιλώ για μια σύγχρονου τύπου μαγεία, που ο μηχανισμός της τείνει κι εκείνος στην αποκάλυψη της βαθύτερής μας πραγματικότητας. Πιστεύω γι' αυτό στις αισθήσεις, που τις κινητοποιώ προς μιαν αδοκίμαστη έως σήμερα κατεύθυνση [...]. Είμαι ένας ειδωλολάτρης που

[296] As in 'Δῆλος', ' 'Αρχέτυπον', 'Τὸ φωτόδεντρο', and others.

> του έτυχε ν' αγγίξει από το άλλο μέρος, άθελά του, τη χριστιανική αγιότητα. (1992: 207)

In his 1975 interview with Ivask, he claims that 'he kept the mechanism of myth-making but not the figures of mythology' (1975: 639). As he observes, this consisted mainly of the mechanism of 'personification, [...] myth-making, if you wish, but *without* evoking any mythical figures' (his emphasis), or of 'the mechanism of personifying abstract ideas, yet without turning them into recognizable figures'.

Elytis' problematic concerning myth may have been stimulated both by the Surrealists' investigations into the unconscious, and the folk people's endowment of the incomprehensible elements of life with super-real qualities, by calling them irrational or sacred. The mythological modes of Elytis' poetry, that is, the manner or the mechanism in which his mythologizing imagination functions, have led to the fabrication of three central mythological systems that establish the fictional world of his poetry. The following two sections, in which the theoretical framework against which examples of his poetry are examined in Part III is set, consider the modes of the function of the mechanism of myth in Elytis' thought (section 4.2.1), and the mythical systems emerging in his poetry (section 4.2.2).

4.2.1 *Mythological Modes*

In *Le Miroir du merveilleux* (1940), a book admired equally by Elytis (1987: 27) and the French Surrealists, Pierre Mabille attempted 'a synthetic understanding of the world' (Breton 1962: 14) by rediscovering and reimagining (Bachelard 1973: 163)

ancient myths. His aim was to reveal the visionary power of the textual inscription of myths, to prove the relation between 'the visible and the intelligible, the real and the imaginary' (Elytis 1987: 505), to give access to the marvellous. He did this by elaborating on the opposition between the objective and the subjective, which is the characteristic of the Surrealist myth (Tamuly 1995: 128). Mabille, who was a medical doctor, did not reject reason, but used it together with dream to approach the mythical instinct. He held that science can be instrumental in the discovery of the mysteries of reality. In his view, myth rests on the polyvalence of the symbol and on the semantic richness of words (1962: 20ff.). His method was to see the symbol in its relation with the object: 'Ancré dans le réel, le symbole acquiert une singulière richesse: saisi à la fois comme objet perceptible et comme objet imaginaire, il nous révèle la pluralité de ses formes et de ses significations, et ne cesse de nous instruire' (Tamuly 1995: 129).

As Durand observes, myth is 'un système dynamique de symboles, d'archétypes et de schèmes, système dynamique qui, sous l'impulsion d'un schème, tend à se composer en récit' (1982: 64). Myth can be explained only in itself, in the interplay of images and the projection of the symbol. There is 'a dynamic organization of myth' which often corresponds 'à l'organisation statique que nous avons nommée "constellation d'images"' (Durand 1982: 65). The 'static organization' of images, leading to a dynamic organization of myth can be traced in the impact that Bachelard's ideas on the image and its power for constant metamorphosis had for the French Surrealists. As Chénieux-Gendron points out, the French Surrealists' theories revolved around the presupposition that myth is a discourse that depends upon its

coherence and credibility while, simultaneously, playing on the polysemy of language by weaving a multi-dimensional network of images (1984: 144-145).

Myth was regarded by the Surrealists as a way of life; they tried to elaborate the 'living myths' to which Mircea Eliade referred with regard to ancient societies: 'les mythes incitent en réalité l'homme à créer, ils ouvrent continuellement de nouvelles perspectives à son esprit inventif' (1963: 173). In the 1920s, the French Surrealists' ideas on myth are exemplified in the writings of Aragon, for whom human beings in modern times are endowed with an immense capability for mythical activity. In *Le Paysan de Paris* (1926), Aragon played on the relation of consciousness to the unconscious. The experience of the senses was identified by him with the mechanism of consciousness, and nature was given the place of his unconscious: 'L'expérience sensible m'apparaît alors comme le mécanisme de la conscience, et la nature, on voit ce qu'elle devient: la nature est mon inconscient' (Aragon 1990: 153).

Aragon referred to the enchantment he felt at the metaphysical 'mysteries' of certain places and certain sights.[297] His assumption was that, in its transformative power, his own mind was generative of mythological deities:

> Il ne put m'échapper bien longtemps que le propre de ma pensée, le propre de l'évolution de ma pensée était un mécanisme en tout point analogue à la genèse mythique [...]. Je me promenai donc avec ivresse au milieu de mille concrétions divines. Je me mis à concevoir une mythologie en marche. Elle méritait proprement le nom de mythologie moderne. Je l'imaginai sous ce nom. (1990: 143)

[297] 'Il me semblait bien que l'essence de ces plaisirs fût toute métaphysique, il me semblait bien qu'elle impliquât à leur occasion une sorte de goût passionné de la révélation. Un objet se transfigurait à mes yeux, il ne prenait point l'allure allégorique ni le caractère du symbole; il manifestait moins une idée qu'il n'était cette idée même. Il se prolongeait ainsi profondément dans la masse du monde' (Aragon 1990: 141).

He contemplated the 'feeling of nature' (1990: 151), since the new myths he had in mind replaced the ancient natural ones (1990: 152); his idea was that only on rare instances did he become aware of the relation between the data of his senses and the unconscious, that is, nature: 'Ayant pris ces clartés en moi de la nature, des mythes de leur liens, j'éprouvais une sorte de fièvre à la recherche de ces mythes. Je les suscitais. Je me plaisais à m'en sentir cerné. Je vivais dans une nature mythique qui allait se multipliant' (1990: 153). Therefore, he maintained that the feeling of nature was simply 'another name for the mythical meaning' (1990: 155).

In the 1930s, the Surrealists were preoccupied with the fabrication of a collective myth as one of the models of individual and social life they had been elaborating ('Il y aura une fois'). This myth should be devoid of pre-existing beliefs imposed from factors outside the individual; myths should be invented by the individual and for the individual's needs (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 146-147).

In 1953, Elytis stated that 'η απουσία ενός ομαδικού μύθου μας αποστερεί από τα κοινά σύμβολα που θα υποβοηθούσανε μιαν άμεση επικοινωνία' between the poet and his readership (1997: 49). Elytis may have drawn his inspiration for the 'interior function' or the 'mechanism' of myth-production both from French Surrealism and from the Greek tradition. Elytis' myth-making method, as he defined it, seems to follow a similar pattern to the mythical tradition of folklore. As he explained in a letter of 1954, in order to reflect 'the beauty of our epoch' (Friar 1954: 175) in his poetry, he was helped 'no longer by ancient myth but by a study of its inner mechanism, and also by the known fact that [he] lived amid a people who will continue to assimilate with greatest ease natural landscape and [transcendental]

modes'.[298] Such an attitude matched his general view of poetry as the ability of the poet 'ν' ανασυνθέτει τον κόσμο κυριολεκτικά και μεταφορικά' (1987: 36). But his method was also a response to the Surrealists' exploration of mythical topoi.

Elytis observed that death occurs 'where words no longer have the strength to give a new birth to the things they name' (1992: 177). Thus, he pursued the regenerative and animating function of poetry; words create the world of poetry, which, in its turn, recreates reality:

> Ο ποιητής αντλεί ζωή απ' τους άλλους και τη διοχετεύει πάλι στους άλλους. Τα πρόσωπα του αρχαίου μύθου εξακολουθούν να κυκλοφορούν ανάμεσά μας έως σήμερα· που πάει να πει ότι το μέρος της φαντασίας που προσκτήθηκαν στα χέρια των συγγραφέων τα διατηρεί στη ζωή αποτελεσματικότερα κι από το αίμα. Προσωπικά, είναι η αλήθεια, το θεωρώ αδυναμία να προστρέχει κανείς στα μεγέθη τους.
>
> Γι' αυτό και, μολονότι χωρίς τη μεταφυσική δικαίωση, που μόνον οι θρησκείες προσφέρουν, δύσκολα μπορεί ν' αποκτήσει υπόσταση μυθική ο διπλανός μας, εκτιμώ σε αφάνταστο βαθμό τις προσπάθειες που τείνουν σ' αυτόν το σκοπό κι επιδοκιμάζω κάθε αποτέλεσμα που φτάνει να πλουτίσει την απογυμνωμένη μας υδρόγειο με καινούρια πρόσωπα ή τοπία. (1992: 175-176)

He held that poetic discourse ought to offer a projective model of life. Surrealism may have stimulated Elytis 'through the great importance it placed on the senses' (Elytis 1975: 631). As he claimed, 'whenever I speak of the most sensuous matters, I conceive of them as being in a state of purity and sanctity. I aim at the union of these two currents. I am not a Christian in the strict sense of the word, but Christianity's idea of sanctification I do adapt to the world of the senses' (1975: 631-632).

Within French Surrealism, myth was not simply a dynamic response to the ideology whose consequence Surrealism was, but also a product of the ideological

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[298] Elytis probably referred to 'πνευματικούς' (modes [?]); the term 'spiritual' employed in Friar's translation is not the appropriate one, as may become apparent from the observations expressed in Chapter 3. Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.1.

experience of a specific historical time. According to Tamuly, French Surrealism involved both a demythification and a mythification (1995: 8). The Surrealists rejected rationalism and yielded primacy to the imagination. Myth exorcises reason; but, as Tamuly further explains, mythification is also mystification: 'le mythe se cherche, face à la tentation littéraire ou encore politique, face à l'exaltation mystique ou du moins ésotérique, quelque part entre le rêve et la réalité' (1995: 114).

Elytis' view of myth was influenced by the Surrealist searches into the unconscious for the production of new mythologies. The notion of the *αίσθησση* (of Greece, or of space, or of an entity, a state of affairs, or a condition) elaborated by Elytis is devoid of rational conceptualism. The function of the *αίσθησση* is a transposition of the individual (the poet) from the natural world (the object of the senses) to the surreal (or metaphysical) plane of an archetypal time where darkness turns to light, and everyday reality to 'a second condition', which is sensed by the poet. The mechanism of myth thus functions as a displacement. In this respect, Elytis' poetry and visual art are active ways of suggesting new mythic themes. In both his poetry and his visual art, three central mythical systems encapsulate a series of subordinate mythic themes. The following section examines these systems, that is, the myth of Greece, the erotic myth, and the myth of the poet.

4.2.2 *Mythical Systems*

In his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, when commenting on his 'αισθησιακή ιδιοσυγκρασία' by stating that he is not attracted by classical antiquity, on the one

hand Elytis acknowledges his affinities with Sikelianos, while on the other hand he clearly distances himself from him; he claims that although the referent of their poetry is similar, their dispositions differ (1995a: 36-37). Elytis was not fascinated by ancient Greek mythology and the way of life of traditional Greek communities; what attracted him was the transcendental equivalents he perceived in the natural and cultural features of modern Greece. He recognized a sanctity borne by the elements of the Modern Greek world and considered it his duty to preserve them by writing about them. He felt that these elements were his personal deities and he decided to attach mythical dimensions to them:

> Υπήρχε σε μένα ένα τρέμισμα ψυχής που προερχότανε από τη συνείδηση ότι αυτά τα πράγματα είναι *ιερά* και ότι πρέπει *να* τα δείξεις στους άλλους (που θα πει *να* τα σώσεις) ή *να* χαθείς μαζί τους. Ο κόσμος μου ήταν αποκλειστικά νεοελληνικός, και τα στοιχεία του όλα ¯από τους ήρωες της Επανάστασης ως τα πορτοκάλια και τα ρόδια και τους *ανέμους*¯ *άγια πράγματα*, θέματα προς μετάληψιν, τοποθετημένα σ᾽ ένα φανταστικό ιδιωτικό εικονοστάσι. Αλλά που έτρεμα σε κάθε στιγμή μήπως μολευτούν. Η *αντιφατική* σύζευξη του ιερατικού ύφους με την αισθησιακή μου ιδιοσυγκρασία, με βοηθούσε *να* εκφραστώ τέτοιος που *πραγματικά* ήμουν[.] (Elytis 1995a: 36-37; his emphasis)

This belief he confirmed years later: 'Στο μικρό εικονοστάσι μου, χρόνια τώρα, φυλάγω ρόδια, δαχτυλίδια κοριτσιών, χρωματιστά βότσαλα, πεταλούδες. Όταν δέομαι, οι συμφορές απομακρύνονται ή, εάν όχι, μοιάζουν με πελώριες *ανορθογραφίες*' (1992: 230).

In his discussion of Elytis' relation to Jouve, Robinson observes that a distinctive aspect of Elytis' poetics is the primacy he gave to the symbol (1975: 681). In his essay on Jouve, Elytis associates the function of the symbol with the subconscious, and lays emphasis on the metaphysical 'idealism' of Jouve. As Robinson points out, Elytis' translations of Jouve's poetry focus on this aspect,

which first appears in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό* (1975: 684). It was indeed in these poems that Elytis managed to control the symbol by keeping it rooted in reality and, by pushing it simultaneously upwards, into the imaginary realm occupied by the archetypal forms of the collective unconscious, and downwards, into the depths of his own psyche. The method was to draw near his own consciousness of a neohellenic collectivity (conceived as the communion of land and soul) and the archetypes of the collective unconscious.[299] Although Sikelianos' resort to classical mythology did not appeal to Elytis (1945a: 357, n. 2), the way the former used symbols may not have been totally unattractive.

In Sikelianos' poetry, the visionary poet realizes the archetypes of his vision through myth. Sherrard claims that, while Jung spoke of the subjectivity that mediates between the processes of the unconscious and the 'definite form' of 'certain psychic contents' of a second, conscious stage, for Sikelianos, things are different:

> what Coleridge calls 'facts of mind' or what we might better perhaps call 'facts of the imagination' [...] which constitute [myth] are not simply psychological but are intrinsically spiritual; [...] essentially a myth is a myth only because it constitutes a symbolic representation through which the human consciousness reflects on the nature of the spiritual or divine cosmos and on its relationship to it. [...] for Sikelianos myth embodies or manifests a reality which in itself has, for our humdrum everyday consciousness, no form or shape, and in doing so it clothes the content of this reality in visible and expressible form. (1996: 47)

If this is the case with Sikelianos, then his employment of myth is a totally separate issue from myth as used by Elytis, as he himself stressed.[300] The latter, through Surrealism, denounced in his poetry the diachronic perspective of a metaphysics that

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[299] According to Jung, in its relation to myth, esoteric tradition, and fairytale, the archetype 'is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear' (1968: 5).

would obscure rather than reveal the *αίσθηση* of Greece; he adopted a modernist's synchronic point of view, as Bien observes, since 'The "eternal" in our day must be cultural instead of metaphysical' (1996: 171).

But then, if 'Myth normally requires the rhetoric of transcendence, the Romantic ideas of metaphor, symbol and organic unity' (Tziovas 1996: 74), there must be some common ground between the metaphysical poetic vision of Sikelianos and the symbolic reality existing within Elytis' inventory of the imagination. This symbolic reality, Elytis argues, comes as naturally as the natural landscape to the senses, provided that the successor of Sikelianos' visionary poet ('ἀλαφροΐσκιωτος') is able to capture the rhythm, not of the universe (as in Sikelianos) but, in particular, of the *κόσμος* of Greece (Elytis 1980a: 15ff.). In Elytis' view, this is very simple--just a matter of finding the 'analogies' of Greece 'in the world of [mental (noetic) or psychological] values' (1975: 632).[301]

In point of fact, Elytis effectively metamorphosed into a Greek costume the modern dress of the Romantic reflections on metaphor, symbol and (to a lesser extent) organic unity, as this was elaborated by the French Surrealists. He made an honest move to confess this in his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, as pointed out above. This is why 'Η αντιφατική σύζευξη του ιερατικού ύφους' with his 'αισθησιακή ιδιοσυγκρασία' helped him express himself. In this manner, the real could merge with the surreal, the cosmic dimension of the collective emotion could acquire a form whose transcendental correlations were culturally acceptable, and the senses could be sanctified most naturally (Elytis 1987: 31). Elytis reimagined the *κόσμος* of Greece

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[300] Cf. Elytis' observations on Sikelianos' employment of myth, examined in Chapter 1.

in the 'ceremonial' and 'miraculous' (Elytis 1987: 27-28) way of the mythical imagination.[302] He followed Mabille's instructions, by keeping the symbol tightly connected with the perceptible object;[303] he used the 'sacred language' to approach the real, and strict mathematical form to capture the unreal, dream. Thus, in Elytis', as in Sikelianos' poetry, the elements of Greek culture are sacred because, by resisting temporal continuity (Sherrard 1996: 51), they are parts either of an intelligible spiritual reality (Sikelianos) or of a psychological reality (Elytis).

In the poetry of both Sikelianos and Elytis, the constitution of this reality depends not only on the discovery of the 'inner drama' of the unconscious 'by means of analogy, in the processes of nature both great and small' (Jung 1968: 7), but also on the kind of move they both make so as to bring the collective unconscious to the surface of consciousness. Both poets wrote poetry in which the poetic subject gains consciousness of the spiritual (Sikelianos) or the transcendental (Elytis), and of the historical and cultural aspects of Greece: Sikelianos in the 'Συνειδήσεις' of *Πρόλογος στὴ ζωὴ* (1915-1917) and Elytis in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*. In point of fact, Elytis wrote extensively about this in his commentary on this poem, in which he referred to three 'Συνειδήσεις' (1995a: 39ff.). On the other hand, however, while Sikelianos distinguished between the different 'consciousnesses' of his land, his race, woman, faith, and personal creativity (added in 1946), Elytis explicitly pointed out that the three consciousnesses of tradition, danger, and the overcoming of danger merged into

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[301] The terms 'mental (noetic) or psychological' here replace the inaccurate term 'spiritual' employed by Ivask; cf. n. 298 above, and also Chapter 3 and see Chapter 5, section 5.1.

[302] As Elytis explained, 'Η έμφυτη ροπή μου να εξαγιάζω την αίσθηση εκβάλλει κατευθείαν στο όραμα του Παραδείσου' (1987: 31).

[303] Elytis pointed out that his method was the following: 'η νόηση του αφηρημένου μέσ' απ' την αίσθηση του συγκεκριμένου' (1987: 31).

the all-encompassing consciousness of his national identity and the personal consciousness of his role as a man and poet: 'Η Ελλάδα σαν οντότητα, ο ποιητής και ο ερωτευμένος, άρχισαν κατά περίεργο τρόπο [...] να ταυτίζονται μέσα μου' (1995a: 37). The 'consciousnesses' of Sikelianos seem to reappear in Elytis' poetry in the form of three central mythical systems: the myth of Greece (landscape and culture), the erotic myth, and the myth of the (male Greek) poet. These mythical systems were unified in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό.* As such, they survive throughout Elytis' later work by being subordinated to the inclusive myth of the poet and of his art.[304]

4.2.2.1 *The Myth of Greece*

In Chapter 3 it was pointed out that in Elytis' thought, the collective unconscious of Hellenism is realized in the *αίσθησση* of Greece, which is perceived through the senses and not conceived (as an idea) in the mind. The Greek landscape was endowed with new mythical dimensions by the Generation of the 1930s; Elytis' own contribution to this myth was his conception of the *αίσθησση* of Greece, whose deciphering it was the poet's mission to accomplish. A further contribution of his to the myth of the Greek landscape was the association of this conduct with pure and elevated forms of life, and in particular, the elevated imaginary or unconscious 'second condition' of life,

[304] Cf. the view expressed by Lychnara, who identifies the mythical personality in the poetry of Elytis with that of the poet; in her view, this poetic personality (or protagonist, as she claims) attempts 'through poetic creation, the action to salvation, which is nothing less than a mythical metaphor, a disguise of the act of love' (1986: 26).

language, and the 'third condition' of poetry or of the act of poetic writing.[305] Thus, as also happens with the erotic myth, the myth of the Greek landscape was incorporated into Elytis' myth of Greece, and this was integrated into the myth of the poet.

Scholars have commented on the distinctive elements constituting the character of the myth of Greece in Elytis.[306] What is perhaps of further interest is a comparison with a few parallel examples in other poets.

On the one hand, Sikelianos' ecstatic exploration of the mystery hidden in the Greek landscape may have functioned as a model for Elytis, to the extent that he could turn Sikelianos' mystagogical association of nature with divinity into his own conception of the relation between nature and the sun. On the other hand, Seferis' myth of the Greek landscape in *Μυθιστόρημα*, and perhaps also in *Γυμνοπαιδία*, runs parallel with that of Elytis, although the meaning attached to Seferis' myth pre-supposes a reverse poetic attitude to that of Elytis, as was pointed out in Chapter 1.

The significance of vision and light in the poetry and the thought of Eluard may also have contributed to the emergence of Elytis' Greek myth.[307] For Eluard, 'Voir, c'est comprendre' (*Avenir de la poésie*) (1968: 526), and by understanding one may act on the world. In 'Au-delà de la peinture', Eluard commented on the

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[305] The notions of the 'second condition' of life and of the 'third condition' of poetry are considered in the last two sections of this chapter (sections 4.2.2.3 and 4.3 respectively).

[306] See, for instance, the fairly systematic account by Lychnara on the myth of the Greek landscape (1986, esp. pp. 95-176). According to her, 'Η ποίηση του Ελύτη είναι [...] βαθύτατα συμβολική και μυθική στο έπακρο. Αυτό που τη διαφοροποιεί και την κάνει μια από τις σπάνιες περιπτώσεις στη σύγχρονη ποίηση είναι η σύνδεσή της με μύθους "σωτηρίας", "χάρης", και "φωτός". Μια "υλική" μεταφυσική. Αυτό [...] που είναι το κύριο χαρακτηριστικό του ελληνικού μύθου [offered by Elytis] είναι η πλήρης και απόλυτη άγνοια κάθε έννοιας ενοχής' (1986: 97).

[307] As Robinson observes, 'Eluard's influence seems [...] to have been important to Elytis' initial formulation of his relationship with the physical world around him and to his search for a poetic

metamorphosing power of the image: 'Il n'y a pas loin, par les images, de l'homme à ce qu'il *voit*, de la nature des choses réelles à la nature des choses imaginées. La valeur en est égale' (*Donner à voir*) (1968: 945; his emphasis). The mobility of the natural landscape, its 'living presence' in Elytis' words, also appears in the poetry of Lorca, Gatsos, Jouve, Ungaretti, and others. It is a poetic tradition that inherited the Romantic ideas on the reconstitution of the harmonious relation between human beings and nature.

Late in the 1940s, Elytis was reading Surrealism 'now in its last metaphysical phase' (1995a: 36), and also Plato, Plotinus, and the German Romantics. As was pointed out in Chapter 1, Hölderlin was the German Romantic who attracted Elytis the most. Hölderlin was a religious poet, deeply involved in the metaphysical question of 'Eins und Alles': the disappearance of God(s), who he presented as having deserted humanity, tormented his mind. Hölderlin's philosophical and ethical ideas are intertwined with his poetic quests. He took from Fichte the idea that human beings are separated from nature, that is, from external reality. According to Hölderlin (*Menons Klagen*), happiness consisted of a 'youthful condition of highest simplicity' in full harmony with nature; when man became alienated from nature, harmony and simplicity were lost. This was man's 'eccentric course' ('exzentrische Bahn'), when he aimlessly wandered around amid a hostile nature. The final stage in man's development was to regain consciousness, 'Hölderlin's vision of individual development from an initial state of simple harmony through alienation to a higher unity' (Ziolkowski 1980: 119). Hölderin's vision of a higher harmony may have

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expression appropriate to that relationship', while Elytis' relation with Eluard is more complicated in Elytis' later poetry (1975: 684).

contributed, together with other poetic voices such as Eluard's metamorphosing vision, to Elytis' conception of the 'innocence' of the senses and the simplicity of life within nature.

In Elytis' first poetic stage, Greece is identified with the natural landscape; in *Προσανατολισμοὶ* and in *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος*, the poet's relation to Greece is expressed in a positive and healthy attitude, '[μία] Αβίαστη συνύπαρξη με τη φύση' (Karandonis 1940: 77), or a determined disposition, a reaction against destiny by means of the liberating power of the senses. In Elytis' second period, which is launched with *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*, the poetic relation with the natural environment is expanded through the consciousness of the national tradition and of the opposition between Greece (the East) and western Europe (the West). Elytis made the choice between *mythos* and *logos*, as suggested by Plato in the second book of the *Republic*, by following the French Surrealists. He promoted the *mythos* of Greece in order to find its 'true face' (Elytis 1975: 631),[308] in reaction to the *logos* of western Europe. In Elytis' early poetry, Greece is a natural presence: the Aegean, the islands, the luminous countryside. In the poetry of his second period, Greece is a myth, and the poetic contact with it is an *αίσθησση*, the *αίσθησση* of Greece, or of Hellenism. In Elytis' later poetry, the poetic subject moves

[308] According to Elytis, Surrealism, which 'had destroyed [the tradition of] rationalism like a hurricane' (1975: 631), helped his generation to reveal 'the true face of Greece', which had been obscured by the tradition of western European rationalism.

freely in the cultural universe, the mythical *κόσμος* of Greece, by writing its 'impossible description' ('décriture') (Lyotard 1989: 217): the *κόσμος* of Greece is 'an absence which stands as a sign of a [...] presence'; it is not real Greece described, but something sacred, and therefore absent, present only in instants of revelation or illumination when 'immensity' and 'eternity' are 'refound'.[309] Elytis' proposal for a collective myth is offered in his notion of the *αίσθηση* of Greece, and of the 'second condition' of life, both realized as a transposition of the individual (the poet) from everyday reality to an archetypal plane, and an ideal community that could be shared by those who can perceive this *αίσθηση*. The two principal personae inhabiting the imaginary world of his poetry are woman and the poet himself.

4.2.2.2 *The Erotic Myth*

Elytis did not view woman as his companion in life (1995b: 54), but as a deity, who bears the message of life and/or poetry. On the one hand, he exalted love, or female beauty and youth, rather than woman, while on the other, he recognized woman as a spiritually superior being (Lychnara 1986: 137). Although the latter conception of woman may have come either from Rimbaud,[310] or from Neoplatonic esotericism, both ideas seem to have been inspired by French Surrealism.

Surrealist libertine eroticism, as in Breton's 'love of love' in the introduction to *Point du jour*, in Eluard's 'La Dame de carreau' (*Les dessous d'une vie*) and in

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[309] 'M'illumino d'immenso' (Ungaretti 1970: 65); Rimbaud is quoted by Elytis ('Elle est retrouvée! / Quoi? l'éternité') in 1987: 31.

[310] See Rimbaud's lettre to Paul Demeny: 'Quand sera brisé l'infini servage de la femme, [...] elle sera poète, elle aussi! La femme trouvera de l'inconnu!' (1991: 350).

'Liberté', in Aragon's *Aurora*, and in his recognition of prostitution in *Le Paysan de Paris*, corresponds to the praise of love and beauty rather than woman on certain occasions in Elytis' poetry. According to Breton, in meeting woman, man has a taste of paradise (*Arcana 17*), although this woman may not be unique but one of a series of selected women (*L'Amour fou*). In the esoteric tradition espoused by the Surrealists, the morality of libertine love is acknowledged, including the theme of 'mad love'. But, in Elytis' poetry, the appreciation of beauty rather than woman also alludes to the ultimate degree in the scale of erotic education, as explained by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*.[311] This degree corresponds to the study of the beautiful rather than of a particular human being. The ideal of woman is for Elytis an archetype to be found in multiplicity rather than in an individual woman ('Το φως της Ελένης, βγαλμένο από το φως όλων των ωραίων γυναικών της εποχής'; 1992: 214).

The limited, although spiritually advanced, role of the intermediary designed by the Surrealists for woman is manifest in their appeal to the child-woman; she plays the role of the sorceress in the magical Surrealist world: 'Je choisis la femme-enfant, [...] parce qu'en elle et seulement en elle, me semble résider à l'état de transparence absolue, *l'autre* prisme de vision dont on refuse obstinément de tenir compte' (*Arcana 17*) (Breton 1947: 98; his emphasis).

In Elytis' poetics, woman is normally emptied of an individual identity; the poet's own subjectivity overwhelms her presence. She is usually anonymous,[312] or

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[311] In his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, Elytis refers to degrees ('Β΄ αναβαθμός' and 'Γ΄ αναβαθμός'; 1995a: 51), to explain the 'geometry of Platonic aesthetics', that is, the function in the second paragraph of 'Η Γένεσις' of what he considers to be a transposition from nature to the world of the imagination or the unconscious and then to ethics.

[312] As Chénieux-Gendron points out, in Surrealist writing, women are rarely named and they escape definition either through metamorphosis or through substitution of one for the other (1984: 189).

else she is evoked through standard names, characteristic for their distinctive Greekness. Alternatively, she may be the product of a fusion of female body and landscape; she may also be identified with natural elements (Dekavalles 1988: 38-39). Woman in Elytis' poetry corresponds to the archetype of a natural paradise ('πόα τῆς οὐτοπίας'; 1980a: 80). This archetype is that of 'το κορίτσι ποίημα' ('Μίλτα ή το αρχέτυπον') (Elytis 1992: 263), the child-sorceress of the Surrealists ('στην ίδια πάντα στάση, τη σχεδόν ιερατική') (Elytis 1992: 265), in whose body reality and the imaginary merge. For Elytis, this girl is both the Surrealists' universal child-woman and also identified with a 'neohellenic', a modern Greek 'poem': by looking at it, one faces (or 'listens to') the history and culture of modern Greece, from the fall of Byzantium to the houses of Pikionis (1992: 265-266).

The child-woman is the narcissistic woman who attracts rather than being attracted; she is self-sufficient and indifferent (Kofman 1983: 61). She is enigmatic, since she is both elusive in her constant movement and clearly visible in stasis (Gauthier 1971: 159ff). She is also the masculine figure of woman-the-seductress, who turns desire into a myth since 'Seduction does not consist of a simple appearance, nor a pure absence, but the eclipse of a presence. Its sole strategy is to be-there/not-there, and thereby produce a sort of flickering, a hypnotic mechanism that crystallizes attention outside all concern with meaning. Absence here seduces presence' (Baudrillard 1990: 85). Milta, the archetypal child-woman described in Elytis' essay, is the object of masculine attention and desire by being fugitive and elusive; she is always seen in stasis, but in different places, and in different poses. She is not a particular girl, she is at once one and many different girls, but she is

always young, beautiful, and indifferent to the male gaze and to the projection of male desire.

As woman is both visible and invisible, elusive and absent in Embirikos' poetry (Anagnostopoulou 1990: 108), in Elytis' poetry, woman is perceptible/imperceptible, fragmentary, imaginary. Elytis shares with Embirikos the vision of an 'earthly paradise', of the unification of the real and the imaginary, of the recomposition of life (Elytis 1992: 116-117).[313] According to Elytis, Embirikos is a visionary and a prophet (1992: 157), who in his poetry turns love into an instrument that brings man into contact with the 'magic forces of his psychism' (1992: 134), and with the transcendental ('αγγέλους'), that is, with the surreal existing inside and outside the psyche. This surreal is achieved through poetry, which is magic or the art of metamorphosis (1992: 137). As one may observe a 'transparency and permeability between woman and nature' in Embirikos' poetry (Anagnostopoulou 1990: 142), woman and nature in Elytis' poetry are closely related.[314] As is the case with Embirikos, the child-woman in Elytis' poetry is the modern goddess of love, replacing the boy Eros of antiquity (Elytis 1992: 138). But especially in Elytis' poetry,[315] this child-goddess is seen as a goddess of nature, in whose magic work the processes of nature are paradigms for the processes of art:

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[313] Expressive of this is the title of the essay 'Ο Οδυσσέας Ελύτης και η παραδεισιακή ουτοπία του έρωτος' by Victor Ivanovici, who makes the observation that Elytis' poems constitute a series of 'γυναικοφάνεια' (1986: 488); however, Ivanovici's explanation for this term is rather confusing and irrelevant to Elytis' poetry: ['γυναικοφάνεια' is the] 'βαθμιαίες αποκαλύψεις της γυναίκας που είναι το "Ιερόν Μεγάλον" πάνω από, ή μάλλον στη βάση των ποικίλων μυθολογικών αναπαραστάσεών της'.

[314] A comment by Elytis in the essay 'Πρώτα-πρώτα' is characteristic of his attitude: 'Κι από τα χόρτα έφτιαχνα ονόματα κι από τα ονόματα γυναίκες που τις αγκάλιαζα κι ένιωθα τη μέση τους ν' αναδίνει τρεμούλα και δροσιά σαν το τρεχούμενο νερό' (1987: 15).

[315] In Embirikos' poetry, the association of woman with nature, which is usually biological (Siaflekis 1989: 68) is rather less complex than in Elytis.

> Μια μικρή, σύγχρονη θεά, που το ραβδάκι της είναι από μίσχο ή από ανάβρυσμα νερού· και που αρκεί να τ' αγγίξει κάπου, για ν' αναπαρθενευθούν τα πάντα, συνάμα και να διεγερθούν ερωτικά· ωσάν να ήταν το ένα πρόξενος του άλλου, ή και τα δυο μαζί ¬λάμψη και σκίρτημα¬ της ίδιας εμπνοής θαυματοποιά στοιχεία ομογάλακτα. Ο τρόπος να [...] μη γνωρίζεις ποτέ ακριβώς αν είναι σε όσα διαδραματίζονται γύρω σου η κοιμισμένη ζωή που ξυπνά ή η ξυπνητή που αποκοιμήθηκε, ομολογουμένως οφείλεται στον υπερρεαλισμό[.] (1992: 139)

All in all, it is the poet's own work that exceeds the Surrealist practice, to 'startle the metamorphosis of matter' (Elytis 1992: 139), something that is attributed by Elytis to Embirikos but also applies to his own poetic manner, as does what Octavio Paz says of William Carlos Williams: 'The poem is not a double of the sensation or of the thing. Imagination does not represent: it produces. Its products are poems, objects which were not real before. The poetic imagination produces poems, pictures, and cathedrals as nature produces pines, clouds, and crocodiles. [...] art does not imitate nature: it imitates its creative processes. It does not copy its products but its modes of production' (1992: 16). As was pointed out in Chapter 1, already in the 1940s Elytis reflected on poetry as a mechanism which imitates the interior function of life. This organic view of poetry is repeated in his essay on Embirikos, in which he observes that the mechanism for the production of a poem resembles the mechanism that causes a plant to bloom: 'εδώ δεν πρόκειται για τα λουλούδια· πρόκειται για το αντίστοιχό τους μέσα στην έκφραση, από την άποψη ότι ο ίδιος μυστηριακός μηχανισμός που ξεπετάει μπουμπούκια ξεπετάει φράσεις σε κατάσταση ήβης, ικανές να παγιδεύσουν τα συμβαίνοντα του υπερβατού χωρίς άλλη μεσολάβηση' (1992: 132).

Elytis' little goddess stands both for the poem itself and for the natural power that generates it. Woman and the child-goddess meet in 'θεά Φυτώ' (Elytis 1982b:

35), or mother earth, the vegetable goddess who has wings and can fly, as depicted in Elytis' paintings.[316] They are all representations of the archetypal *anima* (Jung 1968: 199-200; also 54ff.), which can appear both as mother and girl,[317] the soul that inspires life in the poem.[318] The girl angel, a recurrent motif in Elytis' poetry and visual art,[319] is a Jungian archetypal Kore.[320]

A modern correlative of inspiration is the Surrealist notion of 'objective chance' ('le hasard objectif'), or, in the words of Elytis, 'η σύμπτωση' or 'το τυχαίο'. Elytis associated chance with the child-woman, as in the essay on Embirikos,[321] and in 'Τα κορίτσια': according to him, the child-goddess, or 'η καλλονή του τυχαίου' (1992: 127) appears suddenly, as instantaneous revelation; this is the 'law' of objective chance, 'η σύμπτωση', which 'όταν είναι ν' αποκτήσει τη δύναμη συμβόλου, έρχεται να επαναληφθεί με μαθηματική ακρίβεια πάνω στην πιο καίρια στιγμή' (1987: 161). The 'isolation' of the *αίσθηση* (1987: 162), which constitutes the poet's 'private Paradise', occurs instantly and has to be captured in poetry by

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[316] See, for instance, the tempera paintings of *'Η Θεὰ Φυτώ* [in the Appendix: Figs. 19 and 20], and cf. the image of 'θεά Φυτώ' in the poem 'Ad libitum' (Elytis 1982b: 35), which are both considered in Chapter 7.

[317] See Elytis 1987: 12-17; the irrational scene described in this text does not simply refer to 'an archetypal image of an old woman' as Lychnara maintains (1986: 141-142) but to the figure of the mother, which, according to Jung, 'corresponds to the anima'; this interpretation is reinforced by the presence of the little (sick) boy, and the successive references to the poet's mother (Elytis 1987: 12), an old woman 'με ξέπλεκα λευκά μαλλιά και λαχούρι στους ώμους' (1987: 13), and to a beautiful woman: 'Αγγέλισσα σωστή'. Allusions to this scene appear in poems such as ''Ο φυλλομάντης', 'Τὸ φωτόδεντρο' ('Ζοῦσε ἀκόμη μ' ἕνα λαχούρι σκοτεινὸ στοὺς ὤμους / ἡ μητέρα μου') (1984c: 37), and elsewhere.

[318] Cf. 'Τὸ Δοξαστικόν' part of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, and see Elytis' comment: '[η] παιδούλα που θα σώσει τον κόσμο [...] είναι η προσωποποίηση της ποιητικής ιδέας', which is offered in his commentray on the poem (1995a: 64).

[319] Cf., for instance, the poem ''Η κόρη πού 'φερνε ὁ βοριάς' (Elytis 1984c: 13-14) and the collage *Τὸ μήνυμα* [in the Appendix: Fig. 6], and see Elytis' comments in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* (1987: 190).

[320] Elytis evoked the 'Θεά-παιδούλα' or 'Αγία Κόρη' in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* (1987: 192-193). Elytis' description of this goddess or 'Saint Kore' is reminiscent of the girl described in Embirikos' poem 'Excelsior ἢ Τὸ ρόδον τοῦ 'Ισπαχάν' (Embirikos 1988: 139).

[321] Chance plays a significant role also in Embirikos' poetry.

being enclosed 'μέσα σε μιαν ισόβια στιγμή'. This is an appeal to the eternal, a return to the archetypal forms of life.

4.2.2.3 *The Myth of the Poet: the 'Second Condition' of Life*

The erotic myth is intertwined with the myth of poetry, as also happens with the myth of Greece. In Elytis' poetics, the three mythical systems are inseparable and constitutive of the poetic act itself. The myth of the poet presupposes the realization of his role as a Greek man, and this is an ethical and a biological role which is subjected to the role of the poet.

In his interview with Analis, Elytis explains that he elaborated 'un mythe dont les composantes sont la lumière et l'éros *jusqu'à la mort*' (1983a: 103; his emphasis). He adds that this is an experience which 'is no less real than life simply because it is belied by life'; it is precisely by using beauty and by effacing ugliness that the poet 'creates'. Although Elytis referred to his own poetry, his observation reflects his Surrealist aesthetic viewpoint. In fact, Elytis' ideas evoke both Mallarmé's conception of 'le hasard',[322] and the Surrealists' conception of inner vision. In Elytis' view, all poetry ought to 'make one see', to open up the world of the imagination and offer a vision of the world. For Elytis, this involves the task 'of recomposing the world literally and metaphorically' (1987: 36) and then to show this to others. In 'Τα κορίτσια', he exclaims:[323]

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[322] Cf. Chapter 1.

[323] Elytis' observations seem to respond to Seferis' view of the role of the poet, as expressed in his debate with Tsatsos: 'Ο [...] σκοπός του ποιητή δεν είναι να περιγράφει τα πράγματα αλλά να τα δημιουργεί ονομάζοντάς τα' (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 95).

> Ο αληθινός ποιητής δεν καταδέχεται να περισσολογεί, να ζωγραφίζει, να ξαναθυμίζει. Κάνει ορατό το αόρατο, αισθητό το νοούμενο, πραγματικό το μή-πραγματικό. Στη θέση μιας φτωχής σειράς από λέξεις βάζει μιαν άλλη, κατάλληλη όχι πια να θυμίσει γνωστά, μα να εμπνεύσει άγνωστα οράματα. (1987: 176)

In his response to Tsatsos in 1944, he states that the poet aims, through the internal rhythm of poetry, at 'μια γενναιόκαρδη μεταμόρφωση του υπάρχοντος κόσμου σε όφελος ενός καινούργιου· μελλοντικού' (1987: 485), in his effort to mobilize or illuminate things: 'ο ποιητής [...] *φωτίζει ή κινητοποιεί* πράγματα' (1987: 486; his emphasis). In others of his essays, Elytis claims that 'Ο ποιητής *δείχνει*' (1992: 181; his emphasis), and that his achievements may depend on the degree of 'visibility' or of 'της *παραδιόρθωσης* που επιφέρει, με τα έργα του τα ποιητικά, στα φαινόμενα' (1992: 55; his emphasis).[324] Poetry should make life better (1987: 42-43), and it ought to correct the errors of God (1992: 116), just as painting should (Chapter 3).

As was pointed out in Chapter 1, for Elytis, what has significance is the poet's view of the world and not his personal life and individual interests (Elytis 1987: 39). For this purpose, poetry ought to reflect an internal reality,[325] which is not identified with common reality. This internal reality depends on the poet's access to the unconscious, which is the source for the poetic imagination. In Elytis' view, poets 'συγκροτούν τη δεύτερη κατάσταση του κόσμου' (1987: 172), which is what really matters.[326] This visionary view of life ('η δεύτερη όραση') (1992: 138), has a

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[324] Cf. also Elytis 1987: 10.

[325] Breton held that one should be faithful to one's 'internal model'; his idea, which was pointed out in Chapter 1, is considered in Chapter 7.

[326] See his later comment 'Και μείναμε, συνεχίζοντας με τη φαντασία μας πάνω στους ασβεστωμένους τοίχους το όραμα. Που ίσως αυτό νά 'χει και μεγαλύτερη σημασία.

moral content, and presupposes 'καινούριες μονάδες για τη μέτρηση του κόσμου' (1992: 169). It presupposes the rejection of reason and the constitution of the imaginary.

Elytis' early comments on the super-real (or surreal) ('υπερπραγματική') condition of life led to his conception of the 'second condition' of life. In 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935', he claims that Surreality is perceptible through revelation and the momentary gain of consciousness:

> Κανένα ξένο στοιχείο, καμιά υπεραισθητή παρουσία δεν έρχεται να δικαιολογήσει την παράξενη ετούτη τροπή που παίρνει, σε παρόμοιες στιγμές, ο κόσμος. Απλά, γήινα, ανθρώπινα είναι τα ίδια πράγματα, οι ίδιες πράξεις που παρουσιάζονται σε *μια δεύτερη κατάσταση*, πιο αληθινή απ' την πρώτη, μια κατάσταση που, για να την ξεχωρίσουμε, θά 'πρεπε να την ονομάσουμε "υπερπραγματική". (1987: 117; his emphasis)

As he claims, 'Surreality' refers to those aspects of life that evade those human beings who are accustomed to viewing things in accordance with reason. In other essays of 1944, he maintains that the person who can perceive Surreality is the poet who has the faculty of 'ποιητική νοημοσύνη' ('Ποιητική νοημοσύνη') (1987: 479) and is endowed with 'a lyrical energy' ('Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη *νέα μας* ποίηση') (1987: 486), that is, the power to conceive of life not through the intellect but by means of the imagination ('κατά τρόπο υπερδιανοητικό δηλαδή άμεσα ποιητικό') (1987: 487). For such a poet, 'υπερπραγματικότητα σημαίνει ολοκληρωτική πραγματικότητα' ('Τα σύγχρονα ποιητικά και καλλιτεχνικά προβλήματα') (1987: 509), in which 'dream is a reality, mystery a condition that follows [him] ceaselessly' (1987: 510).

Επειδή η φαντασία είναι αυτάρκης· θέλω να πω, πραγματοποιείται με την

When Elytis referred to the identification of his aesthetics with a 'natural metaphysics', the way he conceived of it was as a kind of transposition: the senses led to an 'αίσθηση' and this to the 'συνειρμικά ανάλογα, μ' ένα πλήθος από εικόνες όπου η ατομική ζωή του καθενός, χωρίς να το ξέρει, παίζει τη ζωή των άλλων ανθρώπων. Η μεταμόρφωση του "φυσικού τοπίου" σε "ανθρώπινο" επαληθεύεται, έτσι, όπως σ' ένα θεώρημα' ('Τα κορίτσια') (1987: 174). Although, in his poetic practice, this metamorphosis or transposition may depend on 'a theorem', as is explained in Chapter 5, its first stages, that is, Elytis' understanding of the 'αίσθηση' and of the function of 'συνειρμικά ανάλογα', involved the systematization of his ideas on the (psychological) content of the *αίσθηση* and the processing of this content, as was pointed out in section 4.1.

In 'Τα επιτύμβια', Elytis claims that the *αίσθηση* aims at the 'essential' ('το ουσιώδες'; 1992: 31) and not at mere symbolism; since the 'essential' is the ultimate pursuit of art, it is of a moral character ('η αισθητική εκπορθεί ως ένα βαθμό την ηθική'; 1992: 28). In his essay 'Το "σέρφιγκ" του ζωγράφου Δέρπαπα', he considers the *αίσθηση* as the means of reaching the 'second condition' or state of life: "Ένας δεύτερος κόσμος, διαφορετικός απ' τον πρώτο, εξίσου όμως αληθινός. Επειδή κι η φύση δε βρίσκεται πάντοτε κει που τη βλέπουμε. Οικεί μέσα μας' (1992: 307). The function of the *αίσθηση* could replace the role played by religion and thus lead to the transposition he called 'πλατωνική γεωμέτρηση', that is, the transposition of the poet from external reality to the 'second condition' of life: 'Το υπερβατικό σκαλοπάτι που προτείνουν οι θρησκείες ή που μας υποβάλλουν δειλά οι επιστήμες, αλλά μέσ' απ' την αίσθηση και μόνον. Ένας

αυτοκατανάλωσή της μέσα μας' ('Αναφορά στον Ανδρέα Εμπειρίκο') (1992: 136).

μετεωρισμός, που είναι συνάμα οδύνη για την ύπαρξη και σέβας προς την ύπαρξη' (1987: 308). By means of the *αίσθηση*, the poet attains ' "το δοσμένο" μέσα του', and thus reveals '[την] αληθινή ζωή, [την] υπερτοποθετημένη επάνω στην τρέχουσα', as he observes in the essay on Tsarouchis (1987: 569-570), or '[τη] δεύτερη υπόσταση του κόσμου, [την] πραγματική, [τη] συμπυγμένη σε λίγες γραμμές', which rests on 'the depths of the collective soul', as he holds in the essay on Kapralos (1987: 584).

The human being who can capture this 'μετεωρισμός'[327] is the artist or the poet who may perceive the 'όραμα' (1987: 259) of the 'second condition' of life via the senses. Starting from the *αίσθηση* (which may be, for instance, the *αίσθηση* of Greece or of space or of woman or of the poetic act or of the personal myth) and by isolating it in an instant, which occurs through illumination, at the intersection of vertical with horizontal time, the poet reveals the metaphysical aspects of natural life, that is, he uncovers the hidden, unconscious 'second condition' of life. The end-product constitutes the 'recomposition' of the autonomous reality of the 'third condition' of poetry, which, in itself, is a myth: in Elytis' view, the poem ought to 'move' 'προς όλες τις κατευθύνσεις: της ζωής που ζούμε, της άλλης που μας διαφεύγει, και της τρίτης που φτάνει να γίνεται "μύθος"' (1992: 172). It was

[327] The word used by Elytis in this case points to his elaboration of Plato's theories through the prism of Surrealism. This is why similar comments of his (see 1987: 180), inspired by the Surrealist vocabulary, have nothing to do with the influence of Longinus, as Voyatzoglou hastens to assume (1994: 51); Longinus' treatise on the sublime, which had been rather ignored by Mallarmé (cf. Marvick 1986) did not escape the attention of the French Surrealists. The Romantic treatment of the sublime (Abrams 1971: 72ff.) appears in Surrealist texts (Chrysanthopoulos 1986: 41) but in a different, psychological context and definitely not as an aesthetic pursuit. Vayenas' observations (1991), however (which seem to have inspired the arguments expressed by Voyatzoglou), should not be altogether dismissed: although the 'surrealist dimension' of Longinus is not as obvious or definite as Vayenas holds it to be, the text of *Περὶ ὕψους* was one of the many 'voices' in the modernist polyphony of twentieth-century Greek poetry. But its direct presence in the theoretical development of Elytis (as

pointed out in Chapter 2 that Elytis' ideas about poetry as 'a third condition' were inspired by French Surrealism. As was observed in section 4.2.2.1, Elytis made the choice between *logos* and *mythos* by following the Surrealists: through the rejection of reason (*logos*), poetry enters the world of the imaginary, the space of *mythos*.

4. 3 *Conclusion*: *Poetry as 'a Third Condition'*

The binary opposition between real life and the fictional world of poetry may be considered as a 'complex', 'dual structure' (Pavel 1986: 56),[328] consisting of the 'primary universe' (1986: 57) of real life and the 'secondary universe' of the world established in poetry, and which is founded upon really real life. Since Elytis' conception of the 'third condition [of poetry]' is that it is *mythos*, consisting of imaginary and not real entities, facts and affairs, and being dependent on the 'second condition' of Surreality, that is, the inner reality of the unconscious and the imagination, the dual structure whose components are, on the one hand, the world of his poetry and, on the other hand, real reality is an 'existentially creative' (Pavel 1986: 57) structure, that is, a structure in which there is no relation of correspondence linking the two universes through an isomorphism. As Pavel observes, the typical characteristic of such structures, which can be called 'salient structures', and function as metaphysical models, is their generality (1986: 61).

Voyatzoglou further suggests) is most probably minute, since Elytis' thought was nourished by the intertextual web of different ideas, as is explained in this thesis.

[328] Pavel develops Kendall Walton's theory of fictional entities and Gareth Evans' elaboration of this theory.

Elytis seems to have been aware of this generality, since he tried to avoid abstraction by founding the world of his vision on a concrete basis. Following the French Surrealists, who followed the Romantics, Elytis developed a kind of 'theology', which is one of the senses, and thus grounded his poetry in reality; he achieved this by working on his 'law of analogies', on the transposition from the natural to the noetic or the psychological or the imaginary (Elytis 1975: 632). The imaginary world of his poetry reflects the natural world, and thus, on the one hand, it does not become totally alienated from reality, while, on the other, it does not become completely absorbed into the imaginary.

In 1958, Elytis clarified that Surrealism helped him realize that content ('meaning') and form (expression) are intertwined and constitute together the 'third condition' of poetry. He associated metaphysics with poetry and alluded to the function of the senses as one of transposition, and not mere perception; from the natural world and everyday reality there was a movement to a different state or condition:

> Το νόημα άλλωστε στην Ποίηση, όπως και στη Μεταφυσική, δε συμπίπτει με τη σημασία που έχει ο όρος στα άλλα είδη του λόγου. Υπερακοντίζει τις δυνατότητες των αισθητηρίων, και από την αναλογία τους σ' ένα χώρο, που είμαστε εμείς οι ίδιοι σαν ακέραιη υπόσταση, δημιουργεί εκείνη την τρίτη κατάσταση, που είναι ήχος και ηχώ, αιτία και αποτέλεσμα, όνειρο και πραγματικότητα –την ίδια στιγμή. (1987: 638)

In the introductory essay to *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, he repeats the claim that by expressing this 'second condition' of life (which is the poet's vision of the world), poetry is raised to a 'third condition'; this stands above everyday life and common experience, since it reflects it, but is also differentiated from it:

> Αλλά η ποιητική κατάσταση, πρέπει να το επαναλαμβάνει αυτό κανένας όσο κι αν μοιάζει αυτονόητο, είναι μια *τρίτη κατάσταση* που δεν υπόκειται στις αντιφάσεις και τις διακρίσεις της καθημερινής ζωής. Είναι μια παρασημαντική που σημειώνεται με λέξεις αλλά ερμηνεύεται μες στην ψυχή με δονήσεις που οι προεκτάσεις τους φτάνουν πολύ μακριά, κάποτε (και είναι τότε πιο κοντά στον απώτερο στόχο τους) σε κάτι που δεν έχει πια καμιά σχέση με το αρχικό νόημα των λέξεων. (1987: 11; his emphasis)

Elytis' idea of poetry as a 'third condition', which is a further stage than the 'second condition' of life, may have been inspired by the 'third stage' of Hegelian dialectics. As is apparent from his 1944 essay addressed to Tsatsos, in the early 1940s he was seriously considering the stage of 'synthesis' as the ultimate stage of the process of poetic writing (1987: 484-485). In his later commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, he explains that he attempted a kind of synthesis in the poem:

> Μέσα σε όλο το έργο διασταυρώνονται ρεύματα αντίθετα που εισχωρούν αμοιβαία το ένα στο άλλο και φτάνοντας στην απώτατη άκρη και έσχατη συνέπειά τους αναστρέφονται και δημιουργούν μια τρίτη κατάσταση που είναι και η μόνη που ανταποκρίνεται στην έννοια της απόλυτης πραγματικότητας του πνεύματος, έξω και πάνω από τις συμβατικές διακρίσεις. (1995a: 43-44)

He focused on the example of his conception of a 'third and true Greece', revealed in the *αίσθηση* of Greece, and which was superimposed on and cancelled out the political and social oppositions affecting the social and historical evolution of Greece since antiquity (1995a: 47). It is explained in the following chapter that the Surrealist conception of 'synthesis' as the resolution of opposites, and expressed through the notion of the 'sublime point' where opposites cease to exist, was what he had in mind in the early 1940s, as he pointed out later (Elytis 1975: 632). His conception of the 'third condition' or of the 'myth' of poetry involved precisely the idea of the raising of oppositions to a state where they would no longer exist, that is, their transposition

from the natural to the world of the inner reality, and the more formal aspects involved in the process of this transposition. As is pointed out in Chapter 5, these ideas are reflected in Elytis' observations on the more practical issues of poetic writing.

Chapter 5

The Synthetic and the Analytical View of the Poem

5.0 *Introduction*

Apart from his theoretical reflections on the status and the function of poetry, Elytis referred extensively to poetic writing itself. These more 'practically theoretical' observations concern the relation of poetry as an artefact and work of art to the vision it presupposes and aspires to express, and the laws and rules of composition. The way he conceived of these two different aspects of poetry is manifest in his successive attempts to provide a conceptual image of the poem. These ideas are perhaps the highest accomplishment of his theoretical work on poetry, and the culmination of his arguments on poetics. Elytis expressed his views by referring, on the one hand, to the poem as a unity, and on the other hand, to its distinctive parts. His usual tendency to express his ideas through visual images so as to explain them as lucidly as possible, led him to conceive of certain illustrative images both for the poem and for its parts. These images are considered in this chapter as stages that lead to a conception of the poem which unifies Elytis' more theoretical concerns and his more 'practically theoretical' quests.

The aim of this chapter is to examine Elytis' endeavour to define the prerequisites for the production of the 'ideal poem'--a notion that in itself plainly portrays his determination to achieve poetic perfection--and also the features that

constitute it. The factors he considered indispensable for poetic perfection are analysed by putting into perspective the evolution of his thought, in order to shed light on the stages that marked the emergence of his ideas on poetic writing in the period between 1944 to 1960. It is shown that the two central conceptions that unify and exemplify his ideas concern a synthetic and an analytical view of the poem.

Section 5.1 focuses on the principle determining Elytis' theoretical undertaking, that is, his concern to connect content and form. Sections 5.2 and 5.3 refer respectively to his views of the poem as a totality, and to the way he conceived of its parts. Section 5.4 further analyses his ideas on the poem as a unity, and on its parts. It is explained in this section that the image of the crystal is implicitly suggested in these views of Elytis, and especially in his notion of 'διαφάνεια'. With this image, the *development* of his thought reached its highest peak, and his ideas on poetic writing entered the dynamic stage of *crystallization*. It is also pointed out in this section that this image may explain the way he conceived of the creative process.

5.1 *The Unity of Content and Form*

Elytis' ideas on poetic writing revolved around the centre of his 'practically theoretical' preoccupations, that is, the connection between form and content or, as he preferred to call them, '[τη] μορφολογία του ποιήματος' (1987: 449) and '[το] ιδεολογικό του περιεχόμενο'. It was assumed in Chapter 4 that Bachelard's ideas may have helped Elytis to find a way of connecting content and form. But this Romantic idea was not Bachelard's own and there could have been other sources for

him to draw on. For instance, he could have followed Solomos since, as Papazoglou points out, Elytis was the first Greek poet after Solomos to abolish this distinction (1979: 184). There could also have been other influences; in the same essay where Elytis first referred to Bachelard, he also quoted the 'law of Monod Herzen' which, in his view, explained 'τις ειλικρινείς σχέσεις μορφής και ύλης' (1944a: 23). He may have regarded this 'law' in this same context.[329] Furthermore, as has been observed in Chapter 4, in 1958 Elytis himself pointed out that he came to this realization through Surrealism.

Elytis was gradually led to the conclusion, which he expressed in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), that the external characteristics of the poem, what he called 'τεχνική' or 'Αρχιτεκτονική' (1987: 449), should correspond to what was expressed in the poem; for this reason, he believed that the technique of a poem should be invented and not given. As he observes in his interview with Analis, 'Le poème idéal se doit, sous cet angle, d'être en conjonction parallèle au contenu; c'est là quelque chose d'incompatible avec les anciennes formes comme le sonnet ou la ballade, ou le Pantoum malais, etc... qui ne constituaient que des réceptacles prêts à recevoir le matériel le plus hétéroclite' (1983a: 100).[330] His conception of 'architectural inventions', which emerged while he was reflecting on the unwritten essay for *Empédocle*, that is, sometime between 1950 and 1963, as has been explained in Chapter 4, referred to the development of the external 'scaffolding' ('l'échafaudage')

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[329] Elytis quoted the text from *Science et esthétique* in French: 'Les rapports de la forme et de la matière sont donc les mêmes que la matière soit mise en oeuvre par le jeu de forces naturelles où mise en oeuvre par l'homme. Lorsque une même operation est appliquée à des matières diverses, les transcriptions resultants obeissent [sic] à la même norme, que le facteur operant [sic] soit l'Artiste où la Nature' (1944a: 23-24, n. 1).

[330] A similar observation is made in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* (1987: 449), as has been pointed out in Chapter 4.

(1983a: 100) of the poem, which ought to correspond to its interior, that is, the poem's content.

In 1963, he held that technique, the 'scaffolding', should be developed for the expressive needs of a particular poem and for that only: 'Η Αρχιτεκτονική, για μένα, δεν είχε τη σημασία μιας από τα πριν στημένης σκαλωσιάς' (1987: 449). As he explained in his interview with Analis, the initial or central idea of the poem should lead to a special 'tone' and this tone should dictate the appropriate 'pattern'. He pointed out that he found this solution in Pindar and in Romanos the Melodist:

> Ce sont deux grands esprits de la tradition grecque qui m'ont aidé à affronter ce problème. De l'époque classique Pindare, et de l'époque byzantine Romanos le Mélode. Et ce, dans le sens que chaque unité poétique de leur oeuvre trouvait, suivant la nature du contenu, son genre de versification. Dans les grandes compositions, cette sollicitude architecturale--avec l'alternance des mesures syllabiques, et leur rappel mathématique--s'est révélée être salutaire. Le *ton particulier* donnait naissance au *type particulier*. (1983a: 100; his emphasis)

In the essay on Romanos the Melodist, Elytis claims that the two properties he regards as distinctive of Romanos' poetics, that is, his metrics and his language, constitute 'factors of content' (1992: 41) and are not simply external characteristics of his poetry. He further maintains that the invention of new forms for the content of each poem is a characteristic of Greek poetry, and he stresses the high degree of originality that this method provides, since the invented form contributes, in its turn, to the development of the content:

> πολύ, μπορεί να πει κανείς, βαρύνει ο συντελεστής των αρχιτεκτονικών γνωρισμάτων σε μια ποίηση όπως αυτή, όπου το νόημα γεννιέται μαζί και μέσ' από το φραστικό σχήμα που μέλλει να πάρει. Επειδή για κάτι τέτοιο πρόκειται, κι ας μη συγχέουμε την έννοια της μορφής όπως τη συναντούμε εδώ και

όπως την έχουμε διδαχθεί από τις ξένες γραμματολογίες.
Είναι άλλο εντελώς πράγμα οι τρεις τέσσερις σταθεροί τύποι που χρησιμοποίησε η δυτική παράδοση επί αιώνες σαν απλά δοχεία, για να τα γεμίσει με το πιο ετερόκλητο υλικό, και άλλο οι πρωτότυποι κάθε φορά μετρικοί νόμοι που υποβάλλονται σ' έναν έλληνα ποιητή από την ίδια τη φύση των μηνυμάτων που σκοπεύει να μεταδώσει. (1992: 38; his emphasis)

The Greekness that he attached to the method, and the characteristic choice of the Greek examples of Pindar and Romanos the Melodist are, in any case, ideologically determined, and also conditioned by his own selective and elitist criteria (within Surrealism and the Neoplatonist doctrines that he espoused), as was explained in Chapter 3. Apart from them, what is striking in the above observation is the emphasis, simultaneously, on originality and the strictness of form. In fact, in both passages quoted above, Elytis referred to mathematical accuracy and to 'laws'. This combination of high formal control with innovation presupposes the precedent of the theoretical searches of poets who are not Greek or did not have an entirely Greek poetic education, such as Solomos, Hölderlin and Mallarmé.

Both Solomos and Hölderlin, following Hegel, believed that poetry is intelligence transformed into images and emotions. This led them to revise and rewrite their poems instead of simply trusting inspiration. For both of them, the poet's personality was unimportant and what mattered was the intelligence that would give form to emotion and bring forward the quality of harmony in the poem.

Hölderlin was a 'practically theoretical' poet whom Elytis greatly admired. The most striking quality of his poetry is its tendency to 'move onwards', without repose: 'his poetics are a theory of perpetual onward movement, and his poems realize it. He was a master of the strictest forms, but he subverted and exceeded them

in a poetry that will not stand still. He had a horror of stasis, of fixity, of dead forms' (Constantine 1990: 315) From the philosophical conception of history as triadic rhythm[331] Hölderlin tried to extract a theory of poetic form. For instance, he believed that there is a 'calculable law' ('das kalkulable Gesetz') of poetic effects.[332] Hölderlin's many detailed theoretical analyses[333] may have attracted Elytis,[334] who stated that he admired the great odes of Hölderlin because he perceived through them 'une géométrie invisible' (1983a: 98). Although, as has been explained, Elytis gave an abstract meaning to this notion, most probably he was also aware of Hölderlin's immense project of producing, out of a philosophical theory, a systematic and elaborately 'geometrical' theory of poetry, which he applied with great success in his elegies (Ziolkowski 1980: 121).

The essay on Romanos the Melodist was written in 1975 and the 'report' to Embirikos two years later; in the latter essay, Elytis suggestively attributes Mallarmé's tendency to write poetry which deviates from common everyday language, not only to the selection and the combination of words, but also to their 'ultimate meaning' ('απώτερη σημασία') (1992: 133). This comment seems to point

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[331] This was, in fact, Schiller's theory of history whose origins are to be found in Greek philosophy.
[332] See his essays 'Grund zum Empedocles', 'Wechsel der Töne', 'Über die Verfarrungsweise des poetischen Geistes', 'Über den Unterschied der Dichtarten' (Hölderlin 1944-1962).
[333] Such as, for instance, 'Die Receptivität des Stoffs', 'Eine der verschiedenen Successionen', 'Nothwendinger Widerstreit', and many others. On Hölderlin's theoretical work on poetry see, for instance, Ryan 1960, and George 1973.
[334] There are at least two indications that the two poets share similar literary interests: the elegy is a favourite mode of Elytis (see, for instance, the title of his collection *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας* in which it is pointed out that the poems included in it are elegiac songs; *Ἄσμα ἡρωικὸ καὶ πένθιμο γιὰ τὸν χαμένο ἀνθυπολοχαγὸ τῆς Ἀλβανίας* is also an elegy) and one of the two modes (the other is the hymn) in which Hölderlin achieved greatest success. Another evidence of the two poets affinities is their common enthusiasm for Pindar. Of the Greek writers translated by Hölderlin, Pindar was one (the other was probably Aeschylus) who attracted much of his attention and time. In his translations, Hölderlin was in fact studying poetic language and working on his own poetics: he 'kept the foreign model's foreignness which rendered his own poetry strange' (Constantine 1990: 235). He retained some of Pindar's metrical principles (for instance, the principle of the triad),

to Elytis' ideas on the interdependence of content and form. Mallarmé believed that the sound and the material form of the word should create the analogies of things and not recreate the appearance of things. Words should be 'pure' in themselves. Mallarmé gave a final form to his ideas in the essays he wrote around 1895.[335] His phrase 'Peindre non la chose mais l'effet qu'elle produit'[336] defined his poetic vision. He rejected evocative art, which would simply show things; he was not interested in naming objects, which he considered a mistake committed by the Parnassians and the Naturalists, but in what he called incantatory art ('art incantatoire'). This would capture not objects, that is, appearances, but their rapport with the human soul. Mallarmé claimed that there are analogies between words and objects by means of the human 'instinct' of languages, which is an instinct of harmony. By working on 'transposition', that is, by playing on the semantic polyvalence of words and on 'structure' in which 'each element contributes to the total effect and acquires its signification only in a unity' (Abastado 1970: 41), Mallarmé set a working example which Elytis may have drawn on. In his interview with Ivask, Elytis refers to 'the lineage of Mallarmé' when he points out that 'The success of a poem's language depends on the way in which it combines certain words' so 'as to bring out their rarity' (1975: 638). To this comment, he adds that 'The poet should strive for *something which is pure*' (his emphasis) and he relates the concept of transcendence

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but he modified or abandoned some others. For more on Hölderlin and Greek literature see Harrison 1975.

[335] These are mainly 'La Musique et les lettres', 'Variations sur un sujet', 'Crise de vers' and 'Magie'. However, he also explained his poetic ideas in poems whose theme is literary production, such as 'Toast funèbre', 'Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe', 'Prose (pour des Esseintes)', and 'Toute l'âme résumée...'.

[336] Lettre to Cazalis (Mallarmé 1945: 1440).

with his 'theory of analogies' (1975: 632), that is, the transposition of the poet from the natural elements to the sphere of the mental (noetic) or psychological activity.

The English term 'elevation', used by Ivask in his translation of Elytis' interview, which was given in French, is not the appropriate word to explain what Elytis meant by 'transcendence'; this was the word Elytis used in his interview with Analis (Elytis 1983a: 98), and most probably, also in the interview with Ivask. The word 'elevation' is misleading, since it presupposes a different theological context than that espoused by Elytis. It is indicative that in the Greek version of Elytis' interview with Analis, the term 'υπέρβαση' is employed for 'transcendence' (Elytis 1983b: 754) and not that of 'ανύψωση', as the translation of 'elevation' would be.[337] Similarly, the phrase 'spiritual values', which appears in Ivask's translation of Elytis' interview, is also badly chosen for the same reason. In this case, Elytis refers to 'πνευματικές αξίες' (just as in the case of visual art he refers to 'πλαστικές αξίες') (1992: 187),[338] that is abstract, purely intellectual (noetic) or psychological elements. These details are very important because, as has been observed in Chapter 4, inaccurate interpretations of Elytis' terms can easily contribute to misunderstandings and critical confusion.

As has been explained so far, in Elytis' view, the final form ought to be constructed or built by following a process of strict and original architecturing. In order for the poet to be a good architect it is important that he believe in an inner truth, which he can then externalize by inventing the suitable forms. This would be

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[337] Cf. Elytis' observations on the 'υπερβατικό' and 'υπερβατική τάξη', as pointed out in section 3.3. Although Elytis' interview with Analis was first published in French and subsequently in Greek, it is not clear which of the two versions is the original one; it appears possible that the interview was given in Greek and then translated into French.

the result of a clarity of vision (involving the processing of the *αίσθηση*), which could lead to the purity or translucence of poetry ('third condition'). Abstraction should be totally avoided and the poet should strive for poetic precision. The poet finds in nature the 'pure' forms that are suitable for what he wants to express. In other words, through the function of the 'law of correspondences' or 'analogies', as determined by distinct 'αποχρώσεις της ευαισθησίας' (1987: 451), the poetic vision is enacted in the poem which becomes itself a dynamic and self-sufficient entity. This entity Elytis set out to define while attempting, on the one hand, to develop a theory of poetic writing and, on the other, to explain how this theory worked within his poetics.

5.2 *The Poem as Universe and as Solar System*

In order to define the poem, Elytis employed the metaphors of the universe and of the solar system; both conceptions emerged in the period broadly between 1944 and 1960, although the final formulation of his ideas on the poem as solar system appeared in 1963. Elytis defined his conception of the poem as solar system in the essay 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), where he also stated that he had been working on the idea of the poem as a complete and autonomous unit since 1944. It was at that time that, in his response to Tsatsos, he expressed his more general view of the poem as universe. In all, the later definition is not a remodelling of his earlier conception of the poem as universe, since this view is not cancelled out by the notion

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[338] See the Greek translation of the interview (Elytis 1979a: 189); also cf., Chapter 4, n. 298 and 301.

of the poem as solar system.[339] The latter is not even a further elaboration of the former idea. Elytis simply used a more powerful and more successful metaphor to express the same view of the poem he had 'started to feel' in 1944, that is, the idea of the poem as an 'autonomous unit' (1987: 419). The new metaphor of the solar system, which may have been inspired by his ideas on 'solar metaphysics', was probably conceived sometime between 1951 and 1963.[340] The conception of the poem as solar system prevailed over the notion of the poem as universe for two reasons: on the one hand, it depicted more vividly the emphasis on the central idea of the poem by focusing on the subordinate metaphor of the sun, which, in Elytis' theory of 'solar metaphysics', had acquired the symbolic significance pointed out in Chapter 3. On the other hand, this metaphorical depiction of the poem made possible a closer observation of it, since a solar system is closer to human perception (through the technical aid of a telescope) than a universe, which is, more or less, imagined rather than perceived, and therefore, more abstract.

It is explained in section 5.2.1 that the idea behind both of these conceptions of the poem is that of the poem as an 'ideal unit', which refers to the Surrealist notion of the 'sublime point'. As is pointed out in section 5.2.2, Bachelard's theoretical work on Surrealist poetics and his own theories about 'projective poetry' appear to have been the principal background for the elaboration of Elytis' ideas of the poem as an 'ideal unit'.

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[339] This is indicated by the fact that in that part of the essay 'Τα κορίτσια' which was written in 1972 (that is, the part of the essay which is not placed within inverted commas), Elytis still reflected on the notion of the poem as 'ένα μικρό και τέλειο Σύμπαν' (1987: 181).

[340] Just before giving his definition of the poem as solar system, Elytis referred to the time when Camus and Char asked for his contribution in *Empédocle* (1987: 449). It may have been after 1951 and before 1963 that Elytis replaced the notion of the poem as universe with that of the poem as solar

5.2.1 *The Poem as an 'Ideal Unit'*

In the essay addressed to Tsatsos (1944), in order to stress the fact that it is very difficult to examine the individual components of a poem, that is, its underlying 'psychological currents' (Elytis 1944c: 97), and the 'aesthetic functions' governing it, Elytis defines the poem as a 'small and perfect universe':

> κάθε ποίημα (μιλώ για τα καλά ποιήματα) είναι ένα μικρό και τέλειο Σύμπαν και [...] κάθε Σύμπαν συναπαρτίζεται από ένα πλήθος ποικιλλώνυμα και διαφορότροπα στοιχεία που δρούνε ταυτόχρονα και παράλληλα και που αμοιβαία και *αέννααν* [sic] έλκονται *ανάμεσά* τους σε τρόπο που ν' αυτοεξαφανίζουν την ατομική τους υπόσταση μα κατά βάθος *να* συμβάλλουν υπεύθυνα στη διαμόρφωση της τελειωτικής εκείνης τρίτης κατάστασης που είναι η Λυρική πραγματικότητα. (1944c: 97; =1987: 483-484 [slightly modified in the republished version])

In this essay, Elytis explains that his is a similar view to Solomos' 'μεστή εκείνη και ωραία δημοκρατία των ιδεών οι οποίαις να παρασταίνουν ουσιαστικά τον εις ταις αίσθησες αόρατο Μονάρχη'. It seems that his footnote at the end of the same essay is an attempt to comment on the way he conceived of Solomos' conception:[341]

> Ένα είδος νοήματος είναι κι' αυτό που αρχίζω τώρα τελευταία να νοιώθω ότι πρέπει να παρουσιάζει κάθε ποίημα στο σύνολό του: Μιαν εικόνα ολοκληρωμένη που ν' απαρτίζεται από τις επί μέρους μικρότερες εικόνες του περιεχομένου του, εικόνα συνολική που νάναι συνάμα και πάντοτε *μια Ιδέα.* (1944c: 100, n. 1; his emphasis)

Since the essay was addressed to Tsatsos in a concise and carefully presented attempt to bridge the gap between the Greek Surrealists and their opponents, Elytis did not really try to explain how an image can also be an idea; by adding his comment in a footnote, he obviously intended to bypass this important issue of the Surrealist

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system, since, as was argued in Chapter 3, that was the time when he may have conceived of his ideas on 'solar metaphysics'.

[341] The footnote is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά.*

endeavour as painlessly as posssible. All in all, whether Elytis thought that an idea or an image should control the subject-matter and the technique of the poem is no less significant than his emphasis on the importance of the existence of this controlling centre which ought to dominate and regulate the poem.

In the essay of 1963 ('Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας), he states that twenty years earlier, that is, around 1944, he started conceiving of the poem 'όχι σα μέρους μιας αέναης εξομολογητικής ροής, αλλά σα μιας μονάδας αυτόνομης, όπου όλα τα επιμέρους στοιχεία όφειλαν να συγκλίνουν προς κάποιο κέντρον' (1987: 419). He explains that this was his conscious withdrawal from the poetic pursuits of his early poetry, in which he avoided subject-matter and tried to replace it with the 'impersonal notion of Poetry'. In his view, his early poems that 'survived' were those that were controlled by a central idea, although this, he claims, was only accidental at that stage. As examples, he refers to ''Επέτειος', 'Μαρίνα των βράχων' and 'Μορφὴ της Βοιωτίας', that is, poems usually identified by critics with the more thoroughly reworked and successful poetic writing of *Προσανατολισμοί*. Interestingly, in 1940 Karandonis observed that ''Επέτειος' was a perfect poem 'με αξιοζήλευτη δεξιοτεχνία σύνθεσης γύρω από μια κεντρική συναισθηματική ιδέα' (1940: 75).

By March 1944, when he addressed Tsatsos, Elytis had a very clear idea how to unite subject-matter with technique: this, he thought, could be accomplished by developing a perfect and inclusive image (or an idea), which would consist of a series of images of lesser significance. This view had not changed much by 1963, when he held that all of the elements of the 'autonomous unit' of the poem should be subordinate to a central element. In elaborately formulated prose, which seems to

imitate what he wanted to communicate, Elytis provided a new definition of the poem. In this case, he used a more descriptive metaphor than the one of 1944, in order to outline his mental image of the poem:

> ζητούσα από το ιδανικό ποίημα ν'αποτελεί μικρογραφία ενός ηλιακού συστήματος πλήρη, με την ίδια αταραξία και το ίδιο ύφος αιωνιότητας στο σύνολο, την ίδια αέναη κίνηση στα επιμέρους συστατικά στοιχεία του. Έτσι αντιλαμβάνο[μ]αι και σήμερα την πυρηνική διαμόρφωση του ποιήματος, σα μονάδας κλειστής, καθώς και την τελική αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωσή του, από την άποψη πάντοτε του νοήματος του συγκεκριμένου, που η έμπνευση κάθε φορά εντοπίζει, απομονώνει και φωτίζει. Με τη διαφορά ότι, για να λάβει σώμα και να υποδυθεί αποτελεσματικά τη θέση του ήλιου, καθώς και την απώτερη αποστολή του μέσα στο σύστημα των εικόνων και των εννοιών που συμπαρασύρει, το νόημα αυτό είναι ανάγκη να συναναπτύσσεται αδιάκοπα και παράλληλα με μια συμβολική μεταγραφή του σε ρυθμικής και στροφικής υφής γνωρίσματα, ανάλογα με εκείνα που καθιστούν αισθητή στην ανθρώπινη νόηση την έννοια του χρόνου. (1987: 450)

In this definition, the idea of the poem as a closed unit and the emphasis on the central or controlling image is maintained. What appears to be new, but in fact is not, as is pointed out in the next section, is Elytis' explanation of the dynamics of the centre of the poem, that is, its continuous evolution. In his view, this evolution ought to be transcribed into a system of rhythmical and stanzaic features that would make perceptible the passage of time. In other words, the nucleus of the poem should not be static, but reflected throughout the parts of the poem, in an 'αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωση'. Elytis' last observation seems to anticipate the idea of 'prismatic form', which he formulated in his 1975 essay on Romanos the Melodist. In point of fact, as is explained in section 5.3, Elytis conceived of this idea, which is implicitly present in his essay on Kalvos, sometime before 1946.

Elytis' view that the poem is a dynamic entity in continuous evolution reappears in his later interview with Analis, in which he also suggests the process or

the means by which this could be accomplished. As he observes, the unification of 'transcendence' and 'geometry', with which he aspired to supersede the 'old problem' of content and form, could be achieved through a kind of 'psychic automatism':

> quelque chose que l'on obtient non pas tellement par préméditation (telle que l'on pourrait l'imaginer et telle qu'elle se présente, par la force des choses, en théorie) mais à travers *un tressaillement instinctif, avec l'abandon automatique de l'âme à une sorte de tournoiement*, et qui aurait les mêmes lois que le tournoiement de la matière de chaque corps. (Elytis 1983a: 98; my emphasis)

Elytis' observation of course refers to Surrealist automatism; in his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, he explicitly points out that he wrote the first draft of the poem with certain ideas in mind, but also 'χωρίς άλλες έγνοιες μορφολογικές ή τεχνικές, κομμάτια ποιητικά, που χωρίς να το θέλω, σα νά 'μουν medium, έπαιρναν χαρακτήρα εκκλησιαστικών κομματιών' (1995a: 36). The kind of 'tournoiement de l'âme' to which he refers in his interview with Analis evokes Breton's ideas about visionary inspiration and automatism, and his consideration of mediumistic art.[342] Furthermore, although his comments in this interview, which confirm the conclusions reached in Chapter 2 concerning his views on (Surrealist) automatism, refer to the creative process rather than the end-product, that is, the poem, their similarity with his observations on the manner determining the evolution of the nucleus of the poem as solar system is obvious. Yet, in the case of the poem, his explanations are oblique and obscure. By contrast, the ideas referring to the centre of the poem can be easily traced back to their Surrealist origins.

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[342] Blake's visionary automatism was an example for the Surrealists, as has been observed in Chapter 1. On Breton and mediumistic art see Cardinal 1997.

In the essay of 1944, where the idea of the poem as universe first appeared, Elytis gave very little evidence for the sources of his ideas, but stated that his conception did not refer to the poetic preoccupations of Valéry (1944c: 97). However, this same observation indicates that there could have been at least one other source for his ideas. These ideas were conditioned by the Surrealist frame of mind and were formulated against the theoretical background of their quests.

What Elytis sought around 1944 was to use the achievements of the Surrealist endeavour in order to go further than it did (1987: 419-420). Among other aspects he retained from Surrealism was the idea of the meeting of opposites, and the related notion of an 'ideal unit'. He stated that, at that time, his main theoretical preoccupation concerned this ideal unit: 'τον πρώτο λόγο είχε πάντοτε η ιδανική μονάδα η ικανή να περικλείνει τ ' αντίθετα χωρίς άλλα ίχνη, έτσι όπως ακριβώς την έβρισκα στην έννοια "κορίτσι" ή στην έννοια "νησί" –θέλω να πω, με την ίδια αυτονομία και την ίδια σύμπτωση επί το αυτό ενός πλήθους από ετερόκλητα στοιχεία' (1987: 162). What he was working on was probably the Surrealist conception of the 'sublime point'. The 'sublime point', which may be regarded as 'a search for the continuous' (Caws 1970: 34), is the example *par excellence* of the vertical conception of time, that is, of the instant which transforms the temporal disconnectedness of everyday life into a continuity. In Surrealism, the rhythmical motion of poetry involves the perpetual succession of opposites. Repetitive motion is accomplished in the resolution of opposites in a third stage, realized in the notion of the 'sublime point' (see *L'Amour fou*). The dialectic involved in the infinite procedure leading to the 'sublime point' (Breton 1992: 780) refers to

'the resolution of two opposing elements into a third, which then becomes the first element of another group, so that the mobility is constant' (Caws 1970: 16).

Three of the 'theories' employed by Elytis, at least in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, correspond to the theories underlying Breton's notion of the 'sublime point'. These are 'the theory of the extreme opposites which communicate' (Elytis 1995a: 46), 'the theory of the Void and of its filling with its opposite or the theory of "Offsetting"' ('του Συμψηφισμού'), and 'the theory of the single Point' ('του ενός Σημείου'). All of these 'theories' point to the Surrealists' elaboration of the idea on the meeting of opposites. The examples offered by Elytis to explain the first 'theory', as, for instance, the line 'το λευκό αναζήτησα ως την ύστατη ένταση του μαύρου' (1995a: 47), evoke the Surrealist game of 'l'un dans l'autre'. The game of 'l'un dans l'autre' was defined by Breton in 1954. In this game, one element anticipates its opposite or stimulates the appearance of its opposite.[343] The second 'theory', of 'Συμψηφισμός', is based on the knowledge that positive things are really felt and appreciated in their absence or lack (Elytis 1995a: 48). There is an obvious close affinity between these two 'theories' of Elytis. Maronitis probably refers to both when drawing on what he calls the 'principle of the twin' ('αρχή του διδύμου') (1984: 95), in order to explain the 'antithetical balance' of *Μαρία Νεφέλη*. In Maronitis' view, the 'principle of the twin' functions in this particular poem in two ways, that is, either by joining the opposites which complement each other or by dividing 'a traditional unit' into two parts, so as to show the antithesis within it.

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[343] See Breton 1970.

Elytis' definition of the third 'theory' exactly matches Breton's definition of the 'sublime point'. As Breton explains in his interview with Parinaud, 'en [ce "point"] sont appelées à se résoudre toutes les antinomies qui nous rongent et nous désespèrent' (Breton 1969: 151). In Elytis' view, this 'Point' 'δεν πρέπει να συγχέεται με οποιαδήποτε έννοια "μέσης οδού". Είναι η απέραντη έκταση που αποκαλύπτεται όταν επιτύχεις να αρθείς πάνω από τη "σύμβαση των αντιθέτων εννοιών" ισορροπώντας στο μεταίχμιό τους' (1995a: 48). The 'single Point' may refer to the 'third condition' of poetry or to the function of the *αίσθηση* in the poem (and also in life) (1987: 638-639). From a technical viewpoint, Elytis' 'theory' of 'the single Point' perfectly explains his ideas on the unity of content and form. The 'single Point' could occupy the centre, the nucleus of the poem, as a unifying and self-sufficient 'meaning' (or image) surrounded by 'ideas' (or images) which are subordinate to it, the way pairs of opposites are subordinate to the 'sublime point'. This conception appears to be the central idea in Elytis' notions of the poem as universe and as solar system.

However, Elytis' abstruse observations on the dynamics, the constant evolution or the 'αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωση' of the centre of the poem, provided in his definition of the poem as solar system, cannot be explained satisfactorily by the concept of the 'sublime point' or of the 'single Point', which are both equally abstract. The implications of Elytis' ideas may become clearer if one draws on the theoretical basis that inspired them. As it appears, Bachelard's theories on the function of the poetic imagination and 'projective poetry' contributed to Elytis' understanding of the function of the image and may have served as models to develop his own views on poetics.

5.2.2 *Bachelard's Ideas on 'Projective Poetry'*

Elytis' notion of the poem as universe, which became more elaborate in his reformulation of the poem as solar system, may have been inspired by Bachelard, who applied his scientific methodology to his theoretical approach to Surrealism, as was pointed out in Chapter 4. This is highly probable, since the notion of the poem as universe directly points to Bachelard's use of science, and especially physics, in his literary studies, but also, to his theories about 'projective poetry' ('poésie projective'), as is explained in this section. Elytis' response to Tsatsos, in which his definition of the poem as universe appears, was published only two months after Elytis' enthusiastic comments on Bachelard's *Lautréamont* in 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935' (1944). In the same footnote of this essay in which Elytis greeted Bachelard's book, as was pointed out in Chapter 4, he also added the following comment: 'Η θεωρία του [Bachelard] για την επίπεδη και παραστατική ποίηση σχετικά με την Ευκλείδειο και μη Ευκλείδειο γεωμετρία πρόσθεσε μια σημαντικώτατη σελίδα στην ιστορία της κριτικής ερμηνείας των Λυρικών φαινομένων' (1944a: 27, n. 2).[344]

Bachelard reached his conclusions by studying Surrealist poetry. In this respect, his neat observations and reflections on 'projective poetry' may have been precisely what Elytis was looking for at that time.[345] By applying the principles of projective geometry to poetry, Bachelard devised the 'fundamental theorem of projective poetry', which is as follows: 'quels sont les éléments d'une forme poétique qui peuvent être impunément déformés par une métaphore en laissant subsister une

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[344] The footnote appears in the original essay and is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.

[345] Ioannou believes that Elytis could have been influenced by Bachelard (1991: 90-91) but he does not pursue an examination of this influence.

cohérence poétique? Autrement dit, quelles sont les limites de la causalité formelle?' (1939: 70). He defined 'projective poetry' as poetry in which certain images project themselves on to each other 'with certainty and exactitude' so that they are one and the same image: 'certaines images poétiques se *projettent* les unes sur les autres avec sûreté et exactitude, ce qui revient à dire qu'en *poésie projective* elles ne sont qu'une seule et même image' (1939: 70; his emphasis). He regarded the effect of this projection as a kind of 'déformation des images', which 'ought to designate, in a strictly mathematical manner, the group of metaphors' within a poem (1939: 71). He observed that 'parfois certaines métaphores sont manquées parce qu'elles ont été adjointes en dépit de la cohésion du groupe'. In his view, one simply had to 'determine the group of metaphors' in the poem by studying the 'deformation of the images', in order to reveal the function of the poetic imagination (1939: 72).

The group of metaphors, as Bachelard described it, corresponds to the expressions 'clusters of images' and 'bunches of objects', used by Elytis in another text of 1944: the expressions 'τσαμπιά εικόνων, αρμαθιές αντικειμένων' (1987: 180) were offered by Elytis in 'Τα κορίτσια' as examples of the manner in which poetry ought to reflect the metamorphoses of life.[346] In this essay, he claims that, apart from finding the proper position for a word in the poem so that the diachronic load borne by it was manifest, the combination of words ought, on the one hand, to be original, and on the other hand, portray the metamorphoses of life, that is, the psychological repercussions of the phenomena of life:

> μέσα στο μικρό σύμπαν του ποιήματος, [...] σύσσωμη η ικανότητα των πολυπλοκότερων συνδυασμών έπρεπε να γυμνάζεται πάνω στην επιδίωξη

[346] These expressions belong to the original text of 1944, as quoted in the final version of 1972.

> τούτη: *να παρακολουθεί, να διαπιστώνει και, με το δικό της τρόπο, να ξαναδίνει τις μεταμορφώσεις που παίζονται μέσα μας αέναα και που τις περισσότερες φορές στηρίζονται στην ανταλλαγή ή τη συγχώνευση εντυπώσεων οδηγημένων στα αισθητήριά μας από τη συγκίνηση.* (my emphasis)

This idea is central to Surrealist writing and was explained by Bachelard, who observed that, by studying the function of the poetic imagination in the group of metaphors of the poem, 'On verra que les métaphores sont naturellement liées aux métamorphoses, et que, dans le règne de l'imagination, la métamorphose de l'être est déjà une adaptation au milieu imagé. On s'étonnera moins de l'importance en poésie du mythe des métamorphoses' (1939: 72). In other words, Elytis held precisely what the French Surrealists claimed and Bachelard clarified, that is, that metaphor is a product of the metamorphosing power of the imagination. In his comments on the imagination in the essay 'Τα κορίτσια' (1987: 168-169), he stresses the impact that this realization had on him, and he points out that it led him to think of the possibility of an 'ideal poetics'.[347]

The principal idea in these definitions, as well as in the rest of Elytis' observations on the development and the function of the poem, seems to have emerged from, or at least to have been systematized through his consideration of Bachelard's theory about 'projective poetry' and the assumptions involved in it. In the definition of the poem as universe, the emphasis is on the *projection* of one idea (or image) on to the other, described as a kind of *mutual attraction*, which diminishes the individual properties of each idea (or image), for the sake of the integrity of the

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[347] Elytis points out that, 'Πολύ προτού *ανατείλει μέσα [του] το ιδανικό μιας Ποιητικής* που θα κατάφερνε να παρακολουθήσει ως και τις παραμικρότερες μεταμορφωτικές ιδιοτροπίες της συγκίνησης' (1987: 167-168; my emphasis), he was only marvelling at the power of the imagination to reveal Surreality.

poem. Elytis' reformulation of this idea when commenting on the continuous evolution of the nucleus of the poem in his definition of it as solar system shows his perfect understanding of the principle underlying Bachelard's theory. In both of Elytis' definitions, the poem itself is regarded as a stable unit (a universe or a solar system), composed of monads (the planets, that is, images) whose characteristic is instability. As was pointed out in Chapter 4, Bachelard identified the poem with the condition of the stability of the universe, whose parts were in constant motion.

Elytis' attempt to affiliate his notion of the poem as universe with Solomos' conception of the poem as a 'δημοκρατία [...] ιδεών' ruled by or centred around a single imperceptible 'Monarch', that is, an idea, should probably be attributed to Elytis' wish to come to terms with the idealist philosopher Tsatsos rather than admit a real debt to Solomos. Elytis' emphasis on 'one idea' in the footnote of the essay considered above further supports the presumption that Elytis used Solomos in order to confront Tsatsos. However, in spite of this attempt, Bachelard's theory of 'projective poetry' is traceable in Elytis' comments, since he thought of this 'one idea' as an image, consisting of other, less significant images. Even the example of 'μια παραστατική εικόνα'[348] of the actors or factors of the poem used by Elytis in that essay (1944c: 97; =1987: 484) can be considered as signalling the hidden or semi-revealed pre-text of Bachelard, since, in the footnote of the essay where he refers to Bachelard, quoted at the beginning of this section, Elytis translated the term 'projective' as 'παραστατική'. It can be realized from Elytis' employment of the same term in the essay on Kalvos, which is considered in the next section, that he

[348] The word 'παραστατική' is italicized both in the original essay of 1944 (Elytis 1944c: 97) and in the final version of it published in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* (Elytis 1987: 484).

thought of it as expressive of the function of the imagination and, on a more 'practically theoretical' level, that he considered it in connection with the production of the image.

In any case, the quest to unite content and form, as expressed in the notion of the poem as universe, may have appeared possible to Elytis both in the practical solution he found in Solomos and in the theoretical explanations of Bachelard. But, irrespective of the source and the type of influence, the conception of the poem as an 'ideal unit' constitutes the first landmark in the theoretical evolution of Elytis' poetics. In his definition of the poem as solar system, the idea of the poem as a closed and self-sufficient unit is maintained, as is the emphasis on a central, nuclear 'meaning'. The employment of the metaphor of the sun for this nucleus, which attracts and controls the system of images and notions, is very successful, since it gives a view of the poem as a dynamic and powerful entity in full motion.

However, Elytis' consideration of the relation between the subordinate images and the central one was not restricted to his synthetic view of the poem as (universe or) solar system, a view that referred to the subordination of secondary systems of images to the poem's nucleus. The parallel conception of 'prismatic form' emerged synchronically with his ideas on the poem as (universe or) solar system. Although the notion of 'prismatic form', which was the expression of his ideas on the independent function of the individual parts of the poem, appeared as late as 1975, the idea of 'prismatic form' developed out of the same theoretical considerations as those supporting Elytis' early definitions of the poem.

5.3 *The Concept of 'Prismatic Form'*

Apart from his ideas on the poem as a totality, Elytis also expressed a more analytical view of the poem, which concerned the function of its individual parts; this he did by coining the term 'prismatic form' ('πρισματική μορφή') to refer to a certain manner of developing poetic expression, and which he distinguished from 'flat expression' ('επίπεδη έκφραση'). It is shown in section 5.3.1 that the concept of 'prismatic form' seems to have been a further elaboration of Bachelard's ideas about 'projective poetry'. As has been already pointed out, in the footnote of 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935' (1944) in which Elytis referred to Bachelard, he mentioned the latter's conception of 'projective poetry', translating it as 'παραστατική ποίηση' and by juxtaposing it with 'επίπεδη ποίηση' (Elytis 1944a: 27, n.2). This, and Elytis' comments on poetic expression, which appear in the early essay on Kalvos, show that, although his ideas on 'prismatic form' were explained in the 1975 essay on Romanos the Melodist, they were not a later development in Elytis' thought; in point of fact, they appear to have emerged in the period between 1944 and 1960, while Elytis was still working on the problem of moulding his subject-matter into the appropriate form. As is explained in section 5.3.2, the idea of 'prismatic form' emerged while Elytis was considering the function of the poetic imagination.

5.3.1 '*Prismatic Form*'

In the essay 'Ρωμανός ο Μελωδός' (1975), Elytis uses the term 'prismatic form' (1992: 50) to refer to a certain kind of 'expressions', that is, expressions in which

'thought' has been successfully rendered into 'images', 'similes' or 'apophthegms' (1992: 47). While in his synthetic view of the poem he used the metaphor of the solar system to explain the function of the poem as a unity revolving around one centre, he devises the metaphor of the red corpuscles of the human blood for his analytical approach to the poem. He employs this latter metaphor to explain that, in poetry where 'prismatic form' prevails, there is more than one functional centre or 'nucleus' ('πυρήνες') (1992: 49), since each individual part functions in isolation as well as revolving around the centre of the poem (1992: 50). In other words, just as the perfect function of each of the red corpuscles is of vital importance and all of them contribute to the health of the human blood and thus the health of the human body, so these poetic 'nuclei' function independently and are at the same time vital for the success of the poem.

Casting a retrospective glance at Greek poetry, he maintains that these nuclei appear in Homer, since each book of his epics is organized around them, and the total depends on these 'prominent' or 'projecting' parts ('προεξοχές') (1992: 50) that control the whole poem. He holds that ancient Greek lyrical poetry, which followed Homer's tradition and evolved out of it, not only retained but further developed the technique involved in 'prismatic form'; he claims that, in this case, the poems 'οργανώνονται γύρω από πυρήνες που προεξέχουν και που, εκ των υστέρων, συγκρατούν το σύνολο' (1992: 49-50). It is precisely this manner of developing poetic expression which, in Elytis' view, 'δίνει μια καθαυτό πρισματική μορφή στο λόγο' (1992: 50). As he observes, such poems:

> *επενεργούν στον αναγνώστη όχι μόνο με το σύνολό τους αλλά και τμηματικά, κομματιαστά, χάρη σ' αυτές τις προεξοχές, σ' αυτούς*

> *τους κρυστάλλους όπου αποκορυφώνεται η οξύτητα του πνεύματος.* Πρόκειται για ρήσεις όπου τα μέταλλα της γλώσσας και των εικονιστικών στοιχείων συγχωνεύονται και όπου η διατύπωση μιας αλήθειας είναι και η διέγερση ενός κόσμου αφομοιώσιμου από την προσληπτικότητα της φαντασίας μας. (1992: 50; my emphasis)

In his essay, Elytis also claims that 'prismatic form' is a dense and very economical manner of expression: 'Πρόκειται για μιαν όσο γίνεται πιο λακωνική διατύπωση, όπου όλοι του ποιητικού φαινομένου οι συντελεστές έχουν εξαποστείλει "επί το αυτό" τα βέλη τους' (1992: 49). He further explains that the 'nuclei' or the 'crystals' of 'prismatic form' are neither spectacular nor striking but 'mysteriously euphonic' (1992: 48), since all of the poetic factors, that is, '[ο] γλωσσικός, [ο] εικονιστικός, [ο] συλλογιστικός, [ο] ηχητικός', contribute to this effect. His statement is that the technique involved in 'prismatic form' depends on the identification of content and form:

> Οι πυρήνες αυτοί δεν είναι κατ' ανάγκην "εικόνες"· είναι φραστικές μονάδες αυτοδύναμης ακτινοβολίας, όπου ο συνδυασμός ο ηχολογικός συμπίπτει με τον νοητικό σε τέτοιο σημείο, που δεν ξέρεις τελικά εάν η γοητεία προέρχεται απ' αυτό που λέει ο ποιητής ή από τον τρόπο που το λέει. (1992: 50)

The terms employed by Elytis to develop his arguments on 'prismatic form' are at the same time very descriptive and revealing. The diction he employs ('red corpuscles', 'functional nuclei', 'projecting nuclei', 'crystals', 'prismatic') points to two metaphors for the poem: the first, which has already been pointed out, refers to the human organism and the second to the crystal or the prism. Of the two, the organic metaphor of the red corpuscles seems to have served as an example to describe better the inorganic metaphor of the crystal or the prism. For this reason, Elytis'

observations are here analysed by focusing on the metaphor of the crystal or the prism.

Reading Elytis' explanation of the concept of 'prismatic form', one may reach the following conclusions. The notions of the 'prominent' and 'projecting' nuclei allude to his definition of the poem as solar system in which the nucleus of the poem is considered as being projected throughout the poem. While in that definition Elytis' explanation referred to the nucleus of the poem, in his description of 'prismatic form' he focuses on the component parts of the poem, which he regards as individual nuclei. Yet, in both cases, what is described is the same kind of projection, which is defined in similar terms, that is, either as a 'τελική *αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωση*' of the poem in the first case, or as the 'projection' or protrusion of its parts, of the 'πυρήνες που προεξέχουν' or of the 'μονάδες *αυτοδύναμης ακτινοβολίας*', in the second case. What further unites these two definitions is Elytis' care to stress that a poem in which 'prismatic form' prevails functions *both* as a totality--which is the main precondition for the function of the poem as solar system--*and* in its component parts ('όχι μόνο με το σύνολό τους αλλά *και* τμηματικά, κομματιαστά'). Elytis' observation is repeated twice on the same page in which he culminates his explanation of 'prismatic form' (as is explained in the next section), and seems to have been anticipated not only in his 1963 definition of the poem as solar system, but also in his 1944 definition of it as universe.

The second observation that can be made through an analysis of Elytis' description of 'prismatic form' concerns his employment of two kinds of terms to explain the metaphor of the crystal or the prism. On the one hand, he used the words

'διάσπαρτες φωτεινές εκλάμψεις' (1992: 46), 'ακτινοβολούν' (1992: 48), 'μετεωρίζονται', 'ακτινοβολία' (1992: 50) to refer to the final effect of those parts of the poem which are written in 'prismatic form'. On the other hand, terms used by him to explain the way the 'prisms', that is, the individual nuclei of the poem, function ('προεξέχουν' [1992: 49], 'συμπίπτει', 'προεξοχές' [1992: 50]) seem to have been borrowed from the vocabulary employed by Bachelard when defining his notion of 'projective poetry'. Especially the word 'προεξοχές', which can be translated into English both as 'prominent' and 'projecting' elements, seems to allude to the principles underlying Bachelard's theories about 'projective poetry'. It is apparent from his observations that Elytis broke the French term 'projection' into its two meanings ('ακτινοβολία' and 'προεξοχές') in order to explain his idea of the poem as crystal or prism.

As is explained in the next section, Elytis' ideas about 'prismatic form', which culminated in his exposition of the opposition between 'prismatic' and 'flat expression', are based on Bachelard's notion of 'projective poetry' and on the latter's views about the function of the imagination, that is, on his ideas referring to the production of the image.

5.3.2 '*Prismatic Expression*' *and the Function of the Poetic Imagination*

In 'Η αληθινή φυσιογνωμία και η λυρική τόλμη του Ανδρέα Κάλβου', Elytis maintains that because of the ways in which their respective imaginations functioned, the poetry of Kalvos was the opposite of that of Cavafy, whereas Solomos' poetry

came in between (1987: 91).[349] In 'Ρωμανός ο Μελωδός', he makes a similar classification, this time by juxtaposing Kalvos, Romanos the Melodist and Pindar with Seferis (in his poetry after *Στροφή*) and Cavafy (1992: 45 and 50-51). In this case, his argument did not refer to the function of the imagination but was based on the opposition between 'flat expression' and 'prismatic expression'.[350] By comparing Elytis' comments on the function of the imagination in the former essay with his arguments on 'prismatic form' in the latter, one may realize that the notion of 'prismatic form' emerged as a unifying principle in which Elytis' ideas on the originality of the image and the perfection of expression reached their elaborate systematization. For the idea behind them all is 'the imagination as a function' (Elytis 1987: 91), or the function of the poetic imagination, which again evokes Bachelard's theories of 'projective poetry'.

As has already been pointed out in section 5.3, in his essay 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935', Elytis referred to Bachelard's notion of 'παραστατική ποίηση' by juxtaposing it with 'επίπεδη ποίηση'. In his essay on Romanos the Melodist, Elytis juxtaposes 'prismatic expression' ('πρισματική έκφραση'), that is, the manner of expression in which 'prismatic form' prevails, with 'flat expression' ('επίπεδη έκφραση'), which, in his view, is the dominant feature of poems that function only as a totality (1992: 50). As he claims, '*ένα* ποίημα που *αναπτύσσεται*, με σκοπό την εκπλήρωση της αποστολής του, όχι *και* με τα *καθ' έκαστον* μέρη του

[349] Although the essay was read at the 'Κύκλος Παλαμά' in 1942, it was first published in 1946; in the meantime, Elytis could have inserted fresh observations, based on his reading of Bachelard's theories, sometime before 1944.

[350] In his 1986 essay '"Πρισματική" και "επίπεδη" ποίηση', Dimou juxtaposes 'prismatic poetry' with 'flat poetry' rather arbitrarily, since he does not give any explanation for making the generalization which Elytis himself avoided (1992: 105ff.). Dimou's terms are adopted by Katsakos, who argues that Elytis' own poetry is 'prismatic' (1988: 26-28).

αλλά *μόνον* με το σύνολό του' (1992: 50-51; his emphasis) is written in 'flat expression', which is a manner whose origins are primarily Anglo-Saxon (1992: 50),[351] and one that is foreign to the Greek poetic tradition. Elytis' views on 'prismatic form' may explain why he admired Solomos and Hölderlin for their stubborn rewriting of the same lines of the same poem (1992: 409, 411). They may also explain why he never reproached Solomos or Kalvos for the incompleteness or the fragmentation of their poetry, as did Seferis (1974: 61). In fact, it is in his essay on Kalvos that Elytis' ideas on the opposition between 'prismatic form' and 'flat expression' are implicitly put forward, since they can be evoked in his comments on the difference between the lyric and prose.

In the essay on Kalvos, Elytis proclaims that content is much less significant than the way it is expressed (1987: 81) and he holds that the difference between 'true lyricism' and prose lies precisely in the special manner in which things are expressed and not in the things themselves (1987: 84). He maintains that in Kalvos, diction 'developed together and from within his imagination' (1987: 81), and he attributes to the imagination the originality of Kalvos' imagery. He uses the term 'παραστάσεις' to refer to two categories of images in Kalvos: the 'pictorial' ('ζωγραφικές') (1987: 83), and the 'lyrical' ('λυρικές'). He defines the former as painterly, that is, as images which could be painted in 'the traditional descriptive manner'. He focuses on Kalvos' lyrical images, which he explicitly considers super-real for expressing the 'superior reality' (1987: 84) of the 'υλική και πνευματική υπόσταση' of things. Apart from stating that the presence of 'εικόνων αντιφατικών' (1987: 88), which lead to an

[351] By mentioning the 'Anglo-Saxon' origins of 'flat expression', Elytis was apparently alluding to Eliot's influence on Seferis, since he observed that the latter wrote poetry in which 'flat

'αρετή πυκνότητας' in the poetry of Kalvos, Elytis makes the following observation regarding Kalvos' imagery:[352]

> *κλείνει παρατακτικά*, και χωρίς μεσολάβηση στιχουργημένων, τις περισσότερες φορές, σκέψεων, *μέσα σ' ένα και το ίδιο ποίημα, πολλές και ποικίλες, σύντομες και αυτόνομες, εικόνες* που, σαν αστραπές, να φωτίζουν κάποιο θέαμα που να 'ναι συνάμα και ιδέα, πετυχαίνοντας έτσι ταυτόχρονα ένα ενιαίο και ισόρροπο σύνολο.
> (1987: 88; my emphasis)

This passage seems to be Elytis' earliest attempt to explain the principles of 'projective poetry' or the requisites for projection, principles that he had already considered while thinking of the poem as universe, as was observed in section 5.2.2. The explanation provided by Elytis for the processes of the lyrical or the 'creative imagination' clarifies the way he conceived of Bachelard's theory:

> Η συγκίνηση, προικίζοντας με ικανότητες ηθοποιίας τα στοιχεία της φύσης, με οργανικές ιδιότητες τα στοιχεία του ανόργανου κόσμου, βρίσκει μόνη της, και μέσα από μιαν αδιάκοπη κίνηση, το *ανάλογον* της ίδιας αλήθειας, φτάνοντας στο αποτέλεσμα μιας εικόνας, που αν ήθελε τυχόν εξετασθεί επιστημονικά (αδιάφορο αν στον ψυχικό χώρο του ποιητή ξεπήδησε αυτόματα και αναπόσπαστα με το κύμα της έμπνευσης), θα παρουσίαζε ένα ολόκληρο σύστημα πολλαπλής αναγωγής, γεμάτο από παρομοιώσεις, μεταφορές και μεταβολές, σύστημα που *εκ των υστέρων* έχει πετύχει την ανατροπή του φαινομενολογικού καθεστώτος, σε όφελος της βαθύτερης αλήθειας του ανθρωπίνου πνεύματος. (1987: 85; his emphasis)

The correspondence considered by Elytis as being discovered by the poetic imagination cannot possibly be other than the 'group of metaphors', dominated by one central image or idea, and in which reality is metamorphosed, to use Bachelard's words. The 'determination', that is, the identification of this group, as suggested by Bachelard (as has been pointed out in section 5.2.2), or of the system included in an

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expression' prevailed after *Στροφή*, that is, after he had discovered Eliot's poetry.

image, in Elytis' view of the poem as universe, which is evoked in the passage quoted above, involves specifying the 'identifications' achieved through the 'method of identifications' ('Μέθοδος των ταυτίσεων') (Elytis 1995a: 46). This method was elaborated by Elytis prior to the publication of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*. It is obvious that the 'method of identifications' referred to the production of metaphor and also, to other 'changes', that is, metamorphoses of reality taking place in poetry.

The method developed by Elytis to conduct the sequence of metamorphoses is that of 'πολλαπλή αναγωγή', which also seems to have been inspired by Bachelard's ideas about 'projective poetry'. The name of the method suggests that for Elytis this involved a process with several stages in the development of the different poetic mechanisms. In fact, the method may refer to the process which leads from a number of images to the central image of the poem, that is, the 'single Point'. The examples from Romanos show that the precondition for an expression to be 'prismatic' is that it should contain at least one pair of 'distant realities' (e.g. 'βότρυς πικρίας'; 1992: 52). Alternatively, as the examples of Kalvos' poetry show, it may refer to the production of images which are 'εικόνες αντιφατικές' or images that are auxiliary to other, more prominent images, that is, to the co-presence of many metaphorical nuclei which constitute one and the same image. Elytis' brief examination of the 'auditory imagination' in Kalvos was possibly an example of this method of 'πολλαπλή αναγωγή' or of the way 'projective poetry' functioned. As he observes, Kalvos' 'auditory imagination' depended on imagery of the wind (1987: 86), which gave his

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[352] Cf. Karandonis' observations on the 'σύνθεση αθροιστική' of Elytis' poetry (1940: 50-51), that is, what Vitti calls 'παρατακτική' (1979: 141, n. 39.2).

poetry the quality of Greekness (1987: 87).[353] Elytis' argument is that the imagery of Greekness was to be found in the imagery of the wind, and the imagery of the wind was nothing other than the imagery of Greekness (1987: 86-88). Although this appears to be a poorly developed argument about the imagery of Kalvos, since the examples chosen by Elytis do not prove that the imagery of the wind is the imagery of Greekness and vice versa, it is nevertheless an observation which proves that Elytis had Bachelard's ideas in mind. When he explained 'projective poetry' in *Lautréamont*, Bachelard used the example of images of fire and life (1939: 70-71), which was similar to that employed by Elytis. Bachelard's aim was to explain two things: firstly, that certain images remain hidden unless 'the deformed images' are 'determined', that is, unless 'the [whole] group of metaphors' is identified, and secondly, that projection involved a very simple, 'primitive' 'projective linkage' ('lien projectif') (1939: 71), which could reveal a multiplicity of images within other images. This is precisely what Elytis seems to suggest in his observations on the auditory imagination of Kalvos. It becomes apparent from this that, just like Bachelard, Elytis was referring to the function of the poetic imagination. Bachelard's ideas on projection and on the 'projective linkage' that makes projection possible may also have been what Elytis wanted to suggest in his essay on 'prismatic form'. The examples chosen from Romanos the Melodist seem to share the same characteristics as those of Kalvos. They are 'prismatic', that is, multifaceted images which may be 'complex metaphors' (otherwise known as 'telescoped metaphors'). Thus, projection seems to be the common property shared between the expressions of Romanos the

[353] Had this essay been written ten years later, Elytis would most probably have referred to Kalvos' *αίσθησση* of the Greek wind.

Melodist in 'prismatic form', such as 'ὁ ἡνιοχεύων τὴν τῶν κινουμένων πνοὴν' (1992: 52), or 'ἐτινάχθη ὡς ἀράχνη κονιορτοῦ', and the example from Kalvos chosen by Elytis to support his argument on the production of powerful metaphors by the lyrical imagination:

> Οὕτως ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιον,
> ὡσὰν πυρὸς σταλάγματα,
> πέφτουσιν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν
> τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ χάνονται
> διὰ πάντα ἢ ὧραι.
>
> (Elytis 1987: 85)

In his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, Elytis refers to the method of 'πολλαπλή αναγωγή', which he employed in the poem, as the 'method of multiple correspondence' ('Μέθοδος της πολλαπλής αντιστοιχίας') (1995a: 46). The method seems to have been associated by Elytis with his ideas on 'transcendence' and 'geometry' or with his 'theory of analogies', since he holds that 'Ο μηχανισμός αυτός πάει από το Φυσικό στο Αισθητικό και από [το] Αισθητικό στο Ηθικό' (1995a: 50). The examples offered to support his explanation of the method clarify the mechanism for the production of the symbol; the method itself, which 'Είναι διάσπαρτη σε όλο το έργο', and may involve, for instance, 'a triple correspondence', yet still retains the property of multiplicity presupposed in the arrangement of images, which are subordinate to a main one. The fact that, in his commentary, Elytis explains that the imagery of the line ''Αρετὴ μὲ τὶς τέσσερεις ὀρθὲς γωνίες' (1980a: 15) refers to ethics, the purity of deeds and the rigidity of the architectural style of the Greek islands (1995a: 50) shows that in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* he

was working on the idea of projection, using it in order to achieve the perfection of poetic expression.

The conception of 'prismatic form' was not a late development in Elytis' theoretical considerations on the poem. It is alluded to in the theoretical observations that were expressed in his essays of 1944, and it is implicitly present in the essay on Kalvos. The notion was elaborated in the period between 1944 and 1960, although its final formulation appeared in the essay of 1975. Elytis' definition of 'prismatic form' corresponds to Bachelard's notion of 'projective poetry', since it refers to those prominent or projecting parts of the poem where form, or expression, and what is expressed (content) coincide. These parts are autonomous poetic units which ought to involve at least one opposition of elements, that is, to consist of at least two subordinate images. The notion of 'prismatic form' may be considered as a principle conditioning Elytis' poetic experiments from *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ* onwards. It is a conception which complements his ideas on the poem as an autonomous and perfect unity, since it refers to the development of its individual parts as autonomous, complete and perfect units in themselves. The idea underlying the conception of 'prismatic form' was also used by Elytis to support his assertions on Greekness. The explanation of 'prismatic form' provided here shows that this was a poorly developed argument; 'complex metaphors' are widely used in non-Greek poetry (e.g. French Surrealist poetry), including the Anglo-Saxon (e.g. Shakespeare), whereas the emphasis on the 'peaks' or the 'nuclei' of meaning is

implicitly presupposed in the more general problematic on form in the modern lyric.[354]

While the conception of 'prismatic form' seems to have emerged out of Bachelard's theorem and theories about 'projective poetry', the evolution which led to the final formulation and articulation of Elytis' ideas may also have involved other theoretical considerations. Although Bachelard's notion of 'projective poetry' presupposes the transparency of images, Elytis' metaphorical expression 'prismatic form' has greater connotative power than that of Bachelard. 'Prismatic form' is associated with the standard modernist metaphor of the poem as crystal or precious stone. In this respect, it is linked with Elytis' ideas on translucence and purity, and with the principle of the transparency of the image.

5.4 *The Notion of 'Διαφάνεια'*

As happens with the term 'αίσθηση', the Greek term *διαφάνεια* was used by Elytis on several occasions to refer to two inter-connected conceptions. It appears, especially in interviews given in languages other than Greek, that he did not consciously distinguish between the two. But the fact that he related the term 'διαφάνεια' to the notion of 'διαύγεια' proves that he attached to the former term both an abstract and a more concrete meaning. For the purposes of this section, the term 'translucence' is used to refer to the more abstract meaning, as considered in Chapters 3 and 4, and the term transparency is employed as a more technical notion

[354] Cf., for instance, Mallarmé's theoretical work.

to refer to the quality of the permeability of a material and, in this particular case, to the condition of the image.

5.4.1 *Translucence*

In his interview with Ivask, Elytis admits that there is a 'kind of transparency [that] [...] [he] attempted to achieve' in his poetry (1975: 642). He claims that 'even the most irrational things can be *limpid. Limpidity* is probably the one element which dominates my poetry at present' (his emphasis). His definition of the notion of διαφάνεια, translated by Ivask as 'limpidity' but referring both to translucence and transparency, is that 'behind a given thing something different can be seen and behind that still something else, and so on and so on [sic]'. He stresses that this condition, which is to him 'something essentially Greek', is irrelevant to the clarity of reason: 'The limpidity which exists in nature from the physical point of view is transposed into poetry [...] that which is limpid can at the same time be altogether irrational'. This last comment, which points to the rejection of reason by the French Surrealists[355] and is reminiscent of Mallarmé's notions of 'translucence' and 'limpidité', which have been considered in Chapter 1, also evokes Elytis' observations on the 'clarity of emotion' ('διαύγεια του συναισθήματος'), as examined in Chapter 2. In fact, a more precise and self-explanatory definition of translucence was formulated by Elytis sometime before this interview--probably two years earlier.[356] The term used in this case is indeed the word 'διαύγεια' (1992: 23); Elytis holds that

[355] See Chapter 4.

'διαύγεια' is the ability to perceive a stable and polyvalent metaphorical point, through a kaleidoscopic, multi-layered reality: 'η δυνατότητα να βλέπεις μέσ' απ' το πρώτο και το δεύτερο και το τρίτο και το πολλοστό επίπεδο μιας και μόνης πραγματικότητας το μονοδιάστατο και συνάμα πολύφθογγο σημείο της μεταφορικής τους σημασιολογίας'. It is apparent from this definition that the conception of 'διαφάνεια' (or 'διαύγεια') emerged out of the Surrealists' theories on analogies and the idea of the 'sublime point', and that it owes much to their concern with light and translucence. It is also clearly associated by Elytis with the view of the nuclear organization of the poem as a solar system, and the idea of the 'single Point' and, as is explained in the next section, with the transparency of the image.

Usually, critics are carried away by Elytis' abstract explanations and tend to conceive of the notion of 'διαφάνεια' (or 'δαύγεια') in an equally abstract manner, although they also identify it with a technical method.[357] The confusion results from Elytis' tendency both to view this condition in metaphysical terms, by associating it with the notions of 'transcendence' and 'geometry', and to use it as an explanation for his ideas on the function of the 'law of analogies'. What seems to escape the critics' attention is the special way in which Elytis conceives of the distinction between content and form or, to be more accurate, the fact that he abolishes this distinction. Thus, despite his own confusing attempt both to distinguish between 'transcendence' and 'geometry' and to put them side by side by regarding both of them as content and form,[358] it is clear that both of these notions refer to his more theoretical considerations. Translucence is an aim which, on a theoretical level, links these

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[356] The essay 'Σχέδιο για μιαν εισαγωγή στο χώρο του Αιγαίου', where this definition appears was first published in 1973 (Elytis 1992: 419).
[357] See, for instance, Grodent 1991: 881.

theoretical concerns with the technical aspects of the construction of the poem. But it has to be stressed that these aspects of technique refer to the method of the production of the image and not to the external 'scaffolding' of poetic architectonics. This is precisely how he conceived of the unity of content and form, that is, form dealing with the mechanism concerning the image, and not the formal structure of the poem. It is in this sense that *διαφάνεια* is linked with the technical aspects of Elytis' poetics. In his interview with Analis, he explained this, mixing up the theoretical with the more technical. His statement is as follows:

> La transparence, qui fut aussi mon but suprême, atteindrait, me semblait-il, le plus haut degré d'exactitude, si les éléments particuliers de chaque poème arrivaient à prendre dans l'ensemble une place telle qu'ils puissent fonctionner, toujours mutuellement, aussi bien au signifiant qu'à l'image; exactement comme les corps célestes de chaque système autour du soleil. Sous condition, bien sûr, que, dans ce cas précis, la place du soleil soit tenue par la conscience. C'est quelque chose dans ce sens (en ce moment je ne peux l'exprimer que de manière naïve) qui m'a fait parler, il y a longtemps, de 'métaphysique solaire', et créer ce terme, qui, à première vue, semble arbitraire. (1983a: 98)

It should be made clear that, while 'διαφάνεια' may refer to a quality of the image ('La transparence'), linking his theoretical concerns with his effort to achieve the perfection of the image, as is explained in the next section, it is mainly expressive of a philosophical position which designates a specific moral disposition and a particular aesthetic perspective: 'διαφάνεια' is also associated with the principle of 'purity',[359] which, as he points out in his interview with Analis, refers to the principle or 'rule' he followed in order to capture his 'vision' in his poetry (Elytis 1983a: 96-97). Thus, 'διαφάνεια' is the condition of translucence that allows the transposition of the poet

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[358] See Chapter 3.
[359] See Chapter 3.

from one element of an opposition to the other, to an elevated position ('where opposites cease to exist'; Elytis 1975: 632), so that he may be in a position to see both sides (the positive and the negative) concurrently. As Elytis observes in the essay 'Η μέθοδος του "άρα"', written in 1976, ''Οταν μιλώ τόσο συχνά για διαφάνεια, υπονοώ ακριβώς αυτό: τη δυνατότητα να βλέπεις μέσ ' από το αθώο το ένοχο και μέσ ' από το λευκό το μαύρο' (1992: 179). Or, put differently, translucence is the ability to see through a 'diaphanous prism' 'όπως ακούς, ή ν ' ακούς όπως βλέπεις, και ούτω καθεξής, *όπως μόνον η ψυχή γίνεται να το επιτρέψει*' (Elytis 1992: 169; his emphasis). It is the psychological state which makes possible the resolution of opposites by reaching the 'single Point' (Elytis 1995a: 48).

Elytis referred to his 'theory of analogies' (1975: 632) in order to explain that the correspondence of art to 'the world of [mental (noetic) or psychological] values' functioned by means of transposition: nature was transposed into poetry after it had affected 'the human spirit'. As in nature, so in poetry no opposites could exist. As nature 'simply is', so poetry is not 'subject to habitual everyday distinctions'. In his view, by attaining the '*αίσθηση των αναλογιών*' (1992: 179), the poet shows things: 'Και η ορατότητα μεγαλώνει, εντείνεται, λαμπικάρει, τόσο περισσότερο όσο το κάθε στοιχείο βρίσκει την ακριβή του θέση μέσα σ ' ένα σύνολο που κάνει τα επίπεδα να συγκλίνουν και να καταλήγουν στη μια και διαρκή λάμψη' (1992: 181). Translucence then refers to the effect of nature on the human spirit, and (as was pointed out in Chapters 3 and 4) to the *αίσθηση* which leads to the poetic vision. The poet's task is to communicate this to others. In order to accomplish this

task, the poet ought to perfect technique; διαφάνεια then becomes a technical concept, referring to the manner of the production of the image.

5.4.2 *The Principle of Transparency in 'Crystalline' Poetry*

Translucence is not a poetic technique in itself, but a principle that unifies Elytis' ideas concerning the function of the poem, which should be shining and have the transparency of the symbol. Transparency is a quality of the air and of water, the two 'favorite [sic]' elements of Elytis (1975: 641), which, as he suggests, 'predominate' in his poetry. It is also the physical property of glass and of crystal, of diamonds and other precious stones; the fact that Elytis used these metaphors to refer to the poem shows that he attributed a second, more concrete meaning to the notion of 'διαφάνεια'. This is a meaning which refers to the more technical aspects of the poem and, in particular, to the preconditions determining the production of the image.

As was explained in section 5.3.1, the employment of the term 'prismatic', as well as of such expressions as 'φωτεινές εκλάμψεις' (1992: 46), 'πυρήνες' (1992: 49), 'προεξοχές' (1992: 50), 'ακτινοβολία', 'ακτινοβολούν' (1992: 48), and 'προεξέχουν' (1992: 49) in the essay on Romanos the Melodist, points not only to the metaphor of the poem as solar system, but also to the common poetic metaphor of the prism or the crystal. The word crystal itself was used by Elytis in the culmination of his exposition of the ideas on 'prismatic form'. He evoked the poetic crystal on several other occasions, and especially in his early essays. In all of these

cases, he referred to poetic expressions rather than the whole poem. His observations point to three standard prerequisites that ought to be met in order for a poetic expression to appear 'adamantine' or 'crystalline'. These are originality in the combination of words, a kind of integrity or perfection, and density. Transparency is then considered by him as the final quality of a successful poetic expression, or as its ultimate effect.

In the essay on Jouve (1938), Elytis comments on the 'dense, almost adamantine expressions, achieved through the accumulation of clever combinations' (1938d: 754; =1987: 620). He claims that these expressions are so compact that it is very difficult to retrace the process that led to their construction. The result is that they are as transparent as an 'unbreakable crystal'. In the essay on Theofilos (1947), he refers to the artist's painting as a prism elaborated to perfection (1987: 306).[360] In the much later preface to his 'recomposition' and translation of Sappho's poetry (1984), he refers to the 'adamantine expressions' (1992: 218) which bear evidence of 'ένας πραγματικός θησαυρός λόγων με στοχαστική δύναμη, παρομοιώσεων τολμηρών και πρωτότυπων εικόνων' in Sappho's corpus. He attributes the effectiveness of Sappho's poems to two features: on the one hand, expressions with an apophthegmatic value, which he also identifies with self-sufficiency and perfection, and a 'refraction of emotions' (1992: 219); this metaphor evokes the refraction of light

[360] In fact, Elytis stated that he was quoting Le Corbusier here (Elytis 1987: 306).

through a crystal or a prism. In fact, the analysis of this metaphor may reveal those aspects that are presupposed in Elytis' views about the process leading to the production of the image and of the poem.

Refraction is a quality of crystal. In 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), Elytis associates the transparency of crystal with that of glass, and uses both metaphors to refer to poetry. He shifts the emphasis from the object itself, that is, the crystal or the glass as an object of practical usage or as a commodity, to its aesthetic value; he regards transparency an aesthetic quality: 'Ο παραλογισμός μου ήταν ίσως ότι ήθελα να χρησιμοποιώ ένα ποτήρι, όχι για να πίνω, αλλά για οτιδήποτε άλλο· π.χ., για να διαπιστώνω και να χαίρομαι τη διαφάνεια του κρυστάλλου. Με την προϋπόθεση, φυσικά, ότι η διαφάνεια είχε πολύ μεγαλύτερη σημασία στη ζωή από το κάθε είδους ποτό' (1987: 324).[361] In terms of aesthetics, the transparency of glass is also a material, technical quality. Elytis employs the imagery referring to the production of glass to explain his view on the manner of producing a poem: 'Πολλές έννοιες ρευστές [...] Και το ποίημα, τόπος όπου συναντιούνται μύριοι ετερόκλητοι παράγοντες, μπορούσε, από ένα βαθμό *τήξεως* και πέρα, να τους συγχωνεύει κατά την έννοια που η πραγματικότητα, όπως την ξέραμε, δεν το επέτρεπε' (his emphasis).[362] The chemical reactions of liquefaction and fusion may possibly refer, in this case, to the production of glass out of sand, which from a solid state is turned to liquid and then back to solid. Both processes, liquefaction and fusion, and the result, the glass, may

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[361] This last phrase is reminiscent of Eluard's title 'La jarre peut-elle être plus belle que l'eau?'.

[362] The verb 'συγχωνεύει' in this case probably refers to fusion, since the noun 'σύμπηξη' is used by Elytis in the essay on Romanos the Melodist, where he observes that all of the poetic factors contribute 'στη *σύμπηξη* μιας άρτιας, [...] φραστικής ποιητικής μονάδας' (1992: 48; my emphasis). The fact that Elytis intended to study chemistry before he decided to study law, may explain this diction. However, the employment of such words could be allusions to his readings in French

be allusions to the function of the imagination. In 'Τα κορίτσια' (1944/1972), he refers not only to the *fusion* of the elements of life by means of the imagination, but also to the 'projection' of a 'new order of things within objective reality' (1987: 180-181), which again evokes Bachelard's idea of 'projective poetry'.

The words 'projection' and 'refraction', both used by Elytis to refer to the poetic imagination, may signal a particular conceptual image of the poem, like that of the crystal. The conception of the poem as crystal might explain in a most vivid manner his ideas on the image, which lie at the centre of his theoretical and practical poetic concerns, as was explained in the previous section. Because of its transparency, a crystal permits the passage of light through its structure, and it may act as a projector. The perfect structure of the crystal, multi-faceted as it is, also allows the refractive diffusion of light through it. Thus, although the material itself is hard and impenetrable, of compact and 'unbreakable' surfaces, when brought to light, the crystal may release a kaleidoscopic effect, which 'peut nous enseigner les beautés de l'instant, tous les beaux changements brefs des lumières cristallines' (Bachelard 1973: 297). As Mitchell points out, 'the distinctive modernist emphasis is on the image as a sort of crystalline structure, a dynamic pattern of the intellectual and emotional energy bodied forth by a poem' (1986: 25).

Mallarmé used the image of precious stones to explain his idea of incantatory art. He claimed that the aim of art should be to produce precious stones and not simply use those already available: 'L'enfantillage de la littérature jusqu'ici a été de croire, par exemple, que de choisir un certain nombre de pierres précieuses et en

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Surrealism, where many references to chemistry (and also alchemy) are made. On this subject and Greek Surrealism see Lekatsas 1985.

mettre les noms sur le papier, [...] c'était *faire* des pierres précieuses. Eh bien! non!' (1945: 870; his emphasis). He held that what matters is not the perceived object but its function as symbol: 'La poésie consistant à *créer*, il faut prendre dans l'âme humaine des états, des lueurs d'une pureté si absolue que, bien chantés et bien mis en lumière, cela constitue en effet les joyaux de l'homme: là, il y a symbole, il y a création'. Mallarmé laid the emphasis on the structure of the crystal, that is, of the image or of the poem. The perfection of the poem depended on the elaboration of language, its construction (Abastado 1970: 41), its shaping. The perfect shape revealed the absolute purity of the crystal in its radiance and its limpidity.

In 1939, Seferis referred to the 'striking crystal' of Gerald Manley Hopkins, that is, his care for the perfection of expression, in order to explain that 'difficult' art should be identified not with vagueness and obscurity but with precision and translucence (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 93-94). While he mentioned Valéry and Mallarmé among the poets who elaborated this kind of art, he dismissed Surrealism as 'facile poetry' (Seferis & Tsatsos 1975: 94, n. 1). Elytis' idea of *διαφάνεια*, which presupposes the function of the Surrealist analogy, may have been a response to Seferis' views: apart from the translucence of the poetic vision, Elytis' conception of *διαφάνεια* may also refer to the transparency of the image or of poetic expressions, that is, of the perfection (in Seferis' sense of the term) of 'prismatic form'.

Breton used the image of the crystal to refer to the poem and to the life conduct of the poet: 'L'oeuvre d'art, au même titre d'ailleurs que tel fragment de la vie humaine considérée dans sa signification la plus grave, me paraît dénuée de valeur si elle ne présente pas la dureté, la rigidité, la régularité, le lustre sur toutes ses faces

extérieures, intérieures, du cristal' (*L'Amour fou*; 1992: 681). He regarded the individual entity, whether this be the poem or the poet, as a '"figure"--in the Hegelian sense of the material mechanism of individuality'.

Breton's points may clarify why Elytis related the concept of the poem as a crystal or prism with the function of the imagination. He quotes the first of the above passages from Breton in 'Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935' (1944), where he extensively refers to the notion of the crystal as a metaphor for the poem which is most appropriate to his visual imagination (1987: 130-131). He reveals that, although initially he used to identify this metaphor with the poetic ideas of Valéry, his discovery of Breton's observation proved to him that the different roads of the quest for art's 'essential meaning' meet. While he simply observes that Valéry's poetic method, his crystal, was the result of intellectual effort, he enthusiastically takes Breton's side because, in his view, the Surrealist poet 'άφησε να λειτουργήσουνε οι νόμοι της ζωής και στην τέχνη' (1987: 131-132; his emphasis). Elytis' intention may have been to stress that the intellect was much less significant than the psychological endeavour of the transposition, which, as was explained in Chapter 3, he associated with Plato's ideas. His reason for admiring Breton's concept of the crystal was precisely that this involved both the product and the producer: Breton's crystal stood for the poem and the poet. In other words, in his case, the aesthetic point of view presupposed a moral disposition, and vice versa; aesthetics was identified with ethics, a central idea determining Elytis' poetic quests, as was pointed out in Chapters 3 and 4. Thus, Breton's crystal appears to have been associated by

Elytis with translucence, that is, the principle or the 'rule' of 'purity', as was explained in the previous section.

However, Breton's crystal also presupposed the Surrealists' simultaneous promotion and questioning of the visual. In Breton's poem 'Nœud des miroirs' (in *Le Revolver à cheveux blancs*),[363] the eye perceives the crystal as one and many: 'un seul cristal [...]/ Un diamant divisible en autant de diamants' (1992: 87). The prism of the diamond is made of many other such prisms. This idea seems to be involved in Elytis' conception of the poem as a solar system whose individual parts form a prismatic configuration: around the nucleus of the diamond or crystal, other nuclei-crystals combine and form the structure of the crystal or the 'crystal lattice'.[364] The same idea links the above definition of the poem and Elytis' conception of 'prismatic expression', since, in his view, 'prismatic expression' concerns both the individual 'prisms' of the poem and the poem as a totality.[365] In this case, the concept of the crystal functions as a model for the creation of the poem, since the crystal itself is used as a natural model, while the poetic imagination imitates the creative processes of nature, as was pointed out in Chapters 1 and 4. As nature produces crystals, the poet produces poems; as the crystal is made of crystals, the poem's images (or 'prismatic expressions') revolve around one central image. Breton's diamond, divisible into

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[363] Elytis mentions Breton's collection in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (Elytis 1987: 229).

[364] In crystallography, the crystal lattice refers to the periodic arrangement of atoms, ions, or molecules in a crystal (Kleber 1970: 22-23). For an analytical description of a lattice it is necessary to define a base system of coordinates on the lattice. Such a system of axes is necessary for building up the whole lattice (1970: 24-25).

[365] By drawing on the science of crystallography, Georgousopoulos gives a vivid explanation of Elytis' conception of 'prismatic expression', when he observes that 'Το ποίημα γι' αυτή την ποιητική πολώνεται γύρω από τον αρχικό κρύσταλλο, την ποιητική μονάδα και συμμετρικά, επαναλαμβάνοντας ποικιλοτρόπως το μοτίβο της αρχής, αναπτύσσεται' (1994: 11). A similar view about Elytis' poetic method is expressed by Paschalis, although he disregards Elytis' metaphors for the poem and devises his own. Thus, he names 'method of the "mosaic"' (1986: 461)

many diamonds, may have been a model for Elytis' ideas on the production of the image and the poem: Elytis aspired to attain the transparency of the crystal and also the transparency of the many crystals composing its structure, that is, the crystal lattice. The technical meaning of the notion of *διαφάνεια* refers precisely to the principle of transparency, in this case, a technical 'rule', which combines with the theoretical 'rule' of translucence (or 'purity') to produce 'crystalline' poetry.

5.5 *Conclusion*

In Elytis' metaphor of the poem as solar system, the central image is seen as the sun, that is, a source of light; the radiance of the poem is considered as originating from this nucleus. In other words, Elytis seems to conceive of the poem as a configuration with a centre, the 'sun', which projects itself on to other figures (the rest of the images, conceived as planets). He used a similar metaphor to explain his notion of 'transcendence' in his interview with Analis, as has been observed in Chapter 3. The conception of 'prismatic form', which presupposes the existence of more than one radiant, translucent nucleus, combines with Elytis' definition of the poem as solar system to offer a complete image of the poem and a theoretical explanation of the poetic process. The poem is conceived as a planetary system where glittering crystals are set in orbit around a luminous central crystal. All of these crystals shine and project their light on to the rest of the crystals, but also reflect and refract the light they receive from all of the rest of the crystals, including the central crystal. As

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the method 'της συνένωσης γύρω από έναν αρκετά αφηρημένο ως προς το νόημα πυρήνα πυκνών και αυθύπαρκτων ποιητικών ψηφίδων' (1986: 462).

Bachelard observes, the association between stars and crystals is very common in poetry: 'Les gemmes sont les étoiles de la terre. Les étoiles sont les diamants du ciel. Il y a une terre au firmament; il y a un ciel dans la terre' (1973: 291). This figurative depiction of the poem not only appears in Elytis' poetry, but also provides a detailed explanation of the poetic principles of its production.

Elytis was aware of the perfection, of 'la dureté, la rigidité, la régularité, le lustre' of his poetry and knew that it was his poetry that best explained his ideas and his poetic practice. In Part III, examples from his poetry are examined in aspects that concern his poetics. Although Elytis' ideas emerged and were developed in the period between 1944 and 1960, as has been shown in Part II, they entered the *dynamic stage of crystallization* before the end of this period. In his poetry published from 1960 onwards, his ideas are put into practice in a continuous and energetic evolution, an 'αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωση', to employ his own metaphor, referring to the dynamics of the poem's nucleus.

PART III

Poetic Practice: The Crystallization of Elytis' Poetics

Chapter 6

The Incantatory Function of Poetry

6.0 *Introduction*

While Parts I and II examined the theoretical aspects of Elytis' poetics, Part III assumes that the understanding of his poetics also requires an examination of his poetry. Chapter 6 explores issues of style and Chapter 7 examines the relation developing between Elytis' poetry and visual art.

Elytis' view of poetry as magic or incantation, which is consistent with his views about poetry as a mythical 'third condition', is considered in Chapter 6 in which examples from the poetry of his second period are examined. These poems have been chosen because they are instances of poetic metalanguage, that is, poetry in which the poet comments on his poetics. Studying this poetry is important for two reasons, namely, in order to explore both the extent to which Elytis' ideas are put into poetic practice and the way in which his ideas are reflected in his poetry; moreover, the consistency between his thought and his poetic practice, which is apparent in the poetry of his second period, is even more obvious in poems in which poetic metalanguage is employed.

The examination of poetry in this chapter addresses issues of style, focusing on the principles that appear to determine the selection of words and the production of

the image. Both principles are significant in the study of the poetry of Elytis' second period. While his views on language have been considered in Parts I and II in passing, they do, in fact, condition his poetic writing to a considerable extent, since, as he claims, 'True poetry [...] is always a creation from within language and not from without it. Ideas are born at the same time as their verbal expression. Hence, the language factor plays an important role' (1975: 637). Although this statement reveals authorial intentionality, rather than explaining the actual way Elytis uses language, as is explained in section 6.2, it is nevertheless indicative of his special interest in language. On the other hand, his ideas on the production of the image are put into practice in his poetry, as is shown in section 6.3.

As is explained in section 6.1, for the purposes of this chapter, a particular definition and view of style has been adopted; this has been necessary because, on the one hand, a special approach is required in order to examine Elytis' ideas on the unity of content and form. On the other hand, the theoretical attitude adopted here is most appropriate to show the consistency between the ideas he expressed in the years 1944-1960 and the poetry of his second period.

Both the selection of words and the production of the image are examined in this chapter as referring to theoretical principles whose observance by the poet results in two different types of poetic effects, which both possess great incantatory power; as is pointed out in this chapter, incantatory poetic effects appear to present a distinctive stylistic feature of the poetry of Elytis' second period. Section 6.2 focuses on one of these types of poetic effect, that is, lexical items that have been

invented by the poet for the needs of particular poems of his second period, and which illustrate his views on the incantatory function of poetry.

Apart from the importance of the 'language factor' in his poetry, two other observations concerning Elytis' poetic style can be made as introductory to this chapter. Both refer to aspects of style emerging in the poetry of his second period. It is in this poetry, and especially in poems which seem to have been written, or at least conceived, around 1960, that is, in poems that were published from 1971 onwards, that an increasing interest in developing intertextual relations appears; this may become apparent if one compares this poetry with the poems of his first period--something that is presupposed but has not been pursued in this chapter for methodological reasons, since this chapter and this thesis focus on Elytis' second period. Furthermore, it can be observed that it is in this poetry that the poet develops an intertextual network, which connects various of his own poems; this tendency too appears in the poems of his second period, although, occasionally, allusions may be made to poems of his first period. It is explained in section 6.3 that a kind of metaphorical incantation achieved through the repetition of imagery and based on intertextual links among his own poems is a stylistic feature of Elytis' second period. The effects of this incantation, created through the relations established between various of his poems, are examined here from an intertextual perspective, focusing on the semantic properties of the image, although these texts seem to be connected also by grammatical, morpho-syntactic and other correspondences, which are not considered in this section for practical reasons.

6.1 *On Style*: *A Relevance-Theory Approach*

Traditionally, style is defined as the manner in which words combine, while diction refers to the selection of words. However, even the criteria for the selection of words presuppose certain stylistic choices. There exist numerous definitions of style, whereas the study of poetic style on a systematic basis started with the Russian and Czech Formalists, although Jakobson himself preferred to refer to the structure of the language of the poetic text, rather than to its style. From Formalism to the more modern *Stiltheorie*, the object of study is the 'poetic language' used in poetry, that is, one member of the pair established by the artificial dichotomy between 'common, everyday language' and the language used by poets. Critical attempts to cancel out this dichotomy have paved the way for an understanding of language as an all-encompassing phenomenon which resists orderings and classifications such as those adopted by the Formalists and, in their turn, by the Structuralists.[366]

In view of the fact that language is the medium of poetry, a poetic style may be defined as a set of (linguistic) regularities which is founded on a series of (linguistic) irregularities. As Halliday points out, 'the creative writer finds and exploits the *irregularity* that the [linguistic] patterns allow, and in doing so superimposes a further *regularity*' (Halliday 1967: 221; his emphasis). Language is not a closed system with strictly-bound rules. As language can affect the development of a poetic style, so the latter can create new possibilities for language (Babiniotis 1984: 178-179).

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[366] See Pratt (1977: 14-15ff.), who argues against the (Formalist and Structuralist) distinctions between 'literary' and 'common everyday' language and style, and Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 4ff.), who observe that 'most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature'.

From a wider perspective, and by starting from Buffon's formulation ('le style, c'est l'homme même'), to contemporary views, such as the definition of style by Sperber and Wilson ('style is the relationship' and it 'arises in the pursuit of relevance'; 1986: 217 and 219), one may realize that the style of poetry need concern not simply the linguistic factor, but also intertextuality, that is, the relations developing between texts. In this respect, the style emerging in a poetic corpus and determining a particular poetics is affected by the style which emerges in other poetry and determines other poetics, to affect in its turn the style of future texts. A poetic style may also be founded on a series of deviations from the established poetic canon. A study of poetic style, then, should focus on the linguistic and poetic irregularities[367] appearing in the poetic text, and consider the ways these affect the whole. It is frequently held that it is not always easy, or under certain conditions even possible, to reach conclusions as regards the choices or the deviations of a text. This is normally credited to the ambiguous nature of poetry, which builds on the opacity of its diction or its imagery; yet it is precisely ambiguity, which is not something alien to oral communication, that has to be confronted by the reader in the reading process, just as ambiguity has to be confronted in oral communication. The poetic effects of literary texts,[368] and in particular poetry, depend on ambiguity, as do the poetic effects employed in oral communication. The difference is perhaps one of degree, since the different circumstances of conversation and writing not only affect the cultivation of poetic effects, but may encourage it to a considerably varying extent.

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[367] Poetic irregularities are defined here as deviations from the usual style of the poet whose work is examined; such irregularities may designate an intertextual affinity or provide some other significant information.

[368] Poetic effects are considered here to be effects that rely on metaphor and other related tropes.

It is in its poetic effects that the value of a poetic text resides. The reading process, then, should aim at the disambiguation of the poetic effects of the text in order to release its poetic value. This aim presupposes an 'essentialist' approach to poetry, based on the conviction that the text has value, being the product of labour and not of chance.[369] In this respect, this approach to poetry contravenes the 'conventionalist' approach of theorists such as Jonathan Culler or Stanley Fish, who both argue, each in a different way although on similar grounds, that the value of poetry does not reside in the text itself, but in the way the reader approaches it, in other words, that poetic value is found and attributed to the text by its reader. For instance, Culler argues that the reader approaches poetry by assuming certain 'conventional expectations which make poetic language subject to a different teleology or finality from that of ordinary speech and [...] contribute to the effects of formal devices and of the external contexts that poetry assimilates' (1992: 164). The approach to poetry in this chapter assumes, by contrast, that the value of the poetic text is neither artificial or factitious nor subject to a different teleology than that of 'everyday language', that is, oral communication.[370] The value of a poetic text depends on its greater or lesser reliance on poetic effects, in a manner similar to that in which oral communication may be more or less 'poetic' depending on the extent to which it may rely on poetic effects.

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[369] The distinction between the 'essentialist' and the 'conventionalist' approach to literature is made by Kiparsky (1987: 185-198).

[370] Of course, the 'teleology or finality' of a poem may be different from 'ordinary speech', just as the teleology or finality of a legal document is different from ordinary speech; but this difference may designate or be attributed to an existential determination or aspiration, or to a functional operation, and it does not concern the actual medium that poetry, legal documents and conversation all employ, that is, language. Naturally, conventional expectations are different with regard to a poem than to a legal document or to the announcement of the results of the national lottery. On the other hand, conventional

Far from what is known as the dualist approach to style (which distinguishes between content and form), as well as from Chomsky's distinction between surface and deep structures, which develops along similar lines, the style of a poetic text may be thought of as revealing different layers of meaning(s), depending on its reliance on poetic effects. The principle followed throughout the examination of poetry in this chapter is based on Relevance Theory and is the following: the greater the poetic text's reliance on poetic effects, the greater its exploitation of 'implicature' and the more 'contextual effects' may be achieved in the reading process; the more the 'contextual effects' incited by the poetic text, the greater the processing effort required by the reader.[371] Reading should not aim at a final interpretation but to develop by taking into consideration as many of the implicatures offered in the text as possible, and to aspire to achieve as many contextual effects as possible. Especially in cases of rich poetic texts, such as the poetry of Elytis' second period, reading should not aim to reach a static stage, but to develop dynamically; what can regulate, control and test interpretation is the observation of the 'principle of relevance'. The explanation of this approach, which is based on a Relevance-Theory model of linguistic communication, is offered from the next paragraph onwards. Before setting the theoretical background for this approach, it should be mentioned here that it has been chosen because it is especially suitable for examining style in Elytis' poetry, since it seems to correspond to his own views as expressed in his arguments on the unity of content and form. Moreover, this approach can account for Elytis' views on

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expectations about poetry may differ among readers of poetry, and also between readers and non-readers of poetry.

[371] The terms 'implicature' and 'contextual effects' are employed here as in Relevance Theory and are explained later in this section.

the distinction between 'prismatic' and 'flat expression': apart from the creative model underlying his description of 'prismatic form', which has been examined in Chapter 5, what is further implied in his distinction can be taken to refer to the reliance of the poetic text on as many kinds of poetic effects as possible, whereas 'flat expression' can be taken to refer to poetry that relies on a limited number and type of poetic effects. Although the following pages offer an inevitably simplified account of Relevance Theory, it is an exposition that is rather lengthy; this has been necessary in order to define the methodological principles that condition the readings of poetry from section 6.2 onwards.

As Sell observes, an account of literature cannot be complete unless its use of communicative resources is considered (1991b: xiv). He regards the theory of linguistic communication provided by Relevance Theory, which also responds to theoretical concerns about literary communication, as a promising basis for the understanding of literature. Pilkington maintains that a theory of reading which explores the poetic effects of literary texts can be based on the explanatory and descriptive theory of communication offered by Relevance Theory, which replaces the semiotic models of communication (1991: 49).

The principal arguments of Relevance Theory, as developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, are based on the assumption that, in any communicative act, there is a certain degree of mutuality shared between the addresser and the addressee. Although Sperber and Wilson often use oral communication as an example, their theory applies to linguistic communication in general; in their term 'verbal

communication' they include not only oral communication, but also, among others, poetry (1986: 2).[372] They argue that although 'within the domain of verbal communication, a poem and a legal document seem to communicate profoundly different things [...] there is a general answer to [the] question' of what is involved in communication (1986: 2). Sperber and Wilson turn against the semiotic approach to communication as a coding-decoding process by claiming that this approach, for instance, cannot 'explain how myths and literary works succeed in communicating more than their linguistic meaning, and how rites and customs succeed in communicating at all' (1986: 8).

Although their theory has emerged out of Grice's pragmatic approach to communication (1986: 37), they reject the latter's theories as vague and imprecise. Moreover, they do not remain restricted to the study of conversation, as is implied in Grice's notion of the 'maxims of conversation' (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1986: 261, n. 10). They hold that language does not simply contain manifestations in the form of acts of communication as Grice held, but that 'by producing direct evidence of one's informative intention, one can convey a much wider range of information than can be conveyed by producing direct evidence for the basic information itself' (1986: 64). This idea can prove very useful in the study of Elytis' poetry, since the poet has commented extensively on his poetics, as has been pointed out in Parts I and II. In other words, Elytis' views on his poetics can be used by the reader while approaching his poetry as evidence of his intentions, although this must be done with critical caution, in order to avoid taking his intentions for the actual (poetic) result.

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[372] Citations from the work of Sperber and Wilson that appear in this section and refer to oral communication should be read by bearing in mind that oral communication is used by them as an

Relevance Theory claims that although human communication is 'an asymmetrical process' (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 43), it 'requires some degree of co-ordination between communicator and audience on the choice of a code and a context'. This means that people should share a 'mutual cognitive environment' (1986: 41) in which every manifest assumption[373] will be 'mutually manifest' (1986: 42). Sperber and Wilson hold that 'human cognition is relevance-oriented, and [...] as a result, someone who knows an individual's cognitive environment can infer which assumptions he is actually likely to entertain' (1986: 46).

Sperber and Wilson explain that the way pragmatists study communication is by holding that what is communicated is 'meaning',[374] that is, a set of either explicitly expressed, that is, decoded, assumptions, or implicitly conveyed or implicated assumptions (1986: 56). However, as Sperber and Wilson observe, this understanding of communication overlooks the implicitly conveyed assumptions, that is, what pragmatists call 'implicatures'.[375] Sperber and Wilson distinguish between 'meaning' and communication, holding that 'something can be communicated without being strictly speaking *meant*' (1986: 57; their emphasis). They see the informative intention as a psychological state (1986: 58) and claim that ostensive communication helps to fulfil an informative intention (1986: 61).

Sperber and Wilson adopt an analytical perspective concerning communication, which is realized both as a coding-decoding process and as ostensive-inferential

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example and that their theory applies to linguistic communication and not only to conversation.

[373] By 'assumptions', Sperber and Wilson mean 'thoughts treated by the individual as representations of the actual world (as opposed to fictions, desires, or representations of representations)' (1986: 2).

[374] See their approach to Grice's view of 'meaning' (Sperber & Wlison 1986: 21ff.).

[375] For a pragmatic definition of implicature see Levinson 1983: 103-104ff.

communication;[376] they claim that the former is used as a means of strengthening the latter, which can be used on its own. They describe ostensive-inferential communication as follows: 'the communicator produces a stimulus which makes it mutually manifest to communicator and audience that the communicator intends, by means of this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions' (1986: 63). Inference is 'the process by which an assumption is accepted as true or probably true on the strength of the truth or probable truth of other assumptions' (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 68). Thus, verbal, that is, linguistic communication is held by them to involve two types of communication process, the first based on coding-decoding, and the second on ostension and inference (1986: 175-176). On this basis, they redefine 'implicature' by regarding as such any assumption which is implicitly communicated (1986: (182), and they employ the notion of 'explicature' to refer to any assumption that is explicitly communicated: 'An explicature is a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features. The smaller the relative contribution of the contextual features, the more explicit the explicature will be, and inversely' (1986: 182).

Sperber and Wilson discard the 'Co-operative Principle',[377] developed by Grice to refer to conversation, as too restrictive and an insufficiently developed notion; they hold that what is needed for successful linguistic communication, in general and not only in conversation, is to observe the 'maxim of relevance'. They maintain that the observation of this maxim depends upon a fundamental principle, which they call 'the

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[376] On coded communication see Sperber & Wilson 1986: 3-9, and p. 13 on the decoding process.
[377] Most of Grice's lectures on this subject are still unpublished; for the way the 'Co-operative Principle' functions, see Grice 1975: 47. For a critical presentation of the four maxims involved in Grice's 'Co-operative Principle' see Leech 1983: 79-103.

principle of relevance'. Their main argument is that 'an act of ostension carries a guarantee of relevance, and [...] this fact [what they call the 'principle of relevance'] makes manifest the intention behind the ostension' (1986: 50). Thus, they maintain that 'an act of ostensive communication automatically communicates a presumption of relevance' (1986: 156).

The 'principle of relevance' offered by Sperber and Wilson states that 'every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its optimal relevance' (1986: 158).[378] As Pilkington explains, this means that what is communicated is 'a guarantee that the hearer will derive a satisfying range of cognitive effects for the minimum justifiable processing effort. The cognitive effects can be in the form of contextual implications, confirmations and strengthenings of already held assumptions, or contradictions of already held assumptions which lead to their being abandoned' (1991: 50).

The notion of contextual implication (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 107-108),[379] and the more general notion of the contextual effects lie at the core of Relevance Theory.[380] Sperber and Wilson argue the following:

> If all a contextualisation does is add all, some or none of the new information to the context without otherwise altering the context at all, then this contextualisation has no contextual effect. Otherwise, there is some contextual

[378] As Sperber and Wilson observe, the communicator's 'task is to make sure that the thought [he/she] intends to convey is consistent with the principle of relevance: otherwise, [he/she] runs the risk of not being properly understood' (1986: 162).

[379] Sperber and Wilson observe that the difference between implications and implicatures is that the latter are identified with 'more contextual assumptions and implications which receive some degree of backing from the speaker' (1986: 222).

[380] Cf. Sperber & Wilson 1986: 108ff.: 'contextual effects are achieved only when, [...] the new assumption displaces an assumption already present in the context, with subsequent weakening or erasure of other contextual assumptions linked to it by relations of analytic or synthetic implication' (1986: 115). For analytic and synthetic implication see Sperber & Wilson 1986: 104. Contextualization is 'a deduction based on the union of new information $\{P\}$ and old information $\{C\}$ [; this] is a *contextualisation* of $\{P\}$ in $\{C\}$' (1986: 108).

> effect, in the form of an erasure of some assumptions from the context, a modification of the strength of some assumptions in the context, or the derivation of contextual implications. (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 117)

As Sperber and Wilson point out, 'contextual implications are contextual effects' (1986: 109). In Relevance Theory, it is claimed that 'the greater the contextual effects, the greater the relevance' (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 119), and 'an assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in that context' (1986: 122). Sperber and Wilson maintain that 'relevance is a matter of degree' (1986: 123), and thus, a pivotal aspect of communication is the conclusion that the processing effort should be as small as possible in order to achieve a high degree of relevance (1986: 124). It is presupposed that contexts are chosen (both by the addresser and the addressee) and not given. The choice of context (on the part both of the addresser and the addressee) is then held to be constrained by the consideration of relevance (1986: 132ff.). The contexts chosen are those that are necessary for consistency with the principle of relevance.

Sperber and Wilson contend that 'the speaker who intends to produce a relevant utterance has two related aims: first, to create some contextual effect in the hearer, and second, to minimise the processing effort this involves' (1986: 202). But, as they clarify, in fact, in linguistic communication one of the following may happen: 'The sooner disambiguation and reference assignment are achieved, the less processing effort will be required. The greater the number of possible interpretations that have to be borne in mind as the utterance proceeds, the greater the processing effort' (1986: 204). It is precisely a *choice of style* that distinguishes these two different cases.

Sperber and Wilson claim that style in linguistic communication emerges when the speaker makes assumptions about the cognitive abilities and the contextual resources of the hearer, and thus decides what to make explicit and what to leave implicit:

> A speaker aiming at optimal relevance will leave implicit everything her hearer can be trusted to supply with less effort than would be needed to process an explicit prompt. The more information she leaves implicit, the greater the degree of mutual understanding she makes it manifest that she takes to exist between her and her hearer. [...] What is important, however, is that the speaker must choose *some* form in which to convey her intended message, and that the form she chooses cannot but reveal her assumptions about the hearer's contextual resources and processing abilities. There is no entirely neutral style. (1986: 218; their emphasis)

Differences in style emerge depending on whether the communicator wishes to minimize or maximize the processing effort required for the disambiguation for an utterance. In Relevance Theory, this is considered to result from the communicator's greater or lesser reliance on poetic effects (in all kinds of linguistic communication, including poetry). Sperber and Wilson claim that a poetic effect is 'the peculiar effect of an utterance which achieves most of its relevance through a wide array of weak implicatures' (1986: 222). Poetic effects are considered to result:

> from the accessing of a large array of very weak implicatures in the otherwise ordinary pursuit of relevance. Stylistic differences are just differences in the way relevance is achieved. One way in which styles may differ is in their greater or lesser reliance on poetic effects, just as they may differ in their greater or lesser reliance on implicature and in the way they exploit the backgrounding and foregrounding of information in their explicatures. (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 224)

Within Relevance Theory, metaphor and other tropes and figures of speech are considered to be 'simply creative exploitations' (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 237) of language use, 'a natural outcome of some very general abilities and procedures used in verbal communication'. Poetic metaphors are defined as metaphors whose relevance involves the processing of a wide range of weak implicatures.

In the case of poetry, it can be presupposed that, on the one hand, the poet aims at optimal relevance and not at literal truth (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 233), and on the other hand, that the reader approaches a poem by taking it for granted 'that an utterance is intended as an interpretation of one of the [poet's] thoughts' (1986: 234). What the reader must do is make interpretative assumptions. As Sperber and Wilson put it, in both oral and written communication, 'the wider the range of possible conclusions, the weaker the implicatures, and the more the hearer must share the responsibility for deriving them' (1986: 235). Most importantly:

> the wider the range of potential implicatures and the greater the hearer's responsibility for constructing them, the more poetic the effect, the more creative the metaphor. A good creative metaphor is precisely one in which a variety of contextual effects can be retained and understood as weakly implicated by the speaker. In the richest and most successful cases, the hearer or reader can go beyond just exploring the immediate context and the entries for concepts involved in it, accessing a wide area of knowledge, adding metaphors of his own as interpretations of possible developments he is not ready to go into, and getting more and more very weak implicatures, with suggestions for still further processing. *The result is a quite complex picture, for which the hearer has to take a large part of the responsibility, but the discovery of which has been triggered by the writer. The surprise or beauty of a successful creative metaphor lies in this condensation, in the fact that a single expression* [...] *will determine a very wide range of acceptable weak implicatures.* (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 236-7; my emphasis)

As Pilkington observes, on the one hand, a poem does not offer 'a set of determinate meanings to choose from. Images, symbols, metaphors within the poem interact to make manifest a vast range of weak implicatures' (1991: 59). On the other hand, all readers of poetry do not access the same number of implicatures, not even the same implicatures, although the most appropriate approach in reading a poem would be to avoid isolating and privileging some of them above the others.

By following the approach to style provided by Relevance Theory, the readings of poetry in this chapter observe the ambiguity of certain lexical items and images and aim to resolve it. In other words, readings of poetry here focus on two types of 'condensations' or two types of poetic effects that may appear in Elytis' poetry; these poetic effects are regarded in this chapter as utterances that are based on series of weak implicatures. It is assumed that the poet has a relevance-oriented communicative intention and that the process of reading may proceed by taking into account the principles of both coded and ostensive-inferential communication. Thus, on the one hand, it is presupposed that the poet has observed the principle of optimal relevance in order to produce the poem and, on the other, in a kind of (re)constructive reading, the reader will make every possible effort to observe the same principle. Since the employment of theoretical notions may be distracting in the reading process, the theoretical clarifications made in this section are presupposed in the following sections in which the relevant terminology is used only when necessary.

This approach to style and method of reading has been chosen because it provides an inspiring stimulus for the interpretation of extremely ambiguous poetic

effects. In contrast to more formalist approaches, which may either imply the 'closure' of the text or simply prove inadequate to surpass a mere acknowledgment of the kind of ambiguity involved in the poetic effect examined (as happens frequently with Structuralist analyses of poetry), the stylistic readings attempted in the following sections aim to reveal and foreground the richness of the poetic effects considered. The 'essentialism' of this approach to poetry is constrained here by the belief that, while, on the one hand, interpretation cannot be exhaustive or limited to the readings of a sole reader, on the other hand, it should not aspire to reveal pre-existing 'meaning', but only aim to be relevant. Elytis' poetry, in particular, dictates this type of approach, since, as was explained in Chapter 5, it presupposes a dynamic conception of the poetic function, and the view of the poem as an entity in full motion, in an unremitting process of crystallization.

6.2 *Poetic Effects*: *The Incantatory Power of Words*

In the following sections, characteristic examples from Elytis' poetry are examined in order to indicate that ambiguity and incantatory effects may be caused by the 'antilexical' formulations of lettrist or other similar influence; it is shown here that, on certain occasions, ambiguities may be clarified by observing the principle of relevance. The poetic effects of incantation achieved through 'antilexism' are explored by presupposing the theoretical observations made in the previous section. 'Antilexical' vocabulary items are one type of poetic effect with an incantatory function cultivated in the poetry of Elytis' second period ('antilexism' appears only in his second

period). In section 6.2.1, a few preliminary observations on lexical semantics are made. Section 6.2.2 explores all instances of 'antilexism' in Elytis' poetry while focusing on a particular poem, which presents a condensed example of 'antilexism'.

6.2.1 *On Lexical Semantics*

Words acquire their semantic significance through their interaction with other words. A word is semantically activated when it participates in the semantic totality of a sentence; in this respect, a word is a 'semantic constituent'.[381] Nowottny points out that 'The question of the diction of poetry is a question of how words affect and are affected by the artistic contexts they enter' (1991: 32). As she observes, there are not words that are better than other words, but words that are situated in better places than others:

> a single word [...] matters to its context, which means that ultimately criticism of diction resolves itself into consideration of the interplay of certain words in a certain context; single words bring to the poem a potential of power which derives from their usage outside the poem but the power is not set to work until it combines or collides with other potentials brought into the poem by the other words it also uses. (1991: 46)

This observation addresses the issue of style, that is, both the selection and the combination of words.[382] Following this view, words are examined here with regard to

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[381] A semantic constituent is 'Any constituent part of a sentence that bears a meaning which combines with the meanings of the other constituents to give the overall meaning of the sentence' (Cruse 1986: 25). It should be noted that there exist 'minimal semantic constituents' consisting of more than one word (1986: 36); this is the case in semantically non-transparent expressions (such as idioms and dead metaphors.

[382] Cf. Babiniotis 1984: 177-8.

their immediate contextual environment.[383] More specifically, the meaning of words is considered as established through their relations to other words.[384]

Types of semantic ambiguity that may occur on the lexical and/or the phonetic levels are frequent in poetry and a rich source for the production of poetic effects.[385] A lexical item may be ambiguous because it is a neologism and therefore has no pre-existing meaning, or because it can have more than one meaning. In poetry, lexical ambiguity may be cultivated as part of a more broadly pursued strategy of sound effects or in order to expand the semantic scope of the image.

6.2.2 *Antilexical Formulations*

A tendency of modern poetry, which is considered to be a characteristic distinguishing it from 'traditional poetry, is that often the poet tries to say something nonsensical on the linguistic level, hoping that it will become meaningful on the stylistic level' (Hill 1956: 391). This may or may not hold true, but in either case, it does not happen in Elytis' poetry. The words examined in this section are 'antilexical' formulations,[386] that is, semantically opaque lexical units. They are invented lexical units which

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[383] As Cruse puts it, 'the meaning of a word is fully reflected in its contextual relations' (1986: 16), these relations defined as 'The full set of [semantic] normality [and abnormality] relations which a lexical item contracts with all conceivable contexts'.

[384] The term 'lexical unit' is employed to refer to 'those form-meaning complexes with (relatively) stable and discrete semantic properties which stand in meaning relations [...] and which interact syntagmatically with contexts in various ways to produce [...] different sorts of anomaly' (Cruse 1986: 49). Lexical units are distinguished from 'lexemes', that is, the elements of the 'ideal dictionary' of a language, which are listed in the lexicon of that language (Lyons 1977: 18ff.).

[385] Ambiguity in poetry, as in other forms of speech, may be purely syntactic, quasi-syntactic, lexico-syntactic, or purely lexical (Cruse 1986: 66ff.). Ambiguity may occur either on the level of the paradigmatic relations of words, or on the level of the grammar of language and the syntagmatic relations of words. On poetic ambiguity see William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930).

produce certain effects of incantation, but they are neither completely non-sensical nor illogical. It is explained that, in the poetry of Elytis' second period, the opacity of antilexical constructions is only illusory or partial. It is shown that, on the one hand, their opacity may depend on the degree of relevance sought and achieved by poet and reader (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 123ff.). On the other hand, it is explained that, as soon as these antilexical constructions become semantic constituents, that is, as soon as they participate in the meaning of the utterance, they create strong contextual effects, usually in the form of contextual implications. On this principle, these lexical units are considered, on the one hand, in the light of the textual environment in which they appear (co-text),[387] and on the other hand, as dependent on mutual knowledge, that is, knowledge that the poet believed that he shared, or wanted to share, with the reader (context).

Antilexical formulations appear in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* (1960) and in other poems of Elytis' second period included in the collections *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά* (1971), *Μαρία Νεφέλη* (1978), *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* (1984), and *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας* (1991). In the following sections, all of the antilexical constructions devised by Elytis are examined; emphasis is laid on the antilexical items of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' from *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιὰ* because, on the one hand, it presents a characteristic example in which many antilexical items are employed and, on the other, it is a poem whose subject-matter revolves around these antilexical

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[386] On 'antilexism' see Babiniotis 1984: 117ff.; as he points out, 'antilexism' refers to the invention of new words, based on new combinations of letters (1984: 118). One of the examples mentioned by Babiniotis is 'Lettrism', the invention of Isou and Lemaître, which is considered in section 6.2.2.2.
[387] Halliday employs the term 'co-text' to refer to the situational context created in the text (1978: 133).

constructions. Section 6.2.2.1 presents the antilexical units of this poem and also the weak implicatures on which they are based. In section 6.2.2.2., the antilexical units of the same poem are considered in the light of the contextual implications that emerge, firstly, when the other antilexical constructions appearing in the poetry of Elytis' second period are taken into consideration, secondly, when these antilexical items are compared with antilexical constructions devised by Embirikos and, thirdly, when drawing on relevant theoretical observations made by Elytis. Section 6.2.2.3 uses the conclusions reached in sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2 in order to disambiguate the antilexical formulations of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια', make interpretative assumptions about the poem in which they are employed and, finally, reach a general conclusion regarding the invention and the function of antilexical items in the poetry of Elytis' second period.

6.2.2.1 *Antilexism in the Poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια': Co-textual Implicatures*

The invented, antilexical items to be examined in this section appear in the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' from the collection *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά* (Elytis 1984c: 17-19), which may be one of the poems that Elytis wrote sometime between 1960 and 1965, as was conjectured in Chapter 3 (n. 229). The subject-matter of this poem is the quest for truth. The type of truth searched for in the poem is left rather indeterminate in its title, which creates certain interpretative problems. The poem is divided into three sections. In the last of these sections, the phrases 'Θόη θόη θμὸς', ''Αρίηω ἠθύμως θμὸς' and 'Θμὸς θμὸς ἄδυσος' (1984c:

19) are antilexical constructions, since they do not exist in the Greek lexicon and have been devised by the poet.

On a formal level, the poem enacts its title; on the one hand, the three poetic sections seem to be three stages in the poetic quest for truth. On the other hand, 'ἡ ἀλήθεια' itself is mentioned three times, that is, in a kind of cyclical repetition at the beginning and the end of the first section of the poem, and in the first line of the second section. As is apparent, 'ἡ ἀλήθεια' corresponds both as regards the structure of the poem, and therefore semantically, to 'ἕνα τίποτα': not only does this noun phrase ('ἕνα τίποτα') appear at the end of the second section, and then in the beginning and the end of the third, that is, in places which correspond structurally to the positions of the noun phrase 'ἡ ἀλήθεια',[388] but it is also offered as the final resolution of the poetic quest for truth at the end of the poem. Repetition as a method of creating incantatory effects is widely employed throughout the poem in the elaboration of grammatical, syntactic and semantic correspondences, which always occur three times.[389]

Incantatory effects are also achieved in the poem through the interjection of two dialogical parts in stanzaic form, each of them occupying the space of three and a half lines. Apart from the formal correspondences, there is also a structural correspondence between them, since the first of them appears near the end of the first section of the poem, and the second near the end of the third section. The first

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[388] On the one hand, the lexical unit 'ἀλήθεια' appears in the first line of the poem and the lexical unit 'τίποτα' in the last line; on the other hand, while 'ἡ ἀλήθεια' reappears at the end of the first section of the poem and in the beginning of the second section of the poem, 'ἕνα τίποτα' appears at the end of the second section of the poem and in the beginning of the third section of the poem.

[389] As Minucci observes, repetition is a stylistic choice which reflects Elytis' views on the incantatory function of poetry: 'Η επανάληψη [...] είναι ενδεικτική κυρίως της στάσης που έχει ο

dialogue takes place between the poetic persona and what seems to be his inner self. This may be presupposed by recourse to the extratextual context: the interlocutor of the poetic persona of Odysseas Elytis is called 'Οὔτις' (Elytis 1984c: 17), which points to the name Odysseus invented for himself in *The Odyssey* (IX, 366ff.). This assumption is reinforced in the second of the dialogical parts, since the question asked by the poetic persona in this case is indicative of his anxiety for self-knowledge ('τί ξέρετε ἀπὸ μένα;'). The second dialogue seems to involve the poetic persona, trees of two kinds, that is, 'poplar trees' and 'blue trees', and also the waves. The implication emerging from the co-text is that, on the one hand, the persona, who seems to be in a delirious state, addresses these trees and, on the other hand, he also listens to the waves. The end of the poem presents the culmination and the final resolution of the quest for truth. The poetic premonition that truth, and thus happiness ('ὁ Παράδεισος'), depends on 'ἕνα τίποτα' is confirmed by the trees and the waves:

Παραλαλοῦσα
κι ἔτρεχα Ἔφτασα κι ἀποτύπωνα τὰ κύματα στὴν
ἀκοὴ ἀπ᾽ τὴ γλώσσα

–Ἒ καβάκια μαῦρα φώναζα κι ἐσεῖς γαλάζια
δέντρα τί ξέρετε ἀπὸ μένα; – Θόη θόη θμὸς –Ἒ;
τί; – ᾽Αρίηω ἠθύμως θμὸς – Δὲν ἄκουσα τί πρά-
γμα; – Θμὸς θμὸς ἄδυσος

Ὅσπου τέλος ἔνιωσα κι ἂς πᾶ νὰ μ᾽ ἔλεγαν τρελὸ
πὼς ἀπό᾽να τίποτα γίνεται ὁ Παράδεισος. (1984c: 19)

At first glance, the speech of the waves and the trees is opaque. Although the sequences of these antilexical items seem to imitate the sound of waves or that of the

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Ελύτης απέναντι στη λέξη, στάση που θα λέγαμε μαγική: η λέξη πρέπει να

leaves of trees, in each of them there is a manifest attempt by the poet to make it resemble human words and not natural sounds. Phonological and semantic traits of the word 'Παράδεισος' may be traced in the antilexical item 'ἄδυσος', with which it also rhymes; but the word 'ἄβυσσος' may also be evoked. The Nereids or the dynamic condition of fluidity and instability may be evoked in the antilexical formulation 'θόη' (cf. 'Κυμοθόη' and the verb 'θέω'), the name of the poet ''Αρίων' in the antilexical item ''Αρίηω', and the ancient Greek word 'θυμὸς' in the antilexical phrase 'ἠθύμως θμὸς'. But still the meaning of the three utterances articulated by the trees and the waves, and perhaps repeated and transcribed in human language by the persona, who acts and speaks like a madman ('Παραλαλοῦσα κι ἔτρεχα / Ἔφτασα κι ἀποτύπωνα τὰ κύματα στὴν ἀκοὴ ἀπ ' τὴ γλώσσα'), is rather obscure. The indication given in the text in the form of a series of very weak implicatures is that the utterance articulated by the trees and the waves may refer to the word 'number': on the one hand, the lexical unit 'ἀριθμὸς' itself seems to be evoked, since its semantic traits appear in the phonological sequences of the antilexical items ''Αρίηω' and 'θμὸς', and perhaps also in 'ἠθύμως'. On the other hand, a particular number, number three, is evoked, since the utterances are three in number, and each utterance consists of three words; in fact, the title may be a strong explicature, since truth is searched for or offered [?] 'Τρεῖς φορὲς'. Moreover, the structural and semantic play with the number three is repetitive, contributing to the incantatory rhythm of the poem and to the projection, and therefore the possible recovery, of successive layers of meaning. As has already been mentioned, the lexical

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ανακαλείται περισσότερες φορές για να πάρει πραγματική υπόσταση' (1993: 145).

unit 'ἀλήθεια' appears three times, as does the lexical unit 'τίποτα'. There are three utterances consisting of antilexical formulations, and each of them consists of three antilexical items. The poetic persona searches for 'Κάτι κάτι Κάτι' three times in the same utterance, and three times throughout the poem. The answers given by his inner self are three in number in the first dialogical part, and there are three answers given by the trees and the waves in the second dialogue. Words ('λόγια' and 'λέξεις') are rejected three times (which may allude to the denial of Jesus by Peter in the Bible), and there are three commandments kept by the persona in the name of God. There is also an attempt to order stanzas into three lines--but this is not consistent and it remains implicit in what is a disturbed arrangement of the lines.

As Holthuis observes, normally 'the semiotic disposition, i.e. above all the grammatical-semantic organization of the text to be interpreted, guides the construction of a "mental model" [...] or text world' (1994: 84). But, she claims, especially in poetic texts that may depend on neologisms, it is difficult to construct text worlds. In such cases, 'extra interpretative effort on the reader's part [is required, and also] more or less complex inferences which channel additional information into the interpretation model to be constructed'. Following this, the attempt to resolve the interpretative difficulties caused by the antilexical constructions employed by Elytis could very well throw the reader into a wild search for etymological roots[390] and intertextual associations.

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[390] Such is the case in the attempt of Belezinis to explain Elytis' antilexical formulations as words which are partially unmarked semantically (1986a: 105-106). In this way, in his otherwise interesting essay, Belezinis fails to grasp the function of these antilexical constructions, both from a semantic and from a structural point of view, and thus misses the meaning of the principal statement made by Elytis in the poem.

It should be kept in mind that poems do not aim to turn interpretation into an issue, and that a successful poem guides the reader rather than creates obstacles for him. What may be difficult to grasp, then, is what the poet presupposes to be mutually manifest between him and the reader and not the way he says what he says. But by invoking Elytis' principle of the unity of content and form, one may make the assumption that the utterances themselves contain certain manifestations of their optimal relevance; in other words, what is communicated is based on the poet's presumption of mutual knowledge, that is, knowledge he believes or hopes he shares with the reader. In order to resolve the opacity of the three utterances and understand the antilexical constructions devised, the reader ought to observe the principle of optimal relevance and try to contextualize the utterances. Following Relevance Theory, there may be two ways to do this. One is the way followed in this section, in which the weak implicatures provided in the utterances themselves and in the co-text have been examined. The second way is to search for context outside the text in order to derive contextual implications.

6.2.2.2 *Contextual Implications*: *Antilexism in Other Poems by Elytis and Embirikos*

The construction of a model of interpretation for the antilexical formulations appearing in the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' would require not only linguistic knowledge but also a body of general knowledge and belief, what is called 'encyclopaedic knowledge' (Levinson 1983: 21). The encyclopaedia of general knowledge can be extraliterary or intraliterary.

Searching for extraliterary context, one may draw on Elytis' general comments on his conception of style and on the ways to achieve it. On the other hand, one should bear in mind Elytis' reception of (mainly) nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry, and especially his relation with the Surrealist avant-garde. Both of these aspects have been considered in Part I. What might be useful to mention here is Elytis' observations on the principles of purity and rarity that govern the selection of words in his poetry as well as their combination (Elytis 1975: 637-638). Elytis claimed that it is in particular the Greek language that generates these principles.

The poem's intraliterary context may refer to intertextual relations between different poetic texts by Elytis, to intertextual relations developing between the particular poem and other poetry, and also to text-specific metatextuality (Genette 1982: 10), that is, the relation between the particular poem and Elytis' commentaries. By taking into account the poem's context, one may make inferences through the processing of its contextual implications, that is, of the 'contextual determinants of implicit meaning' (Butler 1984: 1) involved in its antilexical utterances, and therefore in the poem itself.

In Elytis' poetry, antilexical items also appear in *Μαρία Νεφέλη* :

> [έωσότου] ἐπικοινωνήσουν οἱ ἀνθοπῶλες μέ τεράστιες ἀνεμῶνες
> περασμένες στ' αὐτιά τους σάν ἀκουστικά·
>
> σήματα-λέξεις μυστηριώδεις
> "'Αστεροβαδών" "'Ιδιολάθης" "Μίκυον" –ὅπου σημαίνει
> ἔχει συντελεσθεῖ τό θέλημά σας κι ἡ φωνή τῆς γῆς
> ἐπαληθεύεται ἤδη στά λουλούδια. (1984b: 36)

and in *'Ημερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου 'Απριλίου* :

ΕΙΝΑΙ ΚΑΤΙ ΝΥΧΤΕΣ τώρα τελευταῖα, πού ἀκούω πέδιλα στίς πλάκες, θροΐσματα ὑφασμάτων καί λέξεις ἄγνωστες πού μοιάζουν πικρές καί δυνατές σάν ἀγριόχορτα: "ὕρφη" "σαραγάνδα" "τίντελο" "δελεάνα"... (1984d: 51)

In both of these cases, the poetic persona regards these expressions as words which refer to the vegetal world. In the first case, he holds that they are mysterious signals, spelled out by the earth, through the flowers. In the second case, the words are considered to be unknown and to have a semantic resemblance with wild plants.

In the poem 'Ρῆμα τὸ σκοτεινὸν' from the collection *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*, the verb 'καταρκυθμεύω' (Elytis 1991: 36) is yet another instance of a semantically opaque and ambiguous antilexical construction. In the poem, the persona explicitly states that this is a word which he has invented in order to prove that the language he understands is of a different kind than that spoken by other people. The word is reported to have been made up of letters ('many consonants and very few vowels'), 'cheaply bought' from Hades, and it is employed in the poem as the symbolic key to open the doors to Hades, which is described in imagery of wild nature.

As in 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια', the antilexical constructions of these poems are not really attempts to transcribe the sound or the visual aspect of the language of nature into signs that will be linguistically perceptible to human beings. These antilexical items are not simply phonetic elicitors of semantic traits,[391] as would

[391] The phonetic elicitors of semantic traits belong both to the phonological and to the lexical level of language. They are sequences that look like words but cannot always be considered as semantic constituents; in fact, it is difficult 'to find recurrent contrasts of form in which they participate, let alone recurrent semantic contrasts' (Cruse 1986: 35). Usually they are considered on the basis of iconicity and arbitrariness; see Lyons (1977: 102ff.) and Bolinger (1980: 17ff.).

happen in cases of onomatopoeia and sound symbolism,[392] which are also widely employed in Elytis poetry, including the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' (1984c: 17 and 19).[393] In contrast, in the devised antilexical items of these poems, effort has been made to find resemblances between them and not so much the sound of natural elements, but the sound of human language--and also its visual aspect, that is, written form.

Elytis' invention of antilexical constructions is reminiscent of Embirikos' incomprehensible utterance 'ΚΑΛΑ ΛΕΟΝΑ ΝΟΛΑ ΠΥ' (1980: 26), which is said twice in 'Οἱ Χαρταετοὶ' to be written in white smoke, and the semantically opaque word "Οκτάνα' (written twenty eight times in small letters and once in capitals) in '"Οχι Μπραζίλια μὰ 'Οκτάνα' (1980: 76-79). In these cases, the above principle in their invention seems to be shared by Elytis and Embirikos, although the two poets do not seem to follow the same rules (if any). Something similar seems to happen in the antilexical sequences of the latter's "Η νῆσος τῶν Ροβινσώνων'. These sequences are either integrated into the poetic text by being written in small letters and without inverted commas, or they are foregrounded by being written in capital letters and placed within inverted commas. In the poem, these words are articulated by the hermit. The poetic persona observes that the hermit invents new lexical forms for the senses of existing lexical units ('ὁ ἐρημίτης πλάθει νέες λέξεις (νέα δοχεῖα τῶν παλαιῶν ἐννοιῶν), λέξεις ἀπόλυτα δικές του') (Embirikos 1980: 94). What results from this creative process is completely new words or, more accurately, new lexical forms, which bring the hermit-poet, who is thus associated with God ('ὄχι

[392] While onomatopoeic words may be held to have a degree of objective auditory similarity with their referents, in sound symbolism there is no auditory resemblance (Cruse 1986: 34-35).

ἀπὸ τὰ χείλη ἑνὸς θνητοῦ, μὰ ἀπὸ τὸ μέγα στόμα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ'), into an active communion with living nature ('λέξεις ποὺ τὶς προφέρει ὁ ἐρημίτης κοινωνῶν μὲ τὴν πέριξ αὐτοῦ ὀργῶσαν συρροὴν ἁπάντων τῶν στοιχείων'). These words form the following sequences of antilexical items: '"Αχαρ, λαμίρ, ἰσχάρ, μανίκ, νούμα, ραπάντα, ἄντα!', uttered by the hermit; 'Πάθε, σιγγά, ἀλλασονί, πέγγε, κιμέ, βοντά, οὐνόρα!', uttered by the hermit and echoed by the island--when echoed by the island, these same antilexical items are quoted in capital letters and are placed within inverted commas. Also antilexical are the formulations constituting utterances which are quoted in the text '" ΚΑΜΕ ΛΑΜΑ ΧΑΜΙ ΑΧΜΑΡ ΠΑΝΕ ΑΜΠΟΡ ΕΛΜΑΝΑ!"', spelled out once by the hermit who shares the erotic excitement of the animal world of the island, and echoed by the island, and finally '"ΠΑΝΕ ΩΩΩΧ-ΩΩΩ ΑΑΑΧ-ΑΑΑ ΟΥΑ-ΟΥΑ ΕΛΜΑΝΑ!"', as an echo by the island.

The persona's comment on the nature of these words is a very strong explicature. Although the words appear to be semantically opaque, it is emphatically claimed that what is changed is not their semantic but their formal aspect. The fact that some of these utterances, whether pronounced by the hermit or echoed by the vegetable and animal world of the island, appear in quotation marks, may suggest that they are the language of nature, which the hermit was able to understand and pronounce. Thus, these utterances may be expressive not only of the Surrealist 'freedom of speech' (Yatromanolakis 1983: 197), but also of the emotional understanding and communication between the hermit (a human being) and living

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[393] Cf. the phonetic sequences 'πὶτ-πὶτ', 'τλὶπ-τλὶπ' and 'βββββ' (Elytis 1984c: 17 and 19).

nature. These antilexical formulations are presented as the combination of lexical senses, the result of the processes of the human mind, and new lexical forms, which may reflect the communication achieved on the grounds of a common emotional condition shared between nature and the particular human being. Thus, these words, which may stand for the 'μαγική επωδό' (Yatromanolakis 1983: 196) of the language of the poem, may not be irrational or nonsensical, as Yatromanolakis claims (1983: 195), but non-transparent to those who do not speak this language, those who are not initiated into the code of this language.

From a technical viewpoint, this code may have been the result of experiments which may have been influenced not only by Surrealism, but also by other tendencies within the French avant-garde. Both Elytis and Embirikos experimented in the most advanced of the Surrealist projects, and both were well informed about the developments of the avant-garde in France. Among others, André Martel's poetry of the *langage paralloïdre,* Jean-Clarence Lambert's *poésie ouverte*, and the lettrist pursuits of Isidore Isou, Maurice Lemaître and Áltagõr,[394] may have been models for the invention of the antilexical constructions appearing in the poetry of Embirikos and Elytis.[395] Most of the experiments of these poets preceded the writing of the poems by Elytis and Embirikos considered in this section.[396]

Lettrism, 'la pure poésie phonétique', was the invention of Isou, and it was supported by his follower and colleague Lemaître. Both poets searched for 'pure

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[394] Nikolaidis considers the antilexical constructions of Embirikos to be the product of lettrist experiments (1985: 589).

[395] The influence of the French avant-garde on Elytis can be clearly traced in the poetic experiments of *Ὁ μικρὸς Ναυτίλος*, a collection of poems whose composition seems to have immediately followed the publication of *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά.*

letters' and the poetry of both is based on phonology and on the music of the verses. Lettrist poetry concerned 'Les mots sans sens; les paroles à signification cachée prises pour leurs lettres; les onomatopées' (Isou 1947: 224). The poetry of Isou and Lemaître may have been the main model for the code or the principles involved in the invention of the antilexical constructions appearing both in Elytis' poem and in Embirikos.[397]

The 'open poetry' of Lambert, based on a theory that owes a lot both to Surrealism and to Lettrism,[398] may have further informed Elytis' experiments with words. In his 'Thèses pour une poésie ouverte', Lambert provided the principles of this kind of poetry; among others, he insisted that 'le mot soit un act' (1967: 109), and that the poet 's'instaure comme médiateur entre le signe et la signification'. He pointed out that the method was to treat words 'comme des objets, des êtres en soi, qui *sont* avant de *signifier* (1967: 110; his emphasis). Unlike Embirikos, whose experiments seem to be purely Lettrist, Elytis seems to follow some of the principles of the method employed by Lambert in order to devise his antilexical constructions. Thus, his antilexical formulations, on the one hand, retain the semantic traits of the lexical units that inspired them and, on the other, unfold in a creative expansion of lexical senses, thus evoking the semantic traits of other words, which, in their turn, can lead to other words, and so on. This is in fact how 'open poetry' may be defined. Examples from Lambert's poetry ('Lar / Eal / Ité') (1967: 50), '*Imaginaire* I--Magie--

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[396] The poems of Embirikos''*Οκτάνα* may have been written between 1942 and 1965, as the dates given for most of them suggest, but, as Yatromanolakis observes, 'η κύρια εργασία έχει επιτελεσθεί ανάμεσα στα έτη 1960 και 1965' (1983: 146).

[397] Cf., for instance, Isou's *Précisions sur ma poèsie et moi,* followed by his 'ten magnificent poems' (Isou [1950]: 95-121).

[398] Lambert was also influenced by many painters and other poets.

nerfs') (1967: 52) are self-explanatory of the mechanism involved in its production. Mainly, this refers to the distinction between different senses revealed through the disturbed arrangement of letters (this disturbance is here more controlled than in Lettrism) and the inventive separation of the words, and also the addition, subtraction and modification of letters of the initial words. Such poetry requires a methodical reading. As Brindeau explains, Lambert's 'open poetry' is a method of writing and of reading: 'une méthode pour apprendre à être--à être un homme [...]. On découvrera en soi, par la pratique, que changer le langage, c'est changer l'homme' (1973: 503).

The modification of the ways of writing, reading and understanding poetry seems to have been the motive of Elytis' (and perhaps Embirikos') invention of such words as the antilexical items examined in this section. In another of the diary entries of *'Ημερολόγιο ένός ἀθέατου 'Απριλίου,* the poetic persona exclaims that he is thousands of years old, and so is his writing, which for this reason is incomprehensible to other people.[399] Similarly, in the closing part of *'Ο μικρὸς Ναυτίλος,* entitled ' Ἔξοδος', the poetic persona claims that, although what he says is not 'ἀκατανόητα [λόγια]',[400] nobody listens to him. The implication may be that, although the poet speaks a different language, this can be understood by someone who listens to him and pays due attention. This seems to be the meaning of the opening lines of the poem 'Ρῆμα τὸ σκοτεινόν', where the persona claims that he is 'hardly

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[399] See the following lines, appearing in the final diary entry of *'Ημερολόγιο ένός ἀθέατου 'Απριλίου*: ' Ἔγινα χιλιάδων ἐτῶν καί ἤδη χρησιμοποιῶ τή Μινωική γραφή μέ τόση ἄνεση πού ὁ κόσμος ἀπορεῖ καί πιστεύει στό θαῦμα. / Τό εὐτύχημα εἶναι ὅτι δέν καταφέρνει νά μέ διαβάσει' (Elytis 1984d: 57).

[400] The passage from *'Ο μικρὸς Ναυτίλος* is the following: 'ΑΛΛ' ΑΚΑΤΑΝΟΗΤΑ ΔΕΝ / ἀκούει κανένας. Πάει ψηλὰ ὁλοένα καιούμενο τοῦ Παραδείσου τὸ πουλί. Κι ὅλες οἱ Παναγίες οἱ ἀσημένιες, τίποτε. 'Αλλοῦ γυρίστηκε ἡ φωνὴ καὶ ἀθαυματούργητα ἔμειναν τὰ μάτια' (Elytis 1986a: 123).

visible'[401] to those who are not aware of heavenly things. In fact, this poem seems to be a rewriting of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια', since there is a clear correspondence in the subject-matter of the two poems. Apart from many other formal, semantic and poetic similarities between them, there are three aspects that are common to both of them. Firstly, in the place of the sequences of the antilexical constructions of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια', the verb 'καταρκυθμεύω' (1991: 36) has been invented in 'Ρῆμα τὸ σκοτεινόν'; phonological and perhaps also semantic traits of the antilexical item 'καταρκυθμεύω' may be traced in the antilexical sequence ''Αρίηω ἠθύμως θμὸς' of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια'. Secondly, the poetic persona rejects the referential value of language in both poems: 'Μονάχα οἱ λέξεις δὲ μοῦ ἀρκούσανε' (1984c: 19), and 'Δὲν / Ὑπακούουν τὰ πράγματα στὰ ὀνόματά τους' (1991: 36). Thirdly and most importantly, in both of these poems, the subject-matter is the poetic quest for truth, which is not stated but only alluded to in each of the poems: 'ἀπό 'να τίποτα γίνεται ὁ Παράδεισος' (1984c: 19), and ' Ἔχει συνέχεια. Δὲ θὰ τὴν πῶ. [...] Ἡ ἀλήθεια μόνον ἔναντι θανάτου δίδεται' (1991: 37).

In all of the above cases, poetic metalanguage revolves around the issue of the degree of the interpretability of the language of poetry. It is claimed that its non-transparency, both in its written form ('ἀθαυματούργητα ἔμειναν τὰ μάτια', 'Δυσδιάκριτος') and as 'φωνή', should be credited to the fact that people are unable to understand the language because they cannot understand the meaning expressed (or the vision decsribed) in this language. In other words, these passages restate Elytis'

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[401] See the following lines from the poem 'Ρῆμα τὸ σκοτεινόν': 'Εἶμαι ἄλλης γλώσσας, δυστυχῶς, καὶ Ἡλίου τοῦ Κρυπτοῦ ὥστε / Οἱ ὄχι ἐνήμεροι τῶν οὐρανίων νὰ μ' ἀγνοοῦν.

views on the 'second condition' of life and the 'third condition' of poetry, as examined in Chapter 4. It is indeed in his poetry that he develops his (Surrealist) ideas on the function of poetry as a sort of magic, which reveals aspects of life that habit makes difficult to perceive.

Far less complex are the antilexical constructions appearing in ' 'Η Γένεσις' of *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*; this is the first but also the simplest instance of antilexism that can be observed in Elytis' poetry, and it is for this reason that it has been left till last in this reading: this first and rather simple case of antilexism can show that all cases of antilexism in the poetry of Elytis' second period obey the same theoretical principles and all serve the same poetic purpose.

In ' 'Η Γένεσις', the poetic persona refers to the image of girls who blow into a big shell, and others who use chalk to write 'λόγια παράξενα, αἰνιγματικά' (1980a: 18). These are the antilexical units which appear in the sequence 'ΡΩΕΣ, ΑΛΑΣΘΑΣ, ΑΡΙΜΝΑ, / ΟΛΗΙΣ, ΑΙΑΣΑΝΘΑ, ΥΕΛΤΗΣ'. Their opacity is only illusory and they can easily be identified with anagrams corresponding to the lexical units 'ΕΡΩΣ', 'ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ', 'ΜΑΡΙΝΑ', 'ΗΛΙΟΣ', 'ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΑ', 'ΕΛΥΤΗΣ'.[402] Elytis explains in his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* that these lexical units 'διαλέχτηκαν για να παίρνουν με τον αναγραμματισμό τους αρχαιόπρεπο χρώμα' (1995a: 51). The anagrams of ' 'Η Γένεσις' may have been Elytis' first attempt to write a different kind of language, by finding a new (lexical) form for the same lexical senses, just as Embirikos did. As is the case with the hermit in ' 'Η νῆσος τῶν Ροβινσώνων', Elytis' poetic persona considers his ability to see the

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Δυσδιάκριτος' (1991: 35).

'strange, enigmatic words' written by the girls, who act as sorceresses, as a consequence of his union with nature. However, while in Embirikos' poem nature witnesses the process of the illumination of the hermit and simply echoes the words spoken by him, in Elytis' poem the poetic persona is not only able to understand the language of nature, but in fact holds a long dialogue with the sun, through nature. Thus, apart from the words written by the girl sorceresses, which the persona can read, he is also able to understand the speech of the hissing of the waves and the whisper of the trees ('ΥΣΤΕΡΑ καὶ τὸ φλοῖσβο ἐνόησα καὶ τὸν μακρὺ ἀτελείωτο ψίθυρο τῶν δέντρων'). He can also hear and, presumably, understand the voices of the north wind ('λάλησε πιὸ δυνατὰ ὁ βοριάς'), of birds, of hyacinths, and of the month of July ('μικρὲς φωνὲς πουλιῶν καὶ ὑακίνθων / ἢ ἄλλα λόγια τοῦ Ἰουλίου'). Concurrently, it is explicitly stated that, through these voices, it is the sun that speaks to the poetic persona: ''Ηταν ὁ ἥλιος [...] / ἴδια ἡ μνήμη γινάμενη παρὸν / τὴ φωνὴ πῆρε τῶν δέντρων, τῶν κυμάτων') (1980a: 13).

As has been pointed out in Chapter 3, the metaphysical power of the sun ('solar metaphysics') and that of the collective memory, associated with Elytis' notion of 'Πλατωνική γεωμέτρηση', are central ideas in his poetics. It has also been explained that, in poetry, the notion of 'geometry', to be conceived together with transcendence, refers to the transposition from the natural to the noetic (or the imaginary). In ''Η Γένεσις', the speech of the sun is conveyed by trees and waves, and collective memory also speaks through the wind: '"'Ακριβὰ λόγια, μοῦ εἶπε, ὅρκοι παλαιοὶ / ποὺ ἔσωσε ὁ Καιρὸς καὶ ἡ σίγουρη ἀκοὴ τῶν μακρινῶν

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[402] See Maronitis 1984: 21, and Lignadis 1985: 75. Cf. the reappearence of the anagram 'APIMNA' in the sequence 'APIMNA ΕΦΗ ΕΛ' in *Μαρία Νεφέλη* (Elytis 1984b: 15).

ἀνέμων"' (1980a: 19). The voice of the wind, waves, trees and plants is a recurrent motif in Elytis' poetry from *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and *Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ*[403] onwards. They are also associated with death,[404] and they are identified with prophecy.[405]

In Elytis' essay 'Πρώτα-πρώτα', which was probably written after the composition of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' and can thus be used as a metadiscursive comment on it, his views on poetry as a kind of magic are presented in a rather straightforward manner.[406] The second passage of this essay, written in a kind of poetic prose whose abstraction resembles the speech of psychologically disturbed persons or the feverish delirium of sickness, is interpolated between other passages written in his usual, still poetic but concrete prose style. The passage refers to language, that is, both speech and writing, and poetry. It is a key text for the reading of the collection *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά*, where the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' appears, but also for a better understanding of certain aspects of Elytis' poetics, and among them, the significance and the function of incantation in his poetry. As has been observed in Chapter 4, the text refers to reminiscences and visions of the poet's childhood that revolve around *φωνές*, which may be identified with the speech of the subconscious. Elytis seems to talk with his

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[403] See the poem ''Ο ἀγράμματος καὶ ἡ ὡραία' (*Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*): 'Λόγια μόλις τῶν κυμάτων ἤ μισομαντεμένα σ' ἕνα θρόισμα, κι ἄλλα ποὺ μοιάζουν τῶν ἀποθαμένων κι ἀλαφιάζονται μέσα στὰ κυπαρίσσια' (Elytis 1979a: 9).

[404] See the poem 'Αἰῶνος εἴδωλον' (*Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ*): 'ἐσεῖς /'Απὸ τὸν ἄλλο κόσμο, μετανοημένοι, πέστε μας /Ποιὸ φύλλο, ποιὸ πουλί, ποιὸς κῆπος μέσ' στὴ θάλασσα' (Elytis 1980b: 39).

[405] The 'Beauty' of the poem "Ο ἀγράμματος καὶ ἡ ὡραία' is a sorceress.

[406] In his essay 'Magie' (1893), Mallarmé maintains that the poetic language is an alchemy or magic; his idea ('Je dis qu'existe entre les vieux procédés et le sortilège, que restera la poésie, une parité secrète') (1945: 400) is reminiscent of Baudelaire's 'la sorcellerie évocatoire', Rimbaud's 'l'alchimie du verbe', and looks forward to Aragon's 'la puissance incantatoire'.

inner self, and the question and answer 'Ποιος μιλάει; –Ούτις! Ούτις' (1987: 12) allude to the first dialogical part of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια'. The speech uttered by the subconscious is attributed by Elytis to primordial questions and prophecies:

> Ω φωνές, φτασμένες από το άγνωστο, μισές ρωτήματα και μισές τυραννικοί χρησμοί, μετεωρίτες του μέσα διαστήματος, θραύσματα συνείδησης που αποστρακίστηκαν στα χείλη των Σειρήνων και τα θέριεψεν ο αγέρας, καγχασμοί δυναμωμένοι από δαιμονικό αντηχείο, ούου, ούουου, η μεγάλη αόρατη επιφάνεια κάτω απ' το δάσος, όταν απάνω κορυφώνεται η ανάγκη να τρυπήσεις ουρανούς σαν αηδονολαλιά!

He is looking for those *λέξεις* which refer to the preconscious state of language:

> –Μα ποιος μιλάει; Δεν ακούγεται τίποτα μέσα στη σκοτεινιά. *Οι λέξεις* πού είναι; Όχι αυτές, οι άλλες, όπως έμοιαζαν πριν στρογγυλέψουνε, πριν πιάσουνε μαλλί από 'να σ' άλλο στόμα! Πού ν' ανατρίχιασαν πρώτη φορά, κι ο Έλληνας εμίλησε; (his emphasis)

The voice of his subconscious also refers to a kind of *γραφή* whose alphabet is vegetal, maritime and solar. The 'writing of seaweed of the sun' obviously refers to poetic writing: '–Από παιδί τα πήρε λάθος τα γράμματα του κόσμου· ζητούσε "μια γραφή από φύκια του ήλιου". Ποιος άλλος τη νογάει; Μονάχα εκείνος κράτησε την εντολή' (1987: 14). The adult poet seems to have found the words and the writing he has been searching for since he was a child in the recollection of the words of an angelically beautiful woman who, like a sorceress, was holding a translucent wet pebble and was studying it. Her speech consists of antilexical formulations which, in their sound and written form, convey the 'αρχαιόπρεπο

χρώμα'[407] of Elytis' anagrams: 'Νάγ' ἰωδόσσα ἠνὶς μυριόλεον ἐνιπέσσα /'Ιτόεν οὐ κιλδάνα. Συμβιδὶ δ' ἄς. Παμφώετις' (1987: 13). It is characteristic that in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, the layout of this passage, which sounds and looks like dialectal ancient Greek, is foregrounded typographically by being quoted in a different typeface than the rest of the text. The passage is also quoted in verse form, as if it were a poem.

Acknowledging the difficulties that his reader may have in understanding the written transcription of this delirious speech ('Παραμιλούσε και δεν έβγανες μια λέξη') and in a metalinguistic attempt to explain, or to observe the principle of relevance, Elytis provides what can be regarded as a translation of the above passage, which is also foregrounded by being italicized: '¬Θα σου δώσω εγώ ένα δέρμα που να κοιτάν οι άνθρωποι από μέσα. / Και να μην έχεις ούτ' ένα μυστικό. Σ' όλους εσύ θ' ανήκεις. Όλος φως.' This seems to be an attempt to contextualize the incomprehensible, antilexical passage. However, he provides no further explanation for the rest of the speech, which is also quoted in verse form and resembles ancient Greek:

> –'Αλλότερος ἢ θὶν παρὰ σαλτὸς ἰαῖος. Κιδάναν φερ' ἄλκαν
> 'Υμμήταον, ἰμίπαμπτον
> Παμβωετὶ νικώτερον
> Σχὰς ὀλλεπίων λύκτωρ κὺν θαλτὸς οὐ ἰατὸς
> Παιδόεν ἰρισίμας. Θόης, θόη. Θμώς [sic]. (1987: 14)

In this passage, the antilexical items 'Θόης', 'θόη' and 'Θμώς' evoke the antilexical constructions of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια', although only 'θόη' seems to

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[407] In keeping with Elytis' observations on the principle of 'αρχαιόπρεπο χρώμα' for the construction of the anagrams appearing in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, as pointed out above, these antilexical constructions are quoted here in the traditional diacritic system ('polytonic').

correspond exactly to the antilexical item 'θόη' of the poem. Elytis also draws parallels with the poem in the explanation he offers for the obscure passage of the speech of the sorceress. He observes that ' Έτσι μονάχα ο φλοίσβος ή μια φυλλωσιά γίνεται να μιλήσουν. – Όμοια κατάρα· μια κατάρα που τη λέει μέρα-νύχτα ο άνεμος· άστατες συλλαβές που ξεγελούν και κάνουν να παραμιλούν τ' αηδόνια' (1987: 13-14). In other words, the speech of the trees and the waves, which appears in 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια', is conveyed by the wind, that is, the bearer of the collective unconscious; as has already been observed, the same also happens in ' 'Η Γένεσις'.

Apparently the poet identifies this 'παραμιλητό' or 'γραφή' to the seducing song ('Σειρήνες') of poetry ('αηδόνια'). Language is compared to a wood (cf. Baudelaire's *forêt de symboles*) and words are to be found in a 'μεγάλη αόρατη επιφάνεια κάτω απ' το δάσος', 'Στο νερό...στο νερό...' (1987: 12). In other words, the poet points out that words have to come as a magic incantation spelt out by the leaves of the trees and the undulations of the sea: ' 'Ακουγα ένα-ένα τα φύλλα να μιλάν μέσα στον ύπνο μου. "Παιδί, παιδάκι." Το νερό με ταλάντευε -κι όλη τη στεριά μαζί μου' (1987: 13). It is not coincidental that the voice calling the child reappears in the poem ' 'Ο φυλλομάντης' (*Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ*), whose subject-matter alludes to the incantatory or the prophetic function of poetry (1980b: 37-38).

Elytis marvelled at the phenomenon of the birth of language. As has been already observed in Chapter(s) 1 (and 3), his view was that the natural elements of Greece had their analogues in language (and in the Greek soul). These ideas are explained in the fourth part of 'Πρώτα-πρώτα':

> τα στόματα που μπόρεσαν να μιλήσουν έτσι κι όχι αλλιώς, [...] υπακούανε στην ιδιαίτερη ακτινοβολία που προσλαμβάνουν τα φυσικά φαινόμενα στη συγκεκριμένη αυτή γεωγραφική περιοχή. Μεταφέρανε, και από συλλαβή σε συλλαβή σωματώνανε, τις έννοιες σε σύμβολα που είχαν το ίδιο καθαρό περίγραμμα [...] με τα πράγματα που υπήρξανε η γενεσιουργός τους αιτία -ένα βουνό στην πρωινή αιθρία, έναν ήλιο καταμεσής της θάλασσας, ένα βότσαλο μες στη διαύγεια του βυθού. (1987: 29)

He describes the process leading to the birth of language as an 'αγωγή της ακοής απέναντι σε ό,τι θα μπορούσαμε να ονομάσουμε "ηχώ των φαινομένων"', and he maintains that it originates in a psychic function ('ευαισθησία'). He further points out that language and its symbolic transcription, as for instance 'η διαφορετική διάταξη της γραφής' in the fragments of Sappho's poetry (1987: 26), inspired in him the same sense of mystery or 'θαυματουργία' (1987: 28) as irrational expression, the 'mechanism' of fairy tales,[408] the 'mechanism' of dreams, the supernatural, and 'το αναπότρεπτο της μαγικής δύναμης των αριθμών'. He claims that this mystery of poetry was to him similar to the mystery of the words of the spells, the magic incantations ('ξόρκια') (1987: 26), that is, 'λόγια [...] παράξενα, "παλαβάτα"',[409] which he regarded as 'μια μετατόπιση του ονείρου στο λεκτικό ιδίωμα' (1987: 27). In his view, one needed magic in order to turn words into poetry and to establish the different reality of poetry (1987: 11). As he observes in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), the magic of poetry was the means to see behind the phenomenal side of things, and to perceive 'μια τάξη [...] όπου ο αριθμός ήταν τόσο αληθινός, συνάμα και άπιαστος' (1987: 327).

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[408] Novalis had an extreme interest in fairy tales and so did the Surrealists.
[409] Cf. the line 'λόγια παράξενα, αἰνιγματικά' in ' 'Η Γένεσις' (1980a: 18).

The association made in this text between the Greek language (which is the analogue of Greek nature) and the function of the imagination (the unconscious), dream, the supernatural, and numbers, which all make up the 'magic' of poetry, is not simply a theoretical reflection on Elytis' part. In his poetry, this association is realized practically and, in some cases, it is even carried to an extreme. This happens mainly in poems whose subject-matter is poetry and the poetic act, as is the case in 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια'.

The contextual implications discovered so far in relation to the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια', while attempting to achieve optimal relevance, may be finally used in the processing of the poem's co-textual array of weak implicatures in order to make intrepretative assumptions. This processing may lead to the following interpretation of the poem, including its obscure antilexical formulations.

6.2.2.3 *Interpretative Assumptions for the Poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια'*

Until a certain stage of his life the persona of the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' ascetically ('ἄγιασα') (Elytis 1984c: 17) expects to find something indeterminate ('Κάτι κάτι Κάτι'), which is not truth as it appears to be in everyday life ('Κάτι ἄλλο νὰ βρεθεῖ'). He decides to search for this truth in his own inner self. The lines 'Τράβηξα / ἔτσι ὅπως τραβᾶς μιὰ βάρκα στὴ στεριὰ / τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἀπὸ μέρος ποὺ νὰ βλέπεις μέσα του' may refer to a death, as in the poem "Η αὐτοψία' (*Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*) (Elytis 1979c: 11-12); the human being who is

drawn may be a corpse, the dead body of someone who died violently. Or the death may be metaphorical, referring to something that died 'inside' him.

That a murder has or may take place is suggested in the answer given by the inner self ('Ὁ φονιὰς') (Elytis 1984c: 17) and in the presence of the hawk ('Τὸ γεράκι τὸ γεράκι φτάνει ἔφτασε'). The murderer may be the persona or his inner self. That which is killed is words inside him (''Αλλὰ κιόλας λιγόστευαν τὰ λόγια'). The utterance 'Τέτοια ἡ ἀλήθεια' declares the death of words at the end of the first section of the poem and in the opening of the second.

The utterance ' Ὅταν ἀποτραβήχτηκαν τὰ λόγια' (Elytis 1984c: 18) refers to the time of death; this is the stillness of things, and it is exorcized by a prayer ('Πάτερ ἡμῶν'), and the acknowledgement of nothingness ('Μ ' ἕνα τίποτα ἔζησα'), which ends the second section of the poem and marks the beginning of the third. The importance of the 'mechanism of incantation' or of the spell ('ξόρκι') on his poetics has been stressed by Elytis himself, as was explained in the previous section.[410]

The persona confesses that, anyhow, words were not adequate to his needs ('Μονάχα οἱ λέξεις δὲ μοῦ ἀρκούσανε') (Elytis 1984c: 19), and therefore, poetry, the work of his life, was simply nothing ('Μ ' ἕνα τίποτα ἔζησα'). He tries to use his imagination ('ἐσκαρφίστηκα τὰ μύρια ὅσα') and continues to use the mechanism of incantation ('φχιὰ φχιοὺ φχιοὺ') by imagining a natural Paradise ('Τί γυαλόπετρες φοῦχτες / τί καλάθια φρέσκες μέλισσες καὶ σταμνιὰ φουσκωτὰ') and by invoking the support of the collective unconscious ('ὅπου ἄκουγες βββββ νὰ

[410] See also Elytis 1995a: 36.

σοῦ βροντάει αἰχμάλωτος ἀέρας'). Thus, he is able to define with more precision the truth he has been looking for; this is the 'single Point', which is evoked in its opposite ('Κάτι κάτι / Κάτι δαιμονικὸ μὰ ποὺ νὰ πιάνεται σὰν σὲ δίχτυ στὸ σχῆμα τοῦ 'Αρχαγγέλου').

The contradiction conceived in his imagination leads him to crisis, to a delirium ('Παραλαλοῦσα κι ἔτρεχα'), which evokes the condition of the poet in Plato's *Ion*. He speaks to the waves and also listens to them ('ἀποτύπωνα τὰ κύματα στὴν ἀκοὴ ἀπ ' τὴ γλώσσα'), and finally decides to address the trees. Their answer, which points to the Heraclitean flux and the instability of things ('Θόη θόη') and which cancels out the stillness of death, is followed by the Pythagorean and Platonic order of number ('θμὸς [...] 'Αρίηω ἠθύμως / θμὸς [...] / [...] Θμὸς θμὸς') and the uniting third element, that is, Paradise ('ἄδυσος'). In the prophetic speech of nature, the persona comes to what may appear to others to be an irrational conclusion ('κι ἂς πᾶ νὰ μ ' ἔλεγαν τρελὸ'),[411] but is important to him because it is not the product of rational thought but of emotion ('τέλος ἔνιωσα'). He feels that poetry, initially regarded by him as 'ἕνα τίποτα', was in fact everything ('ἀπό 'να τίποτα γίνεται ὁ Παράδεισος'), since it came from him, that is, the poet ('' Αρίηω'), from his own soul ('ἠθύμως'), in his conscious attempt to find order and Paradise in the abysmal fluidity and orderlessness ('ἄδυσος') of life.

[411] The madness of the poet in the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' is also reminiscent of the illuminated poet in Schopenhauer's interpretation of Plato's example of the cave, which was mentioned in Chapter 3.

The poem seems to deal with the relation of the poet with his inner self (soul) and poetry. The Cratylic faith in the referential value of language is rejected. The poetic statement is that words are not adequate to respond to his existential quest for truth, to fulfil the wishes of his soul, and to realize in life the poetic vision, as conceived in the imagination. In contrast, this can be achieved through the order of number, for instance the real number 3, which, conceived geometrically, as in the Pythagorean tradition, may be the basis for all things perceptible. According to Philolaus, 'the nature of number is the cause of recognition, able to give guidance and teaching to every man in what is puzzling and unknown. For none of existing things would be clear to anyone either in themselves or in their relationship to one another, unless there existed Number and its essence. [...] Truth is related and in close natural union with the race of Number' (cited in Butler 1970: 10-11). In Plato's *Timaeus*, the order and the harmony of the soul correspond to the harmony of the World Soul, which has a mathematical structure.

In the essay 'Για μιαν οπτική του ήχου', which was published in 1996, Elytis claims that 'Μια κοινωνία όπου τ' αναγνώσιμα δέντρα γίνονται και πολυφωνικά της ίριδας βρίσκεται ήδη εν εξελίξει. Ας είναι καλά ο εκάστοτε γεωμέτρης ποιητής, πού 'χει κερδίσει τον στέφανο του ανέμου. Ίσως ο νέος Αρίων να γεννήθηκε μόλις εχθές' (1996a: 21). This comment evokes the poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια' and reinforces the interpretation reached in this section. In this case, Elytis' observation does not reflect authorial intentionality, since it is not an attempt to guide the reader but is rather offered as a late overall account of his poetic ideas. Thus, his views on the theoretical issue of (Platonic) 'geometry', the

importance of the personal unconscious ('τ ' αναγνώσιμα δέντρα γίνονται και πολυφωνικά της ίριδας') and of the collective unconscious ('τον στέφανο του ανέμου'), which are summarized in a very condensed manner in this passage, resonate in his poetry examined here.

There is a remarkable consistency between the ideas expressed by Elytis in his essays (especially those dating from the period 1944-1960) and the poetry of his second period. In this section, the consideration of an extreme case of invention of words has shown the clear correspondence between Elytis' thought and his poetic practice. Antilexical units that appear in the poetry of his second period may become transparent if one bears in mind Elytis' ideas on his poetics. The examination of these units has shown that, in his poetry, Elytis observes the principle of optimal relevance and builds on assumptions that he considers to be mutually manifest between him and his reader. On the other hand, it has been shown here that Elytis' view that poetry ought to develop out of language through the exploitation of its incantatory power is put into practice in his poetry. In this section, it has been explained that this is accomplished on the lexical level. In the next section, it is pointed out that this also happens with the image, which acquires an incantatory function, which is a distinctive stylistic feature of the poetry of Elytis' second period.

6.3 *Poetic Effects*: *Incantation in the Image*

The following sections focus on examples from Elytis' poetry where poetic metalanguage is employed. The theme of the dive has been selected since, being associated with the development of the instantaneity of illumination, which is also thematized in Elytis' poetry, it exemplifies the poetic claim for significance: motifs of epiphany are claims for the truth of the poetic vision or of the 'second condition' of life. The principles of the development of instantaneous impressions have been examined in Chapter 4. What is taken into consideration here is not these principles, which are presupposed, but the way in which the development of instantaneity becomes a theme referring to the self-reflexivity of poetry. Following the observations that have been made in Chapter 5 concerning Elytis' ideas on the poem, the readings of poetry attempted in sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.3 concentrate on the image. It is shown that in self-reflexive poems of Elytis' second period, imagery may develop in repetitive patterns by drawing on further poet-specific motifs. It is argued that this process depends in fact on a repetition of imagery, which corresponds to Elytis' views on 'διαφάνεια' and projection as both requisite conditions and aspirations for the development of the image. It is explained that this repetition, leading to intertextual relations which connect various of his poems, produces effects of incantation other than those achieved on the lexical, grammatical, morpho-syntactic or acoustic levels, and results in the unfolding of the marvellous image. The incantatory effects achieved through semantic correspondences between various poems of Elytis' second period are considered here as a distinctive type of poetic

effect cultivated by the poet, and one that requires special consideration, since it appears in poetry that refers to poetry itself.

The view of style offered by Relevance Theory informs the examination of poetry in sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.3, which is based on the processing of the weak implicatures provided in poetic effects which are chiefly based on metaphorical language. These implicatures are accessed as potential indicators of intertextual relations and thus signals of the poet's search for relevance.

As is explained in section 6.3.1, the general view of intertextuality as a 'web of functions that constitutes and regulates the relationships between text and intertext' (Riffaterre 1990: 57) is assumed, although, instead of adopting the notion of the 'intertext', which presupposes the post-structuralist conception of the infinite text,[412] the more generally employed notion of the 'pre-text' is maintained to refer to the text from which a quotation is taken or to which an allusion is made. Intertextuality is considered here both as a property of the text and as a phenomenon of the reading process, which emerges while the reader attempts to process and comprehend the implicatures provided in the poem's poetic effects. Intertextuality is regarded as a necessary function for the interpretation of the poem. While, on the one hand, the intertextual processing of the text, which may involve a number of strategies, depends on the 'intertextual disposition' of the text (Holthuis 1994: 78),[413] on the other hand, it develops in the interaction between text and reader.[414]

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[412] For the post-structuralist notion of intertextuality see Kristeva 1969: 84-112 and Grivel 1982: 237-248; also Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte* (1973).
[413] Cf. Riffaterre's notion of 'syllepsis' (1979: 496ff.).
[414] On this conception of intertextuality see Holthuis 1993: 29ff. and 177ff.

6.3.1 *Intertextuality in the Reading Process*

In section 6.2, interpretation proceeded by jumps, by ignoring certain gaps of the texts, which seemed of secondary importance or even irrelevant to the construction of the text-world of a poem. In critical studies, it is usual for such gaps to evade interpretation. In the next sections, interpretation focuses on the gaps or blurs, that is, on yet unidentified references in the text. Whereas it is presupposed that 'reading is meaning-constructive rather than an activity of extracting pre-existing meaning' (Steen 1991: 121), the reading of poetry undertaken in the following sections has a (mainly) author-oriented 'goal of interpretation' (Holthuis 1994: 85), since it constitutes an attempt to explore the extent to which Elytis' ideas are carried out in his poetry, or 'to reconstruct hypothetically what intention caused the author to use intertextual relations, with what background knowledge, under what promises and with what intention he selected and embedded into his text certain reference texts, for what reasons specific reference and marking strategies are used [...] etc.' (Holthuis 1994: 85-86). Naturally, on the other hand, this reading is an individual's approach to the text, expressive of her personal reactions to the text, and of her own attempts at '(re-)construction' (Holthuis 1994: 86),[415] or contextualization.

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[415] Certainly, the reading of poetry attempted in this section is not that of an 'ideal' reader. The notion of the 'ideal' reader, and the similar notions of the 'implied' (Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader* [1974]), the 'informed' reader (Stanley Fish, *Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics* [1970]) or 'model' reader (Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader* [1979]), or of the 'super-reader' (Riffaterre 1972), all evoke an ideal situation in which the reader has an ideally perfect knowledge of the existing literature, and immense interpretative capabilities. This is not the case in real reading situations, since, no matter how well-read and talented the reader may be, he/she can neither be an ideal possessor of knowledge and interpretative expertise, nor can he/she escape the limitations imposed from the situation of reading itself (place and time of reading, aims, ideological background, etc.). Cf. Culler 1981: 51-52.

There is 'explicit' and 'implicit' intertextuality, and a problem in intertextual studies is 'determining the degree of explicitness of the intertextuality in a literary work' (Jenny 1976: 35). Except for cases of mere influence or plagiarism, a poem contains signals or markers which show an intentional reference to other texts (Broich 1989: 120). Markers are 'always identifiable as [...] element[s] or pattern[s] belonging to another independent text' (Ben-Zorat 1976: 108). Explicitly marked intertextual relations are very unusual, especially in modernist poetry (Broich 1989: 127); usually, explicit marking appears as a metadiscursive comment, indicated by the writer or the editor. Therefore, one ought 'to consider that every textual entity may function as a potential indicator of an intertextual relation' (Holthuis 1994: 80).

Intertextual relations are examined in the next sections as having a 'constructive function', that is, by presuming that:

> they are directly relevant to or in some cases even a precondition of the construction of a text world. This means that they become an integrated part of the text world, primarily with regard to a non-literal or symbolic meaning assignment or with regard to the motivation of certain inferences. In this context the type of 'coherence-inducing intertextuality' is of interest, a special case in intertextual processing becoming relevant when the text can only be assigned a continuous meaning if its intertextual disposition and its reference texts are taken into account, in other words, when the preconditions of its interpretability can only be guaranteed through intertextual aspects. (Holthuis 1994: 86-87)

Discourse is said to be governed by the 'coherence principle' (Mey 1993: 238), which refers to meaning as constructed by subject-matter, themes, and other such bearers of semantic value,[416] and heavily relies on inferential communication, as this has been

[416] Coherence is distinguished from cohesion or connectivity, connection, connectedness, or connexity, which 'refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text' (Halliday & Hasan 1976: 4), and which is an evaluative notion in literary studies (Fowler 1986: 8). Unlike

defined in 6.1. In the next sections, the approach to poetry through coherence-inducing intertextuality takes into account those intertextual affinities between texts that are necessary for the interpretation of a poetic text.

6.3.2 *Constructing an Intertextual Text-World for the Poem 'Δῆλος'*

The theme of the dive as instantaneous illumination is thematized in Elytis' poem 'Δῆλος', which appears in the collection *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά*. The poem is the following:

Ὅπως βουτώντας ἄνοιγε τὰ μάτια κάτω ἀπ᾽ τὸ
νερὸ νὰ φέρει σ᾽ ἐπαφὴ τὸ δέρμα του μ᾽ ἐκεῖνο τὸ
λευκὸ τῆς μνήμης ποὺ τὸν κυνηγοῦσε (ἀπὸ κάποιο
χωρίο τοῦ Πλάτωνα)

Ὁλοΐσια μέσα στὴν καρδιὰ τοῦ ἥλιου μὲ τὴν ἴδια
κίνηση περνοῦσε κι᾽ ἄκουγε νὰ ὀρθώνει πέτρινο
λαιμὸ καὶ νὰ βρυχιέται ὁ ἀθῶος του ἑαυτὸς ψηλὰ πάνω
ἀπ᾽ τὰ κύματα

Κι ὅσο νὰ βγεῖ στὴν ἐπιφάνεια πάλι τοῦ ἄφηνε
καιρὸ ἡ δροσιὰ νὰ σύρει κάτι ἀπὸ τὰ σωθικά του ἀνίατο
στὰ φύκια καὶ τὶς ἄλλες ὀμορφιὲς ἀπ᾽ τὰ ὕφαλα

Ἔτσι ποὺ νὰ μπορέσει τέλος νὰ γυαλίσει μέσα στὸ
ἀ γ α π ῶ καθὼς ποὺ γυάλιζε τὸ φῶς τὸ θεϊκὸ μέσα
στὸ κλάμα τοῦ νεογέννητου

Καὶ αὐτὸ θρυλοῦσε ἡ θάλασσα.

(1984c: 15)

As the 'paratext' (Genette 1982: 9), that is, the poem's title, suggests, the poem refers to illumination. Ortygia, the island where Leto gave birth to Apollo and Artemis, is associated in mythology with 'Delios Apollo', the god of poetry, who

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cohesion, which refers to surface aspects of connection, coherence involves the underlying mechanisms that make texts coherent.

renamed his birthplace 'Delos', that is, 'brilliant'. The poem functions as poetic metalanguage, which describes the creative process. This may be inferred by exploring the intertextual allusion offered in the subject-matter of the poem; the dive refers to poetic illumination and to the act of writing as they are thematized in Ungaretti's poem 'Il Porto sepolto':

> Vi arriva il poeta
> e poi torna alla luce con i suoi canti
> e li disperde
>
> Di questa poesia
> mi resta
> quel nulla
> d'inesauribile segreto
> (Ungaretti 1970: 23)

Both 'Il Porto sepolto' and 'Δῆλος' refer to a dive whose result is contact with the light and the production of poetry. In Ungaretti's poem, the sea itself is equated with poetry and the poet is able to capture only some little part of an 'inexhaustible secret'.[417] Another pre-text of 'Δῆλος' may be Elytis' Greek translation of Ungaretti's poem. Elytis' 'second writing' is revealing of his conscious and intentional misreading or his 'creative correction'[418] of 'Il Porto sepolto', since he added a whole phrase to the first line of the poem: 'Φτάνει μόλις ἐκεῖ / μιὰ στιγμούλα ν' ἀγγίξει / ὁ ποιητὴς' (Elytis 1980c: 155), which presents more emphatically the subject-matter of Ungaretti's poem, that is, the instantaneous character of poetic illumination. He also added a word ('θησαυροῦ'), which significantly changes the meaning of the last line of the poem. Instead of 'some little

[417] In this poem, the poetic persona claims that what remains from poetry is 'quel nulla'; this 'something' is reminiscent of 'ἕνα τίποτα' in Elytis poem 'Τρεῖς φορὲς ἡ ἀλήθεια'.

part of an inexhaustible secret', Elytis writes 'some little part of a secret inexhaustible treasure', thus stressing the value of poetry, which he identifies with a 'treasure'.[419] The two instances of 'misprision' (to use another term by Bloom) may function as contextual implications helping to release the semantic energy of Elytis' own poem. In 'Δῆλος', the 'treasure' may be alluded to in the anaphoric reference (Halliday & Hasan 1976: 14) of the last line: 'Καὶ αὐτὸ θρυλοῦσε ἡ θάλασσα'; 'αὐτὸ' may refer to the foregrounded lexical unit 'ἀ γ α π ῶ' or to the whole process of the dive. However, this anaphoric reference constitutes a kind of gap, and it could allude to a reference that has to be identified.

The ideas, which are perceived rather than conceived ('ἄνοιγε τὰ μάτια κάτω ἀπ ' τὸ νερὸ / νὰ φέρει σ ' ἐπαφὴ τὸ δέρμα του'), are of a metaphysical character, as the reference to Plato reveals. This points to Elytis' views on the 'sanctity of the senses' (1975: 632), and also to his conception of 'Πλατωνική γεωμέτρηση', which refers to the vertical axis of consciousness, as has been explained in Chapters 3 and 4. Ungaretti's Platonism has been mentioned in Chapter 1. As Jones observes, Ungaretti's dive refers to '"a metaphysic" of the senses which permits a concrete image to flash upon the poet's inward eye surrounded by a void of conscious and self-possessed detachment. [...] the process is one of memorial dilation of immediate sensory sensations leading to a distant orphic perspective' (1986: 347-348).

The dive, which aims at purification and enlightenment, is an Orphic theme. As was pointed out in Chapter 1, Elytis, who was interested in Rimbaud's idea of the

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[418] On these terms see Bloom 1973: 14, 19ff., and 1975: 3-4. Cf. also Chapter 1.

Promethean suffering of the poet leading to purification and illumination,[420] must have been aware of Rimbaud's interest in Orphism and other oriental philosophy. Rimbaud's ideas on the painful process of the initiation of the poet, ideas which inform Ungaretti's writing, may be implicitly present in the poem 'Δῆλος' ('κι ' ἄκουγε / νὰ ὀρθώνει πέτρινο λαιμὸ καὶ νὰ βρυχιέται ὁ ἀθῶος του ἑαυτὸς ψηλὰ πάνω ἀπ ' τὰ κύματα'). Although he may have made the association between the dive and the motif of the suffering poet through Ungaretti, Elytis reinforced the motif by adding extra implications to what is involved in the process of the illumination of the poet. In 'Δῆλος', the dive leads to the purification of the poet ('Κι ὅσο νὰ βγεῖ στὴν ἐπιφάνεια πάλι / τοῦ ἄφηνε καιρὸ ἡ δροσιὰ νὰ σύρει κάτι ἀπὸ τὰ σωθικά του ἀνίατο στὰ φύκια καὶ τὶς ἄλλες ὀμορφιὲς ἀπ ' τὰ ὕφαλα'), who then accomplishes his duty as an act of love ('Ἔτσι ποὺ νὰ μπορέσει τέλος νὰ γυαλίσει μέσα στὸ ἀ γ α π ῶ').

This last comment may be an allusion to Plato's *Symposium*, since the process of the purification of the poet involves different stages, as does the erotic education, aspiring to the final appreciation of the beautiful, in Diotima's view. As has been observed in Part II, Elytis paid special attention to Diotima's passage in Plato's dialogue. This passage could be the one ('κάποιο χωρίο τοῦ Πλάτωνα') the poet carries with him into the sea in his dive, which is a process that leads, through the stage of suffering, to poetic illumination and creation. However, the identification of

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[419] Cf. his poem 'Δῶρο ἀσημένιο ποίημα', included in the same collection with 'Δῆλος' (Elytis 1984c: 64-65).

[420] The idea, clearly alluding to Rimbaud, first appears in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*; critics have not made the association between Elytis and Rimbaud in this case, although they have pointed to the Promethean role played by the poet in this poem. See Lambadaridou-Pothou (1994: 29), and also Lychnara 1986 and Leontis 1995.

this sole allusion is not the only gap or blur provided in the semiotic disposition of the text.

As a comment on the theme of epiphany the poem establishes a discursive field that can be inferred with relative ease through the processing of its intertextual disposition. However, the function of the poem as poetic metalanguage is more complex and requires a series of weak, and in some cases, very weak implicatures to be followed and accessed. The most significant of them for the inferential process required in the interpretation of the poem involves the controlling image of the first two stanzas, and perhaps of the whole poem: the double dive into the water and through the heart of the sun.

Following Relevance Theory, one may realize that this powerful metaphor is based on the condensation of many weak implicatures. Synaesthesia ('ἄνοιγε τὰ μάτια'--'ἄκουγε') is only one of the poetic effects employed, which may be taken as pointing to the contextual knowledge of Rimbaud's work. Elytis' view was that metaphors should not be the product of a substitution (1987: 176), but a creative reconstitution of things, a reproduction of the poetic vision, which, as was pointed out above, depends on the combination of words and not on the existence of the things themselves. This is a Surrealist idea of the image, which, at least in Breton's theory, 'is not metaphoric, in the sense of a relationship of equality existing somewhere *at a distance*, outside the units actually in contact' (Mead 1978: 29; his emphasis); it is rather 'a relationship which, through language, provides contact but preserves distance [...], which is at the heart of the process of the surrealist image'.

The image in Elytis' metaphor is an excellent example for his ideas on metaphor as well as on the poem's dynamics.

The double dive, simultaneously into the sea and into the heart of the sun, presents a thematic discoherence (Hatakeyama, Petöfi, and Sözer 1985: 79) for the whole poem. A dive into the heart of the sun presupposes an ascending movement. Thus, the implicature of the text is that the poet dives both into the sea, in a downward movement, and into the sky, in an upward movement. This double movement on the same vertical axis evokes Elytis' positions on the issue of poetic consciousness, as discussed in Chapter 4. As has been already pointed out, in his translation of Ungaretti's poem Elytis suggests that the dive lasts only for an instant: this 'comment' by Elytis on Ungaretti's poem points to Elytis' own notion of instantaneity, and to poetic illumination, which is instantaneous; but it is also associated with the transposition that Elytis identified with the process leading to the superior reality of the Platonic world of the Ideas. Further implications may then be derived through the intertextual processing of the text. The association between the sea, the sky and the act of writing is also made in the poem 'Il Mare', written by Yorgos Sarandaris in 1932:

> Il mare distrae gli amori
> verso la donna;
> elude l'ansia
> e la malinconia della carne,
> e infonde languore
> alle aspirazioni turchine.
>
> Il mare è un cielo capovolto--
> miracolo troppo vicino allo sguardo--
> dove eternamente fioriscono le onde
> e mancano le stelle.

Il mare--solitaria poesia--
conduce all'io
i sospiri dell'io
attraverso lo spazio.
(Sarandaris 1987: 128)

In the poem, Sarandaris associates the sea with poetry, as do Ungaretti and Elytis. As Marinakis observes, by the summer of 1931 Sarandaris had a close acquaintance with the poetry of Ungaretti, although he was not particulary attracted by it yet (1987: λα΄- λβ΄). In the poem, Sarandaris goes further than Ungaretti: the sea, that is, poetry, is 'un cielo capovolto', a reversed sky, 'a wonder too close to the eyes, where the waves bloom eternally and the stars are lost'. Sarandaris' motif of the reversed sky seems to reappear in the poem 'Δῆλος'; the metaphor of the reversed sky or of the sea as sky is alluded to in Elytis' metaphor of the double dive into the sea and the sky.

Discouraged by the fact that the parenthetical utterance 'ἀπὸ κάποιο χωρίο τοῦ Πλάτωνα' was not identified by critics, Elytis made a metadiscursive comment, which can be considered as a metatextual reference for the poem 'Δῆλος'. The comment appears in the essay 'Σχέδιο για μιαν εισαγωγή στο χώρο του Αιγαίου', where Rimbaud is also mentioned. Elytis observes in this essay:

> Κάποτε, όταν έγραψα ότι, βουτώντας στη θάλασσα μ' ανοιχτά μάτια, είχα την αίσθηση ότι έφερνα σ' επαφή το δέρμα μου μ' εκείνο το λευκό της μνήμης που με κυνηγούσε από κάποιο χωρίο του Πλάτωνα, το θεωρήσανε ακατάληπτο. Κι όμως, είναι μέσα στα πιο καθαρόαιμα ελληνικά που ο τιμονιέρης βρίσκει το ζύγι στο πλεούμενό του [...]. Το παν -για ό,τι πιθανόν το ακατάληπτο αντιπροσωπεύει- είναι η διαύγεια [...] Να λοιπόν που την ηθική τη συναντάς κι από το δρόμο που πας να την αποφύγεις. (1992: 22-23)

The reconstruction of this argument may lead to the understanding of a mechanism of primary significance in Elytis' poetics. This mechanism concerns the repetitive patterns that refer to the image and may be observed in the intertextual relations developing between poems of his second period. The creative elaboration on this repetition of imagery is one of the typical characteristics of the style achieved by Elytis.

The poem which describes the poet's dive into the sea, during the course of which his skin is touched by 'that white of memory' from a passage in Plato that haunted him, is of course the poem 'Δῆλος'. The comment on translucence and ethics is perhaps associated with 'that white of memory' in the poem's allusion to Plato. As has been observed in Chapters 1 and 3, Elytis associated aesthetics with ethics, and this with a 'white mark', the mark of a pure consciousness and of a clear perception.

Elytis referred to Rimbaud in the introductory essays of both *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* and *Εν λευκώ*. The fourth part of the essay 'Πρώτα-πρώτα', which was probably written sometime before 1974 and is devoted to poetry, ends with a four-line quotation from Rimbaud's poem 'Faim':

> Elle est retrouvée!
> Quoi? L'éternité.
> C'est la mer mêlée
> Au soleil. (Elytis 1987: 31)

The essay 'Σχέδιο για μιαν εισαγωγή στο χώρο του Αιγαίου' (1973) concludes with another reference to Rimbaud. This essay refers to Elytis' ideas on the metaphysical power of the light of the sun, as have been examined in Chapter 3. The

passage from Rimbaud quoted in this text also belongs to the poem 'Faim': 'Enfin, ô bonheur, ô raison, j'écartai du ciel l'azur, / qui est du noir, et je vécus, étincelle d'or de la lumière / *nature*' (Elytis 1992: 22; emphasis as quoted). Although the content of these passages is similar to, for instance, Mallarmé's poem 'L'Azur', Elytis repeatedly returns to Rimbaud. This insistence may involve contextual implications that exceed the referential value of the particular quotations, and as such they may be part of an 'illocutionary act' (Austin 1962: 100) which is ostensively communicated, that is, an utterance with a particular and clearly indicated communicative purpose. In other words, the communicative purpose of Elytis may not have been simply to express the same ideas as Rimbaud, but to articulate a more complex argument.

This argument seems to have been taken up by Elytis in another of his poems, where another passage from Plato associated by him with the theme of the dive appears. The poem is ''Η παρθενογένεση' from *Μαρία Νεφέλη*. In this poem, the 'Αντιφωνητής' exclaims:

> Τί νά μήν εἶχα πεθάνει ἀπό καιρό καί νά 'χα
> δεῖ ὥσπερ οἱ ἀνακύπτοντες ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης
> ἰχθύες κείνη πού ἦταν ἡ ὡς
> ἀληθῶς γῆ. (1984b: 99)

The complete passage from Plato's *Phaedo* is quoted by Elytis in the long essay 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας' (1963), in the same section where many references to Rimbaud are made:

> Αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν γῆν καθαρὰν ἐν καθαρῷ κεῖσθαι τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐν ὥπέρ ἐστι τὰ ἄστρα, ὃν δὴ αἰθέρα ὀνομάζειν τοὺς πολλοὺς [...] ἐπεί, εἴ τις αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ἄκρα ἔλθοι ἢ πτηνὸς γενόμενος ἀνάπτοιτο, κατιδεῖν <ἂν> ἀνακύψαντα, ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε οἱ ἐκ τῆς θαλάττης ἰχθύες ἀνακύπτοντες ὁρῶσι τὰ ἐνθάδε, οὕτως ἄν τινα καὶ τὰ ἐκεῖ κατιδεῖν, καὶ εἰ ἡ φύσις ἱκανὴ εἴη ἀνασχέσθαι θεωροῦσα, γνῶναι ἂν ὅτι ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν

ὁ ἀληθῶς οὐρανὸς καὶ τὸ ἀληθινὸν φῶς καὶ ἡ ὡς ἀληθῶς γῆ[.]
(Elytis 1987: 446)

In "Η παρθενογένεση', Elytis modifies or 'transforms' (Plett 1991: 19ff.) the lines quoted from *Phaedo*, but he quotes them in the original ancient Greek. The conflict between the quotation-text context (that is, the poem "Η παρθενογένεση') and the pre-text context (Plato's dialogue) is a case of 'codal interference of the interlingual kind' (Plett 1991: 11). Plett points out that the result is a kind of collage and that the process leading to it can be called montage. In "Η παρθενογένεση', the consequence is that this collage highlights rather than assimilating the quoted passage. The quotation adds extra implications to the poem, which refers to the metaphysical power of the light of the sun over natural growth, and to the clarity of perception, as is the case in the essay 'Σχέδιο για μιαν εισαγωγή στο χώρο του Αιγαίου', where the references to the poem 'Δῆλος' and to Rimbaud both appear. In "Η παρθενογένεση', the pragmatic presupposition[421] may be that the dead person with whom the poetic persona identifies himself could be Rimbaud. If such is the case, then the passage from Plato carried by the poetic persona into the sea during his dive in 'Δῆλος' may either be Diotima's passage from the *Symposium*, as has been suggested above, or the passage from *Phaedo* quoted in "Η παρθενογένεση' and in 'Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας'. New interpretative assumptions can be made for 'Δῆλος' on the discovery of this reference, since 'ἐκεῖνο τό λευκὸ τῆς μνήμης' may thus be considered to allude to Elytis' ideas on the psychological function of

[421] The notion of pragmatic presupposition is used here to refer both to mutual knowledge and to the reference texts evoked in the poem. On the notion of pragmatic presupposition see Levinson 1983: 204ff.; on pragmatic presupposition and intertextuality see Culler 1981: 116-118; on pragmatic presupposition and poetry see York 1986: 22-25.

memory, and to his views that poetry should reflect, through the aesthetic, the ethical attitude of the poet.

In fact, the process of inferring new assumptions may be infinite, depending on the success of the poetic effects and on the processing abilities of the reader. Reaching a 'final' interpretation for 'Δῆλος' is an ideal aim that is not pursued in this section. What is perhaps more important is the conclusion that can be reached with regard to the function of the image in Elytis' poetry. The implication that emerges from the intertextual processing of the poem 'Δῆλος' is very significant, since it suggests that the image in Elytis' poetry may aspire to the condition of the symbol through recurrent semantic, and also grammatical, syntactic and other morphological patterns. Thus, in Elytis' later poetry, and in particular in poems of the collection *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς 'Οξώπετρας*, the theme of the dive recurs in enriched imagery. In the poem

Ακινδύνου, 'Ελπιδοφόρου, 'Ανεμποδίστου', the lexical unit 'ἀναστραφεῖ' appears to be an explicit marker of the intertextual relations with the poem by Sarandaris, while the utterance ''Ιχθεῖς τοῦ αἰθέρος' again evokes Plato:

> Ὅσπου κάποτε, ὁ βυθὸς μ' ὅλο του τὸ πλαγκτὸν κατάφωτο
> Θ' ἀναστραφεῖ πάνω ἀπὸ τὸ κεφάλι μου. Κι ἄλλα ὡς τότε
> ἀνεκμυστήρευτα
> Σὰν μέσ' ἀπὸ τὴ σάρκα μου ἰδωμένα θὰ φανερωθοῦν
> 'Ιχθεῖς τοῦ αἰθέρος (Elytis 1991: 8)

But most importantly, the imagery of this passage evokes Elytis' own poetry and alludes to the intertextual relations developing between different of his poems. The poetic effects cultivated in this poem, just as in 'Δῆλος', seem to be based on Elytis' conception of 'διαφάνεια', that is, the idea of the infinite process in which 'behind a

thing something different can be seen', as was pointed out in Chapter 5. It was explained in that chapter that Elytis' notion of 'διαφάνεια' was inspired by Bachelard's view of 'projective poetry', that is, poetry in which an image may point to another image and vice versa.

By examining the development of imagery referring to the theme of the dive in diverse poems by Elytis, the following section considers the assumption that imagery in Elytis' poetry is elaborated on the basis of his theoretical conception of the poem as an 'ideal unit', a 'crystalline' structure, whose individual components (the images) sparkle with projective energy and thus act metaphorically as incantation. It is shown that, beyond what happens in an individual poem, a kind of semantic incantation, achieved through the exploitation of the projective power of the image, may unite distinct poems by Elytis.

6.3.3 *The Dynamics of Crystallization in the Marvellous Image*

The theme of the dive in the poetry of Elytis' second period is associated with the motif of a movement downwards and at the same time upwards, which was identified in Part II with the vertical movement on the axis of consciousness. In one of his later poems, 'Τὰ Εἰσόδια τοῦ προθανατισμένου. (Ἐνύπνιον)' (*Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*) , a dive into the sea serves as the model for the persona's dive up to the sky, in the course of which he gets rid of superfluous weight, 'ἀποβάλλοντας ἔρματα ἕνα-ἕνα' (Elytis 1991: 30), and ascends to discover 'Τὸ οὐράνιο ἀρχιπέλαγος'

(1991: 31), his stare fixed on the figures of a Saint and an Archangel and on the boats of the clouds ('Λίγο πιὸ πάνω οἱ βάρκες τῶν νεφῶν') (1991: 32).

The hermetic imagery referring to ascent appears frequently in the poetry of Elytis' second period; it refers to the notion of 'meteorism' (Elytis 1975: 641), an idea that informs his theoretical work on poetics, as has been observed in Chapter 5. The ascent, identified with illumination and consciousness, normally follows the descent into the depths of the unconscious, where the poetic persona undergoes a process of purification and initiation, surpassing his previous state of suffering. This suffering is usually associated with an existential anxiety and the quest for knowledge or 'truth', and/or the anxiety caused by the sexual instinct. Gaining consciousness is normally identified with revelation, provided in two other frequent motifs in the poetry of Elytis' second period, that is, the motif of the sun, and the motif of the garden. The theme of the dive usually comprises these motifs; the systematic association between the dive, the sun and the garden appears in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and becomes more elaborate in the later poems by Elytis.

In the same passage of ''Η Γένεσις' (*Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ*) considered in section 6.2.2.2, the dive of purification and knowledge immediately follows the persona's communication with the language of nature. In this 'paragraph' (to use Elytis' term; cf. Elytis 1995a: 38) of ''Η Γένεσις', reality and dream merge, and the persona both perceives and dreams; the process of initiation involves the stages of the revelation of nature, and of the dive of purification and illumination:

> Εἶδα πάνω στὸ μόλο ἀραδιασμένα τὰ κόκκινα σταμνιὰ
> καὶ πιὸ σιμὰ στὸ ξύλινο παραθυρόφυλλο
> κεῖ ποὺ κοιμόμουνα μὲ τό'να πλάι
> λάλησε πιὸ δυνατὰ ὁ βοριάς

Καὶ εἶδα
Κόρες ὄμορφες [...]
νὰ φυσοῦν ὄρθιες μέσα στὴν Κοχύλα
καὶ ἄλλες γράφοντας μὲ κιμωλία
λόγια παράξενα, αἰνιγματικά [...]
μικρὲς φωνὲς πουλιῶν καὶ ὑακίνθων
ἤ ἄλλα λόγια τοῦ Ἰουλίου
Σημαίνοντας οἱ ἔντεκα
πέντε ὀργιὲς τοῦ βάθους
πέρκες γοβιοί σπάροι
μὲ πελώρια σβάραχνα καὶ κοντὲς πρυμναῖες οὐρές
Ἀνεβαίνοντας ἔβρισκα σπόγγους
καὶ σταυροὺς θαλάσσης
καὶ λιγνὲς ἀμίλητες ἀνεμῶνες
καὶ πιὸ ψηλὰ στὰ χείλη τοῦ νεροῦ
πεταλίδες τριανταφυλλιὲς
καὶ μισάνοιχτες πίνες καὶ ἁρμυρῆθρες
(Elytis 1980a: 18-19)

In this 'paragraph', the persona meets the sun when he comes back to the surface of the water (Elytis 1980a: 19). As the sun suggests to him, suffering and isolation precede knowledge ('ΑΛΛΑ ΠΡΩΤΑ θὰ δεῖς τὴν ἐρημιὰ καὶ θὰ τῆς δώσεις τὸ δικό σου νόημα'). The poetic persona himself realizes that suffering and ascesis, the descent, is the requisite for its opposite, that is, ascent, knowledge and light:

Ἔζησα τὶς ἀκρίδες καὶ τὴ δίψα καὶ τὰ τραχιὰ στὶς ἁρμοσιές τους
[δάχτυλα
χρόνους τακτοὺς ὅσους ἡ Γνώση ὁρίζει
Στὰ χαρτιὰ σκυφτὸς καὶ στὰ βιβλία τ' ἀπύθμενα
μὲ σκοινὶ λιανὸ κατεβαίνοντας
νύχτες καὶ νύχτες
τὸ λευκὸ ἀναζήτησα ὡς τὴν ὕστατη ἔνταση
τοῦ μαύρου Τὴν ἐλπίδα ὡς τὰ δάκρυα
Τὴ χαρὰ ὡς τὴν ἄκρα ἀπόγνωση
(1980a: 19-20; his emphasis)

In the poem ''Ο κῆπος τοῦ εὐωχεὶρ' from the collection *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά,* a similar dive is presented as the culmination of the persona's frustration and rejection of pernicious reality. In this poem, the persona is in a state of trance, wavering between dream, fantasy and reality. He is lying under a

plane tree in the countryside and attempts an imaginary dive; in the course of this dive, he half-perceives and half-imagines, and he also contemplates or remembers. The imaginary scenery unfolds into a submarine garden of an earthly and celestial beauty:

> Κι ὅπως μὲ τὸ κεφάλι χαμηλὰ καὶ ἀνάποδα τὰ πόδια στὸν ἀέρα πάλευα νὰ βγῶ ἀπ᾽ τὸ βάρος μου κεῖνος ὁ πόθος ποὺ μὲ πήγαινε ψηλὰ μέσα μου τόσο δυνατὰ γυρίστηκε ποὺ εὑρέθηκα λοξὰ καὶ πάλι νὰ σαλεύω σ᾽ ἕναν κῆπο ρεούμενο ἀπὸ βότσαλα λευκὰ καὶ διαύγεια κυανοῦ τῆς μέντας
>
> Μ᾽ εὐεξία μεγάλη προχωροῦσα σποῦσα τὶς βέργες τοῦ νεροῦ νὰ δῶ ποὺ ἀνεβοκατεβαῖναν μ᾽ ἀναφτὸ φαναράκι στὴν κοιλιά τους ἡ Μίκα ἡ Ξένια ἡ Μανιὼ τ᾽ ἀστέρια
>
> Κολλοῦσε τὸ μαστίχι τῶν μαλλιῶν τους καὶ ποῦ-δῶ ποῦ-κεῖ τεντώνονταν μισοπλασμένη ἀκόμη ν᾽ ἀ-ποχωριστεῖ μιὰ πεταλοῦδα ὑπέροχη Καὶ πάνω στὰ σημάδια ποὺ ἄφηνε μὲ τὴν πλατιὰ πατημασιὰ του ὁ πλάτανος ξεχώριζες ἀκόμη τὶς γραμμές ἀπ᾽ τὸ αἴνιγμα τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου
>
> [...]
>
> Στάζανε πράσινο κουκὶ τὰ δέντρα καὶ στὰ φραγκο-στάφυλα ἔπεφτε ἡ ἀνταύγεια χρυσὴ Πάγοι φρού-των ἔλυωναν καὶ κατέβαζαν ἀπὸ ψηλὰ παράξενο θυμία-μα (Elytis 1984c: 47-48)

Elytis' conception of translucence and limpidity is realized in the transparency of this imagery: an earthly garden is transposed and visualized against the elements of the submarine world; even the stars and the air above the garden reappear in the sea-garden of the persona's imagination. Unlike the persona's meeting with the sun when he comes back to the surface of the water in the above 'paragraph' of "Η Γένεσις', in ''Ο κῆπος τοῦ εὐωχείρ', the persona discovers the sun when he hits the bottom of the sea:

Κι ὅπως ἄφηνα τὴ σκέψη πίσω μου σὰν χελιδονένιο
ἀέρι ποὺ ἄλλαζε χρῶμα στὰ νερὰ ψυχρὰ ἢ δα-
χτυλιδένια ἢ διάφανα μὲ τὸ μέτωπο καταμπροστὰ
χτύπησα στὸν πυθμένα Ὅπου ἀναπήδησε ἥλιος

[...]
Πῆρε μιὰ ράβδωση ὁ αἰθέρας

(Elytis 1984c: 48-49)

Both the garden and the sun disappear when the persona touches the sun and stands up erect again, with his hand burnt, a testimony of his initiation:

Ἥλιε μου [...]
Νὰ σ᾽ ἀγγίξω μόνο καὶ
ἂς καῶ φώναξα κι ἄπλωσα τὸ χέρι

Χάθηκε ὁ κῆπος τὸν κατάπιε ἡ Ἄνοιξη μὲ τὰ σκληρά
της δόντια σὰν ἀμύγδαλο

Καὶ ὀρθὸς πάλι ἀπόμεινα μ᾽ ἕνα καμένο χέρι ἐδῶ
(Elytis 1984c: 49)

In this poem, through the reflection of the sun in the water, a transfiguration takes place and the bottom of the sea becomes the sky. The identification of the sea with the sky, a recurrent motif in the poems of Elytis' second period, is frequently associated with the theme of the dive, which is itself accompanied by the imagery of a garden. This is reminiscent of the Romantic appeal to nature in the course of the poetic quest for the Absolute. The identification of the abstract (the sky) with the concrete (the sea and the garden) also evokes the French Surrealists, who tried to '[lend] to the abstract the mask of the concrete' (Balakian 1986: 154) or to unite consciousness with the unconscious, which replaced the Romantic Absolute, as was pointed out in Chapter 4. In the poetry of Elytis' second period, the identification of the sky with the sea and the garden constitutes an attempt to connect external reality

with the world of the poet's inner vision, that is, the 'second condition' of life, which in itself is frequently thematized in his poetry. This is why the dive is often associated with dream (and memory, as in the above poem), and the poetic reality with the contents of the unconscious, as in the following passages of the poem "Ιουλίου λόγος" from the collection *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*:

Ἀπέραντος ὁ κῆπος ὅπου μόλις ἀπο-
Χωρισμένος ἀπ' τὸν (πρὶν καὶ πάλι μεταμφιεσμένος μοῦ ἀγγιχτεῖ)
Θάνατο, ἔπαιζα καὶ μοῦ ἔφταναν εὔκολα ὅλα ἕως τὴν ἀπαλάμη

Ὁ ἱππόκαμπος κεῖνος! Καὶ τῆς φυσαλίδας τσιοὺπ τὸ σπάσιμο!
Τοῦ βατόμουρου τὸ βαποράκι μὲς στὰ βαθιὰ τῶν φυλλωμάτων
Ρεύματα! Κι ὁ πρωραῖος ἱστὸς ὅλο σημαῖες!

Τὶ τώρα μοῦ ἦρθαν. Αλλὰ σὰν χθὲς ὑπῆρξα
[...]
ὅπως τοῦ νεροῦ ἡ ροὴ
Ποὺ ψυχὴ τὴν ψυχὴ δένει τὶς ἀποστάσεις
Κι ἀπό 'να σ' ἄλλον Γαλαξία βρίσκεσαι νὰ σχοινοβατεῖς
Ἐνῶ κάτω ἀπ' τὰ πόδια σου βοοῦν τὰ βάραθρα. Κι ἢ φτάνεις ἢ ὄχι

[...]
Κι οἱ μικρὲς ἐκεῖνες παρακόρες, τὸ μαλλί τους λυτὸ ποὺ
Μὲ τὴ νοημοσύνη ἀνέμου γνώριζε νὰ ξετυλίγεται πάνω ἀπὸ τὶς
καμινάδες!
Τέτοια [...]
Τὴν ὥρα ποὺ κοιμᾶσαι καὶ παρακολουθεῖς τὰ μέλλοντα

Ξέρει ὁ ἥλιος. Κατεβαίνει μέσα σου νὰ δεῖ. Ἐπειδὴ τ' ἀπέξω
Εἶναι καθρέφτης. Μὲς στὸ σῶμα ἡ φύση κατοικεῖ κι ἀπὸ κεῖ
ἐκδικεῖται
Ὅπως σὲ μιὰν ἀγριότητα ἱερὴ σὰν τοῦ Λέοντα ἢ τοῦ Ἀναχωρητῆ
Τὸ δικό σου λουλούδι φυτρώνει
ποὺ τὸ λένε Σκέψη
(Ἄλλο ἄν, καὶ μελετώντας, πάλι βγῆκα ἐκεῖ
Ποὺ τὸ κολύμπι μ' ἔβγαζε ἀπ' ἀνέκαθεν)

(Elytis 1991: 33-34)

It is true that Elytis' conception of the image may come closer to Reverdy's idea of 'a pure creation of the mind' (Reverdy 1975: 73) than to Breton's automatism of unconscious (psychic) association and arbitrariness (Breton 1988: 324ff.). However, the function of the central image in the above passage (the paradisial character of the

unconscious) evokes the Surrealist notion of the sublime point or, in Elytis' words, the 'single Point', where opposites no longer exist: 'Μὲς στὸ σῶμα ἡ φύση κατοικεῖ'.

The Surrealist notion of opposites, which informs Elytis' idea of opposition, as has been observed in Chapter 5, is involved in the antitheses of ascent and descent, suffering and illumination, darkness and ignorance and light and knowledge. The theme of the dive involves the resolution of the opposition between existential and/or sexual anxiety, and the revelation of Paradise; this resolution is realized poetically by means of Elytis' 'law of analogies', or the transposition of the natural to the noetic or the imaginary, as has been pointed out in Part II. In this way, the psychological resistance or the mental decision to reject an image of the world that presents itself as incoherent or disturbing is appeased through the construction of mental images of a fictional reality. This leads to the emergence of the salient (existentially creative) dual structure consisting of the real world and the world of the imagination. It also leads to the 'overflowing' of the 'meaning' ('l'effusion du sens') (Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 91), distinctive of Surrealist writing, and which in Elytis' case results in the constellation of images that produce the 'crystalline' structure of the poem.

In *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, in the same poem considered in section 6.2.2.2 where the antilexical constructions refer to the song of nature, the dive is explicitly associated with a wandering into the inner self, where the 'true day' is to be found. The poem's title, 'Through the mirror', which is given in English,[422] alludes to the fragmentariness

[422] The title 'Through the mirror' may be an explicit marker indicating a possible relation with Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1872). It may also allude to Jean Cocteau's play and/or film*Orphée* (1926 and 1949 respectively), in which the character goes through

and incoherence that external reality presents for Maria Nefeli, the persona of the poem, who turns to the water of the sea, seen as a mirror, in order to recover her lost 'angelic' identity; in the poem, the mirror is considered as reflecting a distorted image of reality, and Maria Nefeli wishes to pass through the mirror, that is, from consciousness to the unconscious or the realm of the imagination, in order to regain the clarity of perception. The poem teems with Surrealist 'marvellous images':

πάνω ἀπό τό κεφάλι σου
ἁπλώνεται ὁ βυθός μέ τά χρωματιστά του βότσαλα σάν
ἄστρα.

Ὦ μουσική ὦ Κυριακή συννεφιασμένη
σέ μιά συνοικία μακρινή μέ σπίτια δίπατα κλειστά
κάτω ἀπό τήν ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ νεροῦ ὅπου γέρνω
σάν σέ καθρέφτη καί κοιτάζομαι
ὧρες πολλές πῶς νά περάσω μέσα
νά περάσω ἀπό
τήν ἄλλην ὄψη τῶν πραγμάτων
μέ το ἑλικτικό μαλλί μου ξετυλίγοντας
κύκλους διαδοχικά
νά κατεβῶ καί τούς ἑφτά οὐρανούς ἑωσότου

ἡ ἀντανάκλαση
τῶν ἀγγέλων μ᾽ ἁρπάξει
ὁ Γιάννης ἡ Ἄννα ὁ Νίκος μέ πελώριες
φτεροῦγες ὅπως τοῦ Θεοτοκόπουλου
μετεωρισμένοι ἀρχίσουν σιγανά
μιά ψαλμωδία καί ἀνοίξουν πάλι τά παράθυρα
ἐπικοινωνήσουν οἱ ἀνθοπῶλες μέ τεράστιες ἀνεμῶνες
περασμένες στ᾽ αὐτιά τους σάν ἀκουστικά·
[...]
μιά συναυλία πού ἐδέησε νά μεταβληθεῖ σέ κῆπο.
[...]
Ὦ
μουσική ὦ Κυριακή συννεφιασμένη
στόν μέσα κόσμο τοῦ καθρέφτη ἐκεῖ πού βηματίζω
ψάχνοντας τήν ἀληθινή μου μέρα·
πού κρατῶ καί ἀνοίγω σάν ὀμπρέλα παλαιή τή θάλασσα
πάνω ἀπό τό κεφάλι μου
λάμπει ὁ βυθός μέ τά χρωματιστά του βότσαλα σάν ἄστρα.

(Elytis 1984b: 34, 36 and 38)

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the mirror and enters the underworld. In both cases, the passage through the mirror leads to the world of the spiritual and eternity.

The passage through the mirror of the sea is regarded in the poem as a descent, a dive, which alludes to the vertical axis of poetic illumination of the other poems by Elytis considered so far. In the poem, imagery referring to the submarine world is also imagery of the celestial world ('βότσαλα σάν ἄστρα'), evoking Bachelard's principle of 'projective poetry'.

As was explained in Chapter 5, Elytis' notion of 'διαφάνεια' is based on Bachelard's views, although Elytis' own formulation presupposes the modernist idea of the 'crystalline' structure of the poem, which he conceived as a verbal icon of the emotional activity involved in it. Indeed, in the parts of the poem 'Through the Mirror' quoted above, 'διαφάνεια' functions both in an identical manner to Bachelard's projection, that is, by regulating the play of the signifiers (the verbal image), and metaphorically. Thus, the imagery of the twisting descent is also imagery of the dive and this is imagery of the heavenly world; similarly, imagery of music is imagery of nature, and imagery of nature is imagery of the celestial world. In this case, 'διαφάνεια' or projection appears in the transparency of the structure, producing incantatory effects that intensify the incantation achieved by the repetition of the utterances 'πάνω ἀπό τό κεφάλι', 'Ὢ μουσική ὦ Κυριακή συννεφιασμένη' and 'ὁ βυθός μέ τά χρωματιστά του βότσαλα σάν ἄστρα', the lexical repetition ('νά περάσω'), and the lexical and syntactic play (e.g. 'σάν σέ καθρέφτη [...] μέσα'--'στόν μέσα κόσμο τοῦ καθρέφτη'). But apart from this, the principle of 'διαφάνεια', also defined by Elytis as purity ('καθαρότητα'), appears to function in the intertextual correspondences that are established between this and other passages from Elytis' poetry examined in this section.

Thus, the image of the sun is evoked in the image of the 'cloudy Sunday', that is, the absence of sun (following the Surrealist idea of the opposites which communicate, and Elytis' own 'theory' of 'the polar extremes which communicate' [1995a: 47], as was explained in Chapter 5); however, the image of the sun is also alluded to in the imagery of the dive and of the garden, as an intertextual reference to the earlier poems by Elytis where the imagery of the dive, the garden and the sun is associated. The downward movement of Maria Nefeli in search of the sun is reminiscent of the imaginary dive of the persona in ''Ο κῆπος του εὐωχείρ', in which he searches for the sun. Similarly, the kind of movement of Maria Nefeli ('ξετυλίγοντας / κύκλους διαδοχικά') evokes the movement of water around the diving persona in ''Ο κῆπος τοῦ εὐωχεὶρ' ('δαχτυλιδένια'), while Maria Nefeli's employment of her hair ('μέ τό ἑλικτικό μαλλί μου ξετυλίγοντας / [...] νά κατεβῶ') alludes to the persona's rope in ''Η Γένεσις' ('μὲ σκοινὶ λιανὸ κατεβαίνοντας'). The latter's search for 'white' amid darkess again evokes Maria Nefeli's search for her 'true day', that is a sunny day, amid the 'cloudy Sunday'.

The principle of 'διαφάνεια' unites these poems not only through the above imagery; in fact, the process which Elytis intended to be infinite is indeed an extended one. Thus the reflection of the angels in the water in 'Through the Mirror' ('ἡ ἀντανάκλαση / τῶν ἀγγέλων') evokes the stars of the poem ''Ο κῆπος τοῦ εὐωχείρ' ('ἀνεβοκατεβαῖναν / [...] ἡ Μίκα ἡ Ξένια ἡ Μανιὼ τ' ἀστέρια') and alludes to the aquatic organisms in ''Η Γένεσις' (''Ανεβαίνοντας ἔβρισκα [...] / [...] λιγνὲς ἀμίλητες ἀνεμῶνες / [...] πεταλίδες τριανταφυλλιὲς'), since in 'Through the Mirror' the angels who sing are compared to flowers ('ἀνεμῶνες') and in ''Ο

κῆπος τοῦ εὐωχείρ', the stars are aquatic organisms ('Κολλοῦσε τὸ μαστίχι τῶν μαλλιῶν τους καὶ / ποῦ-δῶ ποῦ-κεῖ / τεντώνονταν μισοπλασμένη ἀκόμη / ν' ἀποχωριστεῖ μιὰ πεταλοῦδα ὑπέροχη'). These correspondences in the imagery reappear in the later poem ''Ιουλίου λόγος', in which the sun itself descends into the inner self because outer reality is a distorted mirror-image. In this case too, imagery of the submarine garden is also imagery of the sky ('Γαλαξία') and the persona follows a vertical movement both downwards and upwards, using a rope or the hair of girls.

The poetic effect of this intertextual projection is highly incantatory, stimulating and enchanting the reader's imagination; yet, in this case, it does not control the grammatico-syntactic and semantic energy of a single poem, but of many poems. Glittering images, that is, the individual 'crystals' constituting the poem, reappear in diverse poems by Elytis, casting with their light an incantatory effect on poems of his second period. In other words, the kind of intertextual relations among various of his poems that has been traced so far is not accidental or purely semantic or grammatical or syntactic; it is the product of highly elaborated correspondences between different poems by Elytis, that is, of a mechanism that is based on a tightly organized interaction between metaphor, symbol and the image. This section has focused on a semantic approach to these correspondences. A further study, which would consider the structural and grammatical features involved in these correspondences, might reveal the more formal aspects of the dynamics of this mechanism, although it has to be stressed that one should always bear in mind that, in

the poetry of Elytis' second period, the semantic aspect determines the development and the elaboration of form.

6.4 *Conclusion*

The readings of poetry attempted in this chapter reveal that Elytis worked very methodically on the idea of the unity of content and form. It has been shown that poetic effects in his poetry are the product of a systematic exploitation of this idea both on the lexical level and on the level of the image; in the poetry of Elytis' second period, words and images vibrate with formal and semantic energy, as is indicated by the examples of antilexical constructions and by imagery associated with the theme of the dive. Furthermore, the principles of 'διαφάνεια' and projection appear to function in his elaboration of the image. Projection regulates the mechanisms governing the production of imagery, while 'διαφάνεια' seems also to have a second function, as a controlling principle that unifies distinct poems of Elytis' second period through complex semantic correspondences, and perhaps also grammatical and syntactic ones. Elytis' poetry became more hermetic after *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*. Even his 'Surrealist' poems of *Προσανατολισμοὶ* are much more transparent than certain poems of such collections as *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ* (for instance, "Ο ἄλλος Νῶε' or "Εφτὰ μέρες γιὰ τὴν αἰωνιότητα'), *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά*, *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας* or *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*. The obscurity of his later poetry is the result of a creative exploitation of the interaction between content and form.

Chapter 7

The Practice of Poetry and the Visual Arts

7.0 *Introduction*

As has been pointed out in Chapter 3, Elytis' consideration of visual art contributed significantly to the emergence of his poetics. Moreover, it is in his essays on art that his ideas on the role of the poet and the function of poetry are exemplified. However, although he wrote several essays on art and clearly defined his aesthetic perspective, he rarely referred to visual art as a language whose signs and syntax may have informed his poetics. Chapter 7 draws parallels between the poetry of Elytis' second period and visual art in general, as well as his own collages and paintings, in order to highlight those aspects of his poetics that have been affected by the signs (the line, colour and the image) and the syntax (technique) of visual art. It is shown here that explicit references to visual art, and especially painting, in his poetry, indicate that Elytis attaches aesthetics inextricably to poetics; the employment of techniques and devices of the visual arts, and the attempt to integrate the pictorial image into his poetry make manifest not only his systematic exploration of visual art on a formal level, but also his methodical exploitation of the possibilities offered by visual art for constituting a poetic vision of the world.

In section 7.1, it is shown that Elytis foregrounds visual art in the poetry of his second period either through direct reference to it (and especially painting) or to

particular kinds of art or styles, painters and paintings or other artists, or by commenting on the way he views visual art in general. Section 7.2 examines the extent to which painting may have affected Elytis' poetic expression. The aim of this section is to explore the semiotic and the syntactic interaction between poetry and painting and to show that Elytis' poetics is impregnated with the achievements that mark the evolution of twentieth-century art, and in particular Cubism and Abstraction. Section 7.3 considers the apparent convergence between cinema and the poetry of Elytis' second period by focusing on those features of his poetry that show his awareness of techniques and formal devices employed in filmic art. In section 7.4, the relation between the poetic image and the pictorial image is examined from the point of view of 'iconology' rather than 'iconography'; while the latter deals with the descriptive study of subject-matter, the former concerns the semantic aspects of visual art. Iconology is a 'rhetoric of images' which deals with what has been said about images and also with what images themselves say (Mitchell 1986: 1-2).[423] This section considers those instances in Elytis' poetry in which the pictorial image is integrated into the poetic. The ways in which the pictorial image may contribute to the constitution of the mythical 'third condition' of poetry are explored by focusing chiefly on poetic references to woman, the mediatrix for poetry, and also on poetic metalanguage referring to the mythical world of poetry. It is pointed out that the crossing of poetic and pictorial images in the poetry of Elytis' second period, which is manifest in his constant references to visual art and especially painting, and becomes most apparent when comparing his poetry with his own visual art, is a typical

[423] The term 'iconology' was coined by Cesare Ripa and was adopted by Erwin Panofsky to refer to the study of the tradition of pictorial motifs and of their meaning.

stylistic feature of his poetics, in which the image is situated in an intrinsically cardinal position.

7.1 *The Foregrounding of Visual Art and of the Pictorial Image*

In the poetry of his second period, Elytis frequently refers either to kinds of visual art, and especially painting, to specific styles of visual art, and mainly styles of painting, or to the subject-matter or the imagery of particular works of art. He may also refer or allude to the techniques, styles or aesthetic views of certain painters, or other artists such as film directors. Thus, art, and especially painting, may be thematized in his poetry, or the relation of a poem or of the poetic image with a particular pictorial image may be signalled in the text, in the interdiscursive field which develops between the poem and the painting or other work of art, such as film and photography. References to cinema and photography, films and cinema directors, which are frequent in the poetry of his second period, are examined separately in section 7.3.

Modern painters to whom he frequently refers in his essays, such as Picasso, Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas, or the naive Theofilos, are also mentioned in Elytis' poetry; in fact, artists are normally evoked in the poetry of his second period either through their names (e.g. El Greco) or through references to certain of their paintings, as is the case with Magritte and Matisse, or through both, as is the case with Dalí, de Chirico and Balthus. Direct references to artistic achievements by individual artists, such as Picasso or Matisse, may also be made. Elytis may also refer to period art, such as

Greek, Egyptian, Etruscan or Renaissance art, or to kinds of art, such as murals or Christian iconography.

Early poems where Elytis refers to painters are "Ὠδὴ στὸν Πικασσὸ' (1948) and 'Μικρὸν Ἀνάλογον γιὰ τὸν Ν. Χατζηκυριάκο Γκίκα' (1958). Both poems belong to his second period, since they were written sometime between 1944 and 1960,[424] and were finally published in *Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ* (1974) (1980b: 18-23; 29-30). Elytis' references to the visual arts became more frequent in the later poetry of his second period. Twice in *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιὰ* (1971) he refers to murals, in the poems "Η τοιχογραφία' (1984c: 28) and 'Δῶρο ἀσημένιο ποίημα' (1984c: 64). Another reference to murals appears in *Τὸ μονόγραμμα* (1971) (1982a: 22). In *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας* (1982), he mentions the murals of Thera and the mosaics of Ravenna ('Ad libitum') (1982b: 37), and also a Minoan fresco ('Τό ἀμύγδαλο τοῦ κόσμου') (1982b: 24), while the cover of *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* (1984) depicts a Pompeian fresco.[425] In *Μαρία Νεφέλη* (1978), and in *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας* (1991), he refers to the tombstones and the scuplted Korai of Kerameikos (1984b: 14 and 112; 1991: 7). In *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, he compares poetic images to pictorial ones by pointing to particular paintings or motifs used by certain painters (1984b: 41) or belonging to certain styles or art periods.[426]

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[424] The poem 'Μικρὸν Ἀνάλογον γιὰ τὸν Νίκο Χατζηκυριάκο Γκίκα' was first published in 1960 (cf. Daskalopoulos 1993: 57) and "Ὠδὴ στὸν Πικασσὸ' in 1962 (ibid.: 58).

[425] Cf. his own collage *Πομπηιανό* (1979) [in the Appendix: Fig. 1].

[426] See the following passages: 'Τώρα σ' ἀγαπῶ σέ δυό διαστάσεις / σάν φιγούρα ἐτρουσκική / σάν σημάδι τοῦ Klee πού ὑπῆρξε ψάρι' (1984b: 72); and 'πράγμα πού θά 'κανε τήν καθημερινή ζωή μου / [...] / ἀδιάφορη σάν ἔργο ζωγραφικῆς τῆς 'Αναγεννήσεως' (1984b: 73).

Icons are also often mentioned or described in Elytis' poetry; in *Τὸ μονόγραμμα,* he refers to the popular belief in the supernatural weeping of the Saints depicted on holy icons: 'εἶναι ὁ χρόνος μιὰ μεγάλη ἐκκλησία, μ' ἀκοῦς / "Οπου κάποτε οἱ φιγοῦρες, μ' ἀκοῦς / Τῶν 'Αγίων / Βγάζουν δάκρυ ἀληθινό' (1982a: 18). In *'Ημερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου 'Απριλίου,* there is a painting of a small church hanging on the wall (1984d: 18), whereas in *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς 'Οξώπετρας,* a lithograph of the Annunciation is hanging on the wall of his room (1991: 18). The poet refers to icons (and possibly fire-walking) in the first poem of *'Ο μικρὸς Ναυτίλος* (1985) (1986a: 9). In his own collages, the figures of saints or of the Virgin Mary as depicted on icons inhabit surreal or marvellous landscapes.[427]

In *'Ο μικρὸς Ναυτίλος*, among the contents of the persona's 'Ταξιδιωτικός Σάκος', there are ancient Greek and Egyptian works of art, but also Renaissance and modern paintings (1986a: 37-39 and 42-43). In the same collection, the persona refers to the figures ('σχήματα') and the treatment of colours by Matisse (1986a: 57), and to architecture (1986a: 118). Colours are foregrounded in *Μαρία Νεφέλη* ('Τά λευκά τῶν ἀγγέλων', 'Μέρες νωπές στήν ὄμπρα καί στή σιέννα') (1984b: 58), and in many of his later poems.[428] In *Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ*, in the poem 'Villa Natacha', which in date of publication precedes both collections mentioned above, but which may have been written around the same time with the poems included in them, the poet refers to the shapes and the clear figures of Picasso's painting, and to one of his drawings

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[427] See, for instance, *'Ο ἄγγελος τῆς 'Αστυπαλαίας* (1966; Fig. 34), *'Ο σταματημένος χρόνος* (1967), *'Η προσφορά* (1967), *Οἱ δρόμοι τῆς θάλασσας* (1972; Fig. 32), *'Η Παναγιά τὰ Πέλαγα* (1977; Fig. 33), *Στὴ θαλασσοσπηλιά* (1978), *Στὸν καθρέφτη* (1986); all of these collages appear in Elytis 1986c.

[428] See, for instance, the poem 'Παρασκευὴ πού πάντα βρέχει' (*Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς 'Οξώπετρας*) (1991: 22-23), and the poem 'Σὲ μπλὲ 'Ιουλίτας' (*Δυτικὰ τῆς λύπης*) (1995c: 19-21).

(1980b: 44). He praises Matisse's revolutionary view of penumbra and hue (1980b: 45), the wisdom and the artistic boldness of Picasso and Laurens (1980b: 47), and the calmness of Theofilos' painting (1980b: 48).

In *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας*, specific paintings by Dalí, de Chirico and Balthus are mentioned (1982b: 21), as well as the wax models of Madame Tussaud's museum. In *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου*, the poetic persona refers to El Greco (1984d: 15) by evoking an image of the latter's painting, and he quotes the inscription 'διά χειρός' which usually appears on Byzantine paintings of the later phase of Byzantine art. In *Δυτικὰ τῆς λύπης* (1995), the persona privileges the painter (1995c: 15) and he refers to the ideal 'eighth colour' and to the ideal of images becoming 'ζωγραφιές' (1995c: 25). In general, it could be observed that while most of the poetry of his second period includes images or motifs which could be 'expressions' alluding to specific paintings, his last two collections, that is, *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας* and *Δυτικὰ τῆς λύπης*, may give the impression that they comprise images which were first conceived by the poet as paintings. Furthermore, his distinction of Kalvos' imagery into 'ζωγραφικές' and 'λυρικές παραστάσεις', which has been mentioned in Chapter 5, may be evoked when reading Elytis' own poetry, and it can be observed that both types of 'παραστάσεις' appear in it.

Elytis' references to visual art in his poetry are explained and justified in the poem ''Ο κῆπος βλέπει' (*Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας*):

(νά μωρέ ποίηση)
[...]
ἀνάγκη νά μετατρεπόμαστε κάθε στιγμή σέ εἰκόνα

[...]
μ᾽ ἄλλα λόγια κάτι ἐλάχιστο ἀλλά καί
σημαντικό τόσο πού
ἡ μαγεία νά κινεῖ τό χέρι μας καί νά τό ἑρμηνεύει
κατά πῶς οἱ σκιές ἀλλάζουν θέση

λές
ἔχουν πάρει κιόλας τό μερίδιο τοῦ Θεοῦ

ἴδια σ᾽ ἄλλους καιρούς οἱ Ὅσιοι.
(1982b: 13-14)

In this passage, the act of painting is identified with the writing of poetry and they are both justified as creative actions: just as God created the universe and also gave the power to the Saints to produce miracles ('μαγεία'), so the artist or the poet constitutes in his art the magic world of vision. The passage also explains the two lines at the beginning of the first part of the same poem: 'ἕνας Πανσέληνος πού ζωγραφίζει ἐνῶ δέν ὑπάρχει Θεός / καί ἀποδεικνύει ἀκριβῶς τό ἀντίθετο' (1982b: 11), that is, that magic exists although reality may give one the opposite impression. The painting of particular artists and the poetry of specific poets, the 'initiated', or visionary poets and artists, as was explained in Chapters 1 and 3, reveal to man the 'second condition' of life in which 'οἱ ἄλλοι ἐμεῖς / θ᾽ ἀρχινίσουμε νά ζοῦμε μυημένοι στά σανσκριτικά τοῦ σώματος / οὐσιαστικά καί μεταφορικά μιλώντας / ὅπως θέλω νά πῶ ζωγράφιζεν ο Pierro [sic] / della Francesca ἤ κατουροῦσε ὁ Arthur Rimbaud / πάντοτε μέ τή συγκατάθεση τῶν ἡλιοτροπίων' (1982b: 13). Painting and poetry of this kind are raised to a 'third condition', which is the condition of myth and not of reality, as was observed in Chapter 4. This happens because poetry and painting are capable of revealing to man the 'second condition' of life, which is sacred:

ἀλλά τότε ἀκόμα ὑπήρχανε
τριανταφυλλιές μέ σημασία θρησκευτική
ἀλληλούια

ἡ Κυρία τῶν Ἀγγέλων
μέ χρυσό ἀλεξίπτωτο
κατέβαινε ὥς τό μαξιλάρι σου
Γιέ μου πλάγιαζε κοντά σου
ἡ ἀπέραντη πεδιάδα
φυσημένες δεξιά οἱ τουλίπες ὅλες
ἀριστερά ὁ ἀέρας
χρωμοθέτης ἀλάνθαστος

ὁ κῆπος βλέπει (1982b: 13; his emphasis)

In Elytis' view, the reality perceived in the mind's eye does not presuppose thought but the psychic processes of the imagination. One may become a visionary if one is able to capture the pure reflection of the real world on his imagination (the unconscious).[429] It is this reflection which refers to the 'second condition' of life, as the following extract seems to imply:

Τά πανύψηλα ὄρη
ἄς ποῦμε οἱ Ἄνδεις
ἔχουνε τό ἀντίστοιχό τους
μέσα μας (ὅπως τό Σύμπαν
ὑποτίθεται
κάποιο ἄλλο ἀπό ἀντιύλη)
ὅπου ὅταν προχωροῦμε πρός τήν κορυφή τους
ἀραιώνει κι ἐκεῖ ὁ ἀέρας
τόσο πού λυποθυμᾶς

τά ἀνθρώπινα ὄργανα δέν ἀντέχουνε τόση καθαρότητα

ἕνας Vermeer κάποτε τό κατάφερε ἀλλ'
ἐστηρίχτηκε στό χρῶμα (1982b: 14)

As was explained in Part II, the recomposition of life by means of the imagination was the common aim attributed by Elytis both to visual art and poetry. This view is expressed, for instance, in poem XVII of *Ὁ μικρὸς Ναυτίλος*, in which,

[429] Cf. the observations made by Politi with regard to the ontological issues touched upon by the poet in this poem (Politi 1993: 61-72).

significantly, it is observed that the life conduct of the poet or artist should be consistent with his/her work:

> Δὲν εἶμαι ζωγράφος, Κόρη Θηρασία. Μὰ θὰ σὲ πῶ μὲ ἀσβέστη καὶ μὲ θάλασσα. Θὰ σὲ προεχτείνω μ᾽ αὐτὰ ποὺ γράφω σ᾽ αὐτὰ ποὺ πράττω. Θὰ σοῦ προσφέρω μιὰ ζωὴ (τὴ ζωὴ ποὺ δὲν ἀξιώθηκα) [...]
>
> Μόνο μ᾽ ἕνα λευκὸ πουλὶ πάνω ἀπὸ τὸ κεφάλι σου.
>
> Θὰ φυτέψω ἀμπέλια - λέξεις. Θὰ κτίσω᾽Ανάκτορα
>
> (1986a: 85)

Elytis experimented with collage, and he also produced a number of paintings. He refers to collage by calling the result 'συνεικόνες' (1992: 257ff.; 1995b: 21), a term that implies that his intention was to link in a certain manner the disparate images ('εικόνες') that he brought together in his collages.[430] As he explains in his essay 'Εἰ μὴ ἔν εἴη', his aim in his 'συνεικόνες' was 'να δώσει το όραμα ενός κόσμου όπου το γραφικό σήμα παίρνει τη θέση απλού ψηφίου και να μεταδώσει άλλου είδους ποιητικά μηνύματα, όσο κι αν η γραφή πάντοτε βγαίνει πρώτη στην τελική αναμέτρηση' (1995b: 21). As late as 1995, Elytis seems to maintain that writing has priority over the visual arts in depicting a visionary world.[431] This view is already expressed in his 1944 essay addressed to Tsatsos, in which he considers poetry superior to painting and music (1944d: 98; =1987: 486). His essay 'Οι συνεικόνες', accompanying the catalogue of the first exhibition of his visual art in Greece in 1980, is expressive of his attitude.

In this essay, Elytis claims that, although both poetry and visual art express

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[430] See section 7.4.

[431] Unless he simply meant by this comment that his own poetry was better than his own visual art.

the 'προέκταση [...] πνευματική' of things (1992: 259), visual art can convey its messages more easily than poetry, which relies on language. In this comment, Elytis did not express his dissatisfaction with poetry, but his anxiety that the transcription of the poetic vision into verbal language might cause interpretative difficulties. He suggested that this anxiety inspired his own visual art:

> Σκοπός μου δεν ήταν να παίξω· ήταν να μεταγράψω την ποιητική μου σ' ένα επίπεδο αποσπασμένο από τους ήλους του σταυρού της γλώσσας. Και μου φάνηκε, με το πείραμα που έκανα, ότι κρατούσα ίσως στα χέρια μου το κατάλληλο κλειδί. Πολλές παλιές μου ορέξεις άρχισαν σιγά σιγά, με άλλου είδους απαιτήσεις, ν' ανεβαίνουν από το βυθό των ποιημάτων μου στην επιφάνεια.
>
> Η γυναίκα πουλί. Ακόμα καλύτερα: η κόρη άγγελος· ένας άγγελος θηλυκός σε όλη του τη δόξα· με φτερούγες από κάτι άλλο, που η ζωή δε μας το είχε προσφέρει ως τότε: φτερούγες από θαλασσινά όστρακα. Ναι, αυτό ήταν. Να σημάνει ο συναγερμός των φυσικών στοιχείων· ο μετεωρισμός τους στον αιθέρα της φαντασίας· και το κατακάθισμά τους με μια διαφορετική, απρόβλεπτη, μη ωφελιμιστική (επιμένω σ' αυτό) επανασύνθεση. (1992: 259-260)

This explanation reveals that his intention was not to experiment with visual art in its own right, that is, to practise the art of a painter or a producer of collages. His attempt 'to transcribe his poetics' into signs that would not be linguistic involved not expectations of formal achievements but the foregrounding of the visual aspect of his poetry. It is indicative that the examples provided by Elytis in the above passage in order to explain his purpose do not refer to stylistic choices, but to the semantic energy released by the pictorial image.[432] It is clear that the 'transcription of his poetics' did not refer to a transference of the formal aspects of his poetics to another

[432] As Friar observes, Elytis' aim when producing his collages was '[μια] έκφραση παράλληλη μ' εκείνη της ποιητικής του εικονογραφίας' (1978: 80); cf. Lambraki-Plaka 1994: 26 and Aranitsis 1986: 34.

form of artistic expression, but to a conscious effort to employ the visual sign so as to give further backing to the vision he wanted to communicate in his poetry.

Mitchell observes that the modernists turned verbal activity into a 'verbal icon' (Wimsatt) or image: in modernist writing 'this image is defined, not as a pictorial likeness or impression, but as a synchronic structure in some metaphorical space--"that which" (in Pound's words) "presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time"' (1986: 25). Elytis, who undertook this endeavour, pursued it with a striking consistency throughout his second poetic period. What is more significant, his poetry also shows a self-conscious and disciplined approach to visual art, and a constructive exploration of the more formal elements of the visual arts. The following section considers the impact that Elytis' study of the two major movements of twentieth-century art had on his poetics, as this becomes manifest in his poetry.

7.2 *The Attraction of Cubism and Abstraction*

The most important contributions in twentieth-century art history have been made by three movements or trends. Cubism, Surrealism and Abstract painting all originate in the quest to answer the problematic on form raised by the Post-Impressionists or to expand their achievements. Other schools or trends, such as the painting of the Scuola Metafisica, Rayonism, Suprematism and Synchronism, also assisted the transition from Post-Impressionist art to Cubism and to the theories supporting the art of the abstract, both of which precede Surrealism. Abstract art was also influenced by Purism and Orphism. The practical achievements of Cubism and Abstraction have

impressed their impact on literature. Surrealist literature, for instance, was highly affected by various theories of art and especially by Cubism and the art of the abstract. Abstraction and Cubism also influenced Surrealist art; yet the latter is distinctly differentiated from the other two trends. Surrealist art, which is important for the study of Elytis' poetics, is considered in sections 7.3 and 7.4 in connection with cinema and the pictorial image. Section 7.2 examines how the influence of Cubism and Abstract art, which have informed Elytis' aesthetic ideas, can be traced in his poetry. In general, it should be pointed out that technique becomes thematized in Elytis' later poetry, while the employment of technical devices borrowed from the visual arts in the poetry of his first period seems to be only instinctive rather than systematic.

7.2.1 *Cubism*

Cubism, the painting of 'little cubes',[433] plays on reality and illusion and tries to produce a well-considered balance between representation and abstraction. The principles of 'simultaneous contrast',[434] elaborated by the Orphists, gave way to the 'simultaneous vision' of Cubism, that is, 'the fusion of various views of a figure or object into a single image' (Golding 1993: 54). Picasso and Braque, who pioneered the new language of Cubism, left behind the traditional system of perspective and the

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[433] As Warncke points out, 'At a first glance, the motifs look like cubes--which is why the term "Cubism" was coined in the first place' (1994: 182). It was at the exhibition of Braque's work at the Paris autumn Salon in 1908 that Matisse, who belonged to the jury, observed that the paintings involved many 'little cubes'. The critic Louis Vauxcelles adopted the term in his writings, and this type of art was thus named.

[434] These principles were set by the theorist Michel Eugène Chevreul and informed Delaunay's experiments with colour (Atkins 1993: 161).

principle of illusionism,[435] and opened up new perspectives in art by founding a new approach to visual perceptions of space and form. Yet Cubism rejects total abstraction; both Picasso and Braque stressed that there was a 'realistic' aspect in their work and both worked hard to make this aspect of their work clearly discernible. What they meant was that they did not utterly reject representation, but the traditional conventions for representing reality.

There are different techniques used in the first, that is, the Analytical phase of Cubism and the later, the Synthetic phase.[436] In Analytical Cubism, the artist works from representation to abstraction. The process is reversed in Synthetic Cubism which proceeds from abstraction to representation. While in Analytical Cubism objects are 'dissected, as it were, or analyzed' (Warncke 1994: 178), in Synthetic Cubism they are 're-assembled' (1994: 227). Picasso and Braque worked together during the first phase but their methods became distinct at the later stages of their work.

During the first phase, the fact that the work of both was growing more and more abstract led to their realization that there was needed a system of clues or keys that would hold the abstract work close to reality and, thus, interpretation. Stencilled letters, which first appeared in Braque's work in 1911, were soon followed by the more important techniques of collage (from the French 'coller', which means 'to glue') and *papiers collés* (usually translated in English as 'cut papers'). The two techniques are different; collage, the invention of Picasso, 'can be described as the incorporation of any extraneous matter on to the picture surface' (Golding 1993: 62). Braque's

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[435] Illusionism refers to the depiction of nature in a convincing manner.
[436] Both terms were coined by Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler in *The Rise of Cubism* (1949).

invention, *papiers collés*, is a form of collage in which pieces of paper are stuck to the surface of a painting. However, the term 'collage' has been generally employed to refer to both techniques. The intention behind the use of these techniques is revealed in the following comment by Picasso:

> the purpose of the *papier collé* was to give the idea that different textures can enter into a composition to become the reality in the painting that competes with the reality in nature. *We tried to get rid of 'trompe l'oeil' to find a 'trompe d'esprit'*...[...] [The] displaced object has entered a universe for which it was not made and where it retains, in a measure, its strangeness. And this strangeness was what we wanted to make people think about because we were quite aware that our world was becoming very strange and not exactly reassuring.[437]

In some cases, Cubist paintings are made to imitate *papiers collés*. But this is no return to illusionism.

> The Synthetic phase of Cubism emerged out of Braque's and Picasso's experiments with collage and *papiers collés*. In this phase, the two artists worked separately. Braque's technique slowly led from abstraction to representation. Picasso, on the other hand, worked on *assemblage*, that is, the technique of assembling together various elements, either abstract forms or 'ready-mades' in order to create an image.[438]

Elytis must already have been acquainted with Cubism by 1938, when he referred to it in his essay addressed to Theotokas (1987: 469); in 1947, he admitted

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[437] Picasso in an interview with Françoise Gilot, quoted in Golding 1993: 63. My emphasis.
[438] Cf. Golding 1993: 67.

his fascination with the painting of Cubism when, in the essay on Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas, he confessed that Cubism was 'το σημαντικώτερο, όπως πιστεύω, σχολείο της νεώτερης τέχνης' (1947a: 354).[439] However, his acknowledgement of the positive influence of Cubism on poetry was late, since in the essay addressed to Theotokas he insisted that Cubist techniques had not been used in poetry, including that of the 'Cubist poets' Reverdy and Max Jacob (1987: 469-470).[440] It was only in 1961, when he wrote his essay on Reverdy, that Elytis provided a summary of Cubist poetic pursuits. In his view, these were 'Η εμμονή στο αντικείμενο, η τομή και αλληλοδιείσδυση των επιπέδων, η έκφραση που εξυπηρετεί δυο παράλληλες έννοιες, η συμπροβολή πολλών οπτικών επιφανειών, η μετάπτωση από το πρώτο στο τρίτο πρόσωπο κατά την έννοια του en face και profil' (1987: 649-650).[441] While in his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* Elytis points to some of these Cubist techniques which he employed in the poem, as is pointed out later in this section, in *Ιδιωτική Οδός,* he explicitly acknowledges his debt to Cubism (1990: 18-24), which, as he observes, was to him a kind of revelation:

> Η λιτότητα και ο ασκητισμός που αποπνέανε τα έργα του Braque (προτού φτάσουνε στην αναλυτική τους [sic] περίοδο) του Juan Gris, του Leger, οντοποιούσαν κυριολεκτικά ένα ιδανικό μου. Δήλωναν μιαν απόσπαση από τη φιλοδοξία να δώσεις την πραγματικότητα της οφθαλμαπάτης και μια θέληση να συλλάβουν το αντικείμενο στη δομική του αλήθεια, έτσι όπως το ατενίζει ο νους μέσα στην κοσμική τάξη. (1990a: 22)

Apparently, in this passage, Elytis had in mind the first phase of Cubism, that is, its Analytical phase. His mention of the 'Analytical period' in the parenthesis is

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[439] Elytis' observation is omitted in the republished version of *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά.*

[440] Of course, by 1938 Elytis should have known that Cubist techniques had been employed with successful results at least by T.S Eliot and Ezra Pound.

obviously an error or a misprint; in its place he should have referred to the Synthetic phase which, in any case, follows the first Analytical period.[442] In this passage, Elytis stresses the significance of the Cubist rejection of illusionism, which he identifies with 'the ambition' to depict 'the reality of *trompe l'oeil*'.[443] In his view, (Analytical) Cubism managed to capture and highlight the idea of (the structure of) the image as perceived in the mind's eye, and not the actual object of perception, that is, what the eye sees. This seems to be congruent with Elytis' own ideas on art and poetry as they have been examined in chapter 3. Elytis' view of the Cubist idea of the image also points to his ideas on the function of the poem as an autonomous whole and of its independent parts.

In Elytis' poetry, there can be detected several instances where he tries out particular Cubist techniques in order to achieve the above aim. It seems that, irrespective of his initial indifference towards the Cubist poets, that is, Reverdy and Jacob, Elytis may have experimented with Cubist techniques in his early poetic writing; however, such experiments do not appear to have been systematic and serious in the poetry of his first period. It must have been some time before he wrote the essay on Reverdy, most probably around the time of his first sojourn in France in 1948-1951, that Elytis may have seriously considered Cubism from a 'practically theoretical' perspective. Cubist techniques are employed with caution in *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, to be followed by more daring experiments in his later poetry.

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[441] See also Elytis' observations in the original essay (Elytis 1962: 80).
[442] Significantly, the error escaped Elytis's notice in the republication of the essay in the collective volume of *Εν λευκώ* (1992: 389).
[443] One may compare this observation with Picasso's comments quoted above.

An early example that shows Elytis' familiarity with Cubism is the poem 'Ψαλμὸς καὶ ψηφιδωτὸ γιὰ μιὰν Ἄνοιξη στὴν Ἀθήνα', which was written in 1939 but was first published in 1965 and was finally included in *Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ* in 1974. Perhaps this delay in publication, indicative of a possible hesitation on his part, also suggests either that Elytis was aware of the boldness of the experiment, which is balanced in the poem's imponderable and optimistic style, or that the poem was reworked, possibly sometime in the 1960s, when Elytis' exploration of Cubist techniques had acquired a systematic theoretical basis.[444] In the poem, the characteristic Cubist effect of 'simultaneous vision' seems to be pursued in what can be seen as the dissection of the main image into many subordinate ones. Thus, Spring is suggested in the poem by the accumulation of various images and their fusion into the principal image of Spring in Athens. In 1939, the idea of the controlling image had not yet emerged in Elytis' poetic thought, and perhaps its presence in the poem was unconscious or the product of a later intervention.[445] The technique employed in the poem presupposes a knowledge of the theoretical background of Analytical Cubism, where an image is analysed into its composing elements, whose semantic properties correspond to its various aspects. Even the layout of the poem seems to imitate the disjointed, multi-faceted and polygonal effects of the surface of a Cubist painting. The title's reference to 'ψηφιδωτό', that is, another technique used in visual art, confirms the presumption that visual art may have influenced the technique of the poem; the mosaic too has a synthesizing character.

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[444] The poem was first published in *Εποχές* in 1965 (see Daskalopoulos 1993: 58).

[445] As has been observed in Chapter 5, the employment of the controlling image as an organizing principle for the development of the subject-matter of the poem was only intuitive in Elytis' first poetic period.

Another poem appearing in *Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ* is ''Η 'Ελένη τῆς Κρήτης μὲ τὸ πρόσωπο καὶ μὲ τὸ πλάι', composed in 1962, that is, around the time when Elytis wrote the essay on Reverdy and the time when he may have reworked the previous poem; ''Η 'Ελένη τῆς Κρήτης μὲ τὸ πρόσωπο καὶ μὲ τὸ πλάι' is apparently Cubist in its technique. The title is reminiscent of Cubist paintings by Picasso,[446] and the poem itself may draw for its technique on Picasso's Cubist experiments with form. In the poem, the figure of the woman is given in the simultaneous visual presentation in full-face and in profile on the same plane, that is, the poem, but in two perspectives. On the one hand, the woman is depicted in profile in the parts of the poem placed in parentheses.[447] On the other hand, the woman is presented in full face in the main parts of the poem.

In his commentary on *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, Elytis points out that the coincidence of first-person and third-person deixis in the poem was influenced by Picasso's experiments in three-dimensional perspective (1995a: 50). Elytis states that this technique is employed in the poem so as to achieve the projection of horizontal time onto the vertical axis of personal temporal continuity. In the same commentary, Elytis also suggests that the 'method of identifications', used to refer to two things simultaneously, is similar to the Cubist experiments with line (1995a: 49). The verse *'Οἱ κρυφὲς συλλαβὲς ὅπου πάσχιζα τὴν ταυτότητά μου ν' ἀρθρώσω* ' (1980a: 17; his emphasis), provided by Elytis as an example, is italicized in the poetic text: the strong semantic implications of the highlighted line offer evidence of the kind of

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[446] See, for instance, Picasso's *La Lecture* (1932) [Fig. 2], *Femme assise dans un fauteuil rouge* (1931), and *Femme de 3/4 gauche* (1934).

poetic effect that he attempted to achieve. The verse serves as a kind of linkage between the concrete imagery of the vegetable world and abstract language.

Cubism may also have informed Elytis' conception of 'prismatic form', which has been examined in Chapter 5. The principles of Analytical Cubism and the idea of the 'little cubes' of Cubism may have served as models for the conception of the 'crystals' or the 'nuclei', that is, the 'prisms' composing a poem. Apart from Picasso, the early experiments of Braque, Gris and Leger may have contributed to the development of this technique, as Elytis suggests in the passage from *Ιδιωτική οδός* quoted above. However, in Elytis' poetry, Cubist techniques may combine with the methods employed in Surrealist and Abstract art. For instance, in the poem 'Ψαλμὸς καὶ ψηφιδωτὸ γιὰ μιὰν Ἄνοιξη στὴν Ἀθήνα', the technique of dream association may be used, as in Surrealism, in order to allow one image to emerge from another ("Ἄνοιξη "μὴ" "θὰ μᾶς δοῦνε" "τέρας" / Καὶ τὸ τέρας ποὺ γύριζε σὰν τὴ λατέρνα'; 1980b: 12). Relevant examples that show how the principles of Analytical Cubism may be exploited for the achievement of 'prismatic form' are the poems of the collection *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας*, in which Surrealist dream association and techniques of abstraction other than those used in Cubism are also employed. For this reason, the poems of this collection are considered in the next sections.

It should be sufficient here to point out that Elytis' own visual art is mainly influenced by Cubism. His collages, most of which are figurative rather than abstract, are produced through the employment of techniques that point to the discoveries of

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[447] In fact, the parts in the parentheses reappear, with the addition of an extra stanza in the poem "Η Ἑλένη' from the collection *Τά ρῶ τοῦ ἔρωτα* (1986b: 34-35). The same motif reappears in *Μαρία*

Picasso, Braque, Leger, and Gris. Even his painting, which is usually dependent on a varying degree of abstraction, is highly affected by Cubism.

7.2.2 *Abstraction*

Before the advent of modern Abstract art, the word 'abstract' was used for the literary image which was not concrete; an abstract image in poetry was normally valued less highly than a concrete image.[448] As has been pointed out in Chapter 3, nineteenth-century Neoplatonism (and Spiritualism) led to the emergence of the abstract. To abstract means to reduce those properties which make an entity recognizable and this is considered to be the opposite of representation. As Harrison observes,

> the term 'abstract' [...] has been applied as a label to many different forms of art [...]. In writing about art, the related noun 'abstraction' tends to be used in two connected though distinct senses: to refer in the case of certain works of art to the *property* of being abstract or 'non-figurative'; and to refer to the *process* whereby certain aspects of subjects or motifs are emphasized in works of art at the expense of others. (1993: 189; his emphasis)

In visual art, there is a range of degree in abstraction, since an abstract image can be kept close to interpretation either by being 'grounded in an actual object' (Atkins 1993: 44), or by giving 'visual form to something inherently nonvisual, like emotions or sensations'.

Νεφέλη, where Maria as Djenda is depicted 'μέ τό πλάι' on the Cretan mountains (1984b: 104).

[448] Cf. the views of Sidney in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, and also those of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley. Pound and Eliot tried to develop theories of concrete poetry (cf. Eliot's notion of the 'objective correlative'). Edith Sitwell used the term 'abstract' to refer to poetry which relied heavily on

Among others, Piet Mondrian and Mark Rothko are artists who worked on abstraction and may have influenced Elytis, since he seems to share with them common ideas on the origins and the purpose of art. As has been pointed out in Chapter 3, both artists searched for answers to their artistic quests in the Neoplatonic tradition and in Theosophical ideas. Mondrian believed in the existence of a deeper reality whose mask is visible reality, and that this deeper reality can be reached through the imagination (Lynton 1989: 85). Rothko, on the other hand, searched for universal significance (1989: 239). In their techniques, both artists reduce their range of colour and simplify their forms by painting linear structures and aspiring to produce rhythmical results that defy the resistance to interpretation, which is common in abstract painting in general. Elytis was not really interested in Spiritualism, which fascinated artists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Perhaps he shared Breton's excitement about those aspects of life that evade human perception, but what made him especially interested in artists such as Mondrian and Rothko is the expression that their essentialist quests found in their work. Although essentialism may not necessarily be a precondition for abstract art (Harrison 1993: 199), Elytis considered it to be the power that ought to engineer all attempts at artistic creation, as was observed in Chapter 3.

It was pointed out in Chapter 5 that Elytis may have reached an advanced stage in elaborating his ideas on 'prismatic form' and 'crystalline' poetry sometime after his return from his first stay in France in 1951 and before he published *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*. This poem and *Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*, as well as poems published

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sound, and she employed this type of abstraction in the poems of her collection *Façade* (performed in 1923).

in the early 1970s present aspects of the first cautious experimentations with what Elytis later termed 'πρισματική μορφή'. Furthermore, as was also explained in Chapter 5, Elytis presented the final formulation to his ideas in the essay on Romanos the Melodist, which, as he pointed out, was completed in 1975; this may explain why the collection that best exemplifies his views on 'prismatic form' is *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας*, a collection consisting of poems possibly written or completed also sometime in the 1970s. Abstraction may have affected Elytis' ideas on 'prismatic form', as becomes apparent when comparing his poetry in 'prismatic form' to works by Mondrian.

Mondrian painted *Diamond with Grey Lines* in 1918 [Fig. 3]. As Lynton observes,

> The painting is based on a regular trellis of grey lines, some of them accentuated by thickening. The diamond format suggests that we are seeing only a part of a larger trellis. Thus the basis of the picture and of its visual impact is the regularity and stability of the grid which is associated with the wall to which the painting is fixed; its second aspect, in importance and in the sequence of awareness, is the irregularity and unsystematic structure of the thicker lines, a dynamic disturbance of what was, and half remains a stable organization. (1989:76)

The crystal lattice implied in Elytis' definition of 'prismatic form' and in his idea of 'crystalline' poetry could be compared and perhaps related to Mondrian's trellis. This trellis or the structure consisting of many individual 'crystals' in Elytis' conception of 'prismatic form' can be extended *ad infinitum*, but the part that is accessible to the observer, or the reader, presents a stable and complete visual picture. Elytis' stress on the importance of the peaks or the sharp points of the 'prismatic' expressions in a poem, may be compared to the irregularly thickened lines in

Mondrian's painting, which upset the systematicity of the work's organization, and challenge interpretation. In *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, this may be observed in the regular repetition of the foregrounded refrains at the end of each paragraph of ''Η Γένεσις' ('ΑΥΤΟΣ ὁ πρῶτος ὕμνος', 'ΑΥΤΟΣ / ὁ κόσμος ὁ μικρός, ὁ μέγας!', etc.) (1980a: 14 and 15); also, in the systematically disturbed arrangement of the lines of the seven paragraphs of ''Η Γένεσις', and perhaps in the organization of the sequences of the stanzas in the three unities of 'Τὸ Δοξαστικόν'.

The best example to illustrate how this functions in Elytis' poetry of the second period is the collection *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας*. In the poems of this collection, his ideas on 'prismatic form' seem to have reached the advanced stage of crystallization, to which he was consciously aspiring in the poetry he published from 1960 onwards. In point of fact, it seems that the individual parts of the poems of this collection have been elaborated in such a manner as to correspond exactly to Elytis' formulation of the idea of 'prismatic form'. Both the essay on Romanos the Melodist, where Elytis develops this conception, and the collection *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας* were published for a first time in 1982. The fact that the essay was written in 1975 may imply either that the three poems included in this collection were written or completed around the same time as the essay, or that they were written or completed immediately after Elytis gave the final formulation to his ideas on 'prismatic form'. As has been observed in Chapter 5, Elytis' conscious attempt to connect content and form led to a conception of 'prismatic form' that concerns both the semiotic and the semantic planes. The iridescences of the crystal mentioned in his essay on Romanos the Melodist are

observable both in the semiotic disposition of the poems and in their semantic value. In the first poem of the collection, ' Ὁ κῆπος βλέπει', these iridescences or 'sparks'[449] take the form of single lexical units or brief sentences (e.g.: 'οἴηση', 'ρεῦμα', 'ἔλα', 'ὁ κῆπος βλέπει', 'ἡ γραφή σταματᾶ', 'μιλῶ φιλοσοφία') (1982b: 11-15). The joints of the crystal lattice are visible in 'Τό ἀμύγδαλο τοῦ κόσμου', the second poem of the collection, where lines are interrupted in the middle and continued in the line that follows. Even the format of the poem in which the italicized lines dynamically disturb what appears to be a systematically irregular structure, reflects a similar play between systematicity and irregularity with that of Mondrian's painting. An example is the following passage:

> Ἄ ναί παρά τή θέλησή μου
> ἔγινε ὁ κόσμος ἔτσι πού
> γράφω σά νά 'χω ἀποσχιστεῖ ἀπ' τή μοίρα μου
> *τό ἀμύγδαλο τοῦ κόσμου*
> εἶναι πικρό καί δέν
> γίνεται νάν τό βρεῖς παρεχτός ἄν
> κοιμηθεῖς μισός ἔξω ἀπ' τόν ὕπνο
> (1982b: 22; his emphasis)

The brilliance of the 'crystalline expressions', mentioned by Elytis in many of his essays, is evoked and, in a way, proclaimed from the beginning of this poem ('στράφτει', 'ἀνταυακλᾶ') (1982b: 21). They appear in the poem in sudden and unexpected exclamations, mainly in single lexical units (e.g.: 'οἱ ἠλίθιοι', 'τίς νύχτες', 'σέ ἀπόγνωση', ' Ἔλα τώρα', 'θαῦμα', 'ποίηση', 'ντίνγκ / λάμψη / θρύψαλλα', 'ὦ φίλοι', 'Θέ μου', 'ὁλομόναχος', 'κρέμομαι', 'ποῦ; ποιόν; πότε;', 'ἀλήθεια') (1982b: 21-28). The third poem, 'Ad libitum', is similar to the first in that

[449] Breton suggested that the image should shine like the stars (1968: 11).

its iridescences are either lexical units or sentences (e.g.: 'ὥς πότε / φίλοι', 'τά / Επερχόμενα', 'βοήθεια', '*Ad libitum*', 'Ξέρω', 'γέρνεις λίγο ἀπ' τό'να μέρος / τό μέρος τῆς φθορᾶς', 'ὅπου μέλλει νά ἐνταχθεῖς', 'οἱ φύλακες', 'ἐννοεῖτε κεῖνο πού ἐννοῶ', 'ἡ παλιά εὐρυθμία', 'ἡ ποίηση ἀνέρχεται', 'Φιλησέ με θάλασσα προτοῦ σέ χάσω', 'τί νά πεῖ κανείς', 'ἡ πείρα μοῦ ξέμαθε τόν κόσμο') (1982b: 31-39). Such a contrast as in the foregrounding of single lexical units and complete, brief sentences resembles the contrast between the thin and the thicker lines in Mondrian's painting. It also corresponds perfectly to Elytis' definition of 'prismatic form'. The result urges one to a reading which proceeds in defiance of any conventional rules of interpretation but which is meaningful in its abstraction. The poem's polyvalence resides precisely in this mechanism of simplification or condensation: many things are said with the least possible linguistic means. The poem is full of images, each of them being a ring in an associative chain,[450] as was observed in the poem 'Ψαλμὸς καὶ ψηφιδωτὸ γιὰ μιὰν Ἄνοιξη στὴν Ἀθήνα'. Association concerns both the semiotic and the semantic aspects of the images, which may be compared to the 'προεξοχές', the crystals to which Elytis refers when he defines 'prismatic form'. The poems then function 'ὄχι μόνο με το σύνολό [τους] αλλά *και* τμηματικά, κομματιαστά' (Elytis 1992: 50; his emphasis). The controlling image is dissected into numerous other images which are perfect in themselves, just as the atoms constituting the crystal lattice are perfect crystals themselves.

[450] Minucci attributes this mechanism of 'gradual parthenogenesis' (1993: 144), to the associative function: 'Κάθε εικόνα πηγάζει συνειρμικά από μία εικόνα που προηγείται, διευρύνοντας το νόημά της μέχρι ν' αναχθεί σε μία κοινή μήτρα της εικόνας που είναι ο βασικός σημασιολογικός πυρήνας του ποιήματος' (1993: 144-145).

Rothko's use of colour may be used as an example to examine the range of the emotional tension that Elytis' images bear. In a characteristic example of Rothko's painting, *No. 8*, which was produced in 1952 [Fig. 4] one may see the rectangles of colour that are typical of his technique, one hovering over the other. As Lynton observes, in such paintings by Rothko

> None of the colours is clear and final: there are hints of colour breaking through the soft veils of colour before us, or seeping round their vague edges, and the ground colours too are liable to change almost imperceptibly. [...] The subtlety of the relationships of size between the forms, and of hue and weight between the colours is such that the best Rothkos appear to move almost subliminally: the abstract composition becomes a living presence. (1989: 239)

Perhaps one of the clearest examples for studying the traces that the theoretical background underlying this kind of painting may have left in the poetry of Elytis is one of his most recent poems included in *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*.

The poem 'Παρασκευὴ ποὺ πάντα βρέχει' seems to be pointing back to *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου*,[451] where the poetic persona, under the protection of an umbrella, searches for an idealized dream-like pink town with many open-air coffee-shops. In the later poem, the persona seems to be in a state of dejection and depression, which is expressed in the metaphor of the (grey) mud of his mind (1991: 22). In contrast, the illumination of sudden thoughts or reminiscences is compared with the glittering of gold. Out of nothing, his life seems to be revivified. From grey and the absence of time deixis, colour and smells ('Καὶ χωρὶς ἔτος νὰ

[451] See the poems 'Πέμπτη, 16' and 'Σάββατο, 18'; there is no poem for Friday 17 but this is supposed to have been a rainy day (Elytis 1984d: 34). More than this, the naming and counting of the days of the week in 'Παρασκευὴ ποὺ πάντα βρέχει' is also reminiscent of the technique of *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* in which the poems are diary entries. In fact, many of the

ἔχουν χρώματα ἤ ὀσμὲς'), gradually ('Σάββατο Κυριακή Δευτέρα Τρίτη') the colours of images are revealed in succession: the blue of the sky and the sea, the gold of a field, the white of beauty and the silver of the Virgin Mary. The images are implicit and they are evoked through their colours or their sounds. These colours do not correspond precisely to the hue or the tone of the rather dim colours of Rothko's painting mentioned above, where orange predominates.[452] However, the important aspect is the technique used in the poem, which seems to be similar to that used by Rothko. The colours in the painting represent images which move slowly in an upward subliminal movement, one fusing into the other, so that the whole painting vibrates with invisible life. Similarly, in Elytis' poem the colours stand for images, (and vice versa); their movement is slow but steady and it seems to reach its climax in the final hieratic images of a ceremony where the senses (vision and hearing) are the means of reaching the harmony of universal feeling:

Πλὴν οἱ χρησμοί, Τετάρτη Πέμπτη, δροῦν μὲ ἀσήμι τῆς Μαρίας
καὶ ὄστρακα
Τὶς νύχτες ποὺ ἔχουν τὸ ἐλεύθερο οἱ αἰσθήσεις
Ἴδιες νόμοι τοῦ σύμπαντος πιστεύεις εἶναι
Δῶ ἤ ἐκεῖ τὸ μεγάλο κεφάλι τοῦ Ἱερέα καὶ ὕστερα
Ἡ καμπάνα τῆς σελήνης πάνω ἀπ' τὰ κιγκλιδώματα
Ὄμικρον ἄλφα κι ἔψιλον ἀπ' τὰ Παντοτινά. (1991: 23)

The abstraction in the use of colour (but also sound) in this poem by Elytis can be better realized if the poem is compared with the early seven 'Παραλλαγὲς πάνω σὲ μιὰν ἀχτίδα'. In this series of poems, colour is employed in order simply to

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poems in this collection are echoed, both as it concerns subject-matter and technique, in poems of *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς 'Οξώπετρας*, which follows in date of publication.

[452] Although the choice of the tone of the colour is very important in Rothko's painting(s), it has nothing to do with the technical aspects of the poem. However, it can be pointed out here that Elytis approved of the clear colours used by artists, such as Matisse (see, for instance, 1992: 192), and that the colours of Elytis' own collages and paintings are usually very clear and bright.

provide the image with more energy and enliven it; in these poems, the functional exploitation of colour is based on a simple metaphorical mechanism. For instance, the orange girl is orange because she is drunk with the sun: 'Τόσο πολὺ τὴ μέθυσε ὁ χυμὸς τοῦ ἥλιου / Ποὺ ἔγειρε τὸ κεφάλι της καὶ δέχτηκε νὰ γίνει / Σιγὰ-σιγά: ἡ μικρὴ Πορτοκαλένια!' (1988: 40).

Abstraction seems to have offered Elytis further technical means of achieving the poetic perfection he desired while, at the same time, pursuing his views on the visionary function of poetry. The perfection of the mechanism for the production of 'prismatic form' through simpler, stronger and more economical associations, as in the case of using abstraction when working with colour, the density of form, the simplification and simultaneous invigoration of the image, the exploitation of the possibilities offered in the visual arrangement of words and verses on the page are the formal characteristics of the poetry of his second period to which his study and consideration of Abstraction appear to have significantly contributed.

7.3 *The Exploration of the Convergence between Cinema and Poetry*

The constitution of the dreamy world of the imagination in Elytis' first period frequently evokes cinema, while, on the other hand, cinematographic devices are employed systematically in his second period. As is also the case with painting, cinema is thematized in the poetry of this second period. But in the case of cinema,

one should probably avoid speaking of an 'influence',[453] since the impact of the twentieth-century 'seventh art' on literature is extremely wide and general. As Alain and Odette Virmaux observe with reference to Surrealist literature, instead of searching for the 'influence' of the cinema, one should examine the 'convergence' between the two kinds of art: 'Attribuer indistinctement à l'influence du cinéma tous les recours à l'image poétique, toutes les ellipses du langage, tous les changements de rythme, c'est un passe-temps qui peut divertir ou intéresser, mais qui ne saurait convaincre. [...] Au lieu d'une influence, mieux vaut parler d'une fréquente convergence de fait entre les moyens du cinéma et ceux de l'écriture' (1976: 77-78). Elytis does not elaborate extensively on filmic devices and techniques, but only as would have been expected of a poet with his creative abilities and independent thought.

As is suggested in the title of his essay 'Η ποίηση του κινηματογράφου και ο Walt Disney', published in 1938, Elytis considered cinema as a kind of poetry. In this essay, he expresses his enthusiasm for the art of cinema (1938b: 560),[454] its 'anti-realism' (1938b: 561), and 'the *new manner of seeing things*' (his emphasis), and he focuses on the relation of contemporary poetry with cinema. What is characteristic in this essay is Elytis' fascination with Disney's animation of the natural world. In Elytis' view, this example may show that cinema can produce poetry, 'δίνοντας ακριβώς εκείνο που δεν μπορούσε να γίνει στον φυσικό κόσμο (άρα ν' αντιγραφεί) εκείνο που θαρρούσε πως αποτελεί τον κόσμο της φαντασίας, και που ως τώρα είχε βρη μιαν εκδήλωση διαφορετικής υφής στο ποίημα, στο

[453] Discussing Elytis' essay on the animated pictures of Walt Disney, Yatromanolakis observes with hindsight that the films of Disney may have influenced Elytis' poetry (1994: 13); this is an acute observation, although one should probably avoid using the term 'influence' in this case.
[454] In this essay, Elytis also expresses general comments on the art of cinematography, which prove that he was familiar with it and with film criticism of the time. Cf. the list of the literature on cinema he provides at the beginning of the essay (1938b: 560, n. 1).

όνειρο, στο παραμύθι' (1938b: 562-563). He identifies this type of cinema with the 'sensibility of the modern' (1938b: 564), which conditions poetry, and he observes that this refers to a 'superior conception of the world' (1938b: 565). The second aspect of cinema noticed by Elytis in this early essay is the sharpness in the succession of images, the rapid movement of cinematic imagery (1938b: 564, n. 1). With this observation, Elytis referred to cinema in general, and not only to animation; what fascinated him was the fact that movement is created in cinema out of a series of stills.

An early example of the charm that Disney's animation exerted on Elytis is poem XIII of *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος* (1943). The main characteristic of this poem is the vivid personification of inanimate objects and the positive humanization of the whole of nature, which is evoked by the animated pictures of Disney. An example is the following passage:

> Αὐτὸς ὁ ἀγέρας ποὺ χαζεύει μέσ' στὶς κυδωνιὲς
> Τὸ ζουζούνι αὐτὸ ποὺ πιπιλάει τὰ κλήματα
> Ἡ πέτρα ποὺ ὁ σκορπιὸς φοράει κατάσαρκα
> Κι αὐτὲς οἱ θημωνιὲς μέσα στ' ἁλώνια
> Ποὺ καμώνουνται τὸ γίγα σὲ μωρὰ παιδιὰ ξυπόλυτα.
> [...]
> Τὰ κόκκινα πανιὰ λοξὰ στὰ σαγανάκια
> Στὸν πάτο ζῶα κατάξανθα σφουγγάρια
> Τῶν βράχων φυσαρμόνικες (1989: 27)

This kind of animation is widely pursued in the early poetry of Elytis, mainly in *Ἥλιος ὁ πρῶτος*,[455] frequently in *Προσανατολισμοὶ* (as in the poem ' Ἡ τρελλὴ ροδιά'), and throughout *Ἄσμα ἡρωικὸ καὶ πένθιμο γιὰ τὸν χαμένο ἀνθυπο-*

[455] See, for instance, poem VII of 'Παραλλαγές πάνω σὲ μιὰν ἀχτίδα' (1989: 43).

λοχαγὸ τῆς 'Αλβανίας.[456] Animation and the rapid succession of imagery is a characteristic of Elytis' poetry of the first period that is reminiscent of cinema. Both features appear in Surrealist poetry and are retained in Elytis' poetry of the second period. But in this later poetic stage, this imaginary view of life becomes less naive and, due to the elaboration of his ideas on time and myth (as pointed out in Chapter 4), acquires a solid basis and clear dimensions.

As happens in cinema, in Elytis' poetry images are not static but in constant motion. The first part of *Τὸ Ἄξιον 'Εστί*, 'Η Γένεσις', can be visualized as a film with many Surrealist effects. The final part of the poem, 'Τὸ Δοξαστικόν', is composed of sequences of images that usually depend on the same type of personification as that which is presented by Disney. These images rapidly succeed one another, as in a film:

Τὰ μουράγια ξεσκέπαστα στὴ σοροκάδα
ὁ παπὰς τῶν νεφῶν ποὺ ἀλλάζει γνώμη
τὰ καημένα τὰ σπίτια ποὺ τὸ ἕνα στὸ ἄλλο
ἀκουμποῦνε γλυκὰ καὶ ἀποκοιμιοῦνται

Τῆς μικρῆς βροχῆς τὸ λυπημένο πρόσωπο
ἡ παρθένα ἐλιὰ τὸ λόφο ἀνηφορίζοντας
οὔτε μία φωνὴ στὰ κουρασμένα σύννεφα
τῆς πολίχνης τὸ σαλιγκαράκι ποὺ ἔσπασε (1980a: 82)

This type of effect is exploited frequently in Elytis' later poetry, although in a more controlled and sustained manner. An example is the following passage from *Μαρία Νεφέλη*:

Ἔτσι κάποτε ἀπό μιᾶς παρθένας γέννα
πολύ πρίν τήν Μαρία ξεχυθῆκαν οἱ ἄνεμοι

[456] Cf. the following lines: 'Λουλούδια ἀγοροκόριτσα τοῦ κρυφογνέφουνε / Καὶ τοῦ μιλοῦν μὲ μιὰ ψιλὴ φωνὴ ποὺ ἀχνίζει στὸν αἰθέρα / Γέρνουν καὶ κατ' αὐτὸν τὰ δέντρα ἐρωτεμένα / Μὲ τὶς φωλιὲς χωμένες στὴ μασχάλη τους' (1979d: 31).

χρωματιστοί καί τά νέα πουλάκια οί πίποι
ὅλων τῶν λογιῶν ἔφτασαν ἀπαλά
στίς τεράστιες γαλάζιες καμπανοῦλες
ἄφοβα νά καθίσουν. Εἶναι αὐτές πού τώρα
ταλαντεύονται σιμά σέ δέντρα
μέ τεράστιους φιόγκους ρόζ ἐπάνω στά κλαδιά
ἐνῶ περνᾶ γυμνός μέ τό κεραμιδί κορμί του
ὁ Αὐλητής
τό᾽να πόδι μπροστά – καί ἀνοίγουνε τά πέπλα
οἱ ψυχές οἱ φρέσκιες πεταλοῦδες. (1984b: 68)

Whether they are reminiscent of Disney's imaginary world, as in "Ο φυλλομάντης' ('Σαστισμένες φωνὲς κι ἄλλες ποὺ ἀκόμη / Τρέχοντας μέσ᾽ στὶς φυλλωσιὲς ἀστράφτουν σὰν / Μυστικὰ περάσματα πυγολαμπίδας') (1980b: 37), or as in "Ελυτόνησος (κοινῶς ᾽Ελυτονήσι)' ('Δεξιὰ βουτοῦσε ὁ βράχος κι ἀπὸ τ᾽ ἄλλο μέρος ὕψω- / Νε κεφάλι νὰ παλέψει ὁ ἀγρίμης / Μπουρμποῦλες νερὸ στὰ φαγωμένα πόδια του ὅλο καὶ τρίφτανε ἄχνη / Σποῦσε πέτρες ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ψηλὰ κρῶζαν οἱ ἄγγελοι') (1980b: 50),[457] or whether they point to specific films, as in the poem 'Ich sehe dich' from *Μαρία Νεφέλη* ('οἱ ὡραῖες μιᾶς μέρας') (1984b: 105),[458] images in the poems of Elytis' second period may appear to have a cinematic character. Facets of reality are cut and rearranged through a process of montage that makes visible not real life, which is exposed as illusion, but the reality of the poetic mind, of the imagination or the unconscious. Sudden changes and abrupt metamorphoses provide a cinematic impression of reality, although the possibilities for expressing this were revealed to Elytis through French Surrealism.[459] As Kuenzli observes, the Surrealists were extremely interested in cinematic devices and wrote

[457] Both "Ο φυλλομάντης' and "Ελυτόνησος (κοινῶς ᾽Ελυτονήσι)' belong to the collection *Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ*.
[458] Cf. the title of Buñuel's film 'Belle de jour' (1967).
[459] Elytis referred to the poems of his 'first period' as poetry in which 'nature and metamorphoses predominate' (1975: 639); he pointed out that the metamorphoses of his poetry were 'stimulated by surrealism, which always believed in the metamorphosis of things'.

cinematically. In 1917, Soupault wrote 'cinematographic poems' employing cinematic devices, while 'The fluidity of Breton's and Soupault's *Les Champs magnétiques* (1921) is certainly related to the flowing images in cinema' (Kuenzli 1996: 9). In *Le Paysan de Paris* (Aragon), *Poisson soluble* (Breton), *La Liberté ou l'amour!* (Desnos), *Main forte* (Péret), there appear effects and devices that are also employed in cinema, such as 'contrasts of light, [...] the enlargement of details, the animation of objects, the superposition and contamination of the images, the oneiric confusion of the real and the imaginary, the unusual or fantastic metamorphoses, the abolition of the limitations of space and time' (Virmaux 1976: 78).

The diary entries of Elytis' poem '῾Εφτὰ μέρες γιὰ τὴν αἰωνιότητα' (*Ἕξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*),[460] point forward to the cinematographic dramatization of a sequence of days in *῾Ημερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου*.[461] In this collection, the poetic persona has a cinematic perception of reality: 'Στόν ἀντικρυνό τοῖχο οἱ σκιές τῶν δέντρων παίζανε / κινηματογράφο' (1984d: 24). The collection stands as a filmic scenario with many Surrealist effects, since dream and illusory techniques like those employed in Surrealist film also appear in it; references to certain Surrealist films are also made. For instance, the image, '῾Εντελῶς ἄξαφνα φάνηκε στόν ἀέρα μιά βοϊδοκεφαλή / ἀνθοστόλιστη πού πάλι, μεμιᾶς, ἐχάθη' (1984d: 29), evokes the early Surrealist films of Buñuel and Dalí.[462] In this collection, dreaming and film viewing are likened, as in the following poem:

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[460] Cf. 'Κυριακή [...] Δευτέρα [...] Τρίτη [...]' (Elytis 1979c: 24-25).
[461] Cf. 'ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ, 1 [...] ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ, 1β [...] ΠΕΜΠΤΗ, 2 [...]' (Elytis 1984d: 9ff.). As was observed in section 7.2.2, *῾Ημερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* in its turn, points forward to the poem 'Παρασκευὴ ποὺ πάντα βρέχει', but also to other poems from *Ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*.
[462] Cf. *Un Chien andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'or* (1930).

ΣΤΑΜΑΤΗΜΕΝΟΣ ΟΛΗ ΝΥΧΤΑ μές στόν ὕπνο
σάν παλαιό αὐτοκίνητο μέ χαλασμένα φῶτα
ἔλαχε μές στά σκοτεινά πάλι νά πιάσω
κινήσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων τόσο ἀκατανόητες
ὅσο κι ἐκεῖνες πού 'βλεπα γύρω μου
χρόνους καί χρόνους μιάν ὁλόκληρη ζωή:
"Τό μυστήριο τῆς μαυροφόρας" αἴφνης ἤ
"Τόν βουβό μέ τήν κερένια κούκλα"
"Τίς τελευταῖες μέρες τῆς Πομπηίας" ἐάν ὄχι
καί -σέ πρώτη προβολή- "Τό φιλί τοῦ θανάτου".
(1984d: 28)

Poetry is here considered to be a similar fantasy situation to that of viewing films. In psychoanalytic film theory, the comparison between cinema, dreaming and/or fantasizing refers to the constitution of the 'dream state'. The similarities between film viewing and dreaming emerge from the fact that both situations are the result of certain conditions: just like the dreamer, the film viewer is in the dark, that is, a dark room in the cinema house ('μές στά σκοτεινά' in the poem), physical movement is reduced to the minimum whereas visual perception (cinema) or the impression of perception (dream) is intensified. Both the film viewer and the dreamer share a 'regime of belief', that is, a condition, in which non-real images are accepted as real (Baudry 1986b: 314). As Baudry observes, cinema is fascinating not because of its 'impression of reality', but because this impression is electrified by the conditions of the dream (1986b: 312); he considers this to be the 'fiction effect' of cinema or the 'cinema effect'. As he points out, cinema creates the 'subject effect',[463] that is, an experience in the viewer. Baudry makes the following clarifications concerning the relation and difference between dream and cinema:

> In dream and hallucination, representations are taken as reality in the absence

[463] By 'subject' Baudry refers to 'the perceiving and ordering self' [note by Engl. trans., in Baudry 1986a: 296, n. 2].

> of perception; in cinema, images are taken for reality but require the mediation of perception. [...] It is evident that cinema is not dream: but it reproduces an impression of reality, it unlocks, releases a cinema effect which is comparable to the impression of reality caused by dream. The entire cinematographic apparatus is activated in order to provoke this simulation: it is indeed a simulation of a condition of the subject, a position of the subject, a subject and not of reality. (1986b: 316)[464]

Baudry identifies the subject effect of cinema with 'a state of artificial regression' (1986b: 313), that is, a state in which one cannot distinguish between perception and representation, and which is identified with the infant's confusion of the boundaries between external reality and its own self. In *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου*, the persona evokes the womb state (1984d: 10), then his mother (1984d: 22), and 'faints' when he sees her in his hallucination (1984d: 41).

When asked to comment on the technique of *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* in 1985, Elytis clarified that this concerned a kind of 'τολμηρό "ντεκουπάζ"' (Dimou 1992: 149), which he employed in order to achieve 'a continuity that does not coincide with the common perception of time'. He also pointed out that 'even the movements of objects take place the way the camera can capture and show them' ('και οι κινήσεις των πραγμάτων γίνονται όπως μόνον ένας φακός μπορεί να τις συλλάβει και αποδώσει'). Following this comment, several critics have attempted to consider the cinematic techniques employed in this collection.[465] However, *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* is only one of the instances where such techniques have been used. In fact, the systematic exploitation of cinematographic devices is frequent in the poetry of Elytis' second period.

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[464] On the cinematographic apparatus see Baudry 1986a: 286-298.
[465] Cf., among others, Dimou 1992, and Belezinis 1986b.

In the poem ‘ ‘Η χαμένη Κομμαγηνὴ’ from *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*, images are cut and pasted as in cinema. Just as he does in *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* , in this poem too, the poetic persona identifies cinema with dream:

Ἀλλάζοντας πλευρὸ μέσα στὸν ὕπνο μου ἤχησαν
Ἄξαφνα μοῦ ἐφάνηκε, παράφωνες
Καιρῶν ἄλλων σάλπιγγες ὅπως μέσα στὰ ἔργα
Κάποτε τοῦ κινηματογράφου [...]
[...]
[...] ξέροντας πὼς αὐτὰ ὅλα ἕνα ὄνειρο εἶναι
Ποὺ θὰ τὸ δῶ μιὰ μέρα κουρασμένος καὶ σὲ ἄκρα ἀπόγνωση
(1991: 27)

In the poems ‘La pallida Morte’, ‘Περασμένα μεσάνυχτα’ and ‘ ‘Ασημον’ from the same collection, similar cinema techniques to the cutting reported by Elytis to have been used in *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* are employed. The effects of this technique are especially successful in parts of the poems included in *Τρία ποιήματα μέ σημαία εὐκαιρίας*. The first is the closing part of ‘ ‘Ο κῆπος βλέπει’:

ἔτσι τό νερό στή φούχτα
πίνετε προχωρεῖτε
συναντᾶτε τό ἄλσος τό περίφημο τοῦ Κολωνοῦ
ἀκολουθεῖτε τόν Οἰδίποδα

δροσιά
γαλήνη
ἀηδόνια
ξάφνου ξημερώματα
ὁ πετεινός ἐπάνω στούς ἀνεμοδεῖχτες
εἶσ᾽ ἐσύ μέσα στήν ἐκκλησία
τό τέμπλο ὑπέροχο μέ τίς ροδιές

ἡ Κόρη βηματίζοντας στό κύμα
ἐλαφρός πουνέντες
φυσάει

τό χέρι σου ἀντιγράφει
τ᾽ ᾽Ασύλληπτα. (1982b: 18)

In this passage, slow motion is evoked in the rhythm of the first four lines and in the gradual transition from one scene to the next. Gradual transformations are employed for the 'dissolution' ('fondu enchaîné') of one image to the next one. A cutting ('ξάφνου ξημερώματα') is used for the change of focus. The cinematic 'phenomenon of apparent movement', known in film studies as the 'phi-effect' appears in this passage, in which the mind posits continuities of movement while imaginatively visualizing (the poet) or imaginatively reconstructing (the reader) a series of static images. The motion of the otherwise static images (the filmic 'shots' or 'carrés') is achieved through verbs of movement and of the present tense. What Bellour defines as 'camera-wish' or 'film-wish' can be employed to refer to this passage, in which imagery reveals the function of the poetic imagination. Bellour refers to cinematic enunciation as follows: 'A subject endowed with a kind of infinite power, constituted as the place from which the set of representations are ordered and organized, and toward which they are channeled back. For that reason, this subject is the one who sustains the very possibility of any representation' (1979: 98). The continuity in the flow of images and the gradual shifts of focus appear to function in the poetic passage of Elytis as in the cinematographic apparatus, in which the vision of the subject-director meets with the anticipation of the film viewer. Elytis achieves this through the elaboration of a mythical space, bringing together the real (actual objects and entities) and the unreal ('ἀκολουθεῖτε τόν Οἰδίποδα') or the super-real ('ἡ Κόρη βηματίζοντας στό κύμα'). The reader shares the poetic visual experience of the fantasy offered in the text, as a film viewer would perceive the same fantasy on a screen.

Another example of such cinematic scenes, based on the reciprocity of the poetic enunciation, appears in the second part of 'Τὸ ἀμύγδαλο τοῦ κόσμου':

μεγεθύνονται τά σπίτια
τρομερές γυναῖκες ἀπέχοντας ἀπ᾽ τό
λυτό μαλλί τους ὅσο ἡ βροντή ἀπ᾽ τή λάμψη της
πᾶν μοιράζοντας τίς ἄχνες
δῶ κι ἐκεῖ τ᾽ οὐρανοῦ
οἱ ὀπές
παραπλανοῦν τόν θάνατο (1982b: 22)

This passage exemplifies the function of 'prismatic form'; in fact, the technique involved in the elaboration of 'prismatic' poetic expressions, which, as was pointed out in Chapter 5, was inspired by Bachelard's idea of 'projective poetry', may have been affected by the formal experiments encouraged by cinema, experiments that are also observed in Surrealist poetry. The metamorphoses of reality in the above passage are based on a Surrealist conception of motion and on Bachelard's principle of 'projective poetry'; but they also evoke the possibilities offered by cinema to extend the scope of reality ('μεγεθύνονται τά σπίτια'). At the same time, the sequence of imagery depends on the association of independent 'shots', that is, fragments or glimpses of the reality offered, which are then pasted together and attached to a continuous coherence, as in montage. Still photography could not easily capture the dynamic view of reality offered in a single image or a 'prism'; on the other hand, this same dynamism leads from one shot to the next, which is a clear example showing how Elytis achieved the transparency of the 'crystalline' structure of the poem. Thus, on the one hand, a single image bears powerful semantic implications achieved not only through the startling combinations of words, but also through a dynamism that emanates from the fluidity of the associations made. On the other hand, these

same associations attach the image to the next one, which is enriched by new associations, leading to the next one, and so on. This mechanism may become manifest in the reading process if the reader manages to trace what Gratton calls the 'runaway process' of the image,[466] that is, to identify the imagery[467] and discover 'the first and the second and the third and the last layer of the same reality', as Elytis himself implied.[468]

Photography, the material source Elytis drew on in order to create his collages, is also mentioned in his poetry. In the opening poem of *Ὁ μικρός Ναυτίλος*, the poetic persona sets out on a trip with his camera in hand. The descriptive prose texts 'Προβολέας α΄', 'Προβολέας β΄', 'Προβολέας γ΄', and 'Προβολέας δ΄' could either stand as filmic scenes or descriptions of photographs; the 'Προβολέας' could be either a floodlight providing the necessary light for shooting a scene or even a picture-projector, or a slide-projector. The part under the title '΄Οττω τις ἔραται' which bears the indication '[Τὰ στιγμιότυπα]', is clearly meant to be taken as a series of three sequences of photographs; this is what the persona implies in the introductory passage:

> Προπαντὸς ἡ ἀκρίβεια, ἔλεγα. Κι ὅλο πρόσεχα νά 'ναι στενὸ τὸ διάφραγμα. Ὅταν προχώρησα στὴν ἐμφάνιση τὸ εἶδα καθαρά: εἶχα κερδίσει τύπους ἀπὸ στιγμὲς ἤ, ἀλλιῶς, "στιγμιότυπα" πού, ἄπαξ κι ὑπήρξανε μιὰ φορά, τίποτε, ποτὲ πιά, δὲν θὰ μποροῦσε νὰ τὰ κατελύσει. (1986a: 103)

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[466] This is Gratton's idea of a 'runaway process' in the Surrealist poetry of Breton (cf. Gratton 1986: 30-45).

[467] As was pointed out in Chapter 5, Bachelard held that this analysis is required in order for one to understand the function of the poetic imagination.

[468] Cf. the analysis of Elytis' views on 'διαφάνεια' (translucence and transparency) in Chapter 5.

The 'force of silence and immobility' of still photography is analysed in Barthes' *Camera lucida*, in which he distinguishes between two ways of viewing a photograph. The first is the 'studium', which is based on coded information and is more objective than the second, the 'punctum', which involves chance association and is the product of a subjective projection of the viewer's desire (Barthes 1982: 26, 51, 59). The information 'coded' ('Προπαντὸς ἡ ἀκρίβεια') by the persona in the above passage refers to instantaneous impressions, his psychological and subjective reaction to reality: he attempts to provide an accurate depiction not of this reality, but of his own personal associations, that is, his own view of what real reality has to offer. In the above passage, the persona's intention is to take photographs that would stimulate the viewer's approach of the 'studium'; but the persona then goes on to describe the content of the photographs, and as a viewer, he focuses on the 'punctum', the detail, a 'a kind of subtle *beyond*--as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see' (Barthes 1982: 59; his emphasis) What he sees in the photographs--or what he wants to communicate to the reader--are associations, reflecting a subjective point of view, which is then passed on to the reader to observe. The latter, when reading or 'viewing' these photographs in his/her imagination may not be attracted only by the 'punctum' of form, but also by what Barthes calls 'intensity' or 'Time' (1982: 96). It is a vertical conception of time, that is, time in which past and future meet, as was observed in Chapter 4. Examples are the following 'photographs':

> ΣΚΙΑΘΟΣ
> Τὴν ὥρα ποὺ ἡ μικρὴ βάρκα μπαίνει στὴ θαλασσοσπηλιὰ
> κι ἀπὸ τὸ ἐκθαμβωτικὸ φῶς ἄξαφνα βρίσκεσαι κλεισμένος
> μέσα σὲ μιὰ παγωμένη γαλαζοπράσινη μέντα.
> [...]

ΚΥΠΡΟΣ
Στὸ "Σουλτὰν Τεκὲ" λίγο πιὸ ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴ Λάρνακα. Οἱ σκιὲς ἀπὸ τὰ φύλλα ποὺ μετατοπίζονται μὲ τὸν ἄνεμο ρυθμικὰ καὶ μοιάζουν μὲ κρησάρα ποὺ δουλεύει ἀσταμάτητα ὅπως ἀκριβῶς ἡ συνείδηση.
[...]

AMPURIAS
Ἀπόγευμα φθινοπωρινὸ ἀνάμεσα στὰ ἐρείπια. Βλέπεις τὴ θάλασσα μουντὴ κάτω ἀπὸ τὸ ψιλόβροχο καὶ συλλογίζεσαι μιὰ χαμένη ἑλληνικὴ αὐτοκρατορία. Γιὰ χάρη τῆς γλώσσας, ὄχι γιὰ τίποτε ἄλλο.
[...]

ΜΥΤΙΛΗΝΗ
Μιὰ κουταλιὰ γλυκὸ βύσσινο μετὰ τὸν ἀπογευματινὸ ὕπνο.
(Elytis 1986a: 103-106)

In all, the sequence of these photographic shots has a cinematic character, since each photograph is full of motion, just like filmic scenes, and one photograph succeeds the other, like scenes in a film. The first scene, 'ΚΕΡΚΥΡΑ', contains three shots, the first establishing the setting, and at least two more showing the 'displacement' of the fireflies from gave to grave:

Ἀνοιξιάτικη νύχτα σὲ μακρινὸ ἐξοχικὸ νεκροταφεῖο. Τὸ φωτεινὸ ἐκεῖνο σύννεφο ἀπὸ πυγολαμπίδες ποὺ ἀλλάζει ἀνάλαφρα θέση ἀπὸ τάφο σὲ τάφο.
(Elytis 1986a: 103)

The 'echo' of cinematography appears in Elytis' poetry; but between his poetry and filmic art there is indeed a convergence, a parallel exploration of poetic space and time. Elements or techniques of cinema employed in his poetry aspire to the constitution of the 'poetic', the inner reality of the imagination or the unconscious, or the 'second condition' of life, rather than the documentary. This inner reality appears in the 'third condition' of poetry, that 'constellation of images', which, as was observed in Chapter 4, is characteristic of the dynamic organization of

myth, itself dependent on a system of symbols, archetypes and schemas. Symbols and archetypes that pertain to the schema of the mythical 'third condition' of the poetry of Elytis' second period are examined in the following section.

7.4 *The Function of the Pictorial Image in the Constitution of the 'Third Condition' of Poetry*

In the poetry of Elytis' second period, the pictorial image may join the verbal image in forming a kind of collage: the poem then relies not only on the verbal image but also on the incorporation of the pictorial image, which frequently appears to be superimposed on the former. Because of its extraneous character, the pictorial image may appear to be foregrounded in the poem, but in fact, both the verbal and the pictorial are fused together and are expected to act reciprocally. However, apart from this functional interaction, the emphasis on the visual in what is otherwise the verbal artifice of poetry does not simply serve the purpose of extending or complementing a poetic statement. It is an ostensive manifestation of the poet's attempt to highlight aspects of his poetic vision and the poetic expression of his ideas on the myth of the 'third condition' of poetry.

This section focuses on imagery that refers to the archetype of woman, the mediatrix between the poet and the world of the imagination or the unconscious, and also on imagery referring to the mythical, imaginary world constituted in the poetry of Elytis' second period. The fusion of the real and the imaginary, upon which the mythical 'third condition' of poetry is founded, as was pointed out in Chapter 4, is

thematized in the poetry of his second period. In these poems, the mythical world of poetry is constituted through imagery which is both real and unreal or super-real. Woman, who is herself both real and super-real, is the principal human figure inhabiting this mythical world in which trees, plants, birds, waves and woman herself all signify poetry. It is pointed out here that the poetic image of this real/super-real woman is the outcome of an interaction between the pictorial and the verbal image. It is shown that, on the one hand, in the reading process, the consideration of the function of the pictorial image may resolve semantic ambiguities in the text; on the other hand, it is pointed out that in the poetry of Elytis' second period the poetic image may make appeals to the pictorial image in a systematic attempt to constitute the mythical space of poetry.

The poem "Αρχέτυπον', which is included in the collection *Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά*, is based on a series of hermetic images, which may cause serious interpretative difficulties:

Τοῦ βότσαλου ποὺ ἐκρούστηκε ἡ μπαρούτη μοῦ
ξανάφερε τὸ Λιγονέρι καὶ μιὰν ἀκρογιαλιὰ

Ὅπου ὡς φαίνεται εἶχα πρωτοϊδεῖ Γυναίκα καὶ τί
πάει νὰ πεῖ τὰ μεσάνυχτα φωτιστικὰ ροδόδεντρα νὰ
βλέπεις ὕστερα κατάλαβα

Ποὺ τὴ βρῆκα νὰ εἶναι περιστέρι

Ποὺ τὴ βρῆκα νὰ εἶναι ὁ Ὕπνος μὲ τσαμπιὰ σταγό-
νων μέσ᾽ στὴν ἀγκαλιὰ

Ποὺ τὴ βρῆκα σ᾽ ἕνα ταρατσάκι νὰ τὴν ξυλώνει ὁ δυ-
νατὸς ἀέρας

Ὅσπου τέλος δὲν ἔμεινε παρὰ ἕνας ὦμος καὶ τὸ μέρος
τὸ δεξὶ ἀπὸ τὰ μαλλιὰ

Πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ χαλάσματα καὶ ὁ πρῶτος Ἕσπερος. (1984c: 36)

Interpretative assumptions which aim to achieve optimal relevance (as defined in Chapter 6) may rely on the presupposition that visual art informs Elytis' poetry, and also on knowledge of his views on poetry in general, and his own poetics in particular. Extraliterary contextual details should form a general background to draw on. The conclusion reached in Chapter 6 that the poetry of Elytis' second period is marked by strong intertextual links among various of his own poems can prove useful here too. The processing of the contextual implications provoked by the text may lead to the following reading.

The importance attributed by Elytis to the senses is stressed in the poem, which is built on a series of instantaneous impressions, based on the principle of the metamorphoses of matter. While 'Βότσαλο' and 'ἀκρογιαλιὰ' are typical features of the landscape of Elytis' poetry, the first line of the poem implies the theme of illumination, since the sound of the pebble seems to function like Proust's *madeleine*, instigating a series of memories associated with it. Eluard's principle, 'donner à voir', is also observed; the illuminating trees at the time of perfect darkness ('τὰ μεσάνυχτα') are rhododendrons, and they 'donnent à voir', as does the rose-tree depicted in the photomontage of Albert Valentin, published in the final issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* [Fig. 5]. The metaphor of the illuminating trees refers to an instant or instances of illumination ('ὕστερα κατάλαβα'). What is revealed is woman's nature or aspects of this nature.

Frequently, woman is evoked by the French Surrealists in characteristics usually attributed to the Virgin Mary (Gauthier 1971: 157). Sometimes she is

represented as a bird, usually a dove, or bearing wings. In Elytis' poem, woman is identified with a dove. As he observes, in his poetry, 'the spirit inevitably assumes the shape of a girl, a young woman who has wings and can fly. This occurs repeatedly' (1975: 641). Elytis' own collage *Τὸ μήνυμα* (1968) [Fig. 6] depicts a girl angel who bears shells as wings. His tempera painting *Μορφὴ Νίκης* (1969) [Fig. 7] is the abstract figure of a dancing woman with a veil, which assumes the shape of wings. In *Ὁ μικρὸς Ναυτίλος*, the Virgin Mary is holding a dove: 'Στὴν Ἐμορφιάν τὴν Παναϊὰν τὸ δίπολον ἀστέρι /Ὁποὺ κρατεῖ περίστερον καὶ λάμπει της τὸ χέρι!' (1986a: 68). The image evokes Christian iconography, in which the Virgin Mary is frequently depicted with a dove, representing the Holy Spirit.[469] In the opening part of *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, the relief of a tombstone is evoked (1984b: 14). The Kore depicted on it is holding a bird in her hand.[470] The relation of woman with doves is explicitly stated, although in this case, man participates in the spiritual world evoked by the doves, and which signifies poetry: 'δύο χέρια ὡραῖα γυναίκας (ἢ καί ἀντρός) πού νά 'χουν /ἐξοικειωθεῖ μέ τ' ἀγριοπερίστερα' (1984b: 30).

Interestingly, all the images of woman in ''Αρχέτυπον' seem to point to particular paintings or collages. In one of the paintings of Magritte's mural *The Enchanted Realm* (1953), woman is depicted holding a dove in her hand [Fig. 10]. Woman as 'ὁ Ὕπνος μὲ τσαμπιὰ σταγόνων μέσ' στὴν ἀγκαλιὰ' evokes a collage made by Eluard around 1930 [Fig. 11]. Woman 'σ' ἕνα ταρατσάκι' may refer to Dalí's painting *Seated Girl Seen from the Back* (1925) [Fig. 12], and the image of the woman 'νὰ τὴν ξυλώνει ὁ δυνατὸς ἀέρας' may be pointing to Ernst's *Saint*

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[469] Examples could be El Greco's paintings of the Annunciation [e.g. Fig. 8].
[470] Cf., for instance, the *Grave Stele of a Little Girl* [Fig. 9].

Cecilia (*The Invisible Piano*; 1923) [Fig. 13]. In "Αρχέτυπον', woman is not only the bearer of the spiritual power evoked by her association with the dove; as happens frequently in Elytis' poetry, in this poem too, woman appears evasive and powerful in her mystery, evoking the archetypal Kore Milta of his essay 'Μίλτα ή το αρχέτυπον', considered in Chapter 4. But this female archetype is dressed in a modern style, perhaps due to the associations with the Surrealist avant-garde. In Elytis' poetry and also in his published collages, women usually have a modern look.[471] However, as happens in French Surrealism, the archetype remains bound to the tradition that bore it: although a fragmented and dispersed persona by the end of the poem, woman 'πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ χαλάσματα' does not cease to be the object of love: the poem closes with a reference to 'ὁ πρῶτος Ἔσπερος', which points to *Αυγερινός*, the star that announces dawn and which is also called 'Venus' (in Latin and western European languages) or 'Aphrodite' (in Greek).[472]

Female personae are usually mysterious in Elytis' poetry. As has been observed in Chapter 4, they are often identified with nature itself or with the sacred. *Ἡ ὀπτασία* (1977) [Fig. 14] is a collage by Elytis which is reminiscent of the fragmentary figure of woman in "Αρχέτυπον'. However, here, the image of the woman, who is pervaded by the natural landscape, alludes to associations with

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[471] An exception is the eleven 'διαφανογραφίες' included in Elytis' 'recomposition' and translation of Sappho's poetry (Elytis 1984e).

[472] In Friar's translation, 'ὁ πρῶτος Ἔσπερος' is identified with the 'first Evening Star' (see Elytis 1990b: 150). This cannot be the case, since *Ἔσπερος* or *Αποσπερίτης* rises very early in the evening, and, in the poem, midnight has clearly preceded. Traditionally, *Ἔσπερος*, which survives the night and is the star that announces the new day in the morning, is then called *Αυγερινός* or *Αφροδίτη*.

Surrealist dream and Surrealist illusionist techniques. It also shows how Elytis worked on Breton's idea of the 'internal model'.

Breton developed this notion in *Le surréalisme et la peinture* in 1925: 'L'oeuvre plastique, pour répondre à la necessité de révision absolue des valeurs réelles sur laquelle aujourd'hui tous les esprits s'accordent, se référera donc à un *modèle purement intérieur*, ou ne sera pas' (1965: 4; his emphasis). The idea of the 'internal model' lies at the core of the theory of automatism informing Surrealist art; automatism and dream are the principal methods employed by the Surrealist artists.[473] Dream painting is often based on illusionistic techniques and is not always simply a kind of recording of dreams. In fact, the distinction between automatism and dreams, which is made thoroughly clear in Surrealist literature, is not observed in Surrealist art, in which automatism and dream may successfully mix (Ades 1993: 131). Frequently in the poetry of Elytis' second period, there is a controlled flow of dream-images that does not always escape a relatively low degree of automatism. The oneiric imagery produces effects, which, in their semantic polyvalence, resemble the illusionistic character of many Surrealist paintings; furthermore, the succession of unexpected images linked through association is reminiscent of the characteristic motion of Surrealist cinema.

The photomontage entitled *The Language of Letters* [Fig. 15], produced by Herbert Bayer in 1931, in which he obviously has in mind the Surrealist dream (Ades 1986: 137ff.), bears close similarities with *Ἡ ὀπτασία*. Magritte's paintings *Le Retour* (1940), *La Grande famille* (1963) [Fig. 16], and the series of paintings entitled

[473] On automatism and Surrealist painting see Cardinal 1997, and Pierre 1983: 129-143; also René Passeron, *Histoire de la peinture surréaliste* (1968).

La Magie noir have much in common with *The Language of Letters.* In *La Grande famille*, a bird, probably a dove, is made of sky. If not Bayer's photomontage, Magritte's paintings may have inspired the above collage by Elytis.

Magritte's enigmatic and illusionistic Surrealist images are often evoked in Elytis' poetry. In *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, the image of a woman is compared to an apple-tree that is half in the clouds:

> Νά στέλνουμε τό χέρι μας καί νά πηγαίνει
> ἐκεῖ πού μιά γυναίκα σά Μηλιά καρτερεῖ μισή μέσα στά σύννεφα
> ἐντελῶς ἀγνοώντας τήν ἀπόσταση πού μᾶς χωρίζει (1984b: 89)

This image could refer again to Magritte's series of paintings bearing the title *La Magie noir* (1933-1934) with the motif of the woman half in the clouds, a motif that reappears in Dalí's untitled mural of 1943 [Fig. 17]. The image of Elytis' poem could also refer to *La Poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé* [Fig. 18], the sketch of Fernard Khnopff that accompanied Mallarmé's sonnet 'A la nue accablante tu'.[474] The Siren-woman, a recurrent motif in Mallarmé's poetry, symbolizing unfulfilled desires and the seductive power of the world and of dream, also appears in Elytis' poetry (cf. also Elytis 1987: 12). But, unlike the persona of Mallarmé's poem, who resists temptation (Weinfield 1994: 238), in Elytis' poetry, the Siren-woman is associated with poetry itself and she is an essential part of the imaginary world envisaged and sought by the poet.

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[474] This was first published in the April-May issue of the review *Pan*, in 1895 (see Mallarmé 1983: 334). The sonnet is considered to be important, since it looks forward to *Un Coup de dés* (Noulet 1967: 247).

The association of woman with trees, the sky, and water is frequent in Elytis. In the fictional world of his poetry, woman is a Siren and a sorceress who dwells not only in the sea but also in the earth, close to trees, and the sky, like doves or simply birds.[475] In "Εφτὰ μέρες γιὰ τὴν αἰωνιότητα' (*Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*), whose subject-matter refers to poetry, the persona wishes for fair Myrto to become as real as a tree (1979c: 24), and his two beloved women are evoked as lilacs (1979c: 25). The two women are then metamorphosed ('"Τῆς Μεταμορφώσεως" τῶν γυναικῶν') into 'δύο ἀνόμοια περιστέρια ποὺ μὲ τραβοῦν ψηλὰ σ' ἕνα / μεγάλο κισσοστολισμένο σπίτι'. In *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, the motif of woman who communicates with the birds and the trees, a motif which is played out again and again in Elytis' poetry, acquires distinct significance, since it points to the mythical 'third condition' of poetry. In the poem, human beings bearing wings sing like angels, and they are joined in their song by flowers; the woman listens to the music and implies that it comes from inside her ('Ὦ / μουσική ὦ Κυριακή συννεφιασμένη / στόν μέσα κόσμο τοῦ καθρέφτη ἐκεῖ πού βηματίζω') (1984b: 36). The woman is not the traditional Muse, but the mediatrix between man and poetry, the mythical space of the imagination or the unconscious. This is clearly stated in the poem 'Ο ἄλλος Νῶε' (*Ἔξη καὶ μία τύψεις γιὰ τὸν οὐρανό*):

> ἕνα-ἕνα στὰ χείλη τοῦ νεροῦ νὰ τρίξουν τὰ λόγια τὰ πικρά,
>
> Τὸ παλιό μου τῆς ἀπελπισίας νόημα δίνοντας
>
> [...]
>
> Καὶ γυμνὴ ν' ἀνέβει τὸ ρεῦμα τοῦ Καιροῦ ἡ Γυναίκα ἡ

[475] Only occasionally do there appear many women in Elytis' poems, as for instance, in 'Η Γένεσις' or in the visual art accompanying his translations of Sappho's poetry; usually, there is only one.

Χλοοφόρος

Ποὺ μ᾽ ἀργότη ἀνοίγοντας βασιλικὴ τὰ δάχτυλα, μιὰ γιὰ
πάντα θὰ στείλει τὸ πουλὶ

Στῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν ἀνίερο κάματο, ἀπὸ κεῖ ποὺ ἔσφαλε
ὁ Θεός, νὰ στάξει

Τρίλια τῆς Παράδεισος! (1979c: 23)

The speech of water and the song of the birds signify poetry, which, as has been observed in Chapters 3 and 4, is supposed to correct the errors of God, just like painting. The speech of the leaves of trees or of other vegetation is implied in the image of 'ἡ Γυναίκα ἡ Χλοοφόρος'. Through this goddess or sorceress, water, the vegetable world and birds sing poetry ('Τρίλια τῆς Παράδεισος').[476] The image of this woman points to the image of 'θεὰ Φυτώ',[477] as depicted in Elytis' paintings *Ἡ θεὰ Φυτώ β΄* (1983) [Fig. 19] and *Ἡ θεὰ Φυτώ δ΄* (1988) [Fig. 20], and it may be an allusion to a series of paintings by Delvaux, an example of which is *L'Appel de la nuit* (1938) [Fig. 21]. The image of 'ἡ Γυναίκα ἡ Χλοοφόρος' reappears in the image of 'flora mirabilis',[478] as evoked in *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου* (1984d: 10) and in the image of 'θεά Φυτώ' in the poem 'Ad libitum':

κάτι συμβαίνει πού δέν ἔσωσε ποτέ νά τό ἐντοπίσουμε
τίς νύχτες τίς γλυκές ὅταν τό γιασεμί σ᾽ ἐξουθενώνει
κι ἀπό νερά τρεχούμενα
κάπου
κάποιο ἀξήγητο ἀνατρίχιασμα
δίνει ὤθηση στά χόρτα
θά᾽λεγες ἀνεβαίνει ἀπό μιά κινητή
κλίμακα κι ὁλοένα καταπάνω σου
μεγαλώνει νά: ἡ θεά Φυτώ μέ τό τεράστιο τούμπανο
κι οἱ ξυπόλυτες δοῦλες μέ τό μαλλί τους δάδα
μπούμ τό πόδι ἀριστερά μπούμ τό πόδι δεξιά

[476] Cf. the observations made on this role of woman in Chapter 6.
[477] The image of 'θεὰ Φυτώ' is also reminiscent of Yannis Ritsos' ''Η Κυρὰ τῶν ἀμπελιῶν' (1945-1947) (cf. Ritsos 1970: 73ff.).
[478] The image of Elytis' poem could also draw on, for instance, Botticelli's *Primavera*, as well as Evelyn de Morgan' s *Flora*.

ἡ φιλότης τό νεῖκος
ἡ φιλότης τό νεῖκος
ἡ παλιά εὐρυθμία
(1982b: 35-36)

Natural rhythm is reflected in the rhythm of these lines from the poem. This is the rhythm of the rustle of the grass and of the leaves of the trees and the sound of running water or of the hissing of waves. In its transposition into poetry, this natural rhythm is synchronized with the rhythms of the unconscious,[479] as in the last passage quoted from *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, or in poems such as '*Ὁ φυλλομάντης*' (*Τὰ ἑτεροθαλῆ*) and '*Τὸ φωτόδεντρο*' (*Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά*).

There are very few sounds in '*Τὸ φωτόδεντρο*'; the luminous tree is mute and the bird, which is identified with the persona of the poem, does not sing, although, like the oracle, it signifies: '*Ἔφερνα γύρους κι ἔβγαζα φῶς κοκκινωπὸ*' (1984c: 43). The red light seems to refer to the light-tree: '*Τί λογῆς εἶναι ἡ ἀλήθεια / ὅλο φύλλα στρογγυλὰ / κι ἀπὸ τὸ μέρος τοῦ ἥλιου κασσιτερωμένα κόκκινα*' (1984c: 39).[480] Because of the metaphysical power of the sun, the tree is unique; it could refer to the mystical tree of Solomos or to Elytis' collage *Τὸ ἱερὸ δέντρο* (1986) [Fig. 23].[481] In the collage, the tree's branches look like flames, perhaps thus alluding to the 'burning bush' of the Bible. The burning tree of the collage and the luminous tree of

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[479] Cf. Elytis' comments on the 'internal pulsation' of the psyche of certain artists, such as Kanellis (Chapter 3).
[480] Cf. Elytis' painting *Τὸ φυλλόδεντρο* (1988) [Fig. 22].
[481] The associations between the luminous tree, birds and light made in '*Τὸ φωτόδεντρο*' are reminiscent of Solomos' poems '*Τὸ δέντρο*' ('Carmen saeculare') and 'L'Albero mistico'. Cf. the lines '*Τὸ ψηλὸ δέντρ' ὁλόκληρο κι ἠχολογᾶ κι ἀστράφτει / μ' ὅλους τῆς τέχνης τοὺς ἠχούς, μὲ τ' οὐρανοῦ τὰ φῶτα*' (Solomos 1994: 320), and also 'l'albero immane intero tutto / splende, e canta, lontano assai vibrando / gli astri del cielo e i fremiti dell'arte' (Solomos 1994: 321). On the mysticism of 'Carmen saeculare', see Papazoglou 1995.

'Τὸ φωτόδεντρο', both signifying poetry, may be associated with the illuminating trees of ''Αρχέτυπον', which immediately precedes 'Τὸ φωτόδεντρο' in the same collection.

While wind and water are the elements that pervade all of Elytis' poetry (see Chapter 4), in the poems of his second period, fire is linked with the metaphysical power of the sun ('solar metaphysics'), that is, of the Greek sunlight. Fire in itself appears only rarely, as when in *Μαρία Νεφέλη* the prophet joins the sun 'βγάζοντας λευκές φωτιές' (1984b: 29). In the poetry of Elytis' second period, fire is something implied, the energy that is hidden. In his collage *Ἡ μυστικὴ φλόγα* (1977) [Fig. 24], the imaginary natural landscape is calm and seems to be unaware of the existence of the flame. It is a woman, who is unnatural or supernatural herself, since she is depicted to walk on the sea, that stares at it with no apparent expression of surprise on her face.

Although one of the characteristic features of collage is that there is no intrinsic interaction between the disparate elements brought together by the artist, as was observed in section 7.2.1, Elytis explained that he wanted what he called his 'συνεικόνες' to observe certain rules of proportion, symmetry, and light, as well as the conventional rules of painting (1992: 261). The word 'συνεικόνες' itself is indicative of his intention to make collages that function like paintings, that is, collages whose individual aspects participate in or join the principal visual statement of the picture. In fact, Elytis suggested that Ernst's ideas on collage had been especially influential on him (1992: 260); his comments indicate that he espoused the Surrealists' view of collage, which has a semantic intention and functions metaphorically

(Chénieux-Gendron 1984: 97). In *Ἡ μυστικὴ φλόγα*, the logical presupposition may be that the unnatural is only visible to the unnatural or the super-real, or to those who have been initiated to the invisible, for instance, the 'poet-initiate'. The same may be assumed for such statements as those expressed in the poem ' Ὁ κῆπος βλέπει' and in the collage with the same title (1967) [Fig. 25]. The poem may be taken to function as a kind of 'anchorage' (Barthes 1977: 39-40) for the collage, disciplining polysemy and suggesting a particular reading of the image. Conversely, Elytis' own visual art in general, and the references to visual art that appear in his poetry seem to attach particular 'meanings' to his poetry. However, using art to attribute a unique 'meaning' to his poetry should be avoided, since this can only limit the play of the signifier; Elytis himself was aware of this danger and stressed that he did not want to restrict the polyvalence of the text.[482]

However, it can be observed that the supernatural or super-real is one of the dominant features of Elytis' poetry and of his visual art. In *Ἡμερολόγιο ἑνός ἀθέατου Ἀπριλίου*, the face of a woman is drawn on the glass of a window: 'Τί θέλει αὐτή μέ τά σχιστά μαλλιά καί τά γατίσια μά / τια πού μοῦ ζωγραφίστηκε στό τζάμι;' (1984d: 20). A similar image reappears in *Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς Ὀξώπετρας*: ' Ὅλο φύκια σχιστὰ καὶ ματόκλαδα Κίρκης' (1991: 36). Both images may evoke the stylistic abstraction of sketches by Matisse (e.g. *La Chevelure*; 1931) [Fig. 26], Braque, Picasso and others. In 'Τό ἀμύγδαλο τοῦ κόσμου', the poetic persona remembers 'σκηνές πού μέλλει νά συμβοῦν / σέ χρόνο ἀνύποπτο'

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[482] In Elytis' view, "Ενα έργο τέχνης πρέπει να μιλάει το ίδιο. Και όχι μόνο· αλλά να μιλάει πολλές γλώσσες. Από την άποψη ότι πρέπει να προσφέρει στον κάθε αναγνώστη, ανάλογα με την ευαισθησία του και το βαθμό της προσληπτικότητάς του, ορισμένο αντίκρυσμα' (1996c: 72).

(1982b: 21), and he evokes the images of specific paintings by Dalí (the 1950 painting of a child at the sea) [Fig. 27], de Chirico (*Melancholy of a street*; 1914) [Fig. 28], and Balthus (e.g. *The Drawing Room*; 1942-1947) [Fig. 29]. All the three paintings evoke an atmosphere of mystery, which is achieved through different means by each artist;[483] in de Chirico's painting, this is the result of a play with perspective, which has metaphysical repercussions:

ἕνα κοριτσάκι τρέχοντας
ἄκρη-ἄκρη τοῦ γιαλοῦ
ν' ἀνασηκώσει τό τραπεζομάντηλο τῆς θάλασσας (Dalí)

καί τό ἄλλο πίσω ἀπό τό τσέρκι του
στό μάκρος ἑνός δρόμου μελαγχολικοῦ (De Chirico)

ἕνα τρίτο ἀνάγερτο στόν καναπέ
μέ τά σκέλη ἀνοιχτά (Balthus)
(1982b: 21)

The expression of de Chirico's painting is offered by Maria Nefeli, who identifies herself with the little girl (1984b: 69). Maria Nefeli, the child-woman, confesses that she always resorts to day-dreaming, 'πάντοτε ἀνάμεσα Κυρία καί Κόρη' (1984b: 71), between reality and the fantasizing imagination or the unconscious.

The unfamiliar but peaceful, luminous and marvellous world depicted in the poems and collages or paintings by Elytis reproduces a visionary view of the world, constituting the mythical 'third condition' of poetry.[484] As was observed in Chapter 4, this imaginary world forms with real reality a salient structure, since it is grounded in actual reality, but also depends on the function of what Elytis called 'law of

[483] In Balthus' painting, this is achieved through colour, while in Dalí's picture it is attained by a direct appeal to the supernatural.

analogies', that is, the mechanism of the transposition of the natural to the world of the imagination or the unconscious. The characteristics of this imaginary world or of the 'third condition' of poetry are *extension* and *inversion*, both aspiring to an expansion or an abolition of space limits, an aim that has been inspired by French Surrealism. On the one hand, the earth is extended to the sea and vice versa, whereas, on the other hand, sky and sea interchange position. In the first case, the result is houses that float like boats in the sea, as for instance, in poems such as ''Ο φυλλομάντης', ''Η 'Οδύσσεια' (*Τὸ φωτόδεντρο καὶ ἡ δέκατη τέταρτη ὀμορφιά*), '"Ερως καὶ Ψυχὴ"' (*Τὰ ἐλεγεῖα τῆς 'Οξώπετρας*), and boats that enter gardens or sail up to balconies, as in the song 'Τά 'δατε τά μάθατε' (*Τά ρῶ τοῦ ἔρωτα*), in his collage *'Η μυστικὴ συνάντηση* (1977) [Fig. 30], and in his painting *Καράβι σὲ κῆπο* (1988) [Fig. 31]. This 'interpenetration' (Elytis 1992: 262) of sea and earth appears very early, in the poetry of Elyits' first period,[485] but the idea is elaborated in a series of collages produced mainly in the 1970s, such as *Οἱ δρόμοι τῆς θάλασσας* (1972) [Fig. 32], *'Η Παναγιὰ τὰ Πέλαγα* (1977) [Fig. 33], *'Η ὀπτασία* (1977) [Fig. 14]. In the second case, the inversion of sky and sea appears in Elytis' visual art in the late 1960s, in his collages *'Ο "Αγγελος τῆς 'Αστυπαλαίας* (1966) [Fig. 34], *'Ανάστροφο τοπίο* (1967) [Fig. 35], *Τὸ μήνυμα* (1968) [Fig. 6], and is thematized in the poetry of his second period; in *Μαρία Νεφέλη*, the female persona claims: 'κρατῶ καί ἀνοίγω σάν ὀμπρέλα παλαιή τή θάλασσα / πάνω ἀπό τό κεφάλι μου / λάμπει ὁ βυθός μέ τά χρωματιστά του βότσαλα σάν ἄστρα' (1984b: 38). In the same

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[484] Cf. Jouanny's view that the collages included in Elytis' collection *Τά ρῶ τοῦ ἔρωτα* 'give proof of a permanence of visual themes [...] rather than a fortuitous encounter. [...] they permit us to catch a glimpse of the poet's imagination' (1975: 688).

[485] Cf. the line ''Ο κῆπος ἔμπαινε στὴ θάλασσα' in poem IX of *"Ηλιος ο πρῶτος* (1989: 21).

poem, the "Αντιφωνητής' implicitly relates the oceans with the sky ('Κομμάτια τῶν ὠκεανῶν [...] πεθαίνω ἀπό οὐρανική ἀσιτία') (1984b: 103), and he exclaims: 'Μυθικά ψάρια βλέπω νά περνοῦν / πάνω ἀπό τό κεφάλι μου ὁ ἀέρας καίει'. In *'Ο μικρὸς Ναυτίλος*, the flying man of Elytis' dream ' 'Αερτον ή ο κολυμπητής του αέρος' (1987: 220-223) is compared to a boat: ''Εὰν εἶσαι ἀλήθεια ἐκεῖνος ποὺ τὴν ἴδια / Στιγμὴ περνᾶ ψηλὰ πάνω ἀπ' τὶς στέγες / 'Απαράλλαχτο καΐκι μ' ἀνοιχτὰ πανιὰ' (1986a: 93).

The unnatural is repeatedly foregrounded in Elytis' poetry and visual art; but it is neither threatening or sad, nor exceedingly elated or blissful. His intention when producing his collages was to reveal wonder: 'Πουθενά παράπονο, πουθενά χαρά, παντού το θαύμα που δεν έσωσε να γνωρίσουμε' (1992: 263). As has been explained in Chapters 3 and 4, he considered the stimulation of the imagination, of the inner vision, as his primary motivation for poetry. The kind of super-real appearing in the poetry of Elytis' second period is the poetic realization of his ideas on the transposition of the object of perception on to the plane of the imagination (cf. Chapter 3). As was pointed out in Chapter 4, despite his theoretical observations on art and poetics, which make manifest his essentialist viewpoint, Elytis carefully avoided letting the essential become too apparent in his poetry; he achieved this by drawing on the cultural elements that Greece offered him and by fabricating a collective myth, thus tightly connecting the abstract with the concrete and the real.

Elytis' elaboration of symbol reveals his Surrealist standpoint. In the poetry of his second period, he avoided 'mythicizing the past' and focusing on entities or

human figures of the past.[486] His principal concern was, on the one hand, to promote the myth of poetry itself, the 'third condition', which is a myth that encapsulates Greece and its 'living elements', the female presence and the poet himself. These are the symbols emerging in his poetry, which perhaps bears metaphysical resonances but is also deeply rooted in reality. His poetry, a 'σύγχρονου τύπου μαγεία' (Elytis 1992: 207), completely relies on the imagination, but what it achieves is the metamorphoses of matter. Elytis pointed out his intentions in 1958; the following passage indicates that, by that time, he had already defined clearly the spatial and temporal dimensions of his poetic vision:

> Ακρογιάλια έρημα μέσα στο εκτυφλωτικό φως του μεσημεριού· [...] όρμοι παρθένοι κι ανέγγιχτοι, γεμάτοι από τη μυστική ζωή των ψαριών· κήποι κλειστοί και κρεμασμένοι πάνω από τον παφλασμό των κυμάτων· νύχτες που μυρίζανε δεντρολίβανο και ξεχειλίζανε από μυριάδες τριζόνια...Κι αυτά όλα, κατοικημένα από απίθανα πλάσματα, από μυθικές μορφές γυναικών με μακριά μαλλιά και διάφανα σώματα, που κρατούσαν κι έφερναν στα χέρια τους μια άλλου είδους αγνότητα. Αυτήν ίσως που αντιστοιχούσε στο τοπίο και έλειπε από τη ζωή γύρω μου. Μιαν αγνότητα από ολοκληρωμένες αισθήσεις, που καθαγίαζε ό,τι είχαμε συνηθίσει να ονομάζουμε ταπεινό ή χυδαίο, και που δεν ξεχώριζε το ιδανικό από την ύλη. (1996b: 68)

In this chapter, the exploration of the ways in which Elytis accommodated the visual arts to his poetic needs has shown that his achievements on the formal level were instrumental in constituting the reality of the imagination, a visionary view of the world--indeed, in turning verbal activity into a verbal icon or image. In the poetry of his second period, in which elements from the visual arts are borrowed or are exploited in a similar manner, the poetic image interacts with the pictorial image to

[486] In other words, Elytis tried to do the opposite of what he noticed in Cavafy's and Seferis' poetry (cf. Chapter 4).

produce the mythical reality of the poetic vision; this fictional world is based on actuality and reciprocity, but also preserves symbolic distance and originality.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the emergence and crystallization of Elytis' poetics through the examination of his theoretical texts and his poetry. I have situated Elytis' poetics in its historical, ideological, cultural, literary and aesthetic context by presenting the principal issues emerging in his thought and by highlighting the dominant stylistic features of his poetry. The emergence of Elytis' poetics was examined through his aesthetic and philosophical views and the ideas he expressed about poetry and poetic writing, while the crystallization of his poetics was analysed through a stylistic approach to his poetry and an exploration of the developing relation between his poetry and visual art. I have argued that the emergence of Elytis' ideas on the role of the poet and on the status and function of poetry and poetic writing in the period between 1944 and 1960, and the crystallization of these ideas in the poetry he published from 1960 onwards, starting from *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστὶ* and including *Δυτικὰ τῆς λύπης*, provide the prerequisites for a methodological distinction between the more intuitive poetry of his first period and the poetry of his second period, which is based on a firm theoretical basis. I hope to have demonstrated that the poetry of Elytis' second period is founded upon this theoretical framework, which offers integrated ideas on poetry and presupposes a dynamic view of the creative process and the poem itself.

Given the historical factors that contributed to the emergence and development of Elytis' poetics, such as ideological interactions (e.g. his relation to the Generation of the 1930s), intertextuality (e.g. his relation to Greek and other European writers,

especially in the 1930s and 1940s), the transgression of the borders between poetry and visual art, it should by now have become apparent that his originality lies precisely in his transformation of ideas and practices into a calculated but refined theoretical framework, which supports and controls his poetic practice. The success of his endeavour is to be traced to the fact that his project is not a rigid one. Thus, while on the one hand, it offers complete and perfectly systematic accounts of the production of the poem and of the visionary view of life expressed in it, on the other, it does not restrict poetic writing to a mere transcription of rules, 'methods' or 'theories'. By contrast, while he developed a well-considered theoretical framework, his 'methods', 'theories', rules, or simply his views, merely outline the area within which his experiments with form and language are conducted, always aspiring to the perfection of a model that acts as stimulation rather than inviting imitation, which is the reason why Elytis, despite being a prolific poet, was able to avoid repetition.

Elytis' poetics emerged out of the historical and socio-cultural context of Greece in the 1940s and 1950s; this context significantly affected his ideological and 'discursive formation'.[487] The ethical role of visionary that he attributed to the poet and his view of poetry as a mission for the reconstitution of life to a superior state are determined equally by the more inherently Greek concerns of his time and by Surrealist perceptions of reality. Elytis naturalized French Surrealism by transposing it into his perceptions of the geophysical, cultural and psychological reality of Greece. Conversely, he adapted the Greek reality--landscape, culture, psychology--to Surrealism. He endowed the Greek landscape with metaphysical depths that he

[487] For the role that ideology plays in the 'discursive formation' of an individual see Pêcheux 1983: 111ff.

found in Plato, but which were inspired by the expansion of temporal and spatial limits, the unification of the objective and the subjective, the connection of the concrete and the abstract, and the fusion of the real and the imaginary, which are integral aspects of the Surrealist endeavour. Elytis used Surrealism in his search for essential Greekness and poetic perfection. His ideas bear metaphysical resonances, yet in his poems he escapes metaphysics. The imaginary world constituted in his poetry is the projection of subjective perceptions of temporal and spatial dimensions, and the outcome of his attempt to fabricate projective models of myth, but it is also deeply rooted in reality.

As has been argued in this thesis, the elaboration of the theoretical framework that underlies his poetics was determined by his methodical approach to 'the practical problems of Lyricism', an endeavour in which he was again assisted mainly by Surrealism. His main concern was the constitution of the mythical, imaginary world of vision as a model of life and as a way of thinking about life. He attempted to accomplish this through a methodical systematization of the rules determining the function of the interior mechanism of the poem and through the elaboration of a theoretical basis that supports the creative process. In the poetry of Elytis' second period, his ideas about the imaginary superior reality to which poetry should aspire are developed through linguistic and technical innovation, which primarily concerns the image.

More substantial conclusions concerning the major issues of Elytis' theoretical and poetic endeavour have been reached in the main body of this thesis. All in all, two of the most controversial aspects of Elytis' project deserve to be mentioned here.

The first refers to his ideas about the production of the poem; the examination of his views throughout the thesis, but especially in Chapter 5, has shown that while his conception of the creative process reflects an organic approach to poetry, his definitions of the poem as universe or as solar system, that is, as a system governed by strict mathematical rules also correspond to a mechanical conception of poetry. In other words, on different occasions, Elytis seems to hold either that the intellect first sets the rules and the imagination follows by building on them, or that the opposite happens. Indeed, Elytis' poetic originality is to be traced to the way he conceives of the activity of the mind; a further examination of this issue does not concern this thesis and I intend to show the implications of Elytis' project in a separate study, devoted to this special topic. The second issue related to Elytis' endeavour which may be mentioned here because it is extremely thought-provoking concerns his claims for the privileged role of the poet as a kind of 'unacknowledged legislator of the world' (Shelley).[488] It can be pointed out here that Elytis' intention to save humanity by proclaiming the superior reality of the imagination, an intention that is not irrelevant to the general idealist undertones of his poetry, as has been pointed out in this thesis, might be more effective, at least on those of his readers that place equal trust in reason and the imagination, were it not undermined by his elitist and individualist perspective;[489] but again this is an issue that has to be examined elsewhere.

Elytis rejected *logos* in favour of *mythos*; he indicated himself that his poetry was a mythical condition, that is, something that has been devised, the content of

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[488] See Elytis 1965.

dream or fantasy. Yet, as Paul Ricoeur puts it, 'tout mythos comporte un logos latent qui demande à être exhibé. C'est pourquoi il n'y a pas de symbole sans un début d'interprétation; là où un homme rêve, prophétise ou poétise, un autre se lève pour interpréter; l'interprétation appartient organiquement à la pensée symbolique et à son double sens' (1965: 27). In this thesis, the 'unfolding' of Elytis' theoretical work and the attempt to 'unlock' his poetry, both aiming to demythicize and rationalize the work of art, have been inescapably attached to yet another sort of mythification: that of promoting this work to the existentially privileged position of the object which is worthy of study. Elytis' poetry and his theoretical observations about it, the 'stereoscopic space' (Barthes 1990: 15) of his writing are, in this sense, *mythos*, a 'constellation of images' (Durand) that bears the luminosity and the power of the symbol, a system that functions metaphorically. Further critical readings, such as, for instance, an analytical approach to the more formal aspects of his poetry, cannot but also be processes of a simultaneous demystification and mythification.

This is the case with Elytis' poetry, since content and form are inseparable in it. Yet, as long as this fundamental principle of his poetry is taken into account, approaches to the grammatico-syntactic organization of his poems would open up illuminating areas of study, further revealing the internal mechanism of their production. I shall explore the more formal aspects of Elytis' poetry elsewhere. For now, I shall only recall Elytis' view that (his) poetry develops from the refined content of (the Greek) language (1975: 637), and cite a reflection by Eluard: 'Il nous

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[489] See, for instance, his late essays, and especially 'Τα δημόσια και τα ιδιωτικά' (1983, 1989), 'Ιδιωτική οδός' (1990), and 'Πρόσω ηρέμα' (1990).

faut peu de mots pour exprimer l'essentiel; il nous faut tous les mots pour le rendre réel' (1968: 526).

Appendix

Illustrations

1 Odysseas Elytis. *Πομπηιανό.* In Elytis 1986c: 45.

2 Pablo Picasso. *La Lecture.* Musée Picasso, Paris. *Pablo Picasso 1881-1973.* By Carsten-Peter Warncke. Ed. Ingo F. Walther (Köln: Benedikt Taschen) (1994): 345.

3 Piet Mondrian. *Diamond with Grey Lines.* Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. *Mondrian. The Art of Destruction.* By Carel Blotkamp (London: Reaktion Books) (1994): Plate 85.

4 Mark Rothko. *No. 8.* Collection of Mr and Mrs Burton Tremaine, Meriden, Connecticut. In Lynton 1989: Plate 213.

5 Albert Valentin. [Untitled]. *Variétés*, Brussels. In Ades 1986: Plate 144.

6 Odysseas Elytis. *Τὸ μήνυμα.* In Elytis 1986c: 43.

7 Odysseas Elytis. *Μορφή Νίκης.* In Elytis 1990a: 39.

8 El Greco. *The Annunciation* (1596-1600). Museo del Prado, Madrid. On loan to Museo Balaguer, Villanueva y Geltrú. *El Greco of Toledo.* By Jonathan Brown, et al. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company) (1982): Plate 1.

9 *Grave Stele of a Little Girl* (450-440 B.C.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *The Greek Miracle. Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy. The Fifth Century B.C.* By Diana Buitron-Oliver (Washington: National Gallery of Art) (1992-1993): Plate 28.

10 René Magritte. *The Enchanted Realm.* Detail: *La Clairvoyance.* Casino, Knocke-Heist/Le Zoute. *Magritte.* By Jacques Meuris (Köln: Benedict Taschen) (1994): 162.

11 Paul Eluard. [Untitled]. *Le Poète et son ombre.* Ed. Robert D. Valette (Paris: Seghers) (1963): [n. pag.].

12 Salvador Dalí. *Seated Girl seen from the Back.* Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid. *Salvador Dalí. The Work. The Man.* By Robert Descharnes. Trans. Eleanor R. Morse (Abradale Press: New York) (1997): 58.

13 Max Ernst. *Saint Cecilia* (*The Invisible Piano*). Collection of M.H. Franke, Murrhardt. *The Essential Ernst*. By Uwe M. Schneede (London: Thames & Hudson) (1972): Plate 94.

14 Odysseas Elytis. *Η οπτασία. Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Σύγχρονοι ποιητές 2.* (Athens: Akmon) (1979): Plate 8.

15 Herbert Bayer. *The Language of Lettres.* Marlborough Gallery, London. In Ades 1986: Plate 169.

16 René Magritte. *La Grande famille.* Private Collection. *René Magritte 1898-1967.* By Jacques Meuris (Köln: Benedikt Taschen) (1994): 138.

17 Salvador Dalí. [Untitled]. Mural painting for Helena Rubinstein's dining room (panel I). *Salvador Dalí. The Work. The Man.* By Robert Descharnes. Trans. Eleanor R. Morse (Abradale Press: New York) (1997): 279.

18 Fernard Khnopff. *La Poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé. Pan* (Apr.-May 1895). Collection of Glasgow University. In Mallarmé 1983: Plate 5.

19 Odysseas Elytis. *Η θεά Φυτώ β΄.* In Elytis 1990a: 27.

20 Odysseas Elytis. *Η θεά Φυτώ δ΄.* In Elytis 1990a: 6.

21 Paul Delvaux. *L'Appel de la nuit.* Private Collection, London. Photograph Hubert Josse, Paris. In Pierre 1983: 191.

22 Odysseas Elytis. *Το φυλλόδεντρο.* In Elytis 1990a: 74.

23 Odysseas Elytis. *Το ιερό δέντρο.* In Elytis 1986c: 76.

24 Odysseas Elytis. *Η μυστική φλόγα.* In Elytis 1986c: 29.

25 Odysseas Elytis. *Ο κήπος βλέπει.* In Elytis 1995b: [n. pag.].

26 Henri Matisse. *La Chevelure.* Illustration to the *Poésies de Stéphane Mallarmé* (1931). Photograph Flammarion. *Matisse.* By Pierre Schneider (London: Thames & Hudson) (1984): 609.

27 Salvador Dalí. *Myself at the Age of Six when I thought I was a Girl Lifting with Extreme Precaution the Skin of the Sea to Observe a Dog Sleeping in the Shade of Water.* Collection of count François de Vallombreuse, Paris. *Dalí.* By Max Gérard (Paris: Draeger; Le Soleil Noir) (1969): Plate 73.

28 Giorgio de Chirico. *Melancholy of a Street.* Collection of Stanley R. Resor, New Canaan, Connecticut. *Giorgio de Chirico.* By James Thrall Soby (New York: The Museum of Modern Art) ([n.d.]): 73.

29 Balthus. *The Drawing Room.* Collection of Mrs John Hay, Whitney. *Balthus.* By Stanislas Klossowski de Rola (London: Thames & Hudson) (1983): Plate 27.

30 Odysseas Elytis. *Ἡ μυστικὴ συνάντηση.* In *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Σύγχρονοι ποιητές 2.* (Athens: Akmon) (1979): Plate 6.

31 Odysseas Elytis. *Καράβι σὲ κῆπο.* In Elytis 1990a: 24.

32 Odysseas Elytis. *Οἱ δρόμοι τῆς θάλασσας.* In Elytis 1986c: 48.

33 Odysseas Elytis. *Ἡ Παναγιὰ τὰ Πέλαγα.* In Elytis 1986c: 81.

34 Odysseas Elytis. *Ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς Ἀστυπαλαίας.* In Elytis 1986c: 69.

35 Odysseas Elytis. *Ἀνάστροφο τοπίο.* In Elytis 1986c: 67.

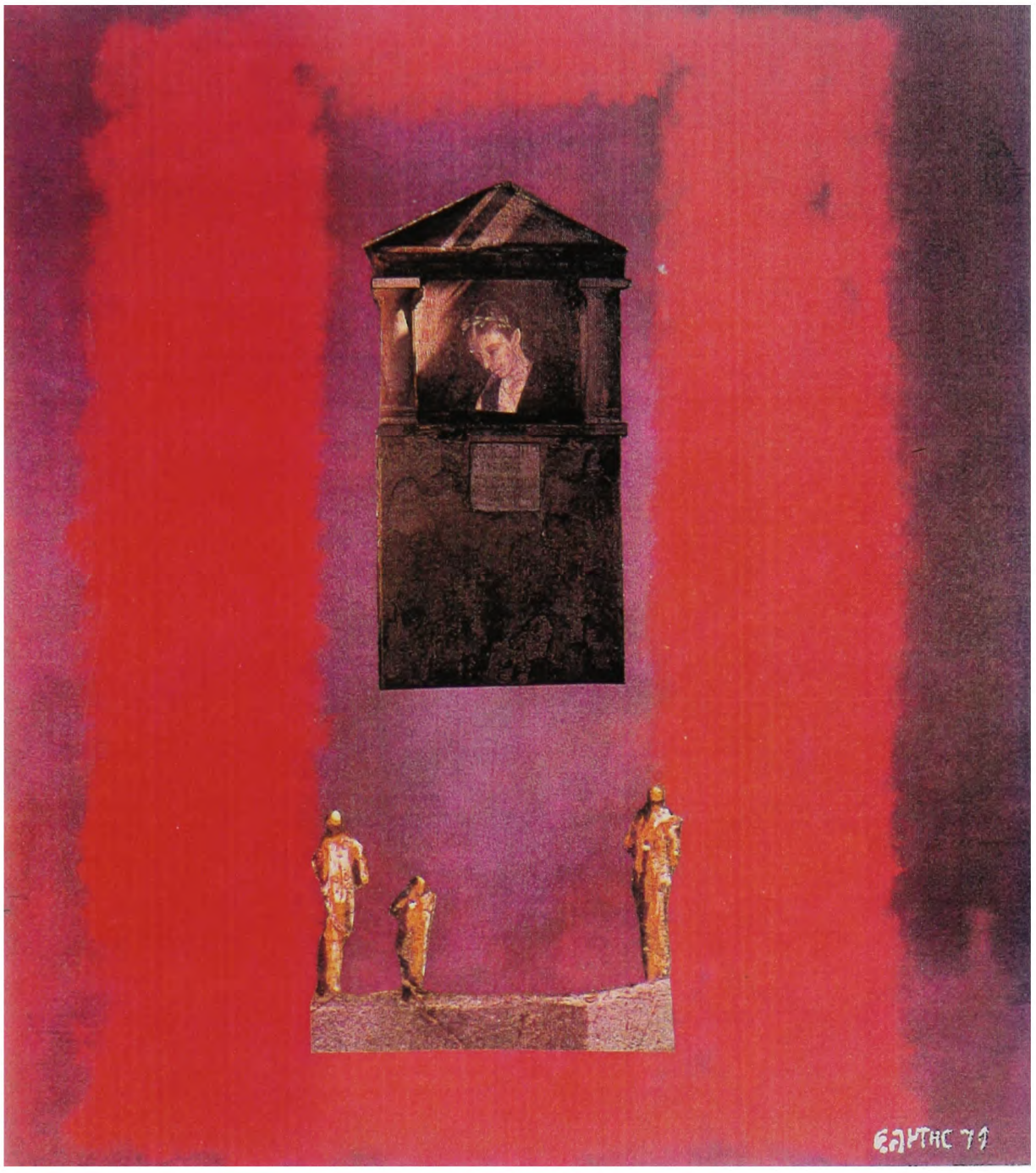


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

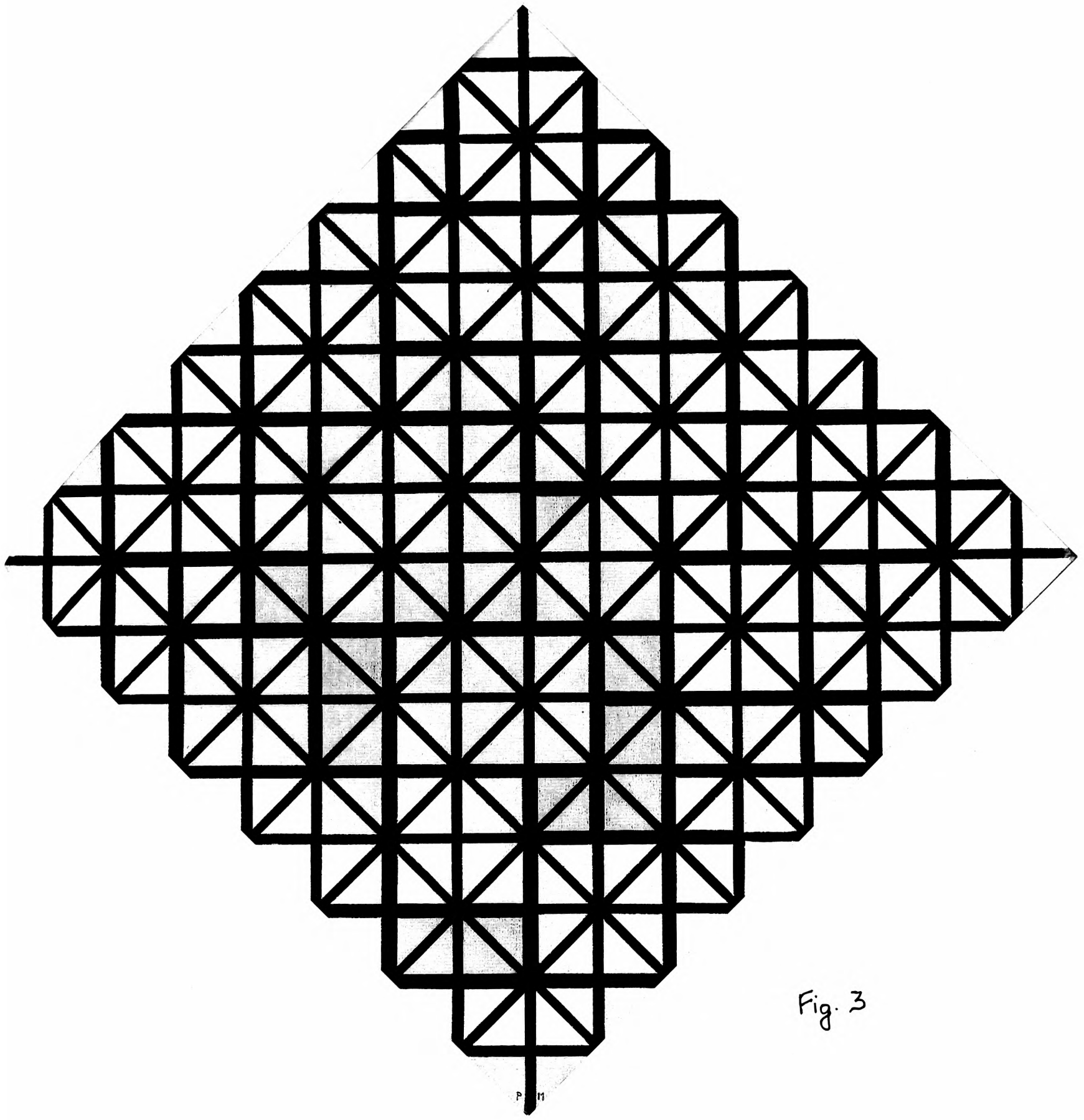


Fig. 3

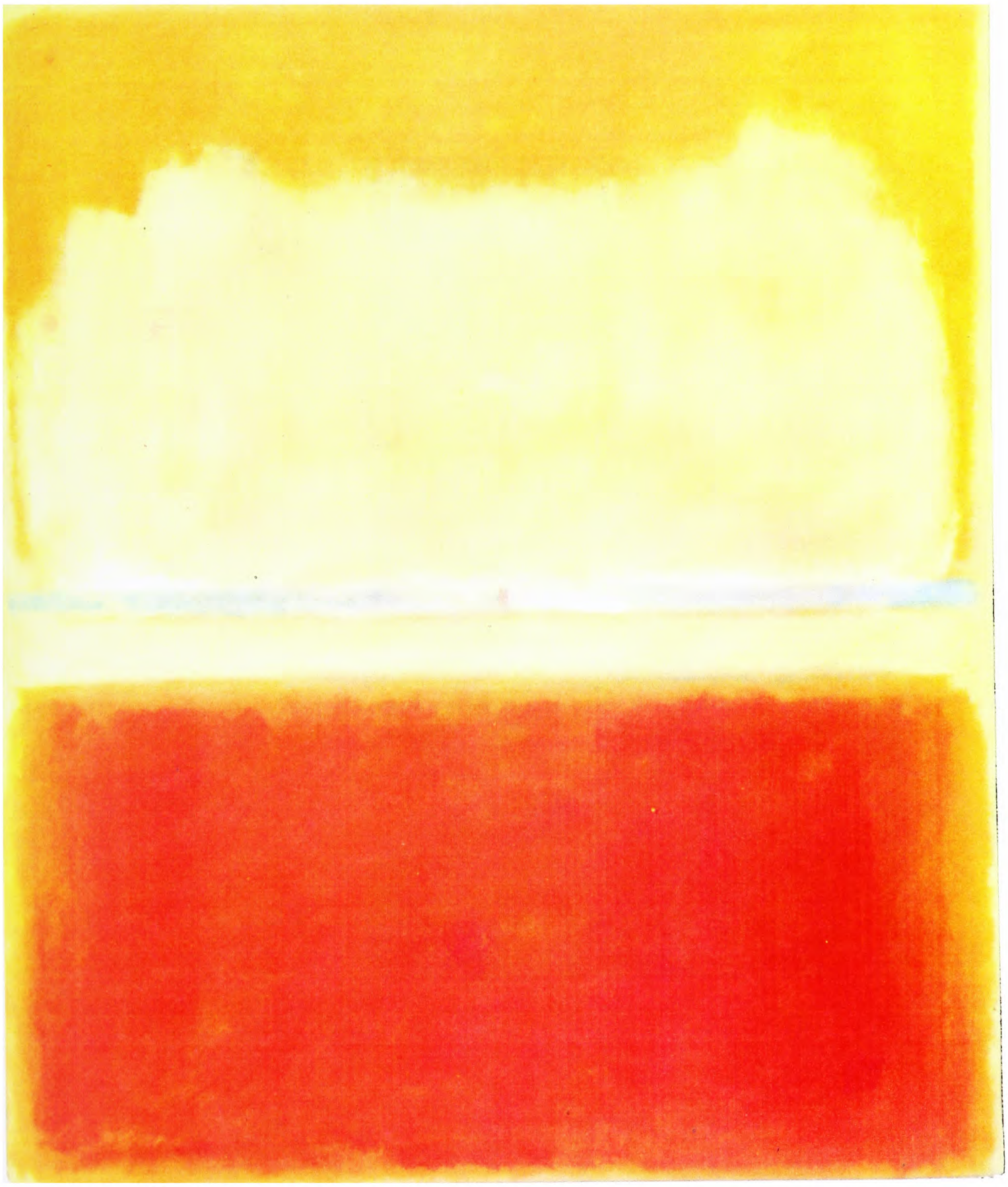


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

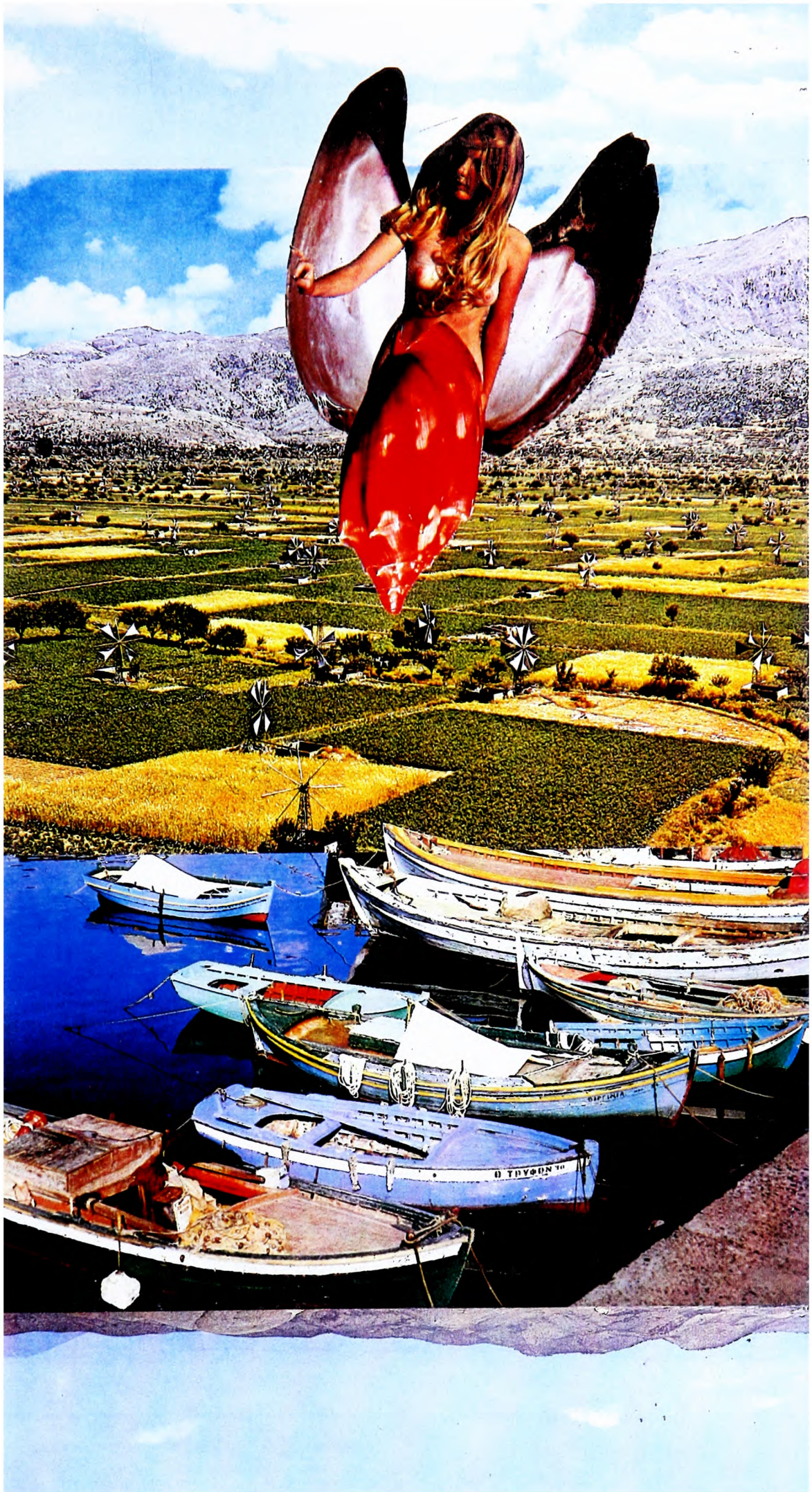


Fig. 6

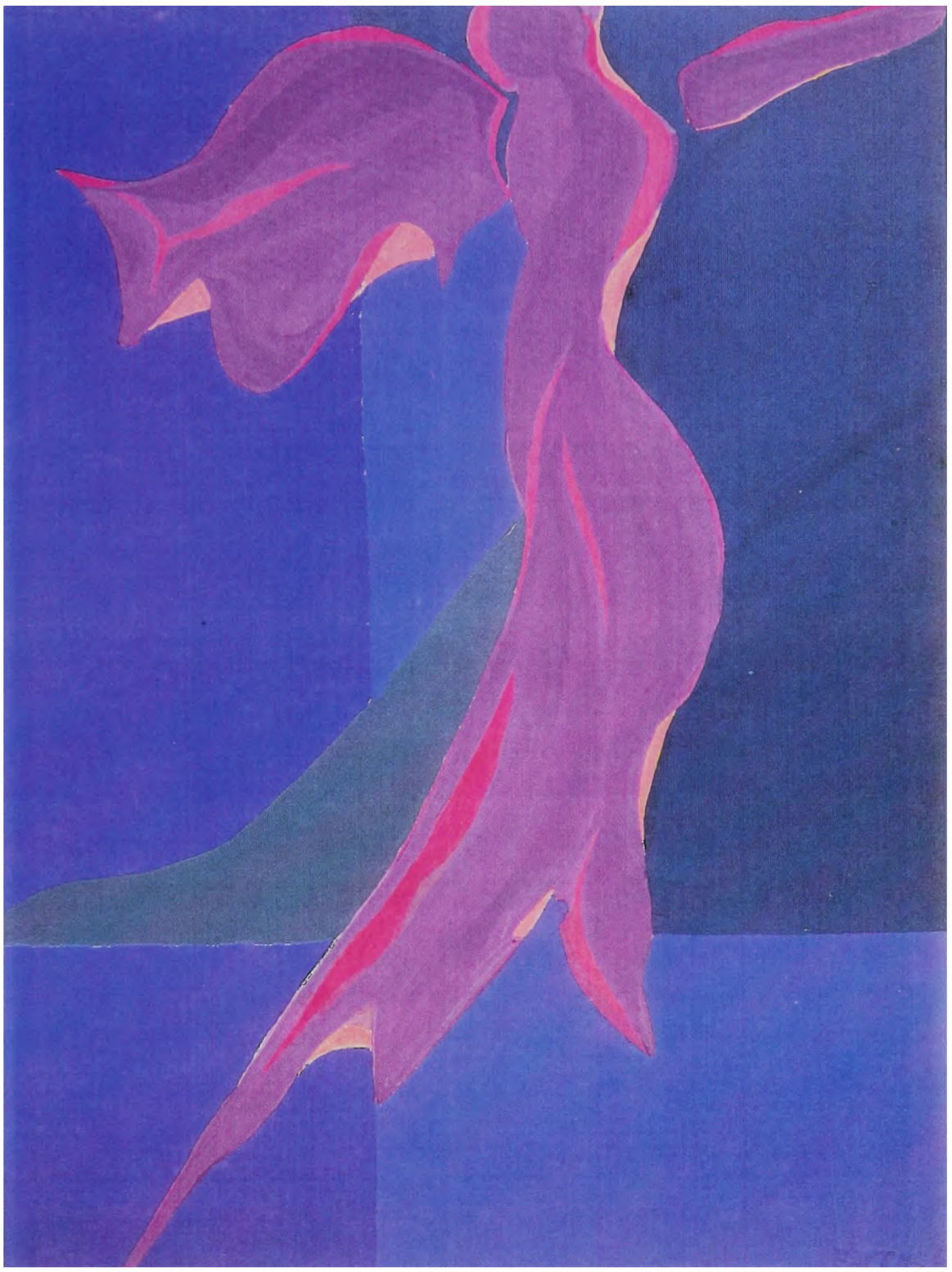


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

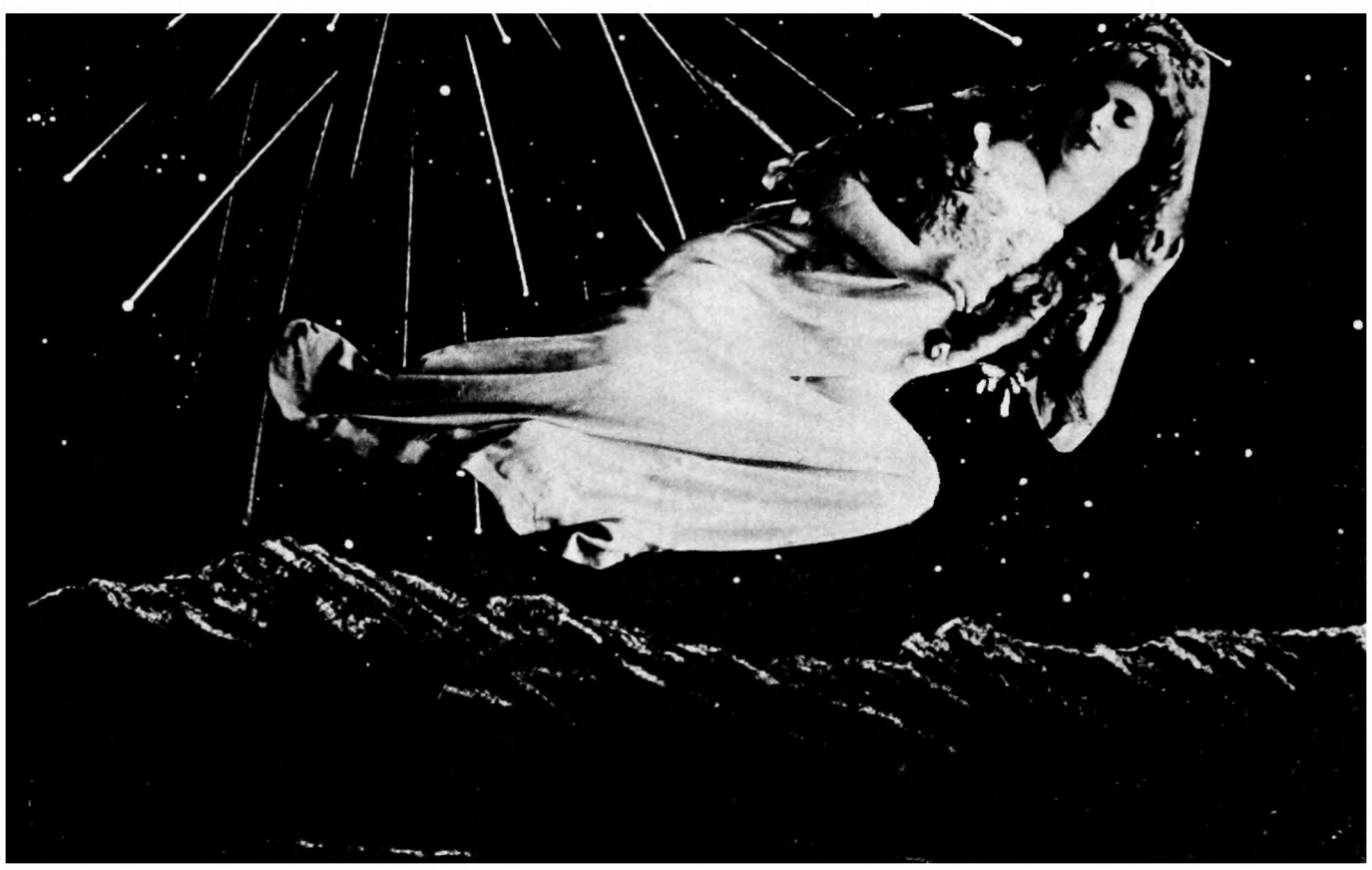


Fig. 11



Fig. 12

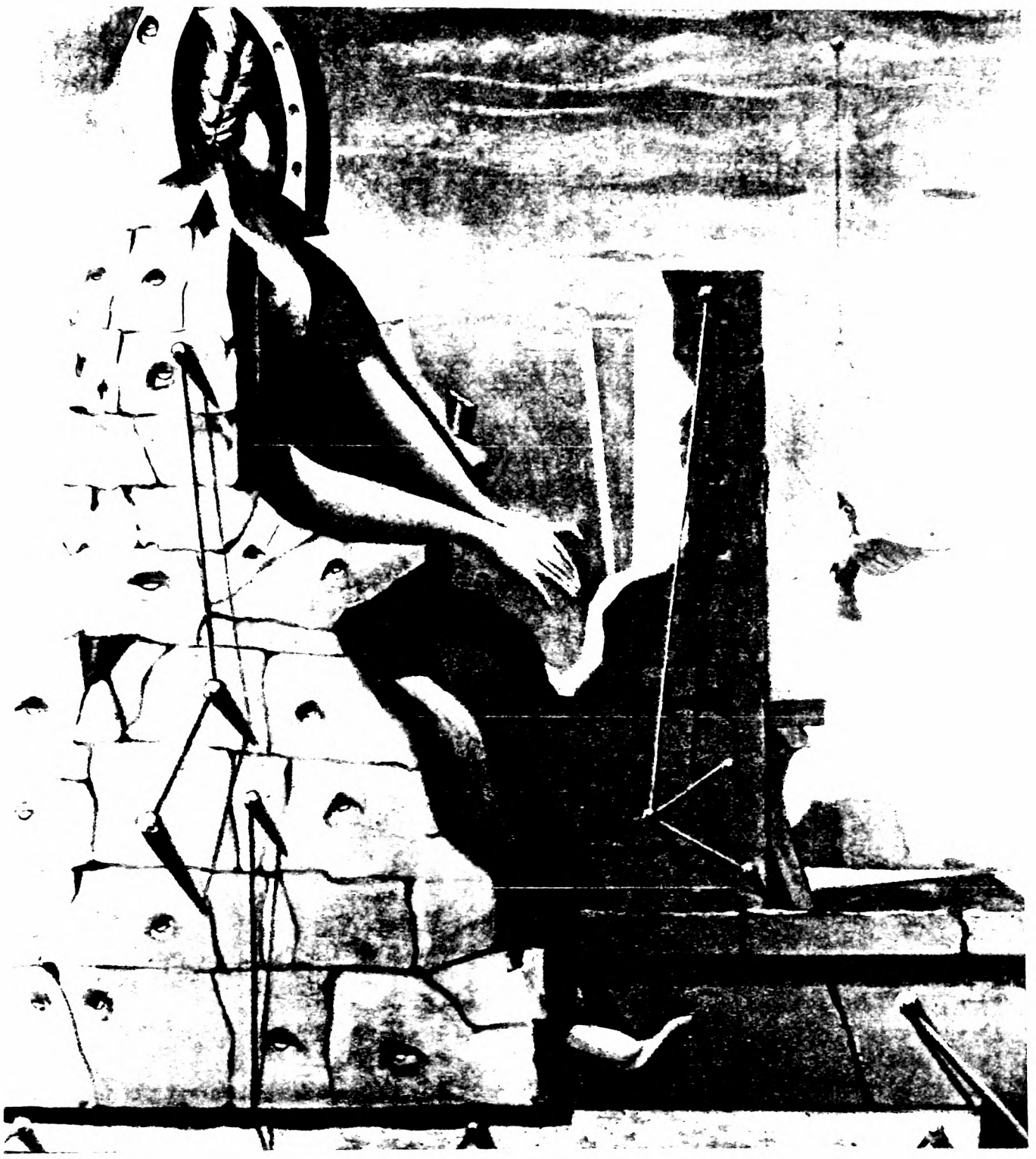


Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

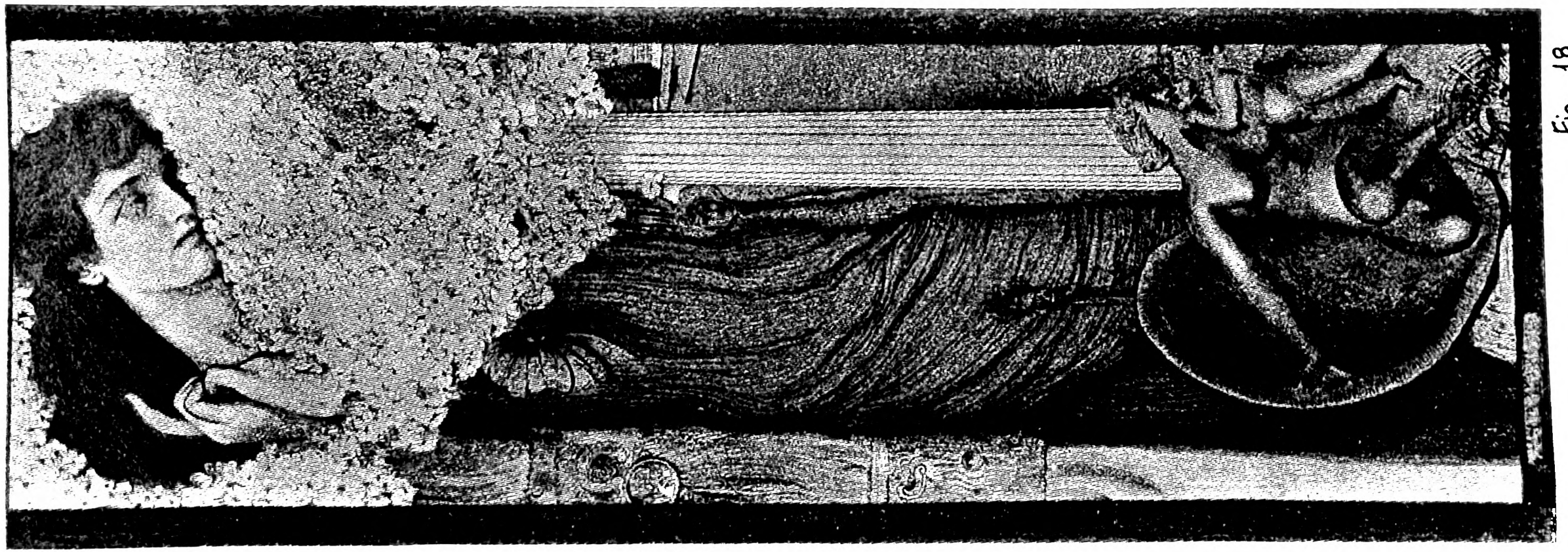


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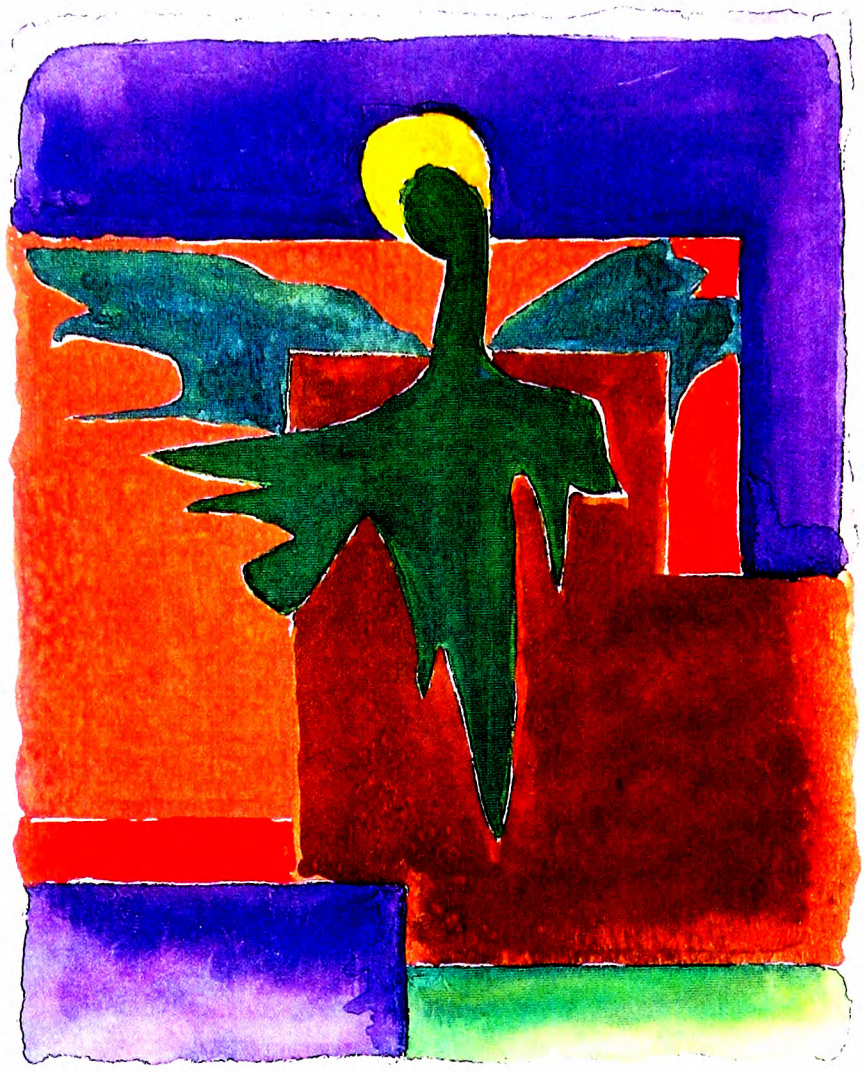


Fig. 19



Fig. 20

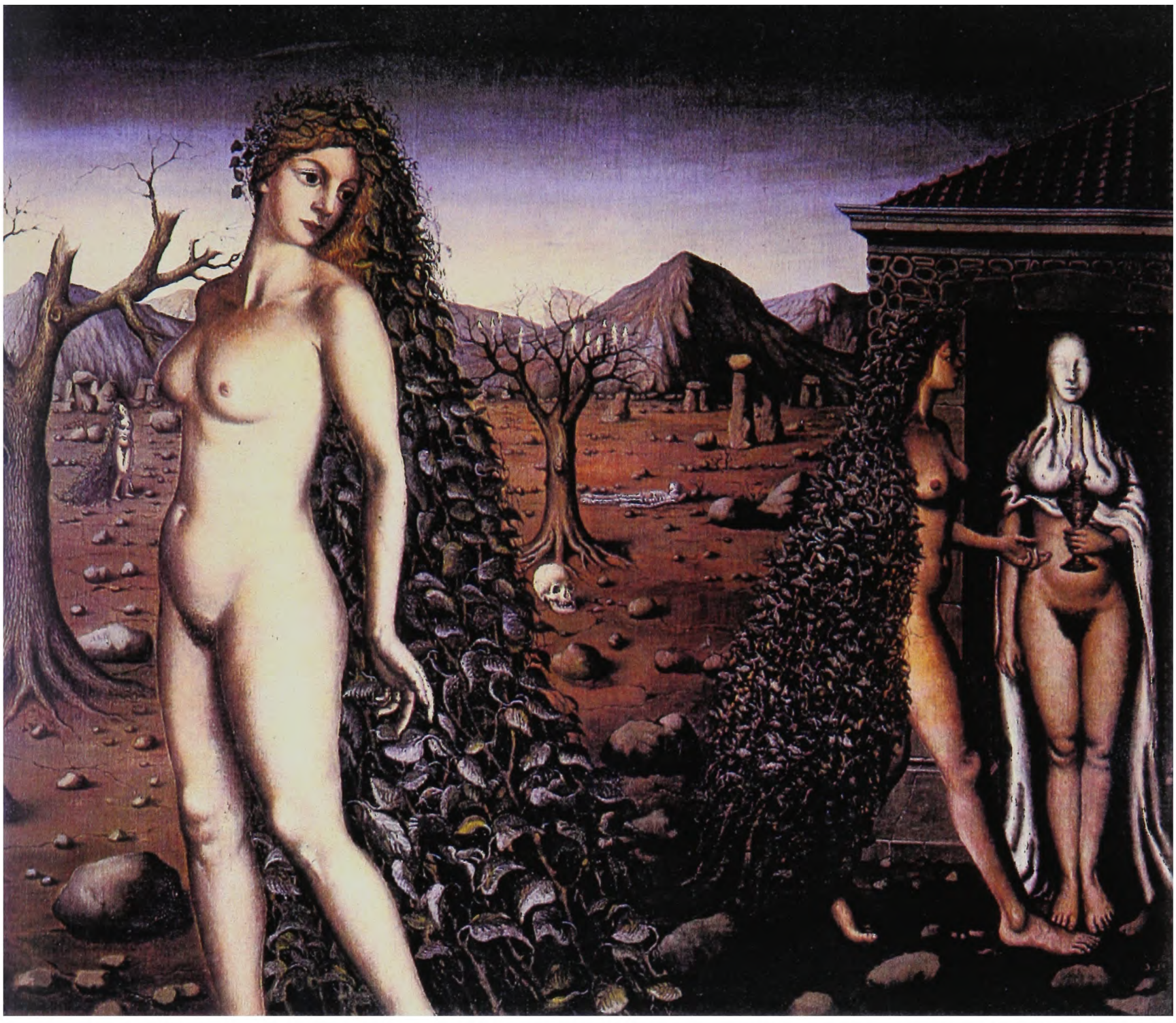


Fig. 21



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Fig. 25



Fig. 26

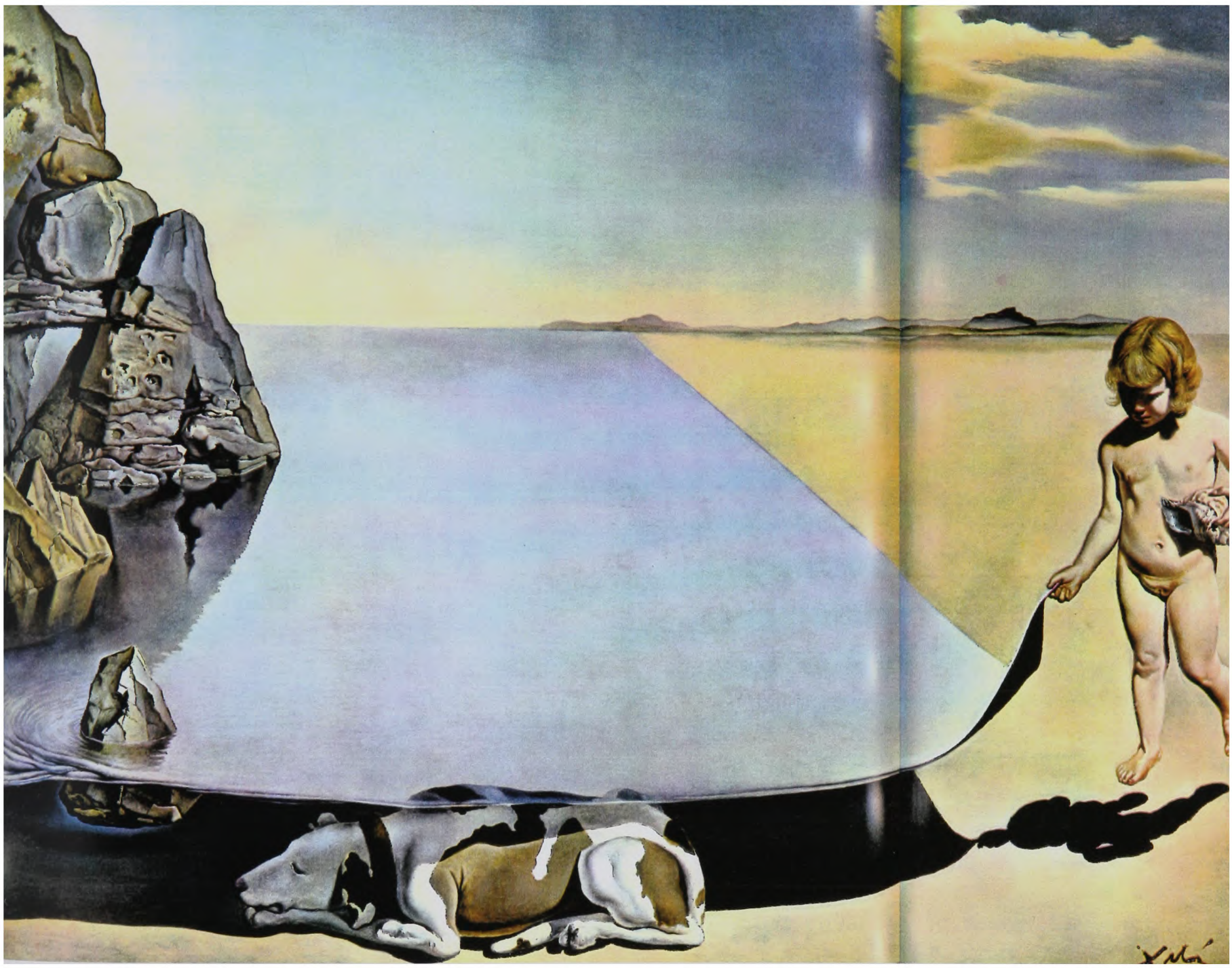


Fig. 27



Fig. 28



Fig. 29



Fig. 30

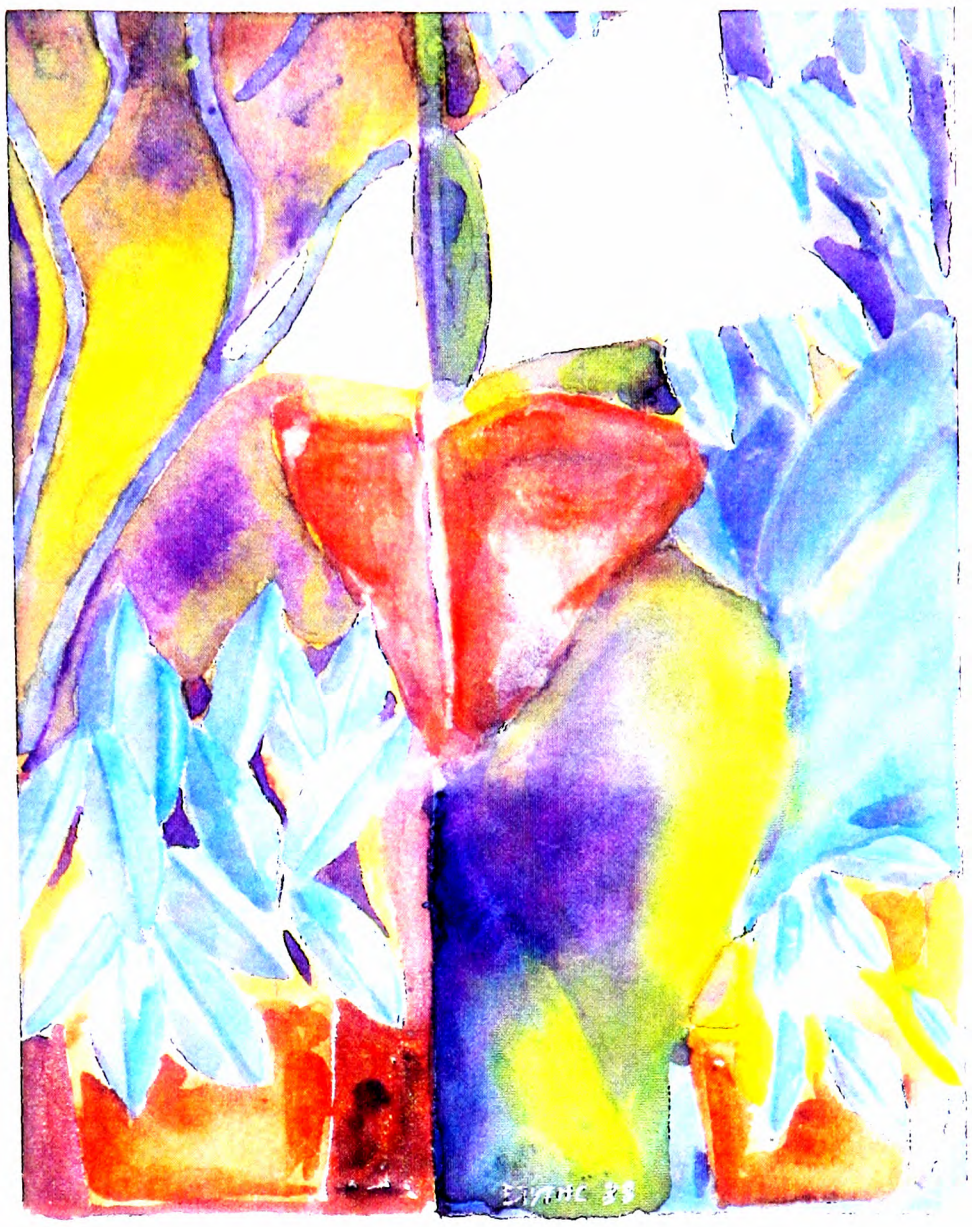


Fig. 31

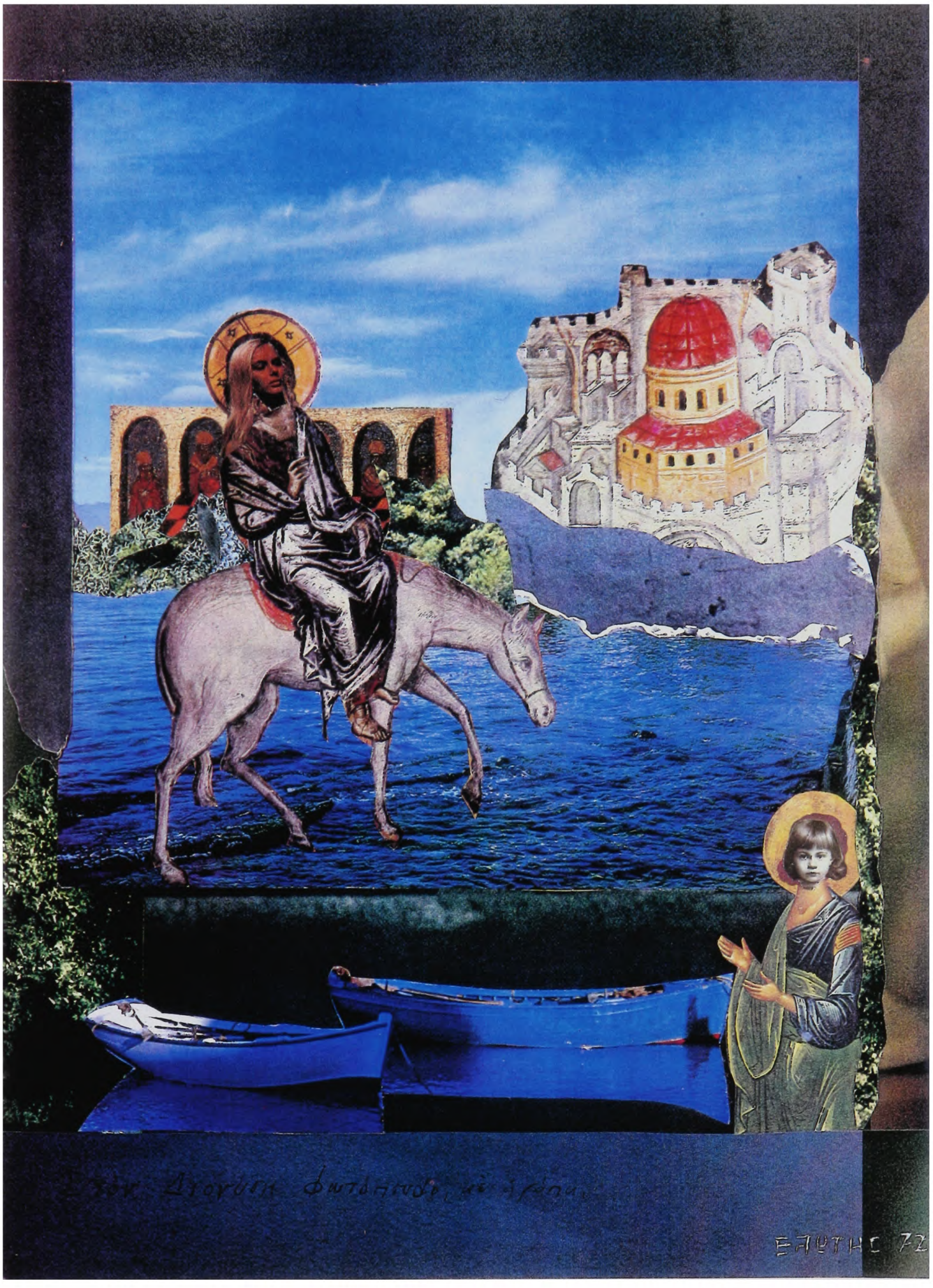


Fig. 32



Fig. 33

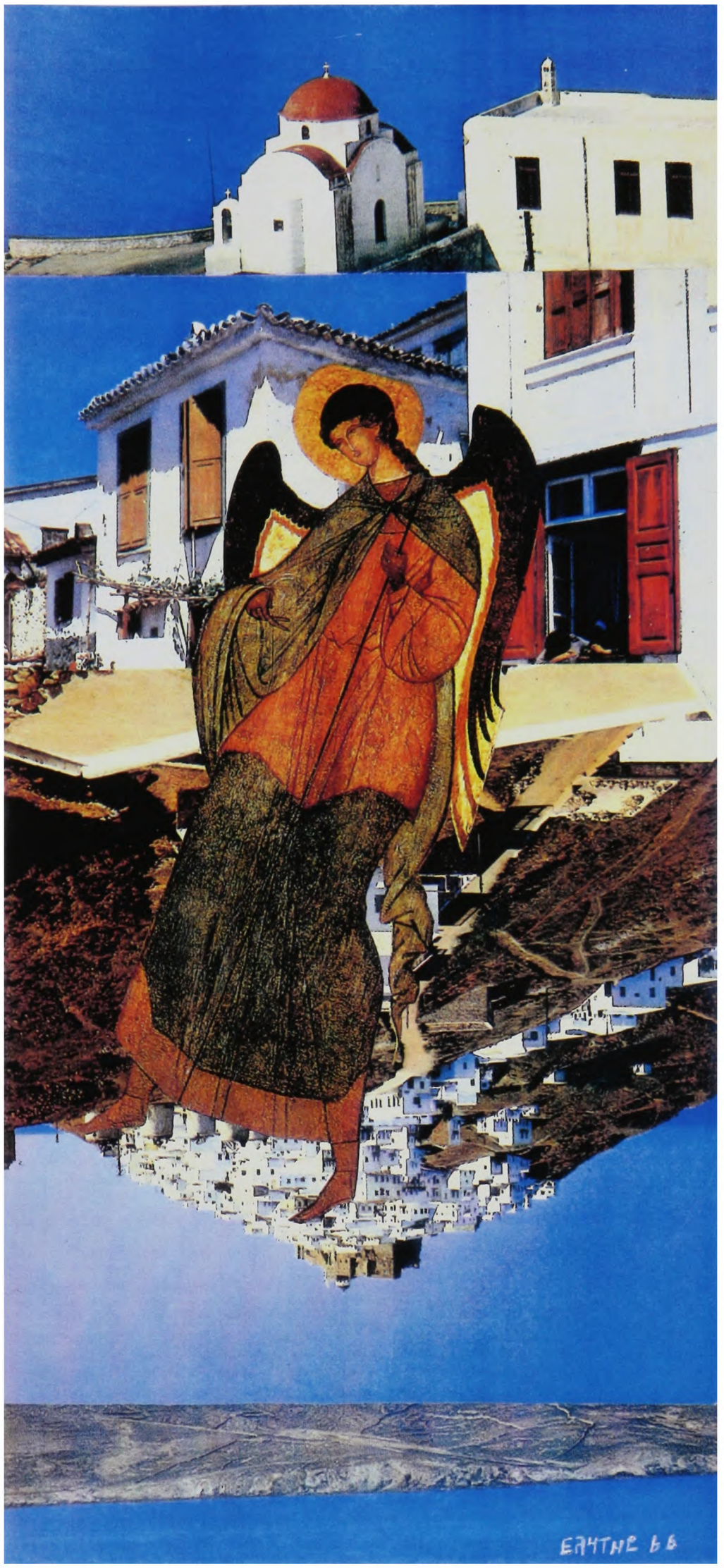


Fig. 34

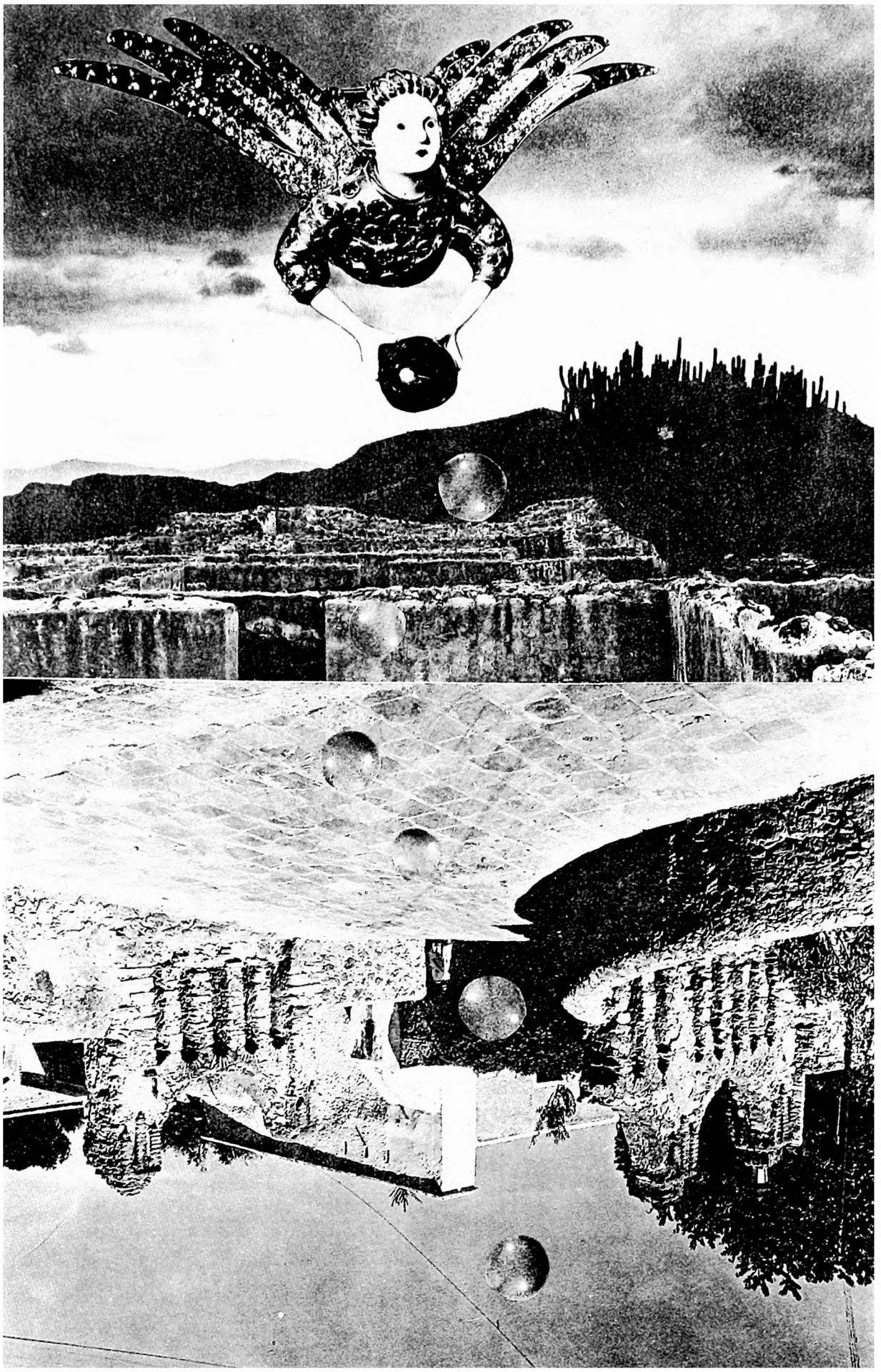


Fig. 35

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