

Elli Philokyprou

**GREEK POST-SYMBOLIST POETICS**

D. Phil. Thesis, St. Cross College,  
**Oxford University, Trinity 1991**

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# **Greek Post-Symbolist Poetics**

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This thesis explores the poetics of the Greek Post-Symbolists, a group of early twentieth-century poets whose main period of activity falls in the period between the Generation of the 1880s and the Generation of the 1930s.

By focussing on Post-Symbolist concepts of the role of poetry and on the way in which Post-Symbolist poems are constructed, this thesis examines the poetic system of a group of poets who occupy a transitional period in the history of Modern Greek literature.

The Post-Symbolists question both the nationalism of poets of the Generation of the 1880s and their confidence in poetic language and the poet's place in society. The questioning of these issues functions on all levels of Post-Symbolist poetic discourse: on the level of subject-matter, Post-Symbolist poetry elects to ignore national themes and to focus instead on themes related to the interior landscape of the individual. Moreover, Greek Post-Symbolist poetry is orientated towards a dialogue with European poetry rather than with Greek tradition, as is the case with the poetry of the 1880s. On the level of the syntactical, acoustic and metrical structures of the poems, Post-Symbolist poetry promotes negation and absence, de-emphasizes external reality, putting forward a poetic reality created through the acoustic links between words, and undermines the importance previously attached to metre and rhythm in poetry.

In this way, Post-Symbolist poetic language constitutes a reaction against the dominant poetic discourse of the time, and a turning point in twentieth-century Greek poetry.

This thesis explores both the internal structure of Post-Symbolist poetry and the relationship between Post-Symbolism on the one hand and the discourses of the Generation of the 1880s and of the Generation of the 1930s on the other, placing this in the historical, socio-political and ideological context of the time.



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Greek Post-Symbolism overlaps chronologically with both the Generation of the 1880s and the Generation of the 1930s. The Post-Symbolists are sometimes referred to as "the Generation of Karyotakis" or the "Neo-Symbolist School of Poetry". These poets did not, however, group themselves under a manifesto or a leader, nor did they espouse reforming causes (such as Demoticism) that would qualify them as a poetic "generation" like the Generations of the 1880s and 1930s. The Post-Symbolists did, however, react to certain issues promoted by the Generation of 1880 and begin to explore new aspects of poetic language which were later to be further developed by the Generation of 1930. The Post-Symbolists therefore occupy a key position in the history of twentieth-century Greek literature.

Nine Post-Symbolists have been selected here as representative of the group: Romos Filyras, Kostas Ouranis, Napoleon Lapathiotis, Mitsos Papanikolaou, Tellos Agras, K.G. Karyotakis, Maria Polydouri, Kesar Emmanouil, Yannis Skarimbas. The works of these poets, in spite of individual stylistic differences, present certain shared characteristics. This thesis focusses mainly on the shared characteristics of their poetry, in order to explore the system of Post-Symbolist poetics. The differences between them are referred to only when they are of relevance to the issues of poetics under discussion.

## **Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 examines the framework of Post-Symbolism, that is the historical, socio-political and ideological situation of Greece at the time Post-Symbolism appeared; certain cultural factors which contributed to the formation of Post-Symbolism, and the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1880s. This chapter argues that Post-Symbolist poetics was partly a reaction to the nationalist ideology of the time which was dominant in the poetry of Palamas's generation. This reaction took three main forms: reservation or hostility towards the poetry of Palamas; a shift of the focus of Greek poetry from tradition to an inter-European dialogue, and a change of the main point of reference of poetry.

## **Chapter 2**

This latter reaction is a chief feature of Post-Symbolist poetics and is examined in the second chapter which explores how the Post-Symbolists view the role of their poetry and the poet's place in society. Certain extra-poetic references to the role of poetry and the poet's place in society are

examined, but the chapter mainly focusses on references made in the poems themselves. The Post-Symbolist references to the role of poetry are viewed parallel to references made by Palamas and to references concerning French Symbolist poetry. In this way, the Post-Symbolist concepts are related to the concepts of two poetic systems that border with Post-Symbolism: the poetry of Palamas because it constitutes a poetic system by which the Post-Symbolists were influenced, from which they deviated and to which they reacted, and French Symbolism because this poetic system influenced the Greek Post-Symbolists who regarded themselves as poetic heirs to the French Symbolists. References of the Post-Symbolists to the role of poetry are explored under six headings: the relationship between poetry and reality; the aims of poetry; its effects on the poet; its transience or inadequacy; the creation of correspondences between reality and the poet's mood or a collective mood, and the space in which poetry operates. Examination of these concepts reveals points of difference not only between Post-Symbolism and the poetics of Palamas but also between the Post-Symbolist poetic system and that of French Symbolism. The differences between Palamas and Post-Symbolism concern mostly the aims and the power of poetic language, while the differences between the Post-Symbolists and the French Symbolists chiefly revolve around the viability of poetic reality. The Post-Symbolists aim at creating a poetic reality separate from external reality, but at the same time refer to their inability to do so. They also aspire at evoking an evanescent reality and simultaneously evoking a mood. This aspiration is related both to the impermanence of the poetic language employed and to the negative or even disastrous effects that the composition of poetry has on the poet. For the Post-Symbolists the raw materials of poetry are feelings rather than ideas or language, and therefore producing poetry means, according to them, working with feelings.

The place of the Post-Symbolist poet in society entails both a position enforced by society and an attitude towards society. In Post-Symbolism, the poet is a townsman, alienated from nature; he is also a penpusher instead of a creative writer, an outcast and an observer who defamiliarizes society, reality in general and poetic language itself. The poet's attitude to society consists in attempts to escape from it or to defamiliarize its dominant nationalist ideology, either by avoiding any references to national themes, as is mostly the case with Post-Symbolist poetry, or by referring to such themes from a point of view that contrasts with nationalist ideology. Moreover the Post-Symbolists suggest certain alternative modes of existence within society and escape-routes out of society. The latter consist in attempts to escape from reality via poetry, while the former in suggestions for poetry as dialogue and for cosmopolitanism in the place of nationalism.

### Chapter 3

Chapter 3 explores the choice of subject-matter in Post-Symbolist poetry which derives from concepts concerning the role of poetry and the poet's place in society. The Post-Symbolists introduce a new thematic area into Greek poetry, placing the emphasis on memory, nostalgia, desire and escape from reality. For Palamas poetic language is omnipotent, and memory, nostalgia and desire are usually satisfied in poetry by means of poetry, while at the same time their function concerns a national rather than an individual scale. The Symbolists (Gryparis, Porfyra and Hatzopoulos) treat the subjects of memory, nostalgia, desire and, more rarely, escape in their poetry, but do not assign them the central position the Post-Symbolists do. For Cavafy the function of these themes is related to the relationship between external and poetic reality and to the artificial but self-contained nature of poetry. After briefly examining the treatment of these themes in the poetry of Palamas, Sikelianos, the Symbolists and Cavafy, this chapter proceeds to explore the function of these themes in Post-Symbolist poetry, and concentrates on three problems: the objects of memory, nostalgia and desire; the effectiveness of memory, desire and escape; the relationships of memory, nostalgia, desire and escape to the poetic language. In Post-Symbolism the objects of memory, nostalgia and desire are often non-specific and are identified with poetry itself. Post-Symbolist poetry aspires to transform itself into a poetry free from pain. It also aspires to music, and to the creation of a self-contained world consisting of poetic reality independent of external reality. This self-referentiality of poetry renders the objects of memory, nostalgia and desire unattainable, because the Post-Symbolists are expressing the longing of one kind of poetic language in terms of another. In most cases, memory, desire and escape prove to be ineffectual, since poetry fails to create a viable world. Poetic language not only fails to fulfil its role but at the same time creates an undesirable reality. Thus, the subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry differs radically from that of Palamas and Sikelianos and also conflicts in many ways with the poetics of Cavafy and the Symbolists. The central concern of Post-Symbolist poetry consists in the interaction between the function of poetic language as an act of memory, nostalgia, desire or escape and its ineffectiveness in the fulfilment of this role.

### Chapter 4

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the semantic structure of Post-Symbolist poetic language in relation to the syntactic, acoustic and metrical structures.

Chapter 4 explores the interaction between the semantic and syntactic structures. This interaction is examined in four categories of Post-Symbolist poems; each of these categories includes a recurrent theme of Post-Symbolist poetry: (a) memory, nostalgia, desire and escape, (b) love and death, (c) solitude and unhappiness and (d) writing and singing. Through an examination of the prevailing syntactic phenomena (e.g. the interplay between active and passive) certain Post-Symbolist preoccupations



are revealed (e.g. powerlessness) and a direct relationship between syntax and the act of poetry as viewed by the Post-Symbolists comes to light. The chapter explores the interaction between semantic and syntactic structures, and examines the fluctuation between the denotative and connotative values of words, certain types of metaphor and the function of symbols in Post-Symbolist poetry.

The symbolic system of Post-Symbolism is characterized by an emphasis on negation and absence, as well as by self-referentiality. External reality is de-emphasized by the undermining of denotations and the promotion of connotations, as well as by its fragmented presence in the poems. At the same time, the inability of poetic language to create a viable reality of its own is enacted on the syntactic level, for example by the bias towards negative structures, the absence of symbols and the passive nature of structures thematically connected with the act of poetry. Thus, Post-Symbolist poetic language is chiefly characterized by self-negation.

## Chapter 5

The preoccupation with poetic language, its possibilities and its limitations proves also to be a central feature of the interaction between acoustic and semantic structures. Chapter 5 explores the interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language. It explores the techniques employed to create or emphasize semantic relationships between words by means of the acoustic structure and the techniques employed to undermine semantic relationships between words by the acoustic structure. The absence or presence of a predominant acoustic structure is connected with the semantic structure of Post-Symbolist poetry and the aspiration either to visual arts or to music. These aspirations suggest two different approaches to poetic language within Post-Symbolism with regard to the techniques employed to construct the meaning of a poem. The majority of the Post-Symbolists emphasize the interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures of their poetry and thereby cast doubt on the ability of poetic language to depict external reality, mood or feelings by signifying them objectively, that is, by relying on the denotative power of words. Poetic language is, then, presented not as a medium of thought but as a formative power, while at the same time its limitations as such are explored by the Post-Symbolists.

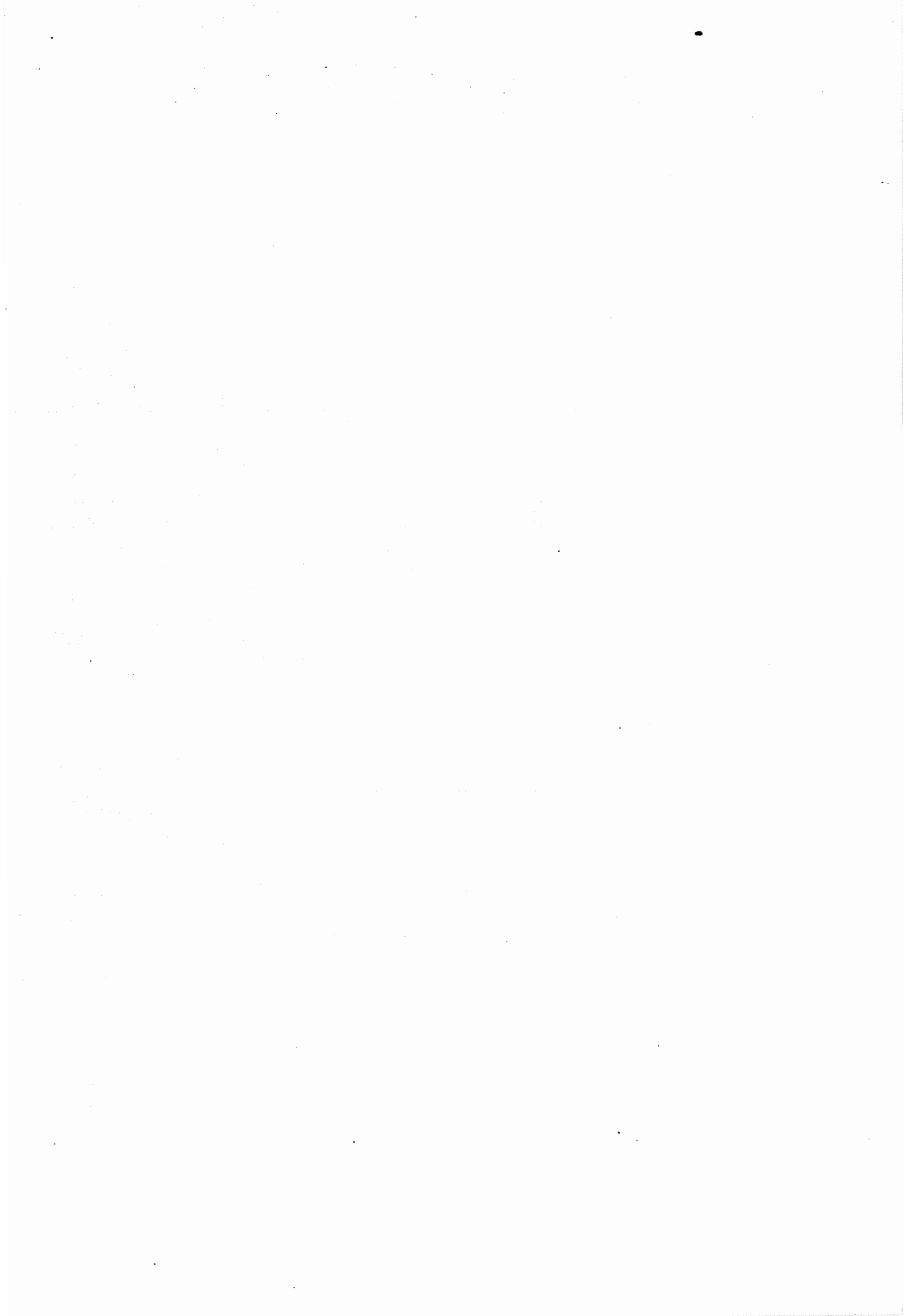
The interaction between the semantic and metrical structures of the Post-Symbolist poetic language is examined in the second part of chapter 5, first through some basic characteristics of the most recurrent metrical forms of their poems and then, through the attitude the Post-Symbolists express or enact towards metre and rhythm. This attitude is explored in its context, that is, after the brief examination of the attitude expressed by previous or contemporary dominant poetic voices: Palamas, Sikelianos, Cavafy and the Symbolists. The Post-Symbolists are divided in this chapter into two categories: the traditionalists and the innovators, that is those who observe traditional metrical verse and those who deviate from it. In both

cases the general attitude towards metre and rhythm is that of mistrust. The confidence Palamas and Sikelianos display in the ability of their poetic rhythm to reflect universal rhythms is questioned and either undermined or rejected by the Post-Symbolists. The innovators enact the attitude also expressed by the traditionalists. This attitude is related to major concerns of Post-Symbolist poetics, such as the inefficacy of poetic language, its artificial character and the need to escape from it.

## **Chapter 6**

Having examined the structure of the Post-Symbolist poetic system, the thesis goes on to explore the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s. This relationship is pertinent to the definition of Post-Symbolist poetics just as the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of 1880 is, since Post-Symbolism is a poetic system which had an impact on the poets of the 1930s. Chapter 6 explores the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of 1930 through specific references by the Post-Symbolists to poets belonging to the Generation of the 1930s and vice versa; main differences of ideology and poetics between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s, and affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s. This relationship presents two fundamental aspects. On the one hand, the common historical and cultural context leads to poetic affinities, while on the other, the ideological differences lead to a conflict in major question of poetics.

This thesis explores the Post-Symbolist poetic system in terms of its historical existence and its internal structure, and argues that Post-Symbolism occupies a key position in the history of twentieth-century Greek literature and that it constitutes a twofold experiment in poetics, since it proposes the disengagement of poetry from nationalism, while at the same time it focusses on the possibilities of poetic language itself. From the point of view of poetics as ideology this experiment was rejected, while from the point of view of poetics as an attitude towards poetic language, this experiment reorientated Greek poetry.



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## Introduction

Greek Post-Symbolism is the term used in this thesis (for reasons to be discussed below) for a group of early twentieth-century poets, sometimes referred to as the Generation of Karyotakis.<sup>1</sup> Greek Post-Symbolism spans a period approximately bounded by the Generation of the 1880s and the Generation of the 1930s and overlaps with both. It also coincides with individual poets (C.P. Cavafy, Anghelos Sikelianos, Nikos Kazantzakis, Kostas Varnalis, Apostolos Melahrinos) who, without belonging to either of the two generations mentioned above, constitute leading poetic voices of the early twentieth century.

The Post-Symbolists are a group of poets who present similar poetic features but never grouped themselves under a manifesto or a leader. Thus, the boundaries of this group in terms both of its chronology and of the poets it incorporates, are not clearly defined. Although the beginnings of Post-Symbolism can be traced to the first part of the second decade of the twentieth century, that is at the time when the first two collections of Post-Symbolist poems were published<sup>2</sup> (individual Post-Symbolist poems had been published prior to this date in magazines)<sup>3</sup>, no real cessation-point can be specified, since some of the Post-Symbolists continued to produce poetry much later than the main period of the flourishing of Post-Symbolism. The peak years of Post-Symbolism can be placed in the second and third decades of the

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Mario Vitti, *Η Γενιά του Τριάντα. Ιδεολογία και Μορφή*, Athens, Ermis 1979, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Romos Filyras, *Ρόδα στον αφρό*, 1911, and Kostas Ouranis, *Spleen*, 1912.

<sup>3</sup> The first Post-Symbolist poems appeared in magazines around 1907.

twentieth century, although some of the poems which will be examined in this thesis may fall outside this period.

The shared characteristics of the Post-Symbolists have frequently been mentioned in general terms, as for example in histories of Modern Greek literature. It has been observed that in Post-Symbolist poetry there is a prevailing atmosphere of bitterness, nostalgia, "spleen" and despair<sup>4</sup> and also that it is poetry preoccupied with the self rather than with collective issues.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Post-Symbolist poetry has been described as defeatist<sup>6</sup> and decadent.<sup>7</sup> A third characteristic which has commonly been observed by critics is that Post-Symbolist poetry displays the influence of French poetry, particularly French Symbolism<sup>8</sup>.

Post-Symbolism includes a number of poets, of whom I have chosen to refer to nine. These nine poets are representative of the movement in that they present both shared and individual characteristics. Their shared characteristics allow them to be considered as a group, while their individual characteristics may indicate different aspects of Post-Symbolist poetry and different tendencies within a general homogeneity.

Romos Filyras (1888-1942) was the first to publish a collection of poetry with some Post-Symbolist features (*Ρόδα στον αφρό* in 1911).

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<sup>4</sup> Linos Politis, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*, transl. by Robert Liddell, Oxford, Clarendon 1975, p.202.

<sup>5</sup> K. Th. Dimaras, *Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας*, Athens, Ikaros 1968, p.447 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Mario Vitti, *Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας*, Athens, Odysseas 1978, p.315.

<sup>7</sup> Politis, 1975, pp 203-4.

<sup>8</sup> e.g. Andreas Karandonis, "Ο Κοσμοπολιτισμός στη Νεοελληνική Ποίηση" (1947), *Προβολές 1*, Athens 1965, pp 20-41,

Kostas Steryopoulos, *Η ανανεωμένη παράδοση*, Athens, Sokolis 1980, pp 44-45.

Kostas Ouranis (1890-1953) followed one year later with *Spleen*. While Filyras is closer to the tradition of Palamas than are the other Post-Symbolists, Ouranis is the Post-Symbolist who turns most towards cosmopolitanism. Napoleon Lapathiotis (1888-1944) presents more affinities with aestheticism than the other Post-Symbolists do and also attaches great importance to music. K.G. Karyotakis (1896-1928) has been recognized as the most influential poet of the group. Tellos Agras (1899-1944), who was both a poet and a critic, is a central figure of Post-Symbolism mainly on account of his critical work. His poetry illustrates a transition in the imagery of Post-Symbolist poetry from rural to urban (from *Ta Βουκολικά και τα Εγκώμια* to *Καθημερινές*). Mitsos Papanikolaou (1900-1943), who was also a critic as well as a poet, adopted free verse towards the end of his poetic career and generally forms a link between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s. I have chosen Maria Polydouri (1902-1930) as the most important female Post-Symbolist poet. Some of Polydouri's concepts of poetic language differ from the concepts of the other Post-Symbolists. Whether or not these differences are related to the wider issue of differences between poetry written by men and women, is beyond the scope of this thesis<sup>9</sup>. Yannis Skarimbass (1892-1984) and Kesar Emmanouil (1902-1970) first appeared in print at the end of the 1920s, that is, at a comparatively late stage of Post-Symbolism. They have been selected as illustrative of some of the impasses of the Post-Symbolist poetic system. Emmanouil's first collections emphasize dissolution (after 1940 he turned

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of this issue, see Christopher Robinson, "The Comparison of Greek and French Women Poets: Myrtilotissa, Maria Polydoure, Anna de Noailles", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1984), pp. 23-38.

to a different kind of poetry which falls outside Post-Symbolism and will not be examined here). Skarimbass's first collections employ irony directed towards Post-Symbolist poetic language itself (the last collection, *Βοιδάγγελοι* , was published in 1968 and therefore falls outside the scope of this thesis).

The group from which these poets have been selected includes among others two poets and critics who will frequently be referred to for their critical work: Kleon Paraschos and I.M. Panayotopoulos.

The poets who have been selected here will be dealt with mostly as a body. That is, individual features of their poetry that do not bear any obvious close relevance to the general issues, such as for example the interplay between demotic and katharevousa in the poetry of Karyotakis, will not be dealt with. Differences among these poets will be pointed out when these are of relevance to general issues, such as the role of poetic language.

In his introduction to an anthology of these poets, Kostas Steryopoulos proposes the terms "*νεοσυμβολιστές* " ("Neosymbolists") and "*νεορομαντικοί* " ("Neoromantics") and talks about this group of poets as "*αθηναϊκή σχολή* " <sup>10</sup> *του νεορομαντισμού και του νεοσυμβολισμού* ". <sup>11</sup> These terms indicate the relationship of this group of poets both with the earlier Symbolists and with the Old Athenian

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<sup>10</sup> The term "school" is not adopted in this thesis, because, although it can apply to this group of poets if taken as signifying a group of poets writing in the same period and presenting similar characteristics, it is not appropriate if taken in its stricter sense, that is a number of poets grouped under a manifesto or a leader.

<sup>11</sup> Steryopoulos, pp 40-41.

Romantics.<sup>12</sup> The assertion of a relationship between these poets and the Romantics, however, touches upon a broad issue concerning Romanticism and Classicism in poetry<sup>13</sup> and thus the term "Neoromantics" is both imprecise and open to question, since it is difficult to divide Romanticism - and subsequent schools or trends that draw on aspects of the Romantic tradition - into periods. The term "Neosymbolists" is more appropriate, since it points to both the relationship and the distinction between the earlier Greek Symbolists (chiefly Gryparis, Hatzopoulos and Porfyra) and the group of poets in question. On the other hand, this term emphasizes the similarities rather than the differences between the Symbolists and the "Neosymbolists", while the term proposed here - "Post-Symbolists" - does not emphasize similarities or differences but rather the chronological relationship between Symbolism and Post-Symbolism.<sup>14</sup> Gryparis, Porfyra and Hatzopoulos published their first Symbolist poems before 1900<sup>15</sup> and Symbolism had become an issue in Greek literature in 1898-99 with the short-lived but highly influential magazine *Η Τέχνη*, while the new group of poets began to form its character only after 1910.

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<sup>12</sup> The Old Athenian School includes poets such as Alexandros and Panayotis Soutsos, Yeoryios Zalokostas, Achilleas Paraschos.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of Romanticism in Modern Greek poetry, see, for example: Elizabeth Constantinides, "Toward a Redefinition of Greek Romanticism", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, Oct. 1985, pp 121-36.

<sup>14</sup> The term "Post-Symbolism" has been employed in a similar way in reference to French poetry of the years 1900-1920, see for example Kenneth Cornell, *The Post-Symbolist Period. French Poetic Currents 1900-1920*, New Haven, Yale UP 1958. According to Cornell, French Post-Symbolism succeeded Symbolism and was characterized both by its influence and by new "questions concerning the ultimate purpose of poetry, the relation between poet and public, and the matters of poetic technique" (p.160).

<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the 1890s, Cavafy and Palamas also published Symbolist poems; for example Cavafy, "Αλληλουχία κατά του Βωδελάρου" (1891); Palamas, *Τα μάτια της Ψυχής μου* (1892).



The fact that these poets do not wholly belong within Symbolism was acknowledged by the poets themselves. In 1947 Kleon Paraschos, countering an accusation levelled by Karandonis to the effect that this group of poets were "*ψευδοσυμβολιστές*" ("Pseudo-Symbolists"), wrote that these poets do not work within the confines of Symbolism. They are working in the context of international poetry and although they prefer French poetry, they do not restrict their readings to Symbolist poetry, nor is their atmosphere ("*κλίμα*") Symbolism. Their poetic atmosphere is compounded of evanescence and suggestion. These may be elements of Symbolism but do not belong exclusively to it.<sup>16</sup> At a later date, in 1953, I.M. Panayotopoulos adopted the same point of view, using moreover the term "*μετασυμβολισμός*" (Post-Symbolism). The young poets of the 1920s, according to Panayotopoulos, span the beginnings of Symbolism to Post-Symbolism.<sup>17</sup> The same term - Post-Symbolist ("*μετασυμβολιστής*") - was applied by Agras to Jules Laforgue in 1922.<sup>18</sup> Some years later, in 1928, Agras placed the poetry of Karyotakis in a line starting from Baudelaire and passing through Verlaine and Laforgue.<sup>19</sup> Therefore Karyotakis and the other poets of his school can be termed "Post-Symbolists" too, since they themselves placed their poetry not only in the context of Greek poetry but also of European, and particularly French, poetry.

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<sup>16</sup> Kleon Paraschos, "*Μερικές ανακρίβειες*", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 42, no. 483 (1947), p.1007.

<sup>17</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos, "*Ο συμβολισμός και οι Νεοέλληνες λυρικοί*" (1953) in *Τα Πρόσωπα και τα Κείμενα*, vol. 6, Athens, Estia, pp 102-3.

<sup>18</sup> *Μούσα*, no. 10 (22), 1922, p.155.

<sup>19</sup> *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 4, no. 16 (1928), p.726.

Post-Symbolism as a "school of poetry" has been generally described by Kostas Steryopoulos in his introduction of 1980 to the anthology of Modern Greek poetry referred to above. An earlier form of this introduction appeared in Steryopoulos's book, *Ο Τέλλος Αγρας και το πνεύμα της παρακμής* (1962).<sup>20</sup> In this book, apart from placing Agras in the Post-Symbolist group of poets and describing the distinguishing characteristics of Post-Symbolism, Steryopoulos also identified the most recurrent themes of Agras's poetry, traced his development and explored elements of his technique. Another poet examined by Steryopoulos is Karyotakis; in *Οι επιδράσεις στο έργο του Καρυωτάκη* (1972)<sup>21</sup> Steryopoulos traced Greek and foreign influences on Karyotakis's work in order to place Karyotakis in his literary context and pinpoint the originality of his poetry. Connections between the poetry of Karyotakis and French and German poetry have also been traced by Vassiliki Tokatlidou in her study *Οι μεταφράσεις του Καρυωτάκη*<sup>22</sup>, this time from the point of view of ways in which Karyotakis transforms the original texts. Karyotakis, as the most influential Post-Symbolist poet is the one about whom most has been written. The first study of his work was published in 1935 by Tellos Agras under the title, "*Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι Σάτιρες*".<sup>23</sup> Agras refers

<sup>20</sup> Kostas Steryopoulos, *Ο Τέλλος Αγρας και το πνεύμα της παρακμής*, Athens, Estia 1962.

<sup>21</sup> Kostas Steryopoulos, *Οι επιδράσεις στο έργο του Καρυωτάκη*, Athens, Sokolis 1972.

<sup>22</sup> Vassiliki Tokatlidou, *Οι μεταφράσεις του Καρυωτάκη, ένταξή τους στο ποιητικό πρωτότυπο έργο των συλλογών του*, Thessaloniki, University Studio Press 1978.

<sup>23</sup> Tellos Agras, "*Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι Σάτιρες*", *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, γρ. 1, no. 12 (1935), pp. 674-706, now in Tellos Agras *Κριτικά*, vol. B, ed. Kostas Steryopoulos, Athens, Ermis 1981, pp. 186-221.

to some of the influences on Karyotakis's poetry and explores aspects of his poetics, such as his metrics and his way of viewing the world. Apart from the studies by Agras and Steryopoulos, other works on Karyotakis that explore aspects related to his poetics are G.P. Savidis's collection of articles, lectures and essays, *Στα χνάρια του Καρυωτάκη* (1989),<sup>24</sup> especially the essay, "Ο Καρυωτάκης ανάμεσά μας ή τί απέγινε εκείνο το μακρύ ποδάρι ; " (first published in 1972), and Christos Papazoglou's *Παρατονισμένη μουσική. Μελέτη για τον Καρυωτάκη* (1988).<sup>25</sup> In his essay of 1972 Savidis explored the relationship between the poetry of Karyotakis and the "new poetics that began to take final shape (*να κρυσταλλώνεται*) around 1935". Papazoglou examined Karyotakis's poems chiefly from the point of view of language, exploring the interplay between demotic and katharevousa and the metrical character and "jarring notes" ("*παραφωνίες* ") of the poems , and relating this metrical character and the linguistic interplays to the content of the poems.

Apart from the studies on Agras and Karyotakis, Emilios Hourmouzios's introduction (1939) to Filyras's poems<sup>26</sup> also touches upon aspects of the poetics of Filyras. After touching briefly on the differences between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1880s, in particular Palamas, Hourmouzios concentrates on the poetry of Filyras, taking it as a characteristic example of the evocative tone that appeared in Modern Greek lyricism as soon as it "liberated itself from the epic"

<sup>24</sup> G.P. Savidis, *Στα χνάρια του Καρυωτάκη. Κείμενα 1966-1988*, Athens, Nefeli 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Christos Papazoglou, *Παρατονισμένη Μουσική . Μελέτη για τον Καρυωτάκη*, Athens, Kedros 1988.

<sup>26</sup> Emilios Hourmouzios, Introduction in Romos Filyras, *Απαντα* (Εμμετρα και Πεζά), vol. A, Athens, Govostis 1939.

("μόλις λυτρώθηκε από το επικό στοιχείο "). The epic style to which Hourmouzios refers is presumably that of Palamas's "Ο Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου " and "Η Φλογέρα του Βασιλιά ".

With the exception of Steryopoulos's introduction, however, the above-mentioned studies do not deal with the Post-Symbolists as a group of poets presenting a shared system of poetics. Thus, although these studies touch upon certain aspects of the poetics of individual Post-Symbolists, Post-Symbolist poetics has never been systematically explored, nor has there been a study of the connection between Post-Symbolist poetics and the poetics of the preceding and succeeding literary generations, or any attempt to place this poetics in its historical, socio-political and ideological context.

This thesis examines the poetics of Post-Symbolism, focussing on both aspects of poetics: the poets' concepts of poetry and the way in which their poems are constructed.

Post-Symbolism has been chosen as the subject of this thesis not only because it has generally been neglected by historians of literature and by critics, but also because, as will be argued, it occupies a key position in the history of twentieth-century Greek literature. That is, Post-Symbolism covers the transitional period between the Generation of the 1880s and the Generation of the 1930s, and many of the innovations that characterize the latter can be observed in embryonic form in the poetic system of Post-Symbolism, while at the same time this poetic system contrasts with those of both generations.

By focussing on the poetics of Post-Symbolism, this thesis will

explore the nature of the key position of the Post-Symbolist group of poets. The issues raised by the Post-Symbolists concerning, for example, the role of poetry and the poet's place in society are connected with the historical, socio-political and cultural context of the time. To a certain extent the issues raised by the Post-Symbolists can be viewed as a response to the attitudes of the Generation of the 1880s, while they also constitute points of reference for the Generation of the 1930s.

Thus, the system of Post-Symbolist poetics can be related to those of the preceding and the succeeding poetic generations and to the system of the historical and socio-political context of the time.<sup>27</sup> Another system to which the Post-Symbolist system is related is French Symbolist poetics, since the Greek Post-Symbolists themselves acknowledged French Symbolism as an important influence on their poetry and placed their poetry in a line starting from or passing through French Symbolism, in the broad sense of the movement, which includes poets from Baudelaire to Rimbaud and Mallarmé.

The relationship between the Post-Symbolist system of poetics and other systems mentioned above will be explored in this thesis. Nevertheless these relationships are only a part of the study of Post-Symbolist poetics. In addition to exploring them, this thesis will examine the Post-Symbolists' own concepts of poetry and will also explore the

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<sup>27</sup> The word "system" is used here in the structuralist sense; see, for example, David Murray, "Unity and Difference: Poetry and Criticism", in *Literary Theory and Poetry. Extending the Canon*, ed. David Murray, London, Batsford 1989, p.8:

"A poem[...] in structuralist terms, is made up of elements which together constitute a special and circumscribed system, and this system itself gives a meaning to those elements which is different from the meaning of the same element if it was operating in a different system.

To read a poem we need to be aware, though not necessarily consciously, of the system, which is a sort of micro-system within the larger systems of language and ideology, from which it takes its elements and uses them for its own purposes."

semantic, acoustic and metrical structures of their poems, that is the internal structure of the Post-Symbolist poetic system.

The methodology with which these issues will be studied draws chiefly on Structuralist approaches to poetry. Post-Symbolist poems will be studied both "in relation to [themselves] as a system of internal dependencies" and "in relation to [their ] situation, that is, in terms of [their] historical existence"<sup>28</sup>, if we regard "historical existence" in the broad sense of various systems co-existing or bordering with the systems of the poems in question.

The thesis will examine the following subjects: Chapter 1 will explore the relationship between the poetic system of Post-Symbolism and its historical, socio-political, ideological and cultural context. It will also explore the relationship between the poetic system of Post-Symbolism and the poetic system of the Generation of the 1880s. Chapter 2 will continue to explore the same relationships in addition to the relationship between the poetics of Greek Post-Symbolism and the poetics of French Symbolism, but focussing this time chiefly on the concepts of the role of poetry and the poet promoted by the Greek Post-Symbolists themselves. Their concepts of the role of poetry are compared to corresponding concepts of the Generation of the 1880s and of the French Symbolists, since the role of poetry is a major issue in the poetics of all three poetic systems. The Post-Symbolist concepts of the place of the poet in society are examined separately, because they relate more to the society of their time than to corresponding concepts of other poetic schools or generations. Chapter 3 explores the relationship

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<sup>28</sup> Gerald L. Bruns, *Modern Poetry and the Idea of Language, A Critical and Historical study*, USA, Yale UP 1974, p.262.

between the Post-Symbolists' concepts of poetry and the dominant themes of their poems, and compares the emerging attitude towards poetic language with the attitudes of influential poets of the time: Palamas, Sikelianos, Cavafy and the Symbolists. Since this chapter focusses on issues closely related to the language of poetry, the references made to other poetic systems include only Greek poets. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the internal structure of Post-Symbolist poems and the relationship between this internal structure and the attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards poetic language. Chapter 4 deals with the interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language, and Chapter 5 with the interaction between the acoustic and semantic and between the metrical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language. Following the examination of both the relationship of the Post-Symbolist system of poetics with preceding and contemporaneous systems and the internal structure of the Post-Symbolist poetic system, the sixth chapter will study the relationship between this system and the poetic system that succeeded it.

By focussing on the relationship of Post-Symbolist poetics with other neighbouring systems, on the Post-Symbolists' concepts of their poetry and on the structure of their poems, this thesis will put forward two central arguments: that Greek Post-Symbolism presents a consistent poetics and that this poetics introduced radically new aspects into the broader system of Greek poetry.

# Chapter 1

## The Framework of Post-Symbolism

The first collections of Post-Symbolist poetry date from the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century (Romos Filyras, *Ρόδα στον αφρό* , 1911; Kostas Ouranis, *Spleen* , 1912). Most of the Post-Symbolist poets first appeared in print in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. Some of them continued to write until the 1940s or the 1950s, but the basic character of their poetry had been formed in the 1910s and the 1920s.

Post-Symbolist poetics therefore belongs within the historical, socio-political, ideological and cultural framework of this period. This chapter will examine Post-Symbolist poetics in the context of this period, taking in turn (1) the historical, socio-political and ideological situation of Greece in the years 1909-1936; (2) cultural factors (such as literary magazines) which contributed to Post-Symbolism and (3) the reception of the Post-Symbolists by the Generation of the 1880s.

These three areas overlap, since the historical, socio-political and ideological context conditioned both the cultural factors and the reception of the Post-Symbolists, while the cultural factors also account for various aspects of Post-Symbolist poetics which in turn conditioned the reception of Post-Symbolist poetry by the Generation of the 1880s.



## 1. 1. Post-Symbolist Poetics in the Context of the Period 1909-1936

The issues raised by Post-Symbolist poetics cannot be entirely explained in terms of the historical, socio-political and ideological context of the period but are nevertheless related to it. Here I will examine this relationship by looking at (a) the political and social situation in Greece at the beginning of the twentieth century, (b) the ideology of demoticism, which was the central point of reference of the Generation of the 1880s, (c) the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*, which played a major part in the socio-political and ideological life of the time, (d) the socio-political and ideological situation after 1922, that is, after the collapse of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*, and (e) the horizon of expectations in literature and the place of Post-Symbolism in it.

The historical events that mark the beginning and end of this period can be said to be the Goudhi coup of 1909 and the beginning of the Metaxas dictatorship in 1936. The history of the time includes the two Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, the Asia Minor disaster in 1922 and major political upheavals combined with relative social stability.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. 1. 1. Political and Social Situation at the beginning of the Twentieth Century

The prevailing socio-political situation and the events leading up to

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<sup>1</sup> Thanos Veremis, *Οι επεμβάσεις του στρατού στην ελληνική πολιτική 1916-1936*, Athens, Exantas 1977, p. 288 ff.

the coup of 1909 had their roots in the nineteenth century, which in Greece was characterized by a lack of "*οργανική σύνθεση*" of society because of the absence of an economically and politically powerful bourgeois class.<sup>2</sup> The last quarter of the nineteenth century was marked by economic under-development; Western capital flooded Greece and the Balkans in the form of state loans and railway investments. Whilst assisting with the carrying out of major public works, this led at the same time to further economic dependence of Balkan societies on Western capital. These two aspects of the functioning of Western capital in Greece prepared the way for industrial capitalism.<sup>3</sup>

Two other features of this under-development were the exploitation of agricultural labourers and factory workers (for example the Sunday holiday and the eight-hour working day were only sanctioned by law in 1911), and the oligarchical nature of the economy which prevented the middle class from effecting social change.<sup>4</sup>

The defeat of Greece in the war of 1897 demonstrated the need for social reorganization<sup>5</sup>; thus, although the bourgeois character of the 1909 coup is disputed<sup>6</sup>, it resulted in the acquisition of political power by the bourgeoisie.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Yeoryios Ventiris, *Η Ελλάς του 1910-1920, Ιστορική Μελέτη*, vol.1, Athens, Pyrsos 1931, p.17.

<sup>3</sup> Nikos Mouzelis, *Νεοελληνική κοινωνία : όψεις υπανάπτυξης*, transl. Tzeni Mastoraki, Athens, Exantas 1978, p.56.

<sup>4</sup> Tassos Vournas, *Ιστορία της σύγχρονης Ελλάδας 1909-1940*, Athens, Tolidis 1977, pp 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ventiris, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Yorgos Dertilis, *Κοινωνικός μετασχηματισμός και στρατιωτική επέμβαση 1880-1909*, Athens, Exantas 1977, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> Ventiris, p. 23.

The need for the bourgeois development of society after 1897 was expressed in the 1899 education act which put forward educational reform. Disputes about education proved to be an important feature of the period 1909-1936. The act of 1899, however, drew attention to the relationship between Greece's low educational standards and her defeat in the war, and, moreover, expressed the belief that future national disasters could only be averted if the educational system underwent a radical reform.<sup>8</sup>

The post-1909 Greek state has been described as an "αστικό-εθνικό κράτος".<sup>9</sup> The coup of 1909, however, was organized by army officers and was therefore influenced by their conservatism,<sup>10</sup> as a result of which no radical change in the status quo took place.<sup>11</sup>

Generally speaking, the army officers' decision to take the affairs of state into their own hands in 1909 implies a decrease in the importance attached to constitutional laws<sup>12</sup> and can be explained in terms of capitalist development and the changing socioeconomic framework.<sup>13</sup> The premiership of Eleftherios Venizelos after 1909 saw a gradual transfer of power into the hands of the politicians.<sup>14</sup> Although the Constitution was not radically altered and while the monarchy was preserved and a spirit

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<sup>8</sup> Anna Frangoudaki, *Εκπαιδευτική μεταρρύθμιση και φιλελεύθεροι διανοούμενοι. Αγονοί αγώνες και ιδεολογικά αδιέξοδα στο Μεσοπόλεμο*, Athens, Kedros 1977, p.18.

<sup>9</sup> Ventiris, p. 71.

<sup>10</sup> Vournas, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ventiris, pp. 192-3.

<sup>12</sup> Veremis, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Mouzelis, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> Veremis, p. 28 ff.

of compromise prevailed,<sup>15</sup> 1909 marked the beginning of a revolution in the Greek economy and of a bourgeois restructuring of society.<sup>16</sup> It also marked the beginning of trades-unionism and the culmination of the claims of the agricultural labourers (for example, the events of Kileler in 1910).<sup>17</sup>

The chief factor in the bourgeois ideology which dictated the coup of 1909 and prevailed after it was the idea of progress within the limits that were convenient for the middle class. Progress would both prevent the collapse of the regime and protect the middle class from the working and peasant classes. This ideology was concisely expressed by Venizelos in a speech in 1911 where he stated that the power of the bourgeois regime consists in the realization of the danger threatening it from below. This danger could be averted only if the demands of the lower classes were met. The bourgeois regime should not be static, because this would lead to its collapse. It should follow the course of progress and adapt itself to new and changing circumstances.<sup>18</sup>

#### 1. 1. 2. The Ideology of Demoticism

The desire for progress was embodied in the demoticist movement, which gained momentum during the period of Venizelos's premiership (cf. for example, the founding of the "Εκπαιδευτικός Ομιλος" in 1910 and of the "Φοιτητική Συντροφιά" in 1911). The years 1909-1911 were

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<sup>15</sup> Vournas, pp. 10, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Dertilis, p. 41 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Vournas, pp. 7-8, 23.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

important ones in terms of educational reform: the *Εκπαιδευτικός Ομιλος* consolidated the theoretical structure of demoticism as the language of education and Venizelos's party included educational reform in its political programme. The reaction against demotacist educational reform, however, became strong from 1911 onwards, forcing the governing party to abandon the reform-plan.<sup>19</sup>

Demoticism provided the middle class with the means of changing those aspects of the oligarchical socio-political framework that were useless or dangerous for the new state,<sup>20</sup> by offering a new language of power and bureaucracy and thereby contributing to the Europeanization of Greece.<sup>21</sup> According to Vergopoulos, Europeanization was also the main objective of the supporters of *katharevousa*.<sup>22</sup> This would explain why a significant element of the middle class initially supported *katharevousa*. Nevertheless, having realized that *katharevousa* not only failed to contribute to the Europeanization of Greece but also helped to create mechanisms of oligarchical power, the middle class gradually began to support demoticism. The demotacists, however, failed more than once to put their educational reforms into practice,<sup>23</sup> because during this period, that is before 1922, the hostility of the former ruling class was still strong in Greek society and their counter-measures proved effective. The attack on demoticism was aimed not only at the language itself but

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<sup>19</sup> Alexis Dimaras (ed.), *Η μεταρρύθμιση που δεν έγινε (Τεκμήρια ιστορίας)*, vol. 2, 1895-1967, Athens, Ermis 1974, p. λς.

<sup>20</sup> Ventiris, p. 26 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Kostas Vergopoulos, *Εθνισμός και οικονομική ανάπτυξη - Η Ελλάδα στο μεσοπόλεμο*, Athens, Exantas 1978, pp 106-7.

<sup>22</sup> Vergopoulos, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> Alexis Dimaras, p. λζ ff.

also at the ideology behind it, since this ideology belonged to the bourgeois system of thought.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of these setbacks, the gradual shift from katharevousa to demotic marked a development in Greek bourgeois thought. This development, however, did not entail liberation from nationalistic ideology. In contrast, the bourgeois class based its power on nationalistic ideology. Some of the ideologies behind demoticism were nationalism, populism, Nietzscheanism; ideologies which may sometimes be mutually exclusive, but belong all the same to a single ideological system.<sup>25</sup>

Demoticism, and the ideologies behind it, was a point of reference for the Generation of the 1880s. The chief figure of that generation was Palamas, whose poetry was closely linked with nationalism. His concept of Greece and Hellenism was at first geopolitical; he concentrated on the character of the Greek landscape, on light and nature. Gradually he historicized his geopolitical concept by linking the Greek landscape to features of ancient Greek and Byzantine culture, and, by idealizing these features,<sup>26</sup> he created a prophecy of the historical destiny of Hellenism, very much along the lines of Nietzsche.<sup>27</sup>

The generation of Palamas threw themselves enthusiastically into the study and literary exploitation of folklore, not only deriving from it a great part of their poetic subject-matter but also projecting their ideology onto folklore. The flourishing of folklore studies during that period does

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<sup>24</sup> Frangoudaki, p. 42 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Dertilis, p. 168.

<sup>26</sup> see, for example, Konstantinos Tsatsos, "Η ελληνική ιδέα στον παλαμικό Δωδεκάλογο", *Ιδέα* γρ. 1 (1933).

<sup>27</sup> Vergopoulos, pp 109-110.

not seem to have been coincidental. The study of folklore arose in Europe at a time when nationalism was appearing, as a result of the desire to promote nationalist ideas.<sup>28</sup> In 1909, the first volume of the magazine *Λαογραφία* appeared. Apart from this magazine, N.G. Politis's *Εκλογαί από τα τραγούδια του ελληνικού λαού*, published in 1914, is considered to be a major contribution to demoticism. Moreover, the emphasis placed on the "λαϊκή ψυχή" or "εθνική ψυχή" by N.G. Politis and later by Stilpon Kyriakidis and others lent support to nationalist ideology.<sup>29</sup>

In literature, the attempt to depict the *εθνική* or *λαϊκή ψυχή* was connected with the geopolitical concept of Hellenism which dictated an interest in the Greek landscape and Greek nature, and with the emphasis of the demoticists on orality. Orality implied collective expression and was consequently felt to be closer to nature than individualistic writing.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time attempts to create a poetic discourse which would be close to nature, and the reaction against the Athenian Romantic School promoted the notions of "health" and "vigour" in the literature of this generation. These ideas went hand-in-hand with the development of the middle class,<sup>31</sup> which had taken political power into its hands and was preparing both the expansion and the reform of the state.

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<sup>28</sup> Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros, *Η θεωρία της ελληνικής λαογραφίας*, Κριτική ανάλυση, Athens, Eteria Spoudon, 1977, p. 142.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 152 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Dimitris Tziovas, *The Nationism of the Demoticists and its Impact on their Literary theory (1888-1930)*, Amsterdam, Adolf M. Hakkert 1986, p. 232.

<sup>31</sup> Epaminondas G. Baloumis, *Κ. Καρυωτάκη, Πεζά. Κοινωνικοϊστορικά*, Athens, Kollias 1988, p. 101 ff.

### 1. 1. 3. Μεγάλη Ιδέα

The dilemma of whether to promote irredentism or reform was a central issue in Greek politics between the establishment of the first Greek state and the time of Venizelism. This dilemma was directly connected with the problem of Europeanization, since those who believed that state reform should precede expansion, saw this as the way for Greece to gain entry into the "family" of "Western Europe". Those in favour of irredentism wished Greece to become an important power in the Balkans and Asia Minor.<sup>32</sup>

The Venizelist solution to the dilemma was to combine a programme of reform with a policy of irredentism<sup>33</sup>. This combination led to the beginning of the realization of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* (first formulated by Kolettis in 1844) via the first and second Balkan wars in 1912 and 1913. At the end of the second Balkan war, the territory of Greece had expanded from 64.000 sq.km to 120.000 sq.km, while its population had increased from 2.800.000 to 5.000.000.<sup>34</sup> The territorial expansion was followed by improvements in road and rail communications and the growth of the merchant navy.<sup>35</sup>

Greece emerged from the Balkan wars both expanded and stronger in terms of population, defences and communications, but the various alliances which had been formed with Western European countries, in addition to the conflicting interests of Britain and Germany in the area of

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<sup>32</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 108.

<sup>33</sup> Baloumis, p. 85.

<sup>34</sup> Vournas, p. 147.

<sup>35</sup> Ventiris, p. 180.



the Balkans and Asia Minor, contained the seeds of the Asia Minor disaster of 1922.

At the beginning of the First World War, these conflicting interests became evident in Greece, when Venizelos wanted Greece to enter the war on the side of Britain and France, while the King favoured the neutrality dictated by Germany.<sup>36</sup> Some of the consequences of this conflict were the political division of Greece, the "Νοεμβριανά " of 1916 (occupation of Piraeus by the French and clashes between French and British on the one side and the King's "επιστράτους " on the other), and the establishment of the Venizelos government in Thessaloniki. Greece finally entered the war on the side of Britain and France in 1917; the events that followed led to the Asia Minor disaster: the Greek army occupied Smyrna and the surrounding area in 1919, thereby providing a safe route for the allies through to the oilfields of Mosul, but proved unable to cope with the continuous attacks of the Turkish army and was finally defeated in 1922, when most of Smyrna was destroyed. One and a half million refugees entered Greece, and the Μεγάλη Ιδέα , which had served as a smoke-screen for the imperialist motives of the Asia Minor expedition, was abandoned.<sup>37</sup>

#### 1. 1. 4. The Political, Social and Ideological Situation after 1922

The disastrous consequences of the Μεγάλη Ιδέα had their impact both on the Greek society of the inter-war period and on the ideological

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<sup>36</sup> Vournas, p. 162 ff.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 211 ff.

system rooted in the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* .

From the social point of view, until 1922 the orientation of Greece towards expansion delayed the development of a bourgeoisie. After 1922, Greece's enforced turning in on itself and the increased population assisted this development.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, social conflicts and demands became more apparent<sup>39</sup>, not only because of the consequent impoverishment of the working class, but also because the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* had ceased to function as a force which united the aspirations of the various classes (after 1923 there was, for example, a large number of workers' strikes<sup>40</sup> ). Moreover, the traditional structures of state and society began to be questioned after the arrival of the refugees in Greece.<sup>41</sup> Another factor, and one which accentuated social conflict, was the formation of the Greek Communist Party. It was first formed as the "*Σοσιαλιστικό Εργατικό Κόμμα* " in 1918; in 1920 it entered the Comintern and in 1924 it adopted the name "*Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας* ". Its presence in Greek politics created problems for Greek governments, as can be seen, for example, in the necessity felt by the Venizelos government in 1929 to pass a special law (the so-called *Ιδιώνυμο* ) specifically banning activities aimed at overturning the established social order.

1922 did not, however, mark the end of Greek nationalism. It merely changed its orientation; nationalism, instead of being orientated towards expansion, now turned its attention to the location of those indigenous

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<sup>38</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 43.

<sup>39</sup> Baloumis, pp. 92-93.

<sup>40</sup> Veremis, p. 286.

<sup>41</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 23.

elements that would create a national identity and guarantee national self-sufficiency.<sup>42</sup> This new orientation, apart from being enforced by the abandonment of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*, was also probably related to the international economic crisis, which began after the First World War and, with various peaks (such as that of 1929) and troughs, lasted until the Second World War.

The international economic situation forced Greece to turn in upon itself in an effort to attain economic self-sufficiency and to orientate itself towards industrialization based on the Greek market. This did not mean economic independence, since British and German capital continued to be invested in Greece (frequently on unfavourable terms<sup>43</sup>) but did mean an extension of the role of the state, which tried to organize industrialization and agricultural reform and to solve the housing problem of the refugees.<sup>44</sup> The extended role of the state and industrialization led to an increase in the number of civil servants (who thus gradually lost their social prestige) and a deterioration in the economic situation both of civil servants and of blue-collar workers.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore the new form of Greek nationalism was related to territorial retrenchment; to economic and industrial development; to the extension of the role of the state and to the deterioration of the economic situation of the lower classes. 80% of the population shared less than half of the national income<sup>46</sup>, while the governing class faced an ideological

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 136.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, pp. 19-20, 62-63.

<sup>44</sup> Veremis, p. 286.

<sup>45</sup> Baloumis, pp. 83-84.

<sup>46</sup> Nikos Svoronos, *Επισκόπηση της Νεοελληνικής Ιστορίας*, Athens, Themelio 1976, pp. 130-131.

vacuum after the collapse of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*. This vacuum, combined with the problematic economic situation, caused a section of the bourgeois class to revert to more conservative ideas, thus becoming a reactionary force.<sup>47</sup> Attempts at educational reform continued to be abortive.<sup>48</sup> Now, however, the failures were not due to counter-measures of the former ruling class, since society had changed after 1922, but to counter-measures taken by part of the bourgeois class itself, which, as one of the protagonists of the educational reform, Dimitris Glinos, put it, neither could nor any longer wished to solve the educational-ideological problem.<sup>49</sup>

The new form of Greek nationalism was a way out of the ideological vacuum of the bourgeoisie. In this context the nationalistic ideas of Kostis Palamas and Periklis Yannopoulos found new expressions through some of the works of Anghelos Sikelianos and Nikos Kazantzakis, and were transmitted via various permutations to the Generation of the 1930s, which concentrated on the creation of a "genuinely Greek" culture.<sup>50</sup>

The prevailing ideology of the time promoted the relationship between man and nature (Greek landscape, light), setting aside the relationship between man and society. In this way, nationalistic ideology, instead of functioning to promote national and cultural independence, reflected the establishment by concentrating on values that were harmless to the mechanisms of economic and political dependence.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Frangoudaki, pp. 100-101.

<sup>48</sup> Alexis Dimaras, p. *μγ*.

<sup>49</sup> Frangoudaki, pp. 53-53, 80-81.

<sup>50</sup> Vergopoulos, pp. 139 ff.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

In political affairs, post-1922 nationalism took two forms: republican and monarchist nationalism. The change reflected the conservatism of a part of the bourgeoisie after 1922 and was also probably due to political disappointments after a series of coups d'état between 1922 and 1928 (for example Pangalos's dictatorship of 1925).<sup>52</sup> Neither the coups d'état nor the passage from republic to monarchy appeared to affect the ruling class gravely. Thus, the coups d'état were confronted rather mildly, since they did not threaten the social system.<sup>53</sup>

Finally monarchy was restored after a rigged plebiscite in 1935, and in 1936 Metaxas established his dictatorship and began systematic persecution of his political and ideological opponents.<sup>54</sup> For Metaxas, dictatorship was the natural political outcome of nationalism. His logic can be justified to the extent that his dictatorship was one of the possibilities inherent in the development of Greek society in the inter-war period and related to the prevailing ideologies of the time.<sup>55</sup>

#### 1. 1. 5. The Horizon of expectations in Literature and the Place of Post-Symbolism

Within this social and political context, poets who had first appeared or had produced a major part of their work before 1922 continued to promote the same model: "an optimistic and national poetry". Palamas, Sikelianos and other poets fulfilled these expectations by expressing

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 136-37.

<sup>53</sup> Veremis, p. 288 ff.

<sup>54</sup> Vournas, p. 367 ff.

<sup>55</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 151.

"Greek optimism and continuity".<sup>56</sup> Thus, the poetry of Palamas both became a part of the cultural establishment and provoked a reaction on the part of the younger poets.<sup>57</sup>

In the "heavy shadow" of Palamas<sup>58</sup> the first Symbolists (Hatzopoulos, Gryparis, Porfyra) began to produce poetry influenced by European Symbolism before the end of the nineteenth century. These poets were the forerunners of the Post-Symbolists who appeared some years later.<sup>59</sup>

Apart from the Symbolists, four poets who presented poetic systems of their own devising at the time were Cavafy, Sikelianos, Kazantzakis and Varnalis. Cavafy, as will be seen in the second section of this chapter, did not fulfil the expectations of the prevailing ideology of the time, since his poetry, unlike that of Palamas, was not characterized by nationalistic optimism. In contrast, Sikelianos did fulfil these expectations,<sup>60</sup> since he put forward a model of modern Greece based on ancient Greece, Christianity and the character of the Greek landscape, continuing to move

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<sup>56</sup> Tziovas, p. 180 ff.

<sup>57</sup> K.Th. Dimaras, introduction to Yorgos Theotokas, *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα*, Athens, Ermis 1973, p. κθ.

<sup>58</sup> K.Th. Dimaras, *Ιστορία*, p. 411.

<sup>59</sup> Baloumis, p. 104 ff.

Palamas himself produced Symbolist poetry (e.g. *Τα μάτια της Ψυχής μου*, 1892). Another sui generis case whose poetry belongs within Symbolism is that of Apostolos Melahrinis, who appeared at the beginning of the 1900s (*Ο Δρόμος φέρνει*, 1905, *Παραλλαγές*, 1907) and possibly forms a link between Sikelianos, the Symbolists and the Post-Symbolists. Apart from the question of influences (for example Linos Politis mentions the influence of Gryparis on Melahrinis and mentions common influences on Melahrinis and Sikelianos, pp. 184, 201), an exploration of the subject-matter of Melahrinis's poetry (aspiration to music together with confidence in *Λόγος* and *Τέχνη*) could also lead to the same conclusion. Moreover Melahrinis is associated with Post-Symbolism through the poetry of Emmanouil whose first collections belong within the literary climate of Post-Symbolism, while his last ones bear Melahrinis's influence.

<sup>60</sup> Tziovas, p. 180 ff.

in a pre-war world and promoting the permanence of certain values, while ignoring social changes. The same applies more or less to Kazantzakis, whereas Varnalis after about 1920 proposed social revolution as an alternative to what he thought of as decadence.<sup>61</sup>

In this literary environment, Post-Symbolism made its first appearance at a time when the prevailing ideology dictated a positive and confident expression of ideas. In contrast, the Post-Symbolists promoted a poetry of sensibility and suggestion, and of dissolution rather than synthesis.<sup>62</sup>

It remains to examine some historical and socio-political causes of this tendency towards dissolution, and the relationship of Post-Symbolist poetry to the prevailing ideology of the time.

The Asia Minor disaster allowed for the prevailing ideology to be strongly questioned. Therefore the years immediately following the disaster were critical for Greek literature, since historical events had shattered the irredentist illusions of the past.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to the events of 1922, the political climate in Greece and the political horizon in Europe also allowed for a poetry of "decadence": the First World War was followed by a period of great economic crisis, and fascism was a rising force in Italy and later in Germany. Therefore, pessimistic poetry or poetry of "decadence" seems to fit into the political horizon after 1922, and the despair and desire to escape expressed in this poetry can be seen as a form of protest against the consequences of the

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<sup>61</sup> Baloumis, 1988, p. 104 ff and

Vassos Varikas, *Η μεταπολεμική μας λογοτεχνία*, Athens, Plethron 1979, p. 96.

<sup>62</sup> Varikas, p. 29 ff.

<sup>63</sup> Vournas, p. 411.

prevailing ideology.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, in spite of the victories in the Balkan wars, the state of affairs both in Greece and in Europe as a whole allowed for a pessimistic poetry even before 1914 (as can be seen even in some of Palamas's poems): there were, for example, the grave losses in the Balkan wars and the preparations for the First World War.<sup>65</sup> The atmosphere of disappointment and disillusion in which these poets grew up was described by P.N. Karavias many years later, in 1933. Karavias talked about the "ειδυλλιακή εκστρατεία του 1912", which led to much loss of life and was followed by political schism in Greece. "Πού ήταν λοιπόν ο Ηρωισμός, η Πατρίδα και οι Θεοί με τις διαφορετικές εθνικότητες; [...] Μια φενάκη, η εθνική πατρίδα και μια αυταπάτη, η δημοκρατική ελευθερία". Karavias went on to talk about the imperialism of the Greek bourgeoisie expressed, for example, by Dragoumis and Yannopoulos, and about the Peace Conferences in The Hague where politicians declared their faith in peace, while secretly forming various alliances in preparation for war. After presenting this situation, Karavias concluded: "Ημαστε ελεύθεροι, γιατί τα βρήκαμε όλα γύρω μας συντρίμματα και γιατί όλοι οι μύθοι, και μέσα μας, ήταν συντρίμματα. Μια δραματική ελευθερία. Αυτός ήταν ο μεγάλος πόνος της γενεάς μας : η έλλειψη και σύγχρονα η αγωνιώδης αναζήτηση μιας αρχής ζωής".<sup>66</sup>

According to Vergopoulos, another cause which contributed to the flourishing of Symbolism in Greece after 1909, that is during the period of

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<sup>64</sup> Vournas, p. 412.

<sup>65</sup> For example Theotokas, p. 62, defines the young people of 1910-1920 as a sacrificed generation.

<sup>66</sup> P.N. Karavias, "Το δράμα μιας γενεάς", *Σήμερα*, γρ 1, no. 4, April 1933, p. 97 ff.



the bourgeois-national development of the state, was this bourgeois-national development itself.<sup>67</sup> The new, more organized, structure of society, orientated towards capitalism, made poets the outcasts of a society where art could no longer occupy a vital position. Therefore artists began to regard society as a lost cause and to seek in their art a refuge . Thus, the escape often referred to by Post-Symbolists, apart from being a form of protest against society, may also be an escape into the space of art.

Art could no longer intervene, or preserve the illusion of intervening, in the development of society. Hence, it lost its social reforming character and tried to create a space of its own.<sup>68</sup> Thus, Varikas's later comments to the effect that interwar art created an atmosphere instead of a living world, since artists no longer considered life to be a matter of responsible activity but a frivolous spectacle,<sup>69</sup> are valid in that art was trying to create a space different from exterior reality and protected from it. Art could not constitute a "responsible activity" within society, therefore its "responsible activity" seems to have been to turn away from society. Varikas talked about a dissolution in society which was at the basis of the dissolution in art. He stated that the common ideals and goals which had formerly served as a uniting force in society had been lost.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless he was still anticipating a poet who would fulfil the ideal formed by the prevailing ideology of Palamas's generation: a poet who would be both a

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<sup>67</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 164 ff.

<sup>68</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 168.

<sup>69</sup> Varikas, p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 29 ff.

prophet and a leader.<sup>71</sup> The same view was held by another socialist - Nikos Yannios - who after Karyotakis's suicide talked about "suicides because of literature" (*αυτοκτονίες από φιλολογία*), comparing the "*μεγάλη, εύρωστη ποίηση*" to degradation and deterioration.<sup>72</sup>

Although socialism and Symbolism may have had their roots in common causes, the one being a positive and the other a negative stance,<sup>73</sup> socialist or Marxist critics do not appear to have recognized this at the time. One of the reasons may be that at least before 1922 Greek socialists supported the trend towards the bourgeois development of society, believing that this was the road to socialism.<sup>74</sup> For the socialists, the bourgeois development was part of a progressive course towards socialism, while for the Symbolists it was an established situation, which prevented their art from playing an active role in society and rendered artists useless.

Therefore what socialist critics called indifference towards society<sup>75</sup> may on the contrary have been opposition to social structures, and society may have been rendered conspicuous by its absence in their poetry.<sup>76</sup> D.S. Mirsky's comment about the French "poètes maudits" is also applicable to Greek Post-Symbolists and this was perhaps one of the reasons that this comment was translated into Greek and published in a literary magazine:

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>72</sup> *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 4, no. 19, (1928), p. 904.

<sup>73</sup> Baloumis, p. 110.

<sup>74</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 118 ff.

<sup>75</sup> e.g. Vassos Varikas, *Κώστας Βάρναλης - Κώστας Καρυωτάκης*, Athens, Plethron 1978, pp. 166-67.

<sup>76</sup> Vergopoulos, p. 168.

Αυτό που κινούσε εκείνους τους ποιητές δεν ήταν  
πια οι ελπίδες και τα ιδανικά μιας τάξης ρωμαλέας  
που κυριαρχεί της ζωής, μα οι τραγικές αντιφάσεις  
μιας κοινωνίας που δυναστεύεται από μια τάξη που  
βρίσκεται σε μια λανθάνουσα μα αγιάτρευτη αποσύνθεση.  
Δεν ήταν επαναστάτες μα ήταν τα συμπτώματα μιας  
κατάστασης πραγμάτων των οποίων η επανάσταση  
έπρεπε να αποβεί η μόνη διέξοδος.<sup>17</sup>

The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards society is connected with various aspects of their poetics, such as the structure of the language used; the idea of escape; the recurrence of themes related to pain or desire; the role of poetry and the poet's place in society.

Therefore, Greek Post-Symbolist poetics, both in various specific aspects and , more especially, in its general character, is not independent from the historical and socio-political situation of its time, nor does it spring from indifference towards this situation. On the contrary, there is both a passive and an active connection between Post-Symbolist poetics and the age in which this poetics was formed. The bourgeois and capitalist development of the time displaced poetry from society, forcing poets to seek refuge in the space of poetry. Therefore, Post-Symbolist poetics is to a large extent a product of the historical and social situation of the time. On the other hand, Post-Symbolist poetics constitutes a reaction against the prevailing ideology of the time which supported and promoted the new form of society with all the political and historical problems and dangers which this entailed. In this sense, Post-Symbolist poetics constitutes a form of ideological and political engagement.

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<sup>17</sup> D.S. Mirsky, "Τ. Σ. Ελιοτ και το τέλος της αστικής ποίησης", transl. P. Spieros, *Ο Κύκλος*, yr 2, no. 5, (1933), pp. 215-16.

## 1. 2. Cultural Factors contributing to the Formation of Post-Symbolism

The historical, socio-political and ideological situation of the period in which Post-Symbolism appeared and flourished in Greece contributed to certain cultural factors. These cultural factors, which are directly related to the formation of Post-Symbolism and, consequently, of its poetics, are : (a) the literary cafés in Athens that served as a meeting point for many poets of the time, (b) the literary magazines of the time where Post-Symbolists published their works and came into contact with works of other poets, writers, critics, and (c) the readings of the Post-Symbolists in European and in Greek poetry. These three factors are interconnected and constitute the cultural framework within which the character of Post-Symbolist poetry was formed.

### 1. 2. 1. Literary Cafés in Athens

The burgeoning of literary cafés in the post-1880 period was related to the increase in the population of Athens at a time when efforts were being made to modernize and urbanize Greece.<sup>78</sup> The literary cafés of Athens were modelled on the literary cafés of Paris<sup>79</sup> and served as a meeting-place for writers of the Generation of the 1880s and the Post-Symbolists, among others.

The period during which the Post-Symbolist school made its

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<sup>78</sup> Yannis Papakostas, *Φιλολογικά σαλόνια, φιλολογικά καφενεία και στέκια της Αθήνας 1880-1930*, Athens, Estia 1988, p. 15 ff.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

appearance coincided with the time when most of the "φιλολογικά σαλόνια"<sup>80</sup> were disappearing. Some literary meetings continued to take place in houses belonging to members of the upper class<sup>81</sup>, but very few of the Post-Symbolists appear to have participated in them.

For the Generation of the 1880s, the space that served as a meeting point for writers ("φιλολογικά σαλόνια" and literary cafés) signalled a combination of an upper-class tradition with a lower middle-class tradition, whereas the space of the Post-Symbolist poets and other writers who succeeded the Generation of the 1880s relocated poetry in lower middle-class life. This transfer from the one space to the other may also be related to the shift from an elevated poetic discourse to one that bore more resemblance to the discourse of everyday life.<sup>82</sup>

The literary cafés served as a meeting-point for writers<sup>83</sup>, as a space for discussions, the exchange of ideas, and the public readings and critiques of literary works. Young writers regarded their admission into a group of writers in a literary café as a major event. Varnalis, for example, describing the first times he visited the café at Dexameni, used the phrase: "Είναι μια κρίσιμη στιγμή της πνευματικής μου ζωής".<sup>84</sup> To be admitted into a group, a young writer often had to go through an ordeal of initiation which sometimes had a serious nature (such as questions on

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<sup>80</sup> For the role of the "φιλολογικά σαλόνια", see Papakostas, pp. 45-90.

<sup>81</sup> Yannis Kerofyllas, *Η Αθήνα του Μεσοπολέμου*, Athens, Filippotis 1984.

<sup>82</sup> Politis, p. 246: "Ο Ρώμος Φιλύρας [...] παρουσιάζει ποιήματα μιας καινούριας αντίληψης και τεχνικής, που είναι πολύ διαφορετικές από τον υψωμένο ποιητικό τόνο της παλαμικής και μεταπαλαμικής πόλης" "[...] λεξιλόγιο καθημερινό".

<sup>83</sup> Some anecdotes connected with the meetings of writers of that time in cafés are included in Elli Alexiou, *Υπό Εχεμύθειαν*, Athens, Syghroni Epohi 1976.

<sup>84</sup> Kostas Varnalis, *Φιλολογικά Απομνημονεύματα*, Athens, Kedros 1981, p. 76.

literary preferences) and sometimes constituted a practical joke, as for example pouring ink over the victim in order to ascertain whether or not he was a poet.<sup>85</sup>

The literary activities of those groups sometimes included lectures on poetry and prose,<sup>86</sup> and writing (for example Káryotakis and Sakellariadis are said to have written "Πελ-Μελ " in the "Αιτωλοακαρνανία " café<sup>87</sup>). The discussions which took place there were instrumental in forming various literary trends by functioning in a similar way to the political discussions which had begun to take place in Athenian cafés since the time of King Otto, turning some cafés into "πιο φιλελεύθερ[α] κοινοβούλι[α] από το πραγματικό ".<sup>88</sup>

Literary cafés were a phenomenon in the literary environment in which Post-Symbolism appeared, and served as a space which fostered the establishment of Post-Symbolism. They may moreover have served as a link between Post-Symbolist poetry and everyday life, thus becoming a poetic space as well. This poetic space, along with others, constituted the urban atmosphere which replaced the rural atmosphere prevalent in the poetry of the 1880s. The literary cafés can be said to constitute both an external and an internal factor in Post-Symbolist poetics, since they were both a space in which this poetics was formed and a part of the Post-Symbolist poetic landscape.

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<sup>85</sup> Yannis Kerofyllas, *Η Αθήνα και οι Αθηναίοι 1834-1934*, Athens, Filippotis, 1978, p. 52 ff.

<sup>86</sup> Papakostas, p. 158 ff and Kerofyllas, *Η Αθήνα και οι Αθηναίοι*, p. 54.

<sup>87</sup> Papakostas, p. 196 ff.

<sup>88</sup> Kerofyllas, *Η Αθήνα και οι Αθηναίοι*, p. 11.

### 1. 2. 2. Literary Magazines

The phenomenon of literary cafés is clearly related to the publication of magazines, since these publications were sometimes planned in a café, as for example in the café "Μαύρος Γάτος " (hence the magazine "Μαύρος Γάτος ").<sup>89</sup>

The phenomenon of literary magazines is also connected with the need for reform in Greek society after the war of 1897.<sup>90</sup> The consistent presence of literary magazines in the history of Greek literature began in 1898 with the magazine *Η Τέχνη* .<sup>91</sup> While the magazines of the nineteenth century dealt with a variety of subjects<sup>92</sup> and moreover most of them were magazines that expressed the views of one person,<sup>93</sup> after *Τέχνη* a large number of literary magazines appeared, addressed to readers with special interests, and usually expressing the views of a group of people.<sup>94</sup>

In 1916 and 1917 there was a sharp increase in the number of magazines - a phenomenon dubbed, at the time, "περιοδικίτις".<sup>95</sup> This

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<sup>89</sup> Papakostas, p. 212 ff.

<sup>90</sup> Dimitris Gounelas, "The Literary and Cultural Periodicals in Athens between 1897 and 1910", *Μαντατοφόρος*, no. 17 (June 1981), p. 14 ff.

<sup>91</sup> H.L. Karaoglou, "Αθηναϊκά Λογοτεχνικά Περιοδικά (1920-1924), Βιβλιογραφία και παρουσίαση", *Αντίχαρη*, Athens, ELIA 1984, p. 153.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Dimitris Gounelas, *Η σοσιαλιστική συνείδηση στην ελληνική λογοτεχνία 1897-1912*, Athens, Kedros 1984, p. 25.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> H.L. Karaoglou, *Το περιοδικό Μούσα (Αύγουστος 1920-Νοε. 1923), Ζητήματα ιστορίας της νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας*, Thessaloniki 1987, pp. 39-40.

phenomenon was due to various factors, such as the language question and the need to experiment with the demotic language; the need to express new ideas, which went along with the development of the state;<sup>96</sup> the lack of great publishing houses; the large number of small printing-shops. Nevertheless the large number of magazines went hand-in-hand with the short life-span of most of them, which was due to the grave financial problems caused by their small circulation.<sup>97</sup>

Therefore the time during which Post-Symbolism appeared and flourished was characterized by an abundance of short-lived literary magazines, usually edited and published by groups of young, like-minded people. These magazines provided the space where the Post-Symbolists could easily come into contact with works by poets of the 1880s and by the Greek Symbolists, and with European literature in translation. They also provided the space where the Post-Symbolists could publish their works and express their views through critiques, articles and letters. Some of the magazines also published books in volume form.<sup>98</sup>

The group of people who published a magazine or regularly sent their works to it, often constituted a literary group whose members shared similar literary tastes. In 1921 Kleon Paraschos, talking about literary groups, mentioned the group of *Νουμάς*, which supported Palamas and Psycharis.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, apart from a few magazines, such as *Νουμάς* and *Κύκλος*, which promoted certain writers and supported

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<sup>96</sup> Gounelas, "The Literary Periodicals", p. 14 ff.

<sup>97</sup> Karaoglou, *Μούσα*, pp. 40, 55.

<sup>98</sup> Gounelas, *Η σοσιαλιστική συνείδηση*, p. 299.

<sup>99</sup> G.P. Savidis, "Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι κριτικοί του", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 90, no. 1065, (1971), p. 1571.



certain linguistic or poetic theories, most of them shared their contributors and chose to present to the public foreign writers and poets who often belonged to similar literary currents.

Thus, there is a number of magazines which, in spite of various differences between them, forms a general, rather homogeneous picture. One common point of reference, for example, was language: the language used was demotic; articles on language and language disputes were sometimes published, as for example in *Εμείς* and in *Μούσα*,<sup>100</sup> the general tendency, however, was a tolerant attitude towards the language question or even a tendency to regard the language question as non-existent, as was declared for example in *Ανθρωπότης*.<sup>101</sup> Another common characteristic was the desire to promote young writers. *Βωμός*, for example, intended to present new works and ideas,<sup>102</sup> while sometimes this intention assumed a polemical spirit, like the intention of *Εμείς* to "purge Art of parasites and cliques".<sup>103</sup> (The "parasites" and "cliques" remain nameless but clearly refer to established writers). This polemical spirit was also present in the "Manifesto" Lapathiotis published in *Νουμάς* in 1914.<sup>104</sup> Lapathiotis asked young writers to destroy false idols and to become the vanguard. Lapathiotis himself did not attend any of

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<sup>100</sup> Karaoglou, *Μούσα*, pp. 166, 172.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>104</sup> *Ο Νουμάς*, no. 524 (1914) and

Yannis Papakostas, *Σημειώσεις και σχόλια*, in Napoleon Lapathiotis, *Η ζωή μου. Απόπειρα συνοπτικής αυτοβιογραφίας*, ed. Yannis Papakostas, Athens, Stigmi 1986, p. 205 ff.

the meetings which followed the manifesto,<sup>105</sup> but the response to it<sup>106</sup> shows a tendency on the part of young writers to fight against certain older, established writers, belonging most probably to Palamas's generation. This tendency is indicative both of a tendency towards the formation of groups and of the fact that many young writers were conscious of radical differences between themselves and the older generation.

Moreover the existence of a large number of magazines allowed for contact between young writers and the public, even if the writers did not always publish their works in book form. Although most of these magazines had a rather small number of readers,<sup>107</sup> through the contact between writers and readers they created two additional factors, which played an important role in the literary climate of that period apart from those mentioned above. One factor was the "*κανονική λειτουργία [...] ενός βασικού θεσμού της λογοτεχνικής μας ζωής, που είναι η έγκαιρη κρίση εκδόσεων των νεότερων ιδίως συγγραφέων*".<sup>108</sup> The second was the existence of a public platform for young writers; this probably played a role not only in the formation of Post-Symbolism but in the composition of some Post-Symbolist poems too. That is, the existence of a public platform may have been transformed into an internal factor of Post-Symbolist poetics, since the poets would be writing in the knowledge that their poems could soon be published and read by a certain circle of readers (including their fellow writers). Thus, Post-Symbolist poetics may

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<sup>105</sup> Lapathiotis, *Η ζωή μου*, p. 127.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., and Papakostas, *Σημειώσεις*, p. 207 ff.

<sup>107</sup> Karaoglou, *Μούσα*, p. 53 ff.

<sup>108</sup> Savidis, "Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι κριτικοί του", p. 1568.

have been formed taking into consideration the expectations and tastes of the small circle of the readers of the magazines. That is, of a small circle consisting chiefly of literati<sup>109</sup> who belonged to the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois class. For example the theme of the poet's isolation in society may reflect a feeling or a realization of writers of the time who through these poems acquired an identity and confirmed their existence by defining their relationship with the rest of society.

The magazines created a literary framework different from that of previous generations. "It was through these periodicals that the writers felt free to introduce new ideas and to use whatever language they preferred. And it was those involved in the publication of periodicals during this time who brought about cultural change, bringing Greece for the first time into the modern period within the framework of contemporary European thought".<sup>110</sup>

This contact with European thought and literature which began at a time when the Generation of the 1880s was flourishing facilitated the introduction of European Symbolism into Greece. The poets influenced by it were assisted in forming a unified poetics by the magazines that brought them into contact with each other and with European literature, and made them aware of their common literary preferences and of the differences between them and poets belonging to other literary currents. Moreover the magazines offered them a public platform which may have become an internal factor of their poetics since it delimited the circle to which the poems would be addressed.

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<sup>109</sup> Karaoglou, *Μοῦσα*, p. 60.

<sup>110</sup> Gounelas, "Literary Periodicals", p. 33.

### 1. 2. 3. The Readings of the Post-Symbolists

The character of the "cultural change" brought about by the magazines in the field of literature can be observed through an examination of the literary texts published in the magazines, the currents to which these texts belong and the role played by these currents in Greek literature. Here, however, the texts published in the magazines are of interest only as potential reading material for the Post-Symbolists. The question posed here is what the actual readings of the Post-Symbolists were, whether these readings helped in the formation of the Post-Symbolist poetics, and, if so, how. The texts published in the magazines of the time serve as indications of what the Post-Symbolists read, while the evidence can be found in translations, critical or autobiographical texts, letters and articles written by some of the Post-Symbolists themselves.

In the case of European literature the common readings of the Post-Symbolists were the works of writers connected with French Symbolism. Apart from French Symbolism, the variety of their readings was large, and this is probably connected with the large variety of texts the magazines presented to the public.<sup>111</sup> Lapathiotis, for example, mentions Émile Zola, Gustave Flaubert, Théophile Gautier, Pierre Loti and Guy de Maupassant among his readings, as well as Edgar Allan Poe, Hans

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<sup>111</sup> The magazines I have looked at are: *Νέα Εστία*, *Νουμός*, *Νέα Τέχνη*, *Ανθρωπότης*, *Κριτική*, *Κριτική και Πόληση*, *Μούσα*, *Κύκλος*, *Νέοι Βωμοί*, *Μαύρος Γάτος*, *Κριτική και Τέχνη*, *Πρωτοπορία*, *Ξεκίνημα*, *Ρυθμός*, *Σήμερα*, *Ιδέα*, *Ηγισώ*, *Λογοτεχνία*, *Μελέτη-Κριτική*, *Πνοή*, *Νέα Γράμματα*, *Πυρσός*, *Βωμός*, *Λύρα*, *Εμείς*, *Οι Νέοι*.

Christian Andersen, Leonid Andreyev, Jules Laforgue, Oscar Wilde, Maurice Maeterlink, Rabindranath Tagore, and Albert Samain among his favourites.<sup>112</sup> In addition to his writings on Francis Carco, Jules Laforgue and Oscar Miłosz, Papanikolaou also wrote articles on Rainer Maria Rilke, James Joyce and Léon-Paul Fargue,<sup>113</sup> while Karyotakis translated, apart from Symbolists, Heinrich Heine, Frédéric Mistral, Charles Guérin, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Francis Viélé-Griffin, André Spire, Laurent Tailhade, Nicolaus Lenau and others.<sup>114</sup>

This variety of readings signifies a new thinking. The poets "*αρχίζουν σιγά-σιγά να μην χορταίνουν με την πνευματική τροφή που τους προσφέρουν το παρελθόν, η παράδοση*"<sup>115</sup> and they choose to read contemporary writers instead of older ones. It also indicates that the influence of French Symbolism on Greek poetry was not a coincidence but rather a conscious choice on the part of the Greek poets.

The influence of French Symbolism on Greek Post-Symbolism has often been discussed in general terms,<sup>116</sup> with the emphasis placed on the sources of influence. It has been specifically examined in the case of Karyotakis<sup>117</sup>, this time with the emphasis on the creative nature of this influence. That is, the influences are traced in connection with the character of Karyotakis's poetry and are regarded as a function of this

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<sup>112</sup> Lapathiotis, *Η ζωή μου*, p. 128 and Papakostas *Σημειώσεις*, p. 212.

<sup>113</sup> Mitsos Papanikolaou, *Κριτικά*, ed. Tassos Korfis, Athens, Prosperos 1980.

<sup>114</sup> K.G. Karyotakis, *Ποιήματα και πεζά*, ed. G.P. Savidis, Athens, Ermis 1980.

<sup>115</sup> Adamantios D. Papadimas, *Λογοτεχνικά Χρονικά. Η πορεία μιας γενιάς*, Athens, Orion 1944, p. 49.

<sup>116</sup> e.g. Andreas Karandonis, *Εισαγωγή στη νεώτερη ποίηση*, Athens, Papadimas 1978, p. 121 ff.

<sup>117</sup> Steryopoulos, *Οι επιδράσεις*. Tokatlidou, *Οι μεταφράσεις*.

character rather than as its mainspring. For example, speaking about Moréas's influence on Karyotakis, Steryopoulos stresses their similarities, such as the motif of escape and their romantic pessimism, as well as their dissimilarities, such as Moréas's stoicism, which contrasts with Karyotakis's despair. The same method is applied in tracing the influences of Baudelaire, Laforgue, the fantaisistes and others.<sup>118</sup>

The Post-Symbolists themselves employed a similar method of approach to French Symbolism to the one employed by Steryopoulos and Tokatlidou. That is, they accepted the presence of French influences in their poetry but they did not regard these influences as static. For example, Tellos Agras, speaking about Karyotakis's poetry in connection with that of Baudelaire, mentions that the principal motif of Karyotakis's *Σάτυρες* is Baudelaire's "L'Héautontimorouménos" but it is a motif presented in a contemporary way. Moreover Agras regards Karyotakis's poetry as part of a line starting from Baudelaire and passing through Verlaine and Laforgue.<sup>119</sup> Papanikolaou on the other hand affirms that Karyotakis did not manage to find a poetic voice of his own and that the influences of Laforgue, Baudelaire and others are apparent in his poetry, while Agras managed to find a voice of his own through the various influences.<sup>120</sup>

Setting aside the different opinions on various poets regarding their influences and the extent to which they managed to assimilate these influences, the references of the Greek Post-Symbolists to French Symbolism have one main point in common. The Post-Symbolists view

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 221 ff.

<sup>119</sup> *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 4, no. 13, (1928), p. 726 ff.

<sup>120</sup> Papanikolaou, pp. 35-36.

their poetry as deriving not only from Greek but also from European poetry. For example Agras regards Karyotakis's poetry as a continuation of lines that had started from or passed through Laforgue and Cavafy.<sup>121</sup> The same attitude is implicit in Karyotakis's decision to include translations from European poetry in his second and third collections of poems, in Kleon Paraschos's book, *Εικοσιοχτώ ποιήματα και εικοσιδύο του Baudelaire*<sup>122</sup> and in the various translations of European poetry published by some Post-Symbolists in magazines of the time.

Therefore the interest displayed by the Post-Symbolists in French Symbolism through their translations, critical readings and the influences they accepted,<sup>123</sup> constitutes not only a manifestation of a common mood but also a radical act on the level of literature. This act consisted in transposing Greek poetry into the area of European poetry. By recognizing as their antecedents both Greek and French poets and by tracing links between these poets,<sup>124</sup> they shift the central point of reference of Greek poetry from tradition to a dialogue between poets and literary currents which assumes a pan-European character. This is probably connected with the efforts made in that period towards the Europeanization of Greece and with the bourgeois development, which led to a culture less characterized by tradition than by features common

<sup>121</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά Β*, pp. 192-93.

<sup>122</sup> A critical comment on Paraschos's book appeared in *Ανθρωπότης*, γρ. 3, no. 1, (1922).

<sup>123</sup> Proofs of this interest can, for example, be found in

G.K. Katsimbalis, *Ελληνική Βιβλιογραφία Παύλου Βερλαίν*, Athens 1956

G.K. Katsimbalis, *Ελληνική Βιβλιογραφία Καρόλου Μπωντλαίρ*, Athens 1956

G.K. Katsimbalis, *Ελληνική Βιβλιογραφία Αννας ντε Νοάιγ*, Athens 1960.

<sup>124</sup> e.g. Tellos Agras: "Η συντομία του [Laforgue] κι η παρασιώπηση, εκδήλωση της ματαιότητας της εξωτερικεύσεως, θυμίζει τον δικό μας Καβάφη", *Μούσα*, γρ. 2, no. 10 (22), (1922).

to many European countries. This choice of the Post-Symbolists was mentioned by I.M. Panayotopoulos in 1922. Panayotopoulos speaks about the "δύσκολος κλήρος" of this "poetic generation": "το πλησίασμα της νέας μας τέχνης προς τα ρεύματα που διασταυρώνονται σ' όλο τον πολιτισμένο κόσμο, η παρακολούθηση των νέων ιδεών, των νέων τάσεων, των νέων σχολών" and contrasts this to an art confined to a locally defined space.<sup>125</sup>

The readings of the Post-Symbolists in European literature facilitated the formation of Post-Symbolist poetics both because the Post-Symbolists turned towards the same literary currents and because through their readings they developed an attitude towards Greek literature which distinguishes them from previous generations.

It remains to examine the nature of the readings of the Post-Symbolists in Greek literature; that is, their preferences, their reactions to the poetry of the previous generation and the values they emphasize or ignore.

The two main points of reference in the critical articles, comments and lectures of the Post-Symbolists are Palamas and Cavafy. Through their references to these two poets the Post-Symbolists also present some aspects of their own poetics by raising questions such as the poet's relationship with his time or the use of language in poetry.

Post-Symbolist attitudes towards the poetry of Palamas usually vary between silence, reserve and rejection. Apart from the hostile reactions

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<sup>125</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos, *Μούσα*, no. 26 (1922), p. 35, quoted in: H.L. Karaoglou, *Η Αθηναϊκή κριτική και ο Καβάφης (1918-1924)*, Thessaloniki, University Studio Press 1985, pp. 79-80. Karaoglou notes the contradictory case of Kleon Paraschos who was sometimes open to foreign influences and other times "ελληνοκεντρικός".



of Yannis Apostolakis and Fotos Politis which were mainly connected with the ideology of the two critics,<sup>126</sup> the first reaction based on a different concept of poetics is probably that of Hatzopoulos in *Νουμάς* in 1910. Hatzopoulos does not dispute the dominant role of Palamas's poetry but argues that Palamas is not the only case in the history of literature of a writer who "έσυρε στους ώμους του μια ολάκερη εποχή" without being either a great poet or a great critic.<sup>127</sup> His reaction on the level of poetics was summed up thus:

Κι είτε πατριώτης, είτε σοσιαλιστής είναι  
ο ποιητής πρέπει να μην ξεχνά τη σημασία  
της εκφραστικής αρτιότητας, την αξία της  
μορφής και του ρυθμού, τη ζωντανότητα και  
την αλήθεια, που χρειάζεται για πρώτο του  
όρο ένα αληθινό καλλιτέχνημα. Βέβαια η ιδέα  
του ποιητή δίνει το μέτρο της ζωτικής του  
δύναμης και της ανθρωπιστικής αξίας του, μα  
για να ενεργήσει αισθητικά αυτή η ιδέα απαιτεί  
και την αρμόδια καλλιτεχνική έκφρασή της.<sup>128</sup>

Thus, one of the first Symbolists who appeared under Palamas's "heavy shadow" differentiated his poetics from the prevailing poetics of Palamas by shifting the centre of gravity of a poem from the ideas expressed to the poetic integrity with which they are expressed; that is, by opposing the poem as a whole system to the poem as an expression of ideas, as is often the case in the poetry of Palamas. This differentiation from the poetics of Palamas was one of the causes of silence, reserve and hostility towards Palamas's poetry on the part of the Post-Symbolists.

At a time when Palamas was not only a dominant force in poetry but

<sup>126</sup> Dimaras, *Ιστορία*, pp 443-44.

<sup>127</sup> X.A. Kokolis, "Οι προβληματισμοί της κριτικής και ο Παλαμάς, 1880-1910 (συναγωγή τεκμηρίων)" in *Η Κριτική στη νεότερη Ελλάδα*, Athens, Eteria Spoudon, 1981, p. 129.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

also a point of reference,<sup>129</sup> silence was probably one way of undermining his importance and durability in Greek literature. Lapathiotis, for example, although he valued Palamas's tacit approval of a poem of his above any compliment,<sup>130</sup> and spoke about Palamas's unique position in Greek literature ("η θέσις η ευαίσθητα λεπτή, η εξαιρετική, του Παλαμά, η συμβολή του στη λογοτεχνία μας, η σοβαρά και πολυτιμοτάτη"),<sup>131</sup> did not mention Palamas among his favourite readings. Another characteristic silence is that of Tellos Agras prior to 1936. Although Agras wrote his first critique of Cavafy in 1921,<sup>132</sup> his first critique of Palamas was not written until 1936 in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Palamas's first book of poetry.<sup>133</sup>

Agras's attitude towards Palamas in 1936 and afterwards was one of reserve. Although he regarded Palamas as the poet who breathed new lyricism into Greek poetry,<sup>134</sup> he avoided committing himself on the subject of whether or not Palamas was a great poet. Apart from the fact that Agras avoided the use of the adjective "great" as a critic,<sup>135</sup> the conclusion of his article on Palamas in 1943 seems to refer to Hatzopoulos's opinion that being the representative of his time is not necessarily a proof that a poet is "great". Agras wrote that he did not

<sup>129</sup> See, for example, Varnalis, pp. 85-86 for the naming of the magazine *Ηγησώ*.

<sup>130</sup> Lapathiotis, *Η ζωή μου*, p. 87.

<sup>131</sup> Lapathiotis, "Προϋποθέσεις", *Ελεύθερον Βήμα*, 28.10.1924, quoted in Karaoglou, *Η Αθηναϊκή κριτική*, p. 34.

<sup>132</sup> Kostas Steryopoulos, *Σημειώσεις*, in Tellos Agras, *Κριτικά*, vol. A, ed. Kostas Steryopoulos, Athens, Ermis 1980, p. 215.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>134</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά* A, p. 123.

<sup>135</sup> *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 4, no. 20 (1928), p. 949.

know whether Palamas was a great poet or not, all he knew was that modern Greek poetry without Palamas would be a fairy tale without a hero.<sup>136</sup>

Much earlier than Agras - in 1919 - Kleon Paraschos continued along the lines of Hatzopoulos in a critical comment on Palamas's *Τα Παράκαιρα*. Paraschos began by declaring Palamas, "Ο Βασιλεύς της πνευματικής μας ζωής",<sup>137</sup> with the reservation, however, that quantity may have been detrimental to quality, and went on to analyze the "ριζική διαφορά " between the aesthetic opinions of Palamas and those of younger poets. One basic difference lies in "ρητορεία " (verbosity). According to Paraschos, Palamas regarded verbosity as the most important element of poetry, while "εμείς πιστεύουμε ότι η ρητορεία ουδέποτε θα εισέλθει στην περιοχή της άδολης Τέχνης ". One difference then lies in the sources of poetry or inspiration: instead of being inspired from within, Palamas took his themes from outside and worked on them "ρητορικά ". This is another point of contrast between Symbolist poetics and the poetics of Palamas related to the problem of poetic integrity posed by Hatzopoulos. For the Post-Symbolists poetic integrity is achieved not only if the dominant element of a poem is artistic expression (e.g. rhythm, musicality), but also if the poem is the expression of a mood instead of an idea.

Therefore mood and techniques of artistic expression are interdependent in the poetics proposed by Hatzopoulos and Paraschos (the latter speaking on behalf of younger poets and using a collective

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<sup>136</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά* Α, p. 176.

<sup>137</sup> Kleon Paraschos, "Κωστή Παλαμά, *Τα Παράκαιρα* μ' έναν πρόλογο", *Οι Νέοι*, vol. 2 (1919), p. 56 ff.

"we") as an alternative to the poetics of Palamas, which they consider to be dominated by two factors: ideas taken from the outside world without being linked to the mood of the poet, and the "ρητορική" elaboration of the ideas in question, while music and other elements of expression do not play a dominant part.

Paraschos classified Palamas among the "poètes rationnels" who enclose their emotion in logical forms, which the reader conceives statically. These poems are "διαδοχαί νοημάτων", with a high level of verbal cliché, and do not appeal to the reader's imagination. As an example of the other kind of poet, for which no term is proposed, Paraschos mentioned Solomos in whose poetry words abolish their own boundaries ("όρια"), ceasing to be logical forms and becoming musical tonalities, and thereby rendering the lines of a poem an "αέναον γίγνεσθαι". When the words break their "λογικά δεσμά", they suggest "κάτι πλέον βαθύ και μουσικό" leading to the "χώρα των ρεμβασμών και του ονείρου" and awakening "αισθήματα και συναισθήματα που δεν εδοκιμάσαμε ποτέ".

A third objection concerns vocabulary. Paraschos considered Palamas's vocabulary to be strictly "ψυχαρικό" and argued that for many writers of Palamas's generation, language was an end rather than a means.

Paraschos seems to sum up some main points of the Post-Symbolist anti-Palamic attitude, indications of which were frequent in the magazines of the time. For example in *Πυρός* one can find protests about the reserved attitude towards Palamas adopted by *Βωμός*, while *Εμείς* condemned the "εμπαθή αυτολιβανιζόμενη κλίκα" of *Νουμάς* which

"κατηγορεί τους γκρίζους ποιητές (εννοεί βέβαια τους υποβλητικούς μοντέρνους τεχνίτες) ".<sup>138</sup> Therefore what Paraschos expressed appears to be the collective opinion of the Post-Symbolists who while reacting against the poetic system of Palamas formed their own poetic system.

In 1933 Alkis Thrylos repeated the accusation that verbosity dominated Palamas's poetry, and also attempted to place Palamas in his time. She characterized him as an "οργωτή ", saying that he dealt with important and universal subjects, thus broadening the Greek horizon of thought. He also employed many techniques of expression, demonstrated the potential of the demotic language and enriched it. He did not, however, assimilate any of the ideas he acquired through his readings and the beliefs expressed in his poetry were frequently contradictory. Hence the "ρητορικός " character of most of his poems. Thus, Palamas responded to the demands of his time, introduced many new ideas into Greece, opened up innumerable avenues, but did not manage to transcend his time.<sup>139</sup>

The problem of Palamas's poetry belonging to a different time from their own was apparent in the attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards him. I.M. Panayotopoulos summed up this problem in 1946, saying that Palamas's response to questions which were exercising the younger generation were becoming more anaemic day by day. "Γινόταν ο ποιητής μιας άλλης εποχής. Ο Καβάφης, αντίθετα, αντιστοιχούσε σε μια βαθύτερη διάθεσή μας.[...] Η γενιά μας ήταν η προορισμένη

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<sup>138</sup> *Εμείς*, γρ. 1, no. 1 (1924).

<sup>139</sup> Alkis Thrylos, "Ο Κωστής Παλαμάς διηγηματογράφος", *Σήμερα*, γρ. 1, no. 2 (1933), p. 51 ff.

να τον καταλάβει".<sup>140</sup>

For the Post-Symbolists Cavafy constituted the second main point of reference in Greek literature. In contrast to their attitude towards the poetry of Palamas, the Post-Symbolists were not only positive towards the poetry of Cavafy but also tried to promote it at a time when critical hostility to Cavafy was very strong in Athens. During the 1920s the war waged by some of the Athenian poets against Cavafy reached its peak. In 1926 Palamas denied that Cavafy was a poet, defining his poems as "ρεπορτάζ από τους αιώνες".<sup>141</sup> Cavafy's poetry was not only attacked by critics (such as Dimitris Tangopoulos in *Νουμάς* and Fotos Politis, but even parodied in the press.<sup>142</sup>

Earlier, some positive critiques of Cavafy had appeared, such as those of Xenopoulos, Galatia Kazantzaki, Periklis Yannopoulos, Anghelos Sikelianos, but it was the Post-Symbolists who based their admiration of Cavafy's poetry firmly on concrete arguments.<sup>143</sup> The promotion of Cavafy's poetry was achieved both through lectures given by the Post-Symbolists and through letters written and published by them.

*Νέα Τέχνη*, for example, often published Cavafy's poems, and, as

<sup>140</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos, *Τα Πρόσωπα και τα Κείμενα*, vol. 4, Athens, Aetos 1946, pp. 12-13.

<sup>141</sup> Palamas, 14, p. 180. The case of Palamas's reception of Cavafy's poetry is, however, more complicated. In 1924 he rejected both the contemptuous and the enthusiastic approaches to Cavafy's poems, suggesting that Cavafy's poems could be seen as "το μαγικό ακολούθημα τραγουδιού μαζί εμπνευσμένου και μελετημένου που κομματιαστά και λίγο-λίγο φανερώνεται και όμως είναι ένα, και στην ουσία του και στο σχήμα του" (Palamas, 12, p. 174). On the common misapprehension of Palamas's attitude to Cavafy, see G.P. Savidis, *Μικρά Καβαφικά 2*, Athens, Ermis 1987, p. 399. See also Palamas's letter to Katsimbalis on 15.8.1929 in Kostis Palamas, *Αλληλογραφία*, vol. 3 (1929-1941), ed. K.G. Kassinis, Athens, Idryma Kosti Palama 1981.

<sup>142</sup> M.H. Yeoryiou, "Ο Καβάφης και η άρνηση. Σταθμοί της αντικαβαφικής κριτικής", *Επιθεώρηση Τέχνης*, vol. 18, no. 198 (1963), pp. 657-59.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 654.

Panayotopoulos points out, *Μούσα* tried to enlarge Cavafy's sphere of influence, at a time when his poetry was parodied and ridiculed in every possible way in Athens.<sup>144</sup> In 1924 Psycharis sent a letter to *Κριτική και Τέχνη* characterizing Cavafy as "*ο καραγκιόζης της Δημοτικής*",<sup>145</sup> to which Lapathiotis responded by applying the same term to Psycharis. This response was not published,<sup>146</sup> but Cavafy was aware of Lapathiotis's support as can be seen from his letter to Lapathiotis of 1925.<sup>147</sup> Lapathiotis, Papanikolaou, Agras, Karyotakis, Emmanouil and Ouranis appear on the lists of people to whom Cavafy sent individual poems or small collections.<sup>148</sup>

Agras's public lecture on Cavafy in 1921 marked the beginning of a new attitude towards Cavafy's poetry.<sup>149</sup> Agras spoke of "*αλήθεια στη σύλληψη των ποιημάτων* ", of "*ουσία στο περιεχόμενο* " and of "*ακεραιότητα στην έκφραση* " <sup>150</sup>, while he also traced Cavafy's influence on the realistic and tragic expression of Karyotakis's *Σάτιρες*.<sup>151</sup>

Later, Panayotopoulos, too, likened Cavafy to Karyotakis, affirming that the pessimism of the one and the painful protest of the other express their time.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Karaoglou, *Μούσα* , p. 71.

<sup>145</sup> *Κριτική και Τέχνη*, γτ. 2, no. 3, (1924), p. 95.

<sup>146</sup> Papadimas, p. 94.

<sup>147</sup> G.P. Savidis, *Οι καβαφικές εκδόσεις (1891-1932), Περιγραφή και σχόλιο. Βιβλιογραφική Μελέτη* , Athens, Tahydromos 1966, p. 189.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., pp. 230, 248, 273 ff.

<sup>149</sup> Yeoryiou, p. 654.

<sup>150</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά* Α, p. 81.

<sup>151</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά* Β, p. 193.

<sup>152</sup> Panayotopoulos, *Τα Πρόσωπα* , vol. 4, p. 13.

The Post-Symbolists promoted Cavafy's poetry, thereby promoting a system of poetics opposed to that of Palamas<sup>153</sup> and presenting some similarities to their own. Cavafy's unorthodox language, original forms, hedonism, absence of idealism and "decadent" undertones were probably the main reasons for the hostile reactions of Palamas's generation.<sup>154</sup> At the same time, these features were probably the chief reasons for which the Post-Symbolists supported and promoted his poetry.<sup>155</sup> Lapathiotis, for example, stated his preference for those of Cavafy's poems "που εγκλείουν την ιδέαν της αναμνήσεως, της νοσταλγικής αναπολήσεως, της μυστικοπαθούς υποβολής".<sup>156</sup> He also stated that Cavafy's poetry "ανοίγει τους ορίζοντας της παγκοσμίου Τέχνης",<sup>157</sup> thus placing Cavafy's orientations in the same context with the orientations of the Post-Symbolists.

Apart from any differences between Cavafy and the Post-Symbolists or any possible Cavafian influence on Post-Symbolist poetry, Cavafy's poetry assisted the formation of the Post-Symbolists poetic system by

<sup>153</sup> This, however, did not mean that they promoted the binary opposition between Palamas and Cavafy. See, for example, Lapathiotis (1924), quoted in Karaoglou, *Η Αθηναϊκή κριτική*, p. 34: Lapathiotis accused Tangopoulos of trying to create a "διαπάλη εντελώς προσωπική" and expressed his belief that no question of "πρωτοκαθεδρία" existed.

<sup>154</sup> Yeoryiou, p. 666.

<sup>155</sup> An exception to this was Kesar Emmanouil who interpreted positive receptions of Cavafy's poems as follows: "Το αισθητικό ρεύμα που διαπερνά, παράλληλα με το διανοητικό, την καβαφική ποίηση, η αναβίωση κάποιων λησμονημένων ειδωλολατρικών ιδανικών, δημιούργησαν μιαν ατμόσφαιρα θαλπωρής, ιδανικά ερεθιστική για τις σανσουαλιστικές παρορμήσεις μερικών και τερπνά περίεργη για ορισμένους σνομπ", Emmanouil, "Ο Καβάφης σαν ποιητής και αρχηγός σχολής", *Αναγέννηση*, no. 10 (1928), p. 439 ff, quoted in Karaoglou, *Η Αθηναϊκή κριτική*, p. 36.

<sup>156</sup> Lapathiotis, "Σύγχρονοι ποιηταί (Κ.Π. Καβάφης)", *Ελεύθερον Βήμα*, 6.5.1924, quoted in Karaoglou, *Η Αθηναϊκή κριτική*, p. 107.

<sup>157</sup> Lapathiotis, *Νέα Τέχνη*, no. 7-10 (1924), p. 99, quoted in Karaoglou, *Η Αθηναϊκή κριτική*, p. 107.



pointing to a way out of the poetic system of Palamas. Moreover, by promoting Cavafy's poetic system and opposing it to Palamas's, the Post-Symbolists were instrumental in changing the orientation of Greek literature, and opening up new paths for the Generation of the 1930s.

Several references were made by the Post-Symbolists to other readings in Greek literature. For example Lapathiotis mentioned among his favourite writers (apart from Cavafy), Solomos, Kalvos and Papadiamantis.<sup>158</sup> Concerning Sikelianos, Varnalis and Kazantzakis the Post-Symbolists mostly preserved silence. Lapathiotis referred to his friendship with Sikelianos,<sup>159</sup> but made no comment on his work; Agras regarded Sikelianos's poetry as the kind of poetry which other critics might label "great": "*αφήνουμε τον αμφιβόλου περιεκτικότητας αυτόν χαρακτηρισμό [μεγάλη ποίηση] στη διάθεση άλλων κριτικών και για κριτικές άλλων έργων [not Karyotakis's] - π.χ. του κυρίου Αγγέλου Σικελιανού*".<sup>160</sup> When a pastiche of a part of Kazantzakis's *Οδύσσεια* was published, suspicion fell on Lapathiotis.<sup>161</sup> This small amount of evidence, however, is insufficient to build up a picture of the attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards these three poets. It can serve only as an indication that these poets probably did not constitute points of reference for the Post-Symbolists.

In contrast, the first Symbolists - Hatzopoulos, Gryparis and Porfyas - and Malakassis seem to have been central points of reference for the Post-Symbolists, not so much in critical articles as in their actual poetry, in

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<sup>158</sup> Lapathiotis, *Η ζωή μου*, p. 212.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>160</sup> *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 4, no. 20, (1928), p. 949.

<sup>161</sup> *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 5, no. 55 (1929), p. 230.

which the influence of the first Symbolists is clearly perceptible. In Karyotakis's poetry, for example, Steryopoulos has traced the influence of both Porfyra and Malakassis.<sup>162</sup> According to Agras, Gryparis succeeded in introducing the musicality of foreign poetry (for example that of Verlaine) into Greek, while Hatzopoulos's failure can be ascribed to his attempts to distort the language by breaking its rules.<sup>163</sup> Agras also referred to Gryparis's imaginative powers and to the compelling words and images he employed, while condemning the Parnassian character of some of his poems.<sup>164</sup>

Through their readings in Greek literature the Post-Symbolists suggested a new orientation for Greek poetry. By rejecting Palamas's poetry or reacting against certain elements in it they created space for different poetic systems. Within this space, apart from their own poetry, they promoted the poetry of Cavafy and of the first Symbolists, thus suggesting both a new conception of poetry and a new conception of their age. Moreover through their negative reaction to Palamas and their approval of Cavafy, they focussed on certain elements of poetics.

Thus, the readings of the Post-Symbolists in both European and Greek literature had two major consequences. First, they contributed to the formation of Post-Symbolist poetics through common preferences, adverse reactions and the raising of issues that helped in the definition of a space of poetry and poetics. Second, they contributed to a reorientation of Greek poetry towards new values and dominant elements, while at the same time contributing to the transposition of Greek literature into the

<sup>162</sup> Steryopoulos, *Οι επιδράσεις*, pp. 57, 59, 138, 140, 217.

<sup>163</sup> *Μούσα*, yr. 2, no. 10 (22), (1922), pp. 155 ff.

<sup>164</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά Β*, p. 77 ff.

area of European literature.

Literary cafés, literary magazines and the readings of the Post-Symbolists are three interconnected factors, which played an important part in the formation of Post-Symbolist poetics. The literary cafés provided a meeting-place for the Post-Symbolists, while the literary magazines both published their poems and made available to them the work of Greek and foreign writers. Their readings helped them to clarify their own system of poetics. Moreover they opened up new directions in Greek literature by rejecting the prevailing poetic system of the Generation of the 1880s and promoting new poetic priorities.

At the same time the literary cafés, the literary magazines and the Post-Symbolists' readings in foreign and Greek literature, apart from being external factors in the formation of Post-Symbolist poetics, also played a role in the internal structure of the poems themselves. Literary cafés are part of the poetic landscape of Post-Symbolism. The literary magazines may have defined the circle of the readers of Post-Symbolist poetry and consequently helped to create the horizon of expectations of that circle. The readings in foreign and Greek literature are assimilated into the system of Post-Symbolist poetics as influences, as parallels or as points of antithesis.

### **1. 3. The Reception of the Post-Symbolists by the Generation of the 1880s**

The orientation of Greek poetry promoted by the Post-Symbolists deviated from that of the generation of Palamas, sometimes to the extent of being radically opposed to it. Since this reorientation was both a feature and a consequence of Post-Symbolist poetics, this opposition can be viewed as a conflict between the two systems of poetics.

The leading figures of the generation of Palamas either ignored the Post-Symbolists or gave them a negative reception. These responses can be seen as evidence of the differences between the two systems of poetics.

Here I will explore some major aspects of the poetics of the Generation of the 1880s, mostly concentrating on the critical works of Palamas, since he was the leading figure of this generation. The purpose of this is to find the reasons behind the hostile reception of Post-Symbolism on the part of the Generation of the 1880s, and to outline the poetic system which dominated Greek poetry at the time Post-Symbolism appeared. The reasons for the critical reception and the essence of the poetic system of the 1880s are related both to the context of the time at which Post-Symbolism appeared and to the cultural factors which contributed to the formation of Post-Symbolist poetics. That is, the poetics of the generation of Palamas formed both a part of the ideological framework of the time and a point of reference, albeit an implicit one, for the Post-Symbolists, thereby forming a part of the literary framework of Post-Symbolism.

The poetics of the Generation of the 1880s revolve around three dominant notions: (a) demoticism, (b) nationalism and (c) the "orphyic" conception of poetic language.

Drawing mainly upon Dimitris Tziovas's work on *The Nationism of the Demoticists and its Impact on their Literary Theory, 1888-1930*, I shall explore these notions, in order to examine the ways they are interrelated and interact to form a system.

### 1. 3. 1. Demoticism

Demoticism was probably the chief unifying force of Palamas's generation. As Xenopoulos put it, "Παρ' όλες τις επί μέρει αντιγνώμεις, εκείνο που μας ένωνε και μας αδέλφωνε ήταν ο Δημοτικισμός. Μπροστά σ' αυτή τη Μεγάλη Ιδέα, όλα τ' άλλα [...] ήταν ζητήματα δευτερεύοντα ".<sup>165</sup> Apart from a linguistic movement, demoticism also constituted a certain subject-matter. According to Xenopoulos again, "η αγάπη της λαϊκής ζωής προηγέθηκε από την αγάπη της λαϊκής γλώσσας. Επειτα ενώθηκαν, συμβαδίσανε, και οι δυο μαζί αποτελέσανε το Δημοτικισμό".<sup>166</sup> The interest in folk life was reflected not only in prose by the flourishing of *ηθογραφία* but also in poetry. Writers and critics of the Generation of the

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<sup>165</sup> Grigorios Xenopoulos, "Ο Παλαμάς από κοντά", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 34, no. 397 (1943), p. 15.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

1880s considered folk poetry to be a continuation of ancient Greek poetry; according to Palamas, for example, "η υγιής αισθητικότης, η διαύγεια, η πλαστικότητα, η χάρις [είναι] κοινά γνωρίσματα της τε δημώδους και της κλασικής ποιήσεως".<sup>167</sup> Folk poetry therefore provided the critics of the time with the argument that the ideas which were expressed in classical antiquity and constituted its character were expressed in modern times in the demotic language; and moreover that demotic was the only language in which such ideas could be expressed, since it was the language spoken by the people who had spoken ancient Greek.<sup>168</sup>

By cultivating the language of folk songs, the poets took upon themselves the task of expressing the ideas contained in folk songs, that is, the "εθνική ψυχή".<sup>169</sup> The expression of the "εθνική ψυχή" appears to have been one of the chief goals of Palamas's generation and consequently a dominant element in their poetics, deriving from demoticism but also leading to it<sup>170</sup>.

This objective was largely responsible for circumscribing the subject-matter of their poetry. In order to express the national soul, poetry had both to adopt the subject-matter of folk songs and to become an incarnation of ideas and moreover of ideas that were to be "εθνοπλαστικές". This term was used by Palamas in defining Solomos's

<sup>167</sup> Kostis Palamas, *Απαντα*, 2, Athens, Biris, p. 130.

<sup>168</sup> See, for example, Yannis Psycharis, *Το Ταξίδι μου*, Athens Estia, 1905, pp. 176-190.

<sup>169</sup> Nestoros, p. 152 ff.

<sup>170</sup> For a discussion of Palamas's concept of the "εθνική ψυχή", see Venetia Apostolidou, *Ο Κωστής Παλαμάς ως ιστορικός της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας* Thessaloniki 1990, pp. 93-102.

poetry as an incarnation of three great "εθνοπλαστικές" ideas: the idea of homeland, the idea of beauty and the idea of language.<sup>171</sup> Language, apart from being connected with the idea of homeland, was, according to Palamas, inseparably linked to ideas in general from the time of their creation: "Γεννώ ιδέας, θα ειπή συγχρόνως γεννώ και γλώσσαν".<sup>172</sup>

This indicates that the demoticist poet may use the ideas expressed by folk poetry as a starting point or as a point of reference but does not necessarily restrict himself to these ideas. Palamas, for example, commenting on Drosinis's *Ειδύλλια* presented two ways of dealing with tradition: "ή αφορμώμενος μόνον εξ αυτών ν' αναπλάση και επεξεργασθή εν δημιουργική εργασία τον μύθον κατά τας ιδιοτροπίας της Μούσης του, ή να αφεθή εις την πιστήν αυτού διατύπωσιν εν χρονογραφική ευσυνειδησία".<sup>173</sup> While Drosinis chose the latter method, Palamas himself mostly adhered to the former. In cultivating the demotic language, he also cultivated new ideas. Thus, the expression of the "εθνική ψυχή" is actually combined with the expression of "εθνοπλαστικές ιδέες" which are intended to shape the "εθνική ψυχή".

Greek poetry of the 1880s functions therefore in a similar way to *ηθογραφία*. *Ηθογραφία* aims at a kind of realism, but "this literary realism, whose apparent aim and whose actual method were to describe in minute detail the real life of the countryside, in fact had the more fundamental aim of creating a new 'reality' - a tradition of Greekness which the urban

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<sup>171</sup> Palamas, 2, p. 23.

<sup>172</sup> Palamas, 2, p. 296.

<sup>173</sup> Palamas, 2, p. 132.

reader of ethnography could call his own".<sup>174</sup>

Demoticism therefore, according to its practitioners, provided both a link with classical antiquity and a means of expressing the beliefs, mores and aspirations which in the Demoticists' view constituted the character of the Greek nation. The poetry of the demoticists did not simply reflect this character but tried to shape it too, according to the demands of the dominant ideology of the time.

### 1. 3. 2. Nationalism

Since the dominant ideology of the time contained nationalism in various guises and in connection with various political beliefs, the "εθνοπλαστικές ιδέες" of the demoticists were characterized by nationalist aspirations. These aspirations were therefore present in demoticist poetics. In 1926, for example, Palamas talked about modern Greek nationalism as the aim of poetry,<sup>175</sup> while in 1888 Psycharis was already promoting the idea that "ένα έθνος, για να γίνη έθνος, θέλει δυο πράγματα : να μεγαλώσουν τα σύνορά του και να κάμη φιλολογία δική του".<sup>176</sup>

Although several poets of the 1880s, such as Drosinis and Gryparis, were thematically more orientated towards love, for example, than towards national ideals, the dominant concept of the role of poets and

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<sup>174</sup> Roderick Beaton, "Realism and Folklore in Nineteenth-Century Greek Fiction", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 8, 1983, p. 111.

<sup>175</sup> Palamas, 13, p. 56.

<sup>176</sup> Psycharis, p. 23.



poetry in the 1880s hinged on the concept of the "poet-patriot".<sup>177</sup> Palamas regarded the kind of poetic sensibility that found great ideas a source of inspiration as superior to the kind which drew its inspiration from love.<sup>178</sup> Nationalism provided four chief phenomena which dominate the poetics of Palamas's generation.

The first is the preoccupation with the historical past. According to Joshua Fishman, nationalistic ideology finds authenticity "in the lower classes and in the distant past".<sup>179</sup> In the case of Greek nationalism the quest for authenticity in the lower classes took the form of folklore combined with references to the past, while the distant past provided the intellectuals of the Generation of the 1880s not only with authenticity but also with glory. A major characteristic of the preoccupation of the demoticists with the past was the effort to prove the continuity of Greek history together with the effort to project this continuity and its character onto the immediate future. It was this generation that expressed an interest in Byzantium, regarding it for the first time as a glorious period of Greek history rather than as the Roman Empire in decline. In 1852 Spyridon Zambelios coined the term "*ελληνοχριστιανικός πολιτισμός*" which was then taken up as a concept by the Generation of the 1880s. That is, this generation tried to find unity in the Greek past by choosing such elements as were convenient for its nationalistic aspirations; i.e. elements that formed a Greek identity which differentiated the Greeks from the Europeans (see, for example, the works of Periklis Yannopoulos)

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<sup>177</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 22.

<sup>178</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 213.

<sup>179</sup> Joshua A. Fishman, *Language and Nationalism. Two Integrative Essays*, Massachusetts, Newbury House Publishers 1973, p. 8.

and pointed to territorial rights in the Balkans and Asia Minor (see, for example "Η Φλογέρα του Βασιλιά "). This, as Emilios Hourmouzios put it, constitutes the difference between Solomos's and Palamas's "πατριδολατρεία":

Την Ελλάδα τραγουδεί και ο πρώτος, αλλά  
την τραγουδεί σαν όραμα και σαν θεία μορφή,  
την Ελλάδα τραγουδεί και ο δεύτερος, αλλά  
την τραγουδεί σαν πράξη και σαν έννοια  
γεωγραφική [...]. Ο Σολωμός έζησε κι  
εμπνεύστηκε από μιαν εποχή που το  
ελληνικό ιδανικό ήταν στενά και  
αδιαχώριστα υφασμένο με το ιδανικό της  
ελευθερίας. Ο Παλαμάς έζησε κι εμπνεύστηκε  
από μιαν εποχή όπου το ελληνικό ιδανικό  
ήταν στενά και αξεχώριστα υφασμένο με τον  
μεγαλοϊδεατισμό.<sup>180</sup>

The concept of "ελληνοχριστιανικό πνεύμα " served therefore as the creation of a "usable past",<sup>181</sup> which Polylas, the defender of Solomos against Zambelios's attack, characterized in 1860 as "βλάσφημα παραμύθια".<sup>182</sup>

At the same time as describing and thereby helping to shape a national soul, the demoticists of the 1880s, in deriving their subject-matter from history, helped to create history too, since by selecting elements of cultures belonging to different periods and attempting to combine these, they create rather than describe a past.

This leads then to the second phenomenon connected with nationalism in the poetics of Palamas's generation. Through references to the historical past and through the preoccupation with ideas that would

<sup>180</sup> Emilios Hourmouzios, *Κριτική Πορεία Α , Ο Παλαμάς και η εποχή του*, Athens, Pigasos, 1944, p. 46.

<sup>181</sup> Fishman, p. 8.

<sup>182</sup> Iakovos Polylas, *Απαντα τα Λογοτεχνικά και τα Κριτικά*, Athens, Nika 1959, p. 162.

shape the national soul, poetry aligned itself with history on the one hand and philosophy on the other. Thus, history and philosophy provided the models of thought for the demoticists of the 1880s who either tried to combine the two in their poetry, as for example did Palamas, thus defining the space of poetry as a link between thought and action, or, through their choice of themes that pointed to certain ideologies, implicitly admitted history and philosophy into their poetry.

A third phenomenon connected with nationalism concerns the attitude of the Generation of the 1880s towards European culture and consequently towards European influences on Greek poetry. Periklis Yannopoulos and Ion Dragoumis probably represent the extreme of the negative attitude, comparing the values of Greek culture favourably with the "decadence" of European civilization. Palamas adopted a pro-European stance, arguing that an "*αναβάπτισις*"<sup>183</sup> of Greek literature in European literature strengthened the former. Somewhere in between Yannopoulos's and Palamas's attitudes lies the attitude of the "Psycharists" who considered that a literary movement like Symbolism, which was "suitable for the French" would be unsuitable and dangerous for Greek literature.<sup>184</sup>

These attitudes are probably reactions to a crisis, which was historically unavoidable at the time : the collision between traditional Greek and Western European culture. The problem faced by Greek nationalism here was how to respond to the "*εκουγχρωτιστικές πλέσεις*

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<sup>183</sup> Palamas, 2, p. 220.

<sup>184</sup> Tziovas, p. 381.

των καιρών ".<sup>185</sup> The answers supplied by the demoticists, although not all identical, all nevertheless point to the same ideology, since they constitute responses to the problem posed by nationalism. Thus, both Yannopoulos and Palamas, for example, point to ways in which nationalism could fulfil the demands of the time but not to any alternatives to nationalism.

A fourth phenomenon prevalent in the poetics of the Generation of the 1880s and connected with nationalism is related to the need for an "εξύψωση ", which was felt to be urgent after the defeat of 1897. The need for this "εξύψωση " was behind the idea of health and vigour in literature and consequently of an optimistic poetry. This applies mostly to poetry which falls into the categories of "λυρισμός του εμείς " and "λυρισμός των όλων ", as defined by Palamas.<sup>186</sup> Ideas of health and vigour are often related to Nietzsche's philosophy, which plays, for example, a leading role in Palamas's "Ο Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου ".<sup>187</sup> The mission of the poet is, then, to transmit optimism to society, while the refusal of society to comprehend his message can result in a sense of disappointment and alienation from that society. The role of the poet, however, is "to consider his social mission, and remaining steadfast, carry out his role as the bearer of new ideas ".<sup>188</sup>

If the role of the poet is to be the bearer of new ideas, his social

<sup>185</sup> Yeoryios Leonaritis, "Εθνικισμός και διεθνισμός : πολιτική ιδεολογία ", *Ο Πολίτης*, vol. 44, (1981), p. 43.

<sup>186</sup> Palamas, 10, p. 496 ff.

<sup>187</sup> Bo-Lennart Eklund, *The Ideal and the Real. A Study of Ideas in Kostis Palamas' "Ο Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου "*, 1972, p. 31.

<sup>188</sup> Gerasimos Augustinos, *Consciousness and History : Nationalist Critics of Greek Society 1897-1914*, N.Y, Columbia UP 1977, p. 45.

mission can be regarded as prophetic, since by transmitting these new ideas to society he points to a future consisting in their realization. At the same time, he is a seer, since he acts as an intermediary between thought and action, interpreting truths that he alone can see, and translating them into words. This process can assume a sacred character. Thus poetry assumes the form of a "*λειτουργική ιεροτελεστία* " according to Palamas.<sup>189</sup> The concept of the poet-prophet and seer upon which Palamas frequently touches is, in the case of the Generation of the 1880s, a point of contact between nationalism and the notion of "orphic" poetry.

Thus the notion of nationalism creates several interlinked phenomena prevalent in the poetics of the Generation of the 1880s, such as the preoccupation with the historical past; the placing of poetry in a space delineated by history and philosophy; the contrast between European and Greek culture and the idea of health and optimism together with the concept of the poet as prophet and seer. Through these phenomena, the notion of nationalism is related both to demoticism and to the notion of "orphic" poetry in a relationship of equality and overlap rather than dependence.

### 1. 3. 3. The "Orphic" Conception of Poetic Language

In order to convey health, vigour and optimism as well as the sensation of a "*λειτουργική ιεροτελεστία* " poetry has to be written in a "major key": "*οι απρόσεχτοι μονάχα μπορεί να στιγματίζουν ως πομπώδη και ως στομφώδη την τέχνη που είναι πομπική γιατί*

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<sup>189</sup> Palamas, 7, p. 312.

*γίνεται από την πομπή μιας λειτουργικής ιεροτελεστίας [...], την τέχνη που είναι πομπική γιατί τα πράγματα είναι πομπικά* ".<sup>190</sup>

Writing this in 1931, Palamas was probably referring to criticisms levelled at his poetry by Hatzopoulos or Paraschos, for example. Apart from the idea that the times called for a vigorous poetry, deriving from nationalistic ideology, Palamas also puts forward here the idea that poetry derives from objective reality.

Apart from Palamas, the Psycharists, according to Tziovas, conceived of "language as an expressive representation, and, consequently [...] literature as a transparent transcription of the surrounding reality".<sup>191</sup>

This idea that poetry derives from objective reality developed along lines parallel to those of the idea of the national soul and the historical past. Just as, while aiming at the depiction of the national soul and the historical past, the demoticists were actually projecting their "εθνοπλαστικές" ideas and their history-making ideas, so, while aiming at a poetry deriving from reality, they were actually projecting their ideas onto reality.

In this way they create a world consisting of objects and ideas, thus adopting the "orphyic" conception of poetic language, not in the sense of Orphism but as defined by Gerald Bruns who distinguishes between the "orphyic" and "hermetic" conceptions of poetic language.<sup>192</sup> The "orphyic" conception regards "poetic speech as an expressive movement which 'objectifies' a world for man (according to the Kantian model) or which

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Tziovas, p. 384.

<sup>192</sup> Bruns, p. 1.

establishes the world within the horizon of human knowing and so makes signification possible". Word and being are identified, and therefore the power of the "orphyic" poet extends "beyond the formation of a work towards the creation of the world". Possessing the power both to create objects and to signify them, language contains reality. This reality may, then, be either a reality of objects and situations, resulting in Palamas's statement that the "*πομπικά πράγματα*" require an analogous language, or a reality of ideas, resulting, for example, in another statement of Palamas that for him composing poetry consists in the effort "*να σαρκώσ[ει] σε πλάσματα κάποια φαντάσματα*".<sup>193</sup>

Poetic language for Palamas does not consist solely of ideas; form - particularly metrical form <sup>194</sup> - also plays a large part in it. Formal devices can act as the means for the expression of ideas; according to Palamas the poet "*νοεί, σκέπτεται, ανακινεί εις το πνεύμα του τα μεγάλα προβλήματα της φιλοσοφίας, και μελετά το αληθές δια να δημιουργήσει το ωραίον*".<sup>195</sup> This being the case, formal devices are the means by which truth is transformed into beauty. They can also acquire a status equal to that of ideas: "*ο ποιητής καλά-καλά δε σκέπτεται παρά με τη γλώσσα και με τον ήχο, με το στίχο και με τη ρίμα, με το ρυθμό και με το μέτρο*".<sup>196</sup> In both cases, however, formal devices are part of the reality contained in poetic language in as much as they constitute the "*τεχνικά καλούπια*" in which the ideas find "*την έκφραση,*

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<sup>193</sup> Palamas, 7, p. 314.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.: "*Στη συνολική αυτή φροντίδα η διαφορά της μιας προσπάθειας από την άλλη βρίσκεται κυριότατα στο μετρικό σχήμα που θα πρέπει να παρουσιάσω τη συγκίνησή μου*".

<sup>195</sup> Palamas, 15, p. 103.

<sup>196</sup> Palamas, 1, pp. 326-27.

την ομορφιά, τη ζωή <sup>197</sup> and in as much as they cannot be separated from the ideas created by poetic inspiration.<sup>198</sup> The poet's inspiration reveals the soul of objects or incarnates objects:

Οι ιδέες είναι οι ίδιες οι ψυχές των  
πραγμάτων. Η, αν θέλετε, είναι τα ίδια  
τ' αντικείμενα που οι εικόνες τους ή δεν  
έφτασαν ακόμα να γίνουν, προσμένοντας το  
χέρι που θα τις υλικέψει ή, ξεθωριασμένες  
από το πολύ μεταχείρισμα, για να τις δώσει  
το πρώτο τους γυάλισμα. Ο ποιητής  
εμψυχώνει τ' αντικείμενα, εικονογραφεί τις  
ιδέες, ξανακαινουργώνει και ξανανιώνει. <sup>199</sup>

Formal devices are not regarded as working within language and as realities in themselves but rather as part of poetic discourse which is powerful because it contains truth and reality and is able to create a world of objects and ideas.

This view of formal devices is probably connected with the aspiration of the Generation of the 1880s towards the spoken word. The demoticists favoured oral discourse in general (e.g. they refer to their poems as "*τραγούδια* ") and some of them "understood poetic language as an imitation of speech", since speech contained the natural character to which poetry aspired. As Tziovas puts it, "those who shared Psycharis's preoccupation with the spoken form of language, such as Eftaliotis, Pallis, and Vlastos, could not see poetry as an autonomous discourse but as an expressive and representational extension of the national reality. The emphasis on speech, which ultimately obliterated any distinction between literary and ordinary language, hindered the

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Palamas, 10, p. 440.



conception of poetry or literature in general as a linguistic construct".<sup>200</sup>

This idea of poetry as oral discourse was not fully subscribed to by all the demoticists. For example, when Palamas speaks of the "*τεχνικά καλούπια* " of his ideas or of his preoccupation with ideals, he seems to be promoting the idea that poetry is an artefact: "*Ποιητής-προφήτης, αλλά και ποιητής-τεχνίτης : υποχρεωμένος να δουλεύει συνειδητά, υπομονετικά, σε όλα τα τερτίπια της τεχνικής του, αξεχώριστ' από τη μυστηριακή εμπνοή* ".<sup>201</sup> Four years earlier, however, (in 1927) he wrote that "*η ποίηση είναι ο λόγος που πάει να γίνει τραγούδι* ",<sup>202</sup> emphasizing the oral aspect of poetry. Although these two statements appear at first sight to be contradictory, they may actually be opposite sides of the same coin: while other poets of the 1880s, such as Eftaliotis and Drosinis referred to their poems as "*τραγούδια* ", trying to present them as natural products of speech, Palamas considered "*τραγούδι* " to be a stage which poetic discourse could reach only after a conscious effort on the part of the poet, who has to employ technical devices to achieve the effect of "*τραγούδι* ". Thus Palamas stands perhaps closer to the concept of poetry as written discourse consisting of technical devices than do the other demoticists; the aspiration to song, however, suggests that he considered such devices as means for achieving effects rather than as a "problematics of language"<sup>203</sup> and moreover that the idea of natural poetry persisted even if it was an aspiration rather than a "gift"

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<sup>200</sup> Tziovas, pp. 126-27.

<sup>201</sup> Palamas, 7, p. 314.

<sup>202</sup> Palamas, 10, p. 565.

<sup>203</sup> Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* , transl. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, London, Cape 1967, p. 9.

or a natural process.

Therefore the centre of gravity of the poetic language is not situated in a work and a world within language, that is in "words taking on value as realities in their own right"<sup>204</sup> but in the signification of an objective reality outside the poem. This may apply not only to poetry falling into the categories of "*λυρισμός του εμείς* " and "*λυρισμός των όλων* " but also to poetry falling into the category of "*λυρισμός του εγώ* ", since the poet's self consists of objects and ideas, while objects and ideas come into being only after passing through the prism of the poet's subjectivity.<sup>205</sup>

In this way, in attempting to evoke a reality consisting of idealized objects and objectified ideas, poetic language itself becomes objectified. That is, it acquires a solid character not as an entity of its own, since it aspires at signifying rather than at being, but as a group of signifiers that aspire to the expression of solid truths. Therefore the words do not usually point to one another, thus creating evanescence and music, but are instead logically interrelated, pointing all together to an idea or a situation outside language and thereby creating plastic unity. As Emiliós Hourmouzios, for example, pointed out, "*το παλαμικό έργο [...] αν επρόκειτο να καταταχθεί σε μιαν από τις δυο όψεις του ποιητικού λόγου που διακρίνει ο Παλαμάς - τη μουσικότητα ή τη*

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<sup>204</sup> Bruns, p. 2.

<sup>205</sup> Palamas, 7, p. 445.

ζωγραφικότητα - θα βρει ανετότερη θέση στη δεύτερη.<sup>206</sup>

This then is another factor in the poetics of the Generation of the 1880s connected with the "orphic" conception of poetic language as defined by Bruns: poetry as plastic art or as painting rather than as music.

To sum up, in the poetry of the Generation of the 1880s the "orphic" conception of poetic language is expressed in the idea that poetry derives from an objective reality. This objective reality consists of situations as well as ideas, while the poetic language deriving from this reality and pointing to it, contains truth. Formal devices are regarded as part of this truth rather than as realities in themselves. The notion that poetic language contains truth and points to a reality outside it is connected with the phenomenon of poetry aspiring to be a product of a natural process related to speech. Thus, poetic language becomes a group of signifiers pointing to a reality outside language and therefore more closely related to painting and the plastic arts than to music.

The "orphic" concept of poetic language is related both to the notion of demoticism, through the aspiration of poetry to speech, and to the notion of nationalism, since the ideas projected onto the objective reality to which poetry points, may include nationalistic ideology.

These three notions thus develop in a parallel way, forming

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<sup>206</sup> Hourmouzios, *Κριτική Πορεία*, pp. 328-29. In "Ο Παλαμάς και η Μουσική" (1947) Karandonis puts forward a different view from that of Hourmouzios, speaking about the "αγνό μουσικό χαρακτήρα της εκφραστικής και της τεχνικής της διάρθρωσης, αλλά και την απευθείας επίδραση της μουσικής τέχνης στην έμπνευση και τον στοχασμό του Παλαμά" (Andreas Karandonis, *Κωστής Παλαμάς, από τη ζωή και το έργο του*, Athens, Nikodimos 1979, pp. 316-17). Karandonis, however, seems to be focussing here on Palamas's references to music (which are obvious even in titles of poems) and on the "musical" character of the poems of *Ασάλευτη Ζωή* (where Palamas adopts and experiments with Symbolist techniques), rather than on the structure of Palamas's poetic language. Thus, although the question of the role of music in Palamas's poetry remains open, here I am focussing (with unavoidable generalizations) on the centre of gravity of the poetic language of Palamas.

overlapping levels which define the space of the poetics of the Generation of the 1880s. This space constitutes both a part of the ideological context of the period when Post-Symbolism appeared and a major point of reference for Post-Symbolists poetics, which may develop along the lines of the poetics of the 1880s, deviate from them or clash with them. Moreover these notions provide an explanation for the non-existent or hostile reception of the Post-Symbolists on the part of the Generation of the 1880s. We shall now look at some examples of this reception together with some aspects of Post-Symbolist poetics.

The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards demoticism was rather unorthodox. As Tellos Agras wrote in 1939, when the Post-Symbolists were first composing their poetry, demoticism was already established, so they were in a position to deviate from it instead of having to fight for it.<sup>207</sup>

Demoticism was not a primary objective for the Post-Symbolists but merely a means for the composition of poetry. In Karyotakis's case, for example, his "language and metre were incompatible with the aspirations of demoticism, since he introduced words of *katharevousa* and he was not very consistent with his metre, nor did he follow the national verse form".<sup>208</sup>

This indifference towards linguistic orthodoxy was probably one of the reasons behind Eftaliotis's characterization of Symbolism as

<sup>207</sup> Tellos Agras, "Δημοτική γλώσσα και ποίηση", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 26, no. 309 (1939), pp. 1435-39.

<sup>208</sup> Tziovas, p. 182. In 1938 Varnalis noted that "ο Καρυωτάκης ήρθεν ύστερα απ' τον Καβάφη να χαλάσουν τη δημοτικιστική παράδοση της ποίησής μας από το Σολωμό και δώθε" (Kostas Varnalis, "Ο ποιητής Κ.Γ. Καρυωτάκης", *Αισθητικά, Κριτικά, Σολωμικά*, Athens, Kedros 1980, p. 231). He also referred to Filyras as "ο πρώτος που έκανε συμβιβασμούς με την καθαρεύουσα κι άνοιξε το δρόμο στον Καρυωτάκη και τους νεότερους" (Varnalis, "Ρώμος Φιλύρας", *op. cit.*, p. 223).

"φιλολογικό λούσο " as early as 1893.<sup>209</sup> Another reason for this reaction probably lay in the kind of nationalistic ideology that rejected European influences. This is a matter of different orientations: while a dominant tendency in the Generation of the 1880s promoted the creation of a literature rooted in the Greek national soul, the Post-Symbolists were orientated towards Europe, not only accepting the influence of European literature but also trying to change the focus of Greek literature. Even if Palamas can be considered to be the "εισηγητής του ευρωπαϊσμού στην ελληνική πνευματική ζωή",<sup>210</sup> he still focussed on the creation of Greekness in literature, on an "ελληνική ψυχή - απαραίτητη σε μια εθνική Τέχνη".<sup>211</sup> As Alexandros Aryiriou has observed, speaking of the poets of the 1920s,

είναι μια γενιά ανοιχτή στα ρεύματα. Μέσα σ' αυτό το γενικό πνεύμα εντάσσεται η άρνησή της στη "σκοπίμη τέχνη" (αυτή που λέμε σήμερα: στρατευμένη) και η απομάκρυνσή της από τις "εθνικές" αξίες στο όνομα μιας ευρύτερης κοινότητας όπου θεωρούν ότι ανήκουν. Το άνοιγμα προς τις ξένες λογοτεχνίες είναι "συλλογικό", σε διάκριση από το παρελθόν που είχε ατομικά ανοίγματα προς την ξένη τέχνη και ατομικές λύσεις, χωρίς επικοινωνία και διάλογο μεταξύ τους.<sup>212</sup>

Internationalism and cosmopolitanism were, according to Yeoryios Leondaritis, "ξένες έννοιες, δυνάμεις διαβρωτικές"<sup>213</sup> for the Greek intellectuals of the 1880s, whereas they were two of the notions that characterized Post-Symbolism. Therefore the Post-Symbolists could be

<sup>209</sup> Aryiris Eftaliotis, *Απαντα*, vol. 2, ed. Yeoryios Valetas, Athens, Piyi 1962, p. 621.

<sup>210</sup> Emiliios Hourmouzios, "Ελληνικότητα και Ξενηλασία", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 44, no. 504, (1948), p. 821.

<sup>211</sup> Xenopoulos, p. 16.

<sup>212</sup> Alexandros Aryiriou, "Τάσεις της κριτικής σκέψης στο μεσοπόλεμο", *Η Κριτική στη νεότερη Ελλάδα*, pp. 216-17.

<sup>213</sup> Leondaritis, p. 44.

considered as abandoning Hellenism, since Psycharis, for example, contrasted cosmopolitanism with Hellenism: "Εναντίον στο ρεύμα του κοσμοπολιτισμού πηγαίνει το ρεύμα του Ελληνισμού και κάθε εθνισμού. Ο πολιτισμός της Ευρώπης ο τωρινός πηγαίνει κατά τον κοσμοπολιτισμό".<sup>214</sup>

Post-Symbolist poetry seems to have tried to undermine the concept of national soul both by narrowing the problems down to individual souls and by expanding them to the idea of a universal soul. It can therefore be seen as a poetry that tried to dissolve the boundaries defining the space of the poetry of the 1880s. History and philosophy, for example, ceased to function as models for poetry, while optimism dictated by the prevailing ideology of the time was replaced by pessimism dictated by the current international situation and by factors concerning poetry itself and its relationship with society. In 1926 Palamas, commenting on a collection of poems by Yannis Hondroyannis, talked about "τον τυφλό φανατισμό του πεσσιμισμού".<sup>215</sup> Optimism and pessimism, then, are not two poetic modes but aspects of two opposing ideologies.

In Post-Symbolist poetry, the preoccupation with the historical past and the consequent placing of poetry in a space defined by history and philosophy were abandoned, while ideas of health and optimism were rejected and the concept of the poet as a prophet or seer was undermined.

Fotos Politis, although he did not himself belong to the Generation of the 1880s, can be said to have partly summed up the reaction of the

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<sup>214</sup> Psycharis, p. 79.

<sup>215</sup> Palamas, 13, p. 45.

Generation of the 1880s to Post-Symbolism, rejecting the "υποκειμενικούς ποιητές" and stating that "δεν καλείται ποιητής όποιος εκφράζει μόνο τα υποκειμενικά του συναισθήματα" <sup>216</sup>.

As well as focussing on subjective emotions, the Post-Symbolists adopted the "hermetic" concept of poetic language and opposed it to the "orphic" concept promoted by Palamas. The "hermetic" concept of poetic language consists, according to Gerald Bruns, in "the direction of the poet's activity toward the literary work as such, that is, the work as a self-contained linguistic structure". <sup>217</sup>

If this is the concept that prevails in the Post-Symbolist poetics, then it probably constitutes not only a form of opposition to Palamas's dominant concept but also an expansion of a concept that had already appeared in the work of some of the poets belonging to Palamas's generation, such as Gryparis and Mavilis. The reaction of the Generation of the 1880s to the preoccupation with poetic language was summed up by Psycharis before the appearance of Post-Symbolism:

Ένας που φτάνει νέος σε μια νέα εποχή,  
που νιώθει το κεφάλι του γεμάτο ιδέες,  
φαντασίες, εικόνες καινούριες, δεν έχει  
καιρό να συλλογιστεί τόσες τεχνολογίες  
και να βάλει τέτοιες σοφίες με το νου  
του. Ένα μόνο γυρεύει, πώς να πει  
γρήγορα και παστρικά ό,τι έχει να πει.  
[...] Το στολίδι του είναι η αλήθεια. <sup>218</sup>

Thus, all three notions prevailing in the poetics of the Generation of the 1880s were either altered, undermined or rejected by the Post-Symbolists. This resulted in the hostile reception of the Post-Symbolists

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<sup>216</sup> Fotos Politis, *Επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων*, vol. 3, Athens, Ikaros 1983, p. 93.

<sup>217</sup> Bruns, p. 1.

<sup>218</sup> Yannis Psycharis, *Ρόδα και Μήλα*, vol. 1, Athens, Estia 1902, p. 156.

on the part of Palamas's generation, and more often the non-reception. In the case of Karyotakis, for example, G.P. Savidis has noted the "αξιοσημείωτη [...] σιωπή του Παλαμά, του Ξενόπουλου και του Φώτου Πολίτη".<sup>219</sup> Although after the death of Karyotakis Palamas referred to him in passing in two interviews, first as an "εξαιρετικής αξίας ποιητή" and then as a poet with "βαθύ αίσθημα",<sup>220</sup> he ignored him when presenting young poets, many of them less prominent than Karyotakis (e.g. Lambros Asteris in 1906 or Dialehti Zevgoli in 1931), and on the one occasion when he did refer to him in a piece of criticism, it was to compare him unfavourably to Panos Tangopoulos: "ο στίχος του Πάνου Ταγκόπουλου [...] με βάρβαρα σωπασμένο το ερωτικό τραγούδι του, σαν εκείνος των Βαλαβάνηδων και των Καρυωτάκηδων, για μας γνωριμότερος και αγαπητότερος".<sup>221</sup>

Dimitris Tziovas, interpreting the negative reception of Symbolism as a result of "nationist" ideology writes: "In short there was a fundamental gap between symbolism and parnassianism on the one side, which constituted the dawn of the modernist movement in poetry, and ethnocentrism on the other side. It was not simply a matter of preference for the ethnocentrists to try to expel symbolism but an epistemological and linguistic difference which rendered their affiliation difficult".<sup>222</sup>

Palamas himself seems to have offered an explanation for this reception in 1925 and to have placed it in its historical and ideological context:

<sup>219</sup> Savidis, "Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι κριτικοί του", p. 1568.

<sup>220</sup> Palamas, 14, pp. 208, 287.

<sup>221</sup> Palamas, 13, p. 206.

<sup>222</sup> Tziovas, p. 385.



Ζω στον προπολεμικό καιρό. Όχι γιατί  
δε φτάνει ίσαμ' εμένα το φοβερό συγκρατητό  
ακατάπαυτο αλάλασμα του μεταπολεμικού  
ξεθεμελιωμού σε όλους τους κύκλους του  
επιστητού. Κάποτε μου κόβει τη φόρα, μου  
σταματά το τραγούδι, με αναγκάζει να βάλω  
στη ζυγαριά της σκέψης μου ένα βάρος ακόμα,  
μια χορδή στην κιθάρα μου. Αλλά αισθάνομαι  
πως μου είναι αδύνατο στερεά να περπατήσω  
επάνω σ' αυτά τα σεισμοχτύπητα και  
σεισμορραγισμένα εδάφη.

[...] Αγάπησα [...] δύο θρησκείες, είδωλα, σαν  
παραμερισμένα τώρα καταφρονετικά, και όχι  
μονάχα από τους ηλίθιους, είδωλα του παλιού  
καιρού την ποίηση που είναι "μέγας ρόος"  
ποταμού, κατά τον ποιητή, καθώς ρητορικά  
και ακράταγα, σα να μη θέλει να σταθεί  
ποτέ και πουθενά, ξεχύνεται ο λυρισμός της.  
Και την ιδέα τη μεγάλη την πανελλήνια, του  
εθνοπλάστη μύθο που προσμένει το ξύπνημα  
του Μάρμαρωμένου για να τελειώσει την  
κομμένη λειτουργία, στην Αγιά Σοφιά.<sup>223</sup>

The reasons for the hostile reception of Post-Symbolism by Palamas's generation are related to the horizon of expectations of the time in which Post-Symbolism appeared in Greece. As such, these reasons and this reception are included in the context of the period 1909-1936 - the period when the character of Post-Symbolist poetics was formed. Other aspects of this context are the historical and socio-political situation and the prevailing ideology of the time which both conditioned certain aspects of Post-Symbolist poetry and provided or allowed for the factors by means of which Post-Symbolist poetics acquired a unified character. The literary cafés and literary magazines of the time, as well as the readings of the Post-Symbolists in Greek and European literature, form part of the context of the period 1909-1936 too, since they constitute the cultural framework in which Post-Symbolist poetics was formed.

<sup>223</sup> Palamas, 7, pp. 446-47.

The historical, socio-political and ideological situation of the time, the cultural framework in which the Post-Symbolism appeared and its literary framework, that is, its reception by the Generation of the 1880s, are related to Post-Symbolist poetics both as factors that conditioned it and as factors that were incorporated into it.

## Chapter 2

### The Role of Poetry and the Poet's Place in Society

As I have argued in Chapter 1, Post-Symbolist poetics was significantly influenced by the historical, socio-political, ideological and cultural context. This influence can be inferred from the Post-Symbolists' choice of subject-matter and from certain features of the poetic language which they employ. It is more apparent in the questions raised in their poems concerning the role of poetry and the poet's place in society.

These questions are chiefly raised and dealt with in the poems themselves although there are a few extra-poetic references by the Post-Symbolists to the role of poetry and the poet's place in society.

The references in the poems point to the two most important relationships of Post-Symbolist poetry: its relationship with society and its relationship with other poetic systems. As has been argued, the poetic system to which the Post-Symbolists display the greatest response - by deviating from it or attempting to undermine it - is that of Palamas. At the same time the poetic system to which they refer as a source of influence and in terms of its affinities with their own poetry is French Symbolism.

The questions concerning the role of poetry have parallels in questions raised by Palamas and the French Symbolists, whereas those concerning the poet's place in society are more directly conditioned by the nature of the particular society to which they refer, and are, therefore,

less easy to compare to similar questions raised by other poetic systems.

This chapter will examine (1) some extra-poetic references by the Post-Symbolists to the role of poetry and the poet's place in society,(2) the role of poetry as presented in Post-Symbolist poems and in comparison with some answers given by Palamas and the French Symbolists, and (3) the poet's place in society, as portrayed in Post-Symbolist poems.

## 2. 1. Extra-poetic References by the Post-Symbolists to the Role of Poetry and to the Poet's Place in Society

The extra-poetic references of the Post-Symbolists to the role of poetry and to the poet's place in society are few, and chiefly point to two questions with which the Post-Symbolists were confronted: (a) what was the place of poetry and consequently the poet in bourgeois society and (b) what role could their poetry and consequently they themselves as poets play in this society.

2. 1. 1. The first of these questions was actually posed in 1930 by Anghelos Doxas who talked about the "*χρεωκοπία* " of poetry.<sup>1</sup> Doxas implicitly defended Palamas and probably Sikelianos as well, since he refers to nationalism and the "*πατριωτική ιδέα* " as two motivating forces for poetry, and also complains that after 1920 "*η λέξη μεγάλοι ποιητές προκαλεί χλευασμό*". In a response to this Tellos Agras denied the "*χρεωκοπία* ", saying instead that "*η απaráμιλλη μετριοπάθεια που πειθαρχεί τώρα την ποίηση, στέκεται πολύ πιο ανώτερη και απρόσιτη*

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<sup>1</sup> Anghelos Doxas, "*Γιατί εχρεωκόπησεν η ποίηση. Τα βιολογικά και κοινωνικά αίτια* ", *Νέα Εστία* , vol. 8, no. 88 (1930), p. 864 ff.

από τις μεγαλόστομες κραυγές, από τον εκκωφαντικό οίστρο, μέσα από τον οποίον οι παλαιότεροι ποιηταί εξωτέρικεναν μάταια κι επιδειχτικά οράματα".<sup>2</sup> This development in poetry, however, made poetry a "κτήμα των ολιγίστων" according to Agras. Poetry did not appeal to the "masses", which disapproved of the poet, believing him to be "άχρηστος" and "ασύγχρονος".

Here Agras touched upon a phenomenon which characterized Greek society at the beginning of the twentieth century<sup>3</sup> as well as other societies at times when a professional class is beginning to develop: artists, living in a society more interested in material progress than in art, "felt cut off from their public and at odds with their world [and] turned against society".<sup>4</sup> The rise of the bourgeoisie was at the root of this phenomenon, but at the same time it was this development that allowed for experiments in poetry and for the appearance of new literary currents (for example through the flourishing of literary magazines, see Chapter 1 above). Therefore the attitude of artists of the early twentieth century in Greece towards society fluctuated between rebellion or aversion of the kind reflected in Agras's statement, and dependence, since it was within bourgeois society that the artists found their public. In the same article, for example, Agras rejected the idea that the real poet composes poetry for himself, ignoring the public; according to Agras, although the poet writes his poetry chiefly for himself, the public is always present in his thoughts, since any form of expression presupposes people ready to

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<sup>2</sup> Tellos Agras, "Εχρεωκόπησεν η ποίηση;", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 8, no. 91 (1930), p. 1028.

<sup>3</sup> Verghopoulos, p. 164 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Charles I. Glicksberg, *The Literature of Commitment*, New Jersey, Princeton UP 1976, p. 38.

receive it. Thus, Agras stressed the indissoluble bonds between the artists of his generation and the bourgeois society towards which they expressed aversion. As Erich Auerbach pointed out in relation to Baudelaire and his contemporaries, "they were part of [bourgeois society] by descent and training. They profited by the security and freedom of expression which it had evolved. After all it was only within it that they found their public, perhaps only a small group but still their readers and admirers [...]. The frequent emphasis on the contrast between 'artist' and 'bourgeois' must not lead to the conclusion that nineteenth-century literature and art had any other soil to grow in than that of the bourgeoisie".<sup>5</sup> The same could be said about poets in early twentieth-century Greece.

This uneasy mixture of dependency and aversion is apparent in the poetics of the Greek Post-Symbolists and especially in their response to the question of the place of poetry and the poet in the society of their time.

2. 1. 2. The second question with which the Post-Symbolists were confronted was chiefly posed in the form of the connection of their pessimism and melancholy with the historical situation. In 1922, for example, presenting some translations of poems by Jules Laforgue, Agras pointed out that one feature of Laforgue's poetry was that it was close to real life. "Εμπουχτίσαμε πια από την ποίηση της υγείας, που επανελήφθηκε τόσες φορές ". He rejected the poetry of health and vigour on both aesthetic and social grounds, that is, on the one hand he

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<sup>5</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. The representation of reality in Western literature*, transl. Willard R. Trask, New Jersey, Princeton UP 1974, p. 504.

called for a new, "πιο ερεθιστική" flavour in poetry, but on the other he believed that this new poetry was more authentic and closer to real life, since coming closer to life meant coming closer "προς την αρρώστια".<sup>6</sup> That is, according to Agras, the socio-political and historical situation called for pessimistic poetry and, therefore, healthy and vigorous poetry was unrealistic and deliberately ignored social and historical problems.

Therefore, as far as Agras was concerned, poetry is connected with society in as much as society conditions the nature of poetry and poetic reality (the world created in the poems). This connection may mean both that poetic reality is invaded by external reality and that poetic reality comes closer to external reality; that is, poetry assumes both a passive and an active role in relation to social reality.

Thus, the perception of the poet's place in society had undergone a change since the generation of Palamas. The poet was no longer the seer or prophet which had appeared to be the model promoted by Palamas's generation and by some French Symbolists, notably Rimbaud.<sup>7</sup> His role vis-à-vis society is to depict its "αρρώστια". This, however, makes him more of an outcast: as Agras put it in the same article, "Η άρρωστη εποχή μας μισεί εκείνους που της μιλούν την τρομακτική αλήθεια. Ο Οσκάρ Ουάιλντ το είπε : μοιάζει με τη λύσσα του Κάλιμπαν εναντίον του καθρέφτη που του δείχνει το πρόσωπό του".

Pointing out the "αρρώστια" does not mean either curing it or revelling in it. Poetry for the Post-Symbolists is powerless when confronted with society and therefore it is incapable of curing society. On the other hand

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<sup>6</sup> *Μούσα*, γρ. 2, no. 10 (22) (1922), p. 155 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Realism, Naturalism and Symbolism. Modes of Thought and Expression in Europe, 1848-1914*, ed. Roland N. Stromberg, London, Macmillan 1968, p. 189.

the poet suffers because the society in which he lives is "sick" (he becomes an outcast); hence he cannot revel in the "sickness" of society. His position only permits him to point out the "sickness". Therefore the concept of the artist as an outcast, which is prevalent in Symbolism, for example in Baudelaire,<sup>8</sup> is to a certain extent a form of punishment which society inflicts upon the artist for telling it the truth. While in Baudelaire's case art may sometimes be "unable to come to grips with reality, which it avoids or fails to recognize",<sup>9</sup> hence assuming an autonomous entity, independent from reality, in the case of Greek Post-Symbolism this independence does not seem to exist. Consequently the poet cannot isolate himself from reality and surround himself with the poetic reality he creates, but produces his work while moving between the two realities.

This concept of the poet existing on the borderline between two realities seems to have been behind P.N. Karavias's depiction of "*Το δράμα μιας γενεάς*" in 1933. Karavias spoke of the generation of the Post-Symbolists, a generation whose youth was marked by the Balkan wars and who lived through the disaster of the First World War and the subsequent political dissolution:

Είχαμε έρθει μέσα στην καταστροφή, ύστερα  
από την καταστροφή. Δεν υπήρξαμε κοινωνικοί  
απροσάρμοστοι, δεν περιφρονήσαμε την πραγματικότητα,  
τη ζωή. Ζητήσαμε μόνο το Απόλυτο και μια βαθύτατη  
δικαιολογία της. Εκείθεν η ανησυχία μας. Ανησυχία  
όχι ως credo, ως στάση ή ως πόζα. Αλλ' ανησυχία  
ως σκληρή τυραννία, ως δραματική αναζήτηση.<sup>10</sup>

Although they avoided direct references to socio-political or

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<sup>8</sup> J.A. Hiddleston, *Baudelaire and Le Spleen de Paris*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1987, p.5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Karavias, p. 99.



historical reality in their poetry, the Post-Symbolists emphasized the importance of their surroundings to their poetry. Thus, their case seems to fall into the category defined by Charles Glicksberg as "asocial literature": "Asocial literature dwells on the complexities of the inner world of man; it traces a symbolic pattern of experience that involves a quest of authenticity of self, but this quest reveals not only the universe of self but also the social order in which the self must work out its destiny".<sup>11</sup>

If this definition applies more or less to all "asocial literature", in the case of Greek Post-Symbolism the poets seem to define their poetry - even if it turns away from society - as a way of looking at society or of dealing with society. Karyotakis, for example, replying to Vassilis Rotas's criticism in 1928, asked him *"αν πιστεύει σοβαρώς ότι η δική του αισιοδοξία συμβιβάζεται με τη σημερινή πραγματικότητα περισσότερο από το δικό μου πεσσιμισμό"*.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Post-Symbolists defended their right to talk about society not only from a different point of view from that of Palamas's generation (or from that of critics promoting Palamas's model, as in the case of Rotas), i.e. adopting pessimism instead of optimism, disillusionment instead of prophetic visions, but also by using a different language. This language for the most part excludes society and concentrates on the individual, thereby becoming the language of a microcosm instead of a macrocosm. The choice of this language appears, however, to be a conscious deviation from the language used by the preceding poetic generation, and as such a socio-political act. Hence when in 1928 Kleon Paraschos defined Karyotakis as a *"γνήσιο άνθρωπο"*

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<sup>11</sup> Charles I. Glicksberg, *Literature and Society*, Hague, Martinus Nijhoff 1972, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ελληνικά Γράμματα*, γρ. 2, vol. 2, no. 7, (1928), pp. 275-76.

του καιρού του "<sup>13</sup>, he probably meant both that Karyotakis was a product of his time and that his poetry was a new way of looking at his time.

Thus, society is present in the role played by poetry in the formation of the individual, as described by Tellos Agras in 1922. For Agras poetry is the most sublime form of art, which is

κάτι ουσιαστικότερο από ένα απλό διανοητικό sport,  
από ένα θελκτικό ψέμα, από ένα διακοσμητικό στοιχείο  
της ζωής, από ένα τεχνητό πάθος, μια τέλος αφαίμαξιν  
υπεραιμίας επικίνδυνης για την κοινωνικής ισορροπία.  
Είναι η συνείδησις και η κατάκτησις του εαυτού μας  
δια της εκφράσεως, - και η εξέλιξις των δυνατοτήτων μας  
σε δυναμικές ενέργειες, η πλήρωσις και η ρύθμισις της  
ζωής.<sup>14</sup>

This "συνείδησις και κατάκτησις του εαυτού μας", to judge from the above-quoted statements of Agras and Karyotakis, seems to constitute both a refuge from society and an aim conditioned by society. Since art aims at shaping individuals, it comes into contact with society, not only being conditioned by it but probably clashing with it as well.

Therefore the Post-Symbolists' responses to the two questions with which they deal in their extra-poetic references suggest that the poet is dependent on society for his formation and his readership, but is also exiled from it; he is an outcast as a result of the way in which society develops and through his own choice. Poetry has ceased to appeal to a large number of readers and at the same time the poet has ceased to play the role of a prophet or seer. The new role of the poet consists in his discerning the *mal de la société* and in depicting it by means of a

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<sup>13</sup> Savidis, "Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι κριτικοί του", pp. 1579-80.

<sup>14</sup> Οι Νέοι. Εκλογή από το έργο των νέων Ελλήνων ποιητών 1910-1920, ed. Tellos Agras, Athens, Eleftheroudakis 1922, p. ι.

language which indicates both an escape from external reality to a poetic one and a close connection with external reality that frames the poetic one. Thus the Post-Symbolists promoted a concept of the role of poetry and of the poet's place in society which differed radically from that promoted by the generation of Palamas. Their responses to the questions with which they are confronted are not solutions but rather an acknowledgement of the problems created by the changes in society and by the new poetics they promote.

This nature and sparsity of their references in contrast to Palamas's assertive and abundant references to these problems are in themselves indicative of a difference in poetics. While Palamas's poetic system revolved around its connection with society (chiefly through the prevailing nationalism) the Post-Symbolist poetic system appears to be more self-referential.

Various aspects of the role of poetry and of the poet's place in society will be examined through the poems in order to see in what way and to what extent they are interlinked.

## **2. 2. The Role of Poetry**

The questions posed in Post-Symbolist poems about the role of poetry are both more frequent and more varied than the corresponding extra-poetic references. In the poems, references to the role of poetry touch upon several issues, such as (a) the relationship between poetry and reality, (b) the aims of poetry, (c) its effects on the poet, (d) its transience or inadequacy, (e) the creation of a correspondence between

reality and the poet's mood or a collective mood, and (f) the space in which poetry operates, that is, the space in which this role is realized or fails to be realized.

These aspects correspond to aspects present in the poetics of Palamas and of the French Symbolists (that is, poets generally connected with French Symbolism from Baudelaire to Mallarmé). Since a comprehensive study of the poems of Palamas and the French Symbolists is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will focus in the case of Palamas, on his theoretical references to the role of poetry, and in the case of the French Symbolists, on some of their theoretical references and on the studies of critics pertaining to the poetics of French Symbolism. Although the French Symbolists frequently differ from each other in their systems of poetics, for the purpose of this thesis they will mostly be dealt with as a unified body, exceptions being made when relevant to the issues of Greek Post-Symbolism which are explored here.

These references by Palamas and by or to French Symbolists serve to indicate points of contrast or similarity between Post-Symbolist poetics and, on the one hand, the poetics of Palamas and, on the other, French Symbolist poetics. Since the focus is Greek Post-Symbolist poetics, the questions of influence or conscious reaction are not dealt with.

### 2. 2. 1. The Relationship between Poetry and Reality

The relationship between poetry and reality, as depicted in Greek Post-Symbolist poems, presents two aspects. On the one hand poetry may reveal reality as the poet sees it and on the other it attempts to

constitute a different reality.

The revelation of reality is a predominant feature in the poetry of Palamas; according to him, the poet "εκλήθη δια να χορτάση του ανθρώπου την δίψαν και να είπη με τάξιν και με λάμψιν ό,τι ο άνθρωπος άτακτα και αμυδρά αισθάνεται".<sup>15</sup> Poetry is "η κεκαλυμμένη και όχι πάντοτε η ευκολονόητος έκφρασις της ψυχής του κόσμου της ψυχής που [...] εξάγεται [...] από τα βάθη των φαινομένων και των ωραίων στίχων ".<sup>16</sup> Thus the poet is able to see a reality that consists of the deeper aspect of phenomena and of their interrelationships, and it is his task to enlighten others by revealing it to them. The revelation of this reality also assumes a prophetic character, since the poet deals with ideals and looks towards the future.<sup>17</sup>

In place of Palamas's macroscopic view of reality, the Post-Symbolists adopt a microscopic one and instead of his prophetic outlook an explorative one. They do not attempt to discover elements of a metaphysics or a hidden unity in the reality around them but rather to explore its depth in relation to themselves. This exploration leads them to the depiction of the transience and hollowness of reality - e.g. "ω... των πραγμάτων βιάστηκα και βρήκα το άδειο βάθος " (Papanikolaou, "Αποχαιρετισμός " p. 41).<sup>18</sup> The inner aspect of reality is deprived of any symbolic meaning or message that it may carry in Palamas.

Since for the Post-Symbolists the objects and emotions that constitute the reality of poetry belong to external reality or are connected

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<sup>15</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 208.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 209.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 211.

<sup>18</sup> Mitsos Papanikolaou, *Τα Ποιήματα*, Athens, Prosperos 1979, p. 41.

with it, poetry does not create another reality. It rather presents a selective view of reality, where most of the objects are either characterized by their transience or have acquired connotative meanings as a result of their frequent use in poetry (e.g. by the Athenian Romantics). These objects - such as flowers, autumn leaves, clouds - are usually linked to concepts such as dream, memory, nostalgia, desire and escape which point to a desired but unspecified reality. Poetry is sometimes identified with one of these concepts<sup>19</sup> but its reality consists of all of them and also of their contrast with the outside world. Therefore the poetic reality in which the Post-Symbolists sometimes seek refuge, depicting it, for example, as "το καταφύγιο που φθονούμε" (Karyotakis, [Είμαστε κάτι] , p. 87)<sup>20</sup> selects its elements and sometimes manages to abolish time or death, by being the "τραγούδι που μέσα του λυτρώνονται και ζουν οι πεθαμένοι" (Lapathiotis, "Όταν βραδιάζει", p. 133).<sup>21</sup> It usually, however, contains elements which either suggest that external reality collides with poetic reality and invades it, or allow external reality to do so.

This is a point of dissimilarity between the Greek Post-Symbolists and the French Symbolists who sought in poetry a refuge from reality, a realm where they could cultivate their feelings, while they believed that "their visions might create images that will change the world".<sup>22</sup> Moreover the reality which some of them tried to create is a reality more

<sup>19</sup> e.g. Ibid, p. 45, "αχ, όνειρο γαλάζιο και μεγάλο/ απ' το τραγούδι μου δεν είσαι τίποτ' άλλο".

<sup>20</sup> K.G. Karyotakis, *Ποιήματα και Πεζά*, ed. G.P. Savidis, Athens, Ermis 1980, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> Napoleon Lapathiotis, *Τα Ποιήματα*, ed. Aris Dikteos, Athens, Fexis 1964, p. 133.

<sup>22</sup> Stromberg ed., p. xxv.

independent of external reality than is the case with the Greek Post-Symbolists. For example Rimbaud attempted "to apply [...] to his poetry" Schlegel's idea that "the artist alone expresses reality". "His works bypass conceptual thought; in them the immediate symbols of the imagination reflect a deeper reality".<sup>23</sup> Mallarmé and Baudelaire moved along similar lines, since "Mallarmé believed [...] that a poem should not mean but be".<sup>24</sup> For Baudelaire "le rêve is not the simple opposite of reality; it is the world in which the criteria of truth and falsehood are abolished [...] in which the artist or spectator undergoes experiences of heightened lucidity and sometimes terrifying exhilaration - which he ascribes to beneficent effects of communion with a mystical universe".<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, while the difference between the Greek Post-Symbolists and Palamas lies in their different perceptions of reality and of the poet's role, the difference between the Greek Post-Symbolists and the French Symbolists lies in their conflicting perceptions of the sufficiency and permanence of poetic reality in its relation to actual reality.

### 2. 2. 2. The Aims of Poetry

The relationship between poetry and reality is connected with the aims of poetry in general. Palamas identified the revelation of the hidden reality with "truth", which assumes a permanent and absolute character, since it is connected with metaphysical aspirations. He believed that the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>25</sup> A.G. Lehmann, *The Symbolist Aesthetic in France 1885-1895*, Oxford, Blackwell 1968, p. 85.

poet "από μεταφυσικά ύψη κατέρχεται ", lives "εις τα σύνορα του νοητού και αισθητού κόσμου " and his poetry aims to give a soul to matter and to present the spirit to our senses as something material.<sup>26</sup> The poet "βλέπει σε κατάματα, ω Θεέ,/ μόνος φτάνει ως την καρδιά σου / και μας λέει τί βρίσκει εκεί". This absolute truth is connected with the identification of inspiration with an Ideal (e.g. "Ω Μούσα Ιδέα, σ' αγάπησα ! " <sup>27</sup> ) and its transmission to others is achieved through "λαμπρόχηα λόγια ".<sup>28</sup>

Instead of aiming to express the absolute as the poetry of Palamas did, Post-Symbolist poetry aimed to convey evanescence and music. The evanescence of things is suggested by the kind of words and images prevailing in the poems. The Post-Symbolists try to undermine the solidity of things by frequently creating images outside place and time, by juxtaposing verbs of sensation with abstractions and by using adjectives and forms of speech which ascribe vague or metaphorical qualities to objects. This evanescence is related to the idea that the poet is no longer either the possessor of an absolute truth or a force capable of changing a world deprived of its absolutes. For example, Lapathiotis states that "είναι τα πάντα μας ανήμπορα" and identifies as one of the causes for this that "μάς τέλεψαν τ' απόλυτα " (Lapathiotis, "Τί κι αν η μοίρα μάς στεφάνωσε", p. 98).

On the other hand evanescence is linked to music, mainly through certain techniques employed by many Post-Symbolists. By depriving

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<sup>26</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 213.

<sup>27</sup> Palamas, 3, pp. 92, 176.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 79.



objects of their solidity and by undermining the denotative value of words they render their verse fluid and it becomes dominated by music, in the form of rhythm and the creation of acoustic connections between words.

Thus, evanescence exists on two levels: on the level of the reality to which the poem refers and on the level of the words which constitute the poem, rendered evanescent by being used mainly because of their connotations. Since these connotations are often cross-references between the words of a poem, the poem points to itself and the poetic reality such as it is (i.e. a selective aspect of reality which conflicts with external reality and is invaded by it) is realized within language.

This self-referentiality of poetry contrasts not only with Palamas's attitude but also with some of the French Symbolists' concepts. According to Jean Royère, the French Symbolists considered their art to be an absolute.<sup>29</sup> They probably believed this in the sense that they attempted "to establish art as an autonomous branch of human activity"<sup>30</sup> and also in the sense that they considered poetry capable of evoking the abstract through the concrete. "Le Symbole actuel est l'inverse du Symbole classique; au lieu d'aller de l'abstrait au concret (Vénus, incarnée en statue, représentait l'amour), il va du concret à l'abstrait, 'de la chose vue, ouïe, sentie, tâchée, goûtée', pour en faire naître l'évocation par l'idée".<sup>31</sup> They believed that "mind can transform matter into non-material existence, which furnishes the data of poetry". Poetry, then, points to a world of ideas behind the world of reality; "all phenomena

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<sup>29</sup> Marcel Raymond, *De Baudelaire au Surréalisme*, Paris, Librairie José Corti 1947, p. 119.

<sup>30</sup> Lehmann, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> Guy Michaud, *Message poétique du Symbolisme*, Paris, Librairie Nizet 1961, p. 363.

assume symbolic value, indications of that higher reality. Phenomena are linked to ideas behind them and to one another by the mysterious bond of analogies which are detected only in the poetic experience". If this conception lies at the heart of the aims of poetry, then music or suggestion "take their place as secondary manifestations of the Symbolist thought".<sup>32</sup> Natural phenomena are, according to Mallarmé, transformed through language into pure ideas.<sup>33</sup>

Therefore poetry according to French Symbolist poets acts on reality in a double way, on the one hand transforming natural phenomena into pure ideas and on the other rendering the invisible visible,<sup>34</sup> whereas, according to the Greek Post-Symbolists, poetry either describes reality by evoking a mood or transforms reality into self-referential language.

### 2. 2. 3. The Effects of Poetry on the Poet

The self-referentiality of poetry is perhaps linked to the search for "the word" in Post-Symbolist poetry. The "*βασίλισσα λέξη του κόσμου*" (Karyotakis, "*Πολύμνια* ", p. 24) seems to be the means for the conquest of poetry, that is for the creation of a sufficient world within language. This word, however, is not found and the poet dies along with it. (Lapathiotis, "*Αποχαιρετισμοί στη μουσική*" p. 244). This is probably connected with the Post-Symbolists' consciousness of the external world conflicting with their poetic world and invading it. Insofar as the role of

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<sup>32</sup> Laurent LeSage, *The Rhumb Line of Symbolism, French Poets from Sainte-Beuve to Valéry, presentation and selected texts*, USA, The Pennsylvania State UP 1978, p.7.

<sup>33</sup> Symbolism, *An Anthology*, ed. and transl. T.G. West, London, Methuen 1980, p.10.

<sup>34</sup> Henri Peyre, *Qu'est-ce que le Symbolisme?*, Presses Universitaires de France 1974, p. 18.

poetry is to create a poetic world for the poet at least to dwell in, the Post-Symbolists are conscious that their poetry fails to fulfil its role.

This failure is probably connected with the depiction of poetry as torment for the poet. The poet may find temporary consolation (mainly "λήθη") in poetry, but is usually tormented either by his vain search for the "word" or by the way he composes his music, since he tries to create harmony out of his sorrow and dreams. This situation is depicted for example in Lapathiotis's lines: "πόσος κόπος και πόνος κι αγωνία / να πλάσεις απ' τη θλίψη σου αρμονία / - και να την πλάσεις μ' όλους σου τους τρόπους" (Lapathiotis, "Ποιητής", p. 230). Harmony is also produced by the poet letting long-forgotten things and words dwell in him:

Πράματα λησμονημένα, γλυκά πράματα παλιά,  
που περνάτε, και λυγάτε την ψυχή μου, σα βιολιά,  
κάποιες ώρες, κάποια λόγια, πεθαμένα από καιρό,  
που όλο πάτε και γυρνάτε μ' έναν ήχο θλιβερό,  
γλυκά πράματα χαμένα, μακρινά κι αποσπερνά,  
που όλο μέσα μου ξυπνάτε, σαν πληγή που δεν περνά,  
πάλι απόψε με μεθάτε...

(Lapathiotis, "Τα περασμένα", p. 144).

Harmony is portrayed as the other side of "pain" and "wound"; "pain" and "wound" are the hidden aspect of poetry and harmony is its external aspect. Agras, for example, writes, "Παρόμοιες άφαντα πουλιά που κελαδοούν στα δάση, / πίσω απ' τους στίχους μου άφαντες οι πίκρες κατοικούνε" (Agras, *Βουκολικά*, p. 29).<sup>35</sup> These two aspects can sometimes be viewed as cause and effect, but in some cases this position is reversed and harmony or music becomes the cause of pain by being the pivot of poetry. For example, Lapathiotis writes, "κι επειδή στράφηκα, κι εγώ, και μ' όλη μου την πνοή, / στη Μελωδία, με

<sup>35</sup> Tellos Agras, *Τα Βουκολικά και τα Εγκώμια*, Athens, Dimitrakos 1934, p. 29.

*σύντριψεν η Μελωδία "* (Lapathiotis, "*Κι έτσι με σύντριψε το φως...*", p. 69) or, "*τ' είναι, τάχα, αυτό βαθιά μου, που δεν θέλει να πεθάνει, / κι όλο μένει κι επιμένει, σα μια στείρα μουσική "* (Lapathiotis, "*Ανοιξιάτικο τραγούδι "*, p. 169). This concept also has two sides: the poet is tormented by music, either producing a poem as a result, as in the previous examples, or feeling that he cannot transform a particular melody into a poem, as for example in Karyotakis's line, "*το λεύτερο τραγούδι δεν θα ειπωθεί "* (Karyotakis, "*Κι αν έσβησε σαν ίσκιος "*, p. 53). These two sides are sometimes interlinked at the moment of death and linked to the moment of death when the poet is finally able to produce the tune or song he had been trying to utter, or rather the tune or song is produced by itself. For example, Papanikolaou writes,

*Ούτε και που τραγούδησα το θρίαμβό μου στην αυγή,  
ούτε το μεσημεριανό τραγούδι του καμάτου,  
τώρα απομένει ένας σκοπός που πάει κι αυτός να βγει,  
με το ξαλάφρωμα κάποιου θανάτου.*

(Papanikolaou, "*Ωρες "*, p. 49).

This concept of the poet tormented by the two elements of his poetry - words and music - differs from certain key concepts of both Palamas and the French Symbolists and is connected with the concept of what constitutes the raw material of poetry.

For Palamas, the raw material of poetry frequently appears to be ideas. Although this is not the case with all his poems, and even in a part of his theoretical writings Palamas says , as has been quoted in Chapter 1, "*ο ποιητής ιδέες - καθώς κοινώς τις εννοούμε τις ιδέες - καλά καλά δεν έχει, [...] ο ποιητής καλά-καλά δε σκέπτεται παρά με τη γλώσσα και με τον ήχο, με το στίχο και με τη*

ρίμα',<sup>36</sup> his preoccupation with ideas was a point the Post-Symbolists emphasized, as has been seen in Chapter 1. For Palamas, the poet "από όλα τα άνθη πορίζεται το μέλι του"<sup>37</sup> and tries to transmit to others the ideas and the "truth" he alone can see. Thus, the poet may suffer as a result of the unreadiness of society to accept the truth he is preaching.<sup>38</sup> This suffering is, however, a by-product of his writing, whereas in Post-Symbolist poetry it is sometimes poetry itself that is responsible for the poet's suffering or even destruction.

In French Symbolism there exists the "conception of the poet as a technician and a craftsman"; Mallarmé believed that "l'oeuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète, qui cède l'initiative aux mots".<sup>39</sup> The poet uses language "with wisdom", which implies a distance from it: "We want words with both a luminous (or dark) sound and meaning: yet, if we had these, let us not forget, *verse would not exist* : the purpose of verse, as a complement to language, is to redress its shortcomings with wisdom".<sup>40</sup> Thus, the raw material of poetry as far as certain French Symbolists are concerned is language as an autonomous entity independent of the poet, whereas in Greek Post-Symbolism language is closely linked to emotions either being produced by them or producing them (if we take the "music" to which the poets refer to be an aspect of language). Therefore the distance between the poet and his tools does not seem to exist, since working on language means working on

<sup>36</sup> Palamas, 1, pp. 326-27.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>38</sup> Palamas, 11, p. 421.

<sup>39</sup> *Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry. New Essays in Honour of Lloyd Austin*, ed. Malcolm Bowie, Alison Fairlie and Alison Finch, Cambridge UP 1982, p. 243.

<sup>40</sup> *Symbolism*, ed. West, p. 6.

emotions.

#### 2. 2. 4. The Transience or Inadequacy of their Poems

Both the poet's suffering and the concept of the raw material of poetry as emotions and music are linked to the conception of the transience of poems, their inadequacy or the unattainable character of poetry. The Post-Symbolists believe that their poetry is inadequate to express their emotions and at the same time that their songs are subject to the same evanescence which characterizes the reality they depict.

While Palamas speaks of eternal verses,<sup>41</sup> the Post-Symbolists stress the transience of their poems, comparing them, for example, to leaves:

"Τότες γιατί να θλίβομαι ; Ελαχαν όμοιο κλήρο / και τα τραγούδια με τα φύλλα : / αφού μιαν άνοιξην ανθούν, να τα σκορπά τριγύρω / του Αυγούστου πρώτη ανατριχίλα " (Agras, *Βουκολικά* , p. 11). This dissimilarity is connected with the difference in the raw material of poetry. Palamas often uses as the raw material of his poetry ideas, which he considers to be eternal:

[ο Ποιητής] εις κάθε του δημιούργημα, ακόμη και εις ό,τι αναγκάζεται να παραλάβει από το άπλαστον και αχαρακτήριστον παρόν που κρύπτει τόσους σκοπέλους πεζότητος, δίδει σταθερόν, αναλλοίωτον, αιώνιον τύπον.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast Post-Symbolists evoke an evanescent reality, subject to decay, death, and oblivion; therefore they are conscious of the same laws applying to their poetry. For example Lapathiotis ends a description of an evanescent reality by asking: "Ητανε μια φορά... Και τί δεν ήτανε.../

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<sup>41</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 208.

<sup>42</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 211.

Μα τί να πω ; Τριγύρω δεσ' τη φύση : / τόσα μεγάλα κι όμορφα, κι  
εχάθηκαν, / και το μικρό τραγούδι μου θα ζήσει ; " (Lapathiotis,  
"Παραμυθάκι ", p. 9).

Karyotakis connects the impermanence of his poetry with its material in the first poem of *Νηπενθή* : "Οι στίχοι μου " (Karyotakis, p. 19). The poet's verses assume a life of their own but are still organically linked to the poet ("Μιλούνε, μα τα λόγια σαν κομμάτια / τα δίνω από την ίδια μου καρδιά "). Moreover, sorrow has been incorporated into them because of their subject-matter: "Πηγαίνουν με χαμόγελο πικρό, / αφού τη ζωήν ανιστορίζω τόσο ". Thus, the raw material of the verses is the poet's emotions that dominate the poem in spite of the poet's technique, which is applied to language: "Το γέλιο του απαλότερου σκοπού, / το πάθος μάταια χύνω του φλαούτου ". The fact that the verses are dominated by the poet's emotions rather than by language or ideas leads to their transience and evanescence: "και πλήττουνε και λιώνουν πάντα οι γιοι / μητέρα που γνωρίσανε τη Λύπη ", "και ρεύουνε και σβήνουν και ποτέ / δεν παύουνε σιγά-σιγά να κλαίνε ". Moreover, oblivion and abandonment, which are frequent themes of the Post-Symbolists,<sup>43</sup> become the fate of poetry itself: "Αλλού κοιτώντας διάβαινε, θνητέ / Λήθη, το πλοίο σου φέρε μου να πλένε".

Music (or rather the way in which music is composed) as a raw material of poetry is also linked to the transience of the poems, since the instruments of music are the poets themselves instead of language, as is the case in certain French Symbolists. Both Lapathiotis ("Λυπητερή

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<sup>43</sup> e.g. Karyotakis, p. 46: The speaker addresses his soul, saying, "Κατάμνη σε μι' άκρη [...] / σε παρατούν ο κόσμος, ο καιρός".

μελωδία ", p. 10) and Karyotakis ([Είμαστε κάτι ], p. 87) deal with the transformation of poets into musical instruments. For Lapathiotis pain goes through the poet who produces harmony. Karyotakis compares poets to "ξεχαρβαλωμένες κιθάρες" where the wind "στίχους, ήχους παράφωνους ξυπνάει ". Both emphasize the way in which music is produced and the poet's pain. Lapathiotis suggests the evanescence and impermanence of poetry created in this way by depicting his poetry as a "βόγγος " which is "το νανούρισμα / του Θάνατου και της Νυχτός ", while Karyotakis suggests the unattainability of poetry: "κι η ποίησις / είναι το καταφύγιο που φθονούμε ". Music as the raw material of poetry contains elements that render poetry evanescent, unattainable or transient, since "music is the art of the thing in flight".<sup>44</sup> Therefore poetry consisting of music which tries to depict the "thing in flight" becomes a thing in flight in itself, lacking permanence and stability (according to Karyotakis, "Είμαστε κάτι διάχυτες αισθήσεις, / χωρίς ελπίδα να συγκεντρωθούμε ").

Apart from being transient or unattainable, poetry is also considered by the Post-Symbolists to be inadequate to express their feelings. Therefore poetic language is not considered to be the raw material of poetry and a means of achieving "incantation", as Mallarmé believes it to be, in the poet's hands.<sup>45</sup> It is instead considered to be a means of expressing the raw material of poetry, and, frequently, an inadequate one. Its ability to express emotions is often questioned by Post-Symbolists, for example by Lapathiotis: "Έχω μια λύπη ερημική, βαθιά μου. / Την

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<sup>44</sup> Warren Ramsey, *Jules Laforgue and the Ironic Inheritance*, New York, Oxford UP 1953, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Symbolism*, ed. West, 1980, p. 10.



τραγουδώ να φύγει από τη μέση : / Μα δεν εχώρεσε μες στην ψυχή μου, / - και σ' ένα τραγουδάκι θα χωρέσει; " (Lapathiotis, "Έχω μια λύπη ", p. 65). Moreover, Karyotakis regards poetic language not only as inadequate to express emotions but also as an artifice that replaces emotions: "Αλλάζουμε με ήχους και συλλαβές / τα αισθήματα στη χάρτινη καρδιά μας " (Karyotakis, "Όλοι μαζί ", p. 103), while Lapathiotis regards language as the cage of emotions: "του Πόνου αυτού, που έχει για κλουβί του, / το χώρο ενός ανθρώπινου αλφαβήτου " (Lapathiotis, "Ποιητής ", p. 230).

Therefore poetic language contains artifice, which in turn imposes limitations upon poetic language by not allowing it to fulfil a main part of its role, i.e. to express emotions. Poetic language only fulfils this role when it is self-negated and reduced to a cry:

Δεν είναι πια τραγούδι αυτό, δεν είναι αχός  
ανθρώπινος. Ακούγεται να φτάνει  
σαν τελευταία κραυγή, στα βάθη της νυχτός,  
κάποιου πόχει πεθάνει.

(Karyotakis, "Κριτική ", p. 77)

Thus, Post-Symbolist poetry leads up to a wish for self-negation in order to fulfil its role. This wish is probably related to the conception of language as a means of expressing emotions rather than as an independent entity, which is how French Symbolists view it. It is also related to the conception of the transience, inadequacy and unattainability of poetry.

## 2. 2. 5. The Creation of a Correspondence between Reality and the Poet's Mood or a Collective Mood

Poetry insofar as it is able to fulfil its role, expresses the poets' emotions or moods in relation to the reality they depict. In this, Greek Post-Symbolists seem to come close to Verlaine's impressionism where "entre le poète et les choses [...] il n'y a pas de différence de nature, car en elles il se 'mire soi-même', et l'état poétique est un moment d'extase où la conscience et le monde fusionnent, éliminant tout ce qui n'est pas intuition immédiate".<sup>46</sup> The mood of the poets is evoked by the reality they depict, while at the same time the reality they depict is evoked by their mood. Therefore there is a correspondence between external and internal worlds, and the role of poetry at this point consists in making this connection.

As Karyotakis puts it (Karyotakis, "Θάνατοι ", p. 3), there is "ο πόνος του ανθρώπου και των πραγμάτων", and poetry evokes it:

μάτια, χεράκια, στόματα, ιστορήστε μου  
τον πόνο κάποιας ώρας, κάποιου τόπου,  
μάτια, χεράκια, στόματα, ιστορήστε μου  
τον Πόνο των Πραγμάτων και του Ανθρώπου.

Poetry then puts into language the feelings and moods of animate and inanimate beings that "ο λόγος [...] εδιάλεξε για τάφο", serving as an expression of a universal collective soul. This is a different view from that of Palamas who believed that "ο Ποιητής, θέλει, δεν θέλει, απευθύνεται προς ιδιαιτέρας τάξεις ανθρώπων· είναι αυτοί οι πνευματικοί αδελφοί του· ποιηταί και αυτοί· αλλά χωρίς χάριν και

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<sup>46</sup> Michaud, p. 122.

χωρίς τραγούδι· το ιδανικόν αυτών εκφράζει· ό,τι έχουν μέσα των το  
αδράχνει, το πλάττει, το εξωτερικεύει και το αποκαλύπτει " .<sup>47</sup>

Palamas also believed that "είμαι ποιητής του καιρού μου και του  
γένους μου " .<sup>48</sup> The Post-Symbolists belong in the international  
movement initiated by French Symbolism, which was the first movement  
where "art ceased in truth to be national and assumed the collective  
premises of Western culture. Its overwhelming concern was the non-  
temporal, non-sectarian, non-geographic and non-national problem of the  
human condition".<sup>49</sup> The speakers who appear in many Post-Symbolist  
poems and use the first person singular can often be said to represent a  
collective soul confronted with reality and experiencing pain, sorrow,  
nostalgia.

On the other hand, since the poet is sometimes depicted as an  
isolated figure, the role of poetry is to express the mood of this isolated  
figure too. Yet the poet owes his isolation to poetry itself, and one reason  
for this is that poetry may impose on him a different way of life. For  
example Papanikolaou says, "Ήταν αλήθεια πως εζούσα / κάποια ζωή  
ξεχωριστή, / ζούσα όπως ήθελεν η Μούσα / κι όπως δεν ήθελε η ζωή"

(Papanikolaou, "Λυρικό ", p. 42). This is probably related to the French  
concept of the "poète maudit", and to Rimbaud's idea of the "long,  
immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens" and of the poet's  
obligation to experience "toutes les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de  
folie".<sup>50</sup> Another reason for the isolation poetry imposes on the poet is that

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<sup>47</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 208.

<sup>48</sup> Palamas, 3, p. 292.

<sup>49</sup> Anna Balakian, *The Symbolist Movement*, New York 1967, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Raymond, p. 39.

it reveals to him new aspects of reality, such as its hollowness. Since this revelation is achieved through the medium of language, the poet's isolation is due to the dual aspect of poetry as the means of revealing reality and as the realization of an event within language. Therefore the poet's feelings as expressed in poetry are due to poetry itself. This situation is depicted for example in Lapathiotis's "*Τί κι αν η μοίρα μάς στεφάνωσε...*" (Lapathiotis, p. 98) where he talks about the poets' "*μοίρα βάσκανη*". The first reason for this fate is, "*γιατ' είναι μέσα, μες στα σπλάχνα μας, / ένα 'γιατί' - και μας μαραίνει*" (poetry as a means of revealing reality). The second reason is, "*γιατ' είναι μέσα, μες στα σπλάχνα μας, / ένα βιολί, και μας μαραίνει*" (poetry as a realization of an event within language).

Thus, the role of poetry in the expression of emotions or a mood consists of poetry acting as a correspondence between the mood and the reality depicted; expressing a collective soul related to reality as perceived by the poets, and expressing the emotions or moods of the poets; feelings or moods created by poetry itself - either through its relationship with reality or through its relationship with language.

#### 2. 2. 6. The Space in which Poetry operates

The space in which poetry operates is organically related to the various aspects of the role of poetry. For Palamas, although the poet does not live in a different world,

*παρέχει την καλλιτεχνικήν εκείνην απόλαυσιν που πολύ  
διαφέρει από τας φυσικάς απολαύσεις, και, καθώς είπεν  
ωραία κάποιος, "ομοιάζει με θάνατον ακολουθούμενον  
από ανάστασιν". Με την εντύπωσιν του καλλιτεχνήματος*

φεύγομεν μακράν από τον κόσμο που μας περικυκλώνει,  
αποθνήσκομεν, και αναζώμεν μέσα εις τον παράδεισον της  
Τέχνης.<sup>51</sup>

Poetry therefore occupies a space separate from reality; the criterion for this separation is the superior quality of the experience (Palamas contrasts poetry to "*τα ακάθαρτα και τα ασήμαντα*") and the result of this separation is a metaphysical experience.

For the Post-Symbolists the "*καλλιτεχνική απόλαυση*" they offer is harmony and dream (e.g. Lapathiotis's "*να κλείσεις τ' Ονειρο σε στίχους [...] να πλάσεις απ' τη θλίψη σου αρμονία* "). It may also contain a message. For example, Karyotakis writes,

Μόνο μπορεί να μένουνε κατόπι μας οι στίχοι,  
δέκα μονάχα στίχοι μας να μένουνε, καθώς  
τα περισσότερα που σκορπούν οι ναυαγοί στην τύχη,  
κι όταν φέρουν το μήνυμα δεν είναι πια καιρός  
(Karyotakis, "*Υστεροφημία* ", p. 63).

In this way the artistic pleasure they offer is not a metaphysical experience separate from reality but rather an experience within reality, even if it is, in the end, a non-realized experience (a message reaching its destination too late). It is also an experience of escape from reality (e.g. dream) and an experience within language (harmony).

Thus, the space where poetry is realized exists not "*εις τα σύνορα του νοητού και του αισθητού κόσμου*" as in Palamas but rather on the borders between reality and language. This leads to another duality of space of Post-Symbolist poetry, one aspect of which is the poetry of escape, pain, nostalgia, while the other is satire which deals with poetry itself. Apart from Karyotakis's *Σάτιρες*, there are poems by Lapathiotis, Emmanouil and Skarimbass which satirize poetry as wavering between

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<sup>51</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 211.

reality and language. For example, Emmanouil in "Ποιηταί " (Emmanouil, p. 25)<sup>52</sup> writes: "Πώς μοιάζουμε με ωραία μυθιστορήματα ! / Σε αβρό papier vélin, αριθμημένα, / με culs-de-lampe, hors-textes, λεπτά στο γράψιμο, / είμαστε για τους λίγους τυπωμένα ". Thus he touches on the subject Karyotakis deals with in "Όλοι μαζί... ", satirizing the concept of the superiority of poetic language over reality, insofar as poetic language is considered to be an artifice.

This duality of space is more emphasized in Greek Post-Symbolist poetry than in French Symbolism. In French Symbolist poetry, language creates another reality and therefore poetry moves away from reality and towards a "pure" experience. "Le langage qui rend, et veut communiquer en l'évoquant, la vision de l'auteur, celle du poète en particulier, doit être, sinon nécessairement rare, du moins épuré. L'essence de la poésie, Valéry le redira après Poe et Baudelaire, doit être chimiquement, ou alchimiquement, isolée [...]. [Les poètes] remonteront du signe, de l'apparence, au noumène, à ce qui reste et dure par derrière ce qui s'écoule, à l'invisible, peut-être au divin".<sup>53</sup>

The Greek Post-Symbolists' relative lack of confidence in language, compared with some of the French Symbolists, leads their poetry to a self-negation, in order to fulfil part of its role. At the same time it leads to a duality of space consequent upon the dichotomy between language and reality, and related to it. As Karyotakis puts it, "Ας υποθέσουμε πως δεν έχουμε φτάσει / από εκατό δρόμους τα όρια της σιγής, / κι ας τραγουδήσουμε " (Karyotakis, "Αισιοδοξία ", p. 139): Post-Symbolist

<sup>52</sup> Kesar Emmanouil, *Ποιήματα*, Athens, Prosperos 1980, p. 25.

<sup>53</sup> Peyre, pp. 18-19.

poetry takes place on the borders between language and silence.

The Greek Post-Symbolists' concept of the role of poetry consists then of certain significant interlinked concerns, such as exploring reality; producing music; transforming reality into self-referential language; expressing the feelings both of a collective soul and of the individual poet, and creating a correspondence between the reality it depicts and the emotions evoked. In their effort to fulfil the role of poetry as they see it, the poets are tormented by their poetry because of the way in which poetry is composed, because of the raw material used for it and because of the awareness that it is often both incapable of fulfilling its role and transient or unattainable. The space in which poetry operates exists at first between language and reality and finally between language and silence.

The dissimilarities between the Post-Symbolists and Palamas in their concept of the role of poetry are connected with a different view of reality and also with a different use of words. While Palamas emphasizes denotations and points at the same time to a deeper reality revealed only to the poet, the Post-Symbolists emphasize connotations and evanescence.

The dissimilarities between the Greek Post-Symbolists and the French Symbolists are connected with the use of symbols (which will be examined in Chapter 4). The French Symbolists appear to believe in a world of ideas to which poetry points (hence the use of symbols), while the Greek Post-Symbolists believe in a self-referential poetic world (hence the suggestive and inter-referential rather than symbolic use of

words). Therefore the view that the dissimilarities between the French Symbolists and the Greek Post-Symbolists are indicative of an "almost general indifference [of the Greek Post-Symbolists] to the doctrine or [...] to the philosophy of Symbolism" and also "if not of total incomprehension, at least of their inability to grapple with the true problems",<sup>54</sup> fails to take account of the indications of the existence of two different poetic systems. As has been argued here, the Greek poetic system, although influenced by the French (and particularly by poets such as Verlaine who emphasized the correspondence between external reality and emotions rather than the correspondence between a world of ideas and the actual world), has a consistent structure of its own as well as dominant factors which differ significantly from those foregrounded in the French Symbolist system.

### 2. 3. The Place of the Poet in Society

The role of poetry, as presented in Post-Symbolist poems, defines Post-Symbolist poetics by pointing to its relationship with the poetics of other, bordering poetic systems. The place of the poet in society, as presented in Post-Symbolist poems, defines Post-Symbolist poetics by pointing to its relationship with society.

The place which the poet and, consequently, his poetry occupy in society interacts with the Post-Symbolists' suggestions concerning the role of poetry, such as the exploration of reality, the transformation of

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<sup>54</sup> Robert Jouanny, "Symbolism in Greece", *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of European Languages*, ed. Anna Balakian, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiado 1984, p. 651.



reality into a self-referential language, the creation of a correspondence between the reality depicted and the feelings evoked, and the existence of poetry in a space between language and reality or language and silence. This interaction not only leads to other concepts and questions, such as the relationship of poetry to memory, nostalgia, desire and escape, but also provides a poetic answer to problems posed by the historical, socio-political and ideological situation.

Here I shall look at the place the poet and his poetry occupy in society through an examination of the following points: (a) the poet as townsman, (b) the poet as penpusher, (c) the poet as outcast and observer, (d) the poet's attitude to society and (e) solutions proposed.

### 2. 3. 1. The Poet as Townsman

Most of the Post-Symbolists lived and worked in Athens at a time when a growing phenomenon in Greek society was urbanization.<sup>55</sup> Although the same applies to the generation of Palamas, it was the Post-Symbolists that incorporated urbanization into poetry,<sup>56</sup> thus representing it as a poetic reality parallel to the external one. Therefore, apart from living and working in a town, the Post-Symbolists are also townsmen in their poetry (as Cavafy is); that is, their point of view is that of a townsman.

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<sup>55</sup> Kostas Steryopoulos, "Κλέων Παράσχος και Τέλλος Αγρας. Δυο αντιπροσωπευτικές φυσιολογίες της κριτικής του μεσοπολέμου", *Η Κριτική στη Νεότερη Ελλάδα*, Athens, Eteria Spoudon 1981, p. 178.

<sup>56</sup> Tassos Korfis, *Ρώμος Φιλύρας, Συμβολή στη ζωή και στο έργο του*, Athens, Prosperos 1974, p. 24: "Πρώτος [ο Φιλύρας] οδήγησε την πόλησή μας στην πολιτεία, ανατέμνοντας την αστική κοινωνία στο σαλόνι και στο δρόμο και αναλύοντας χαρακτηριστικά, μέσω του εαυτού του, την περιχαράκωση του σύγχρονου ανθρώπου στη μοναξιά του από τον τρόπο της αλλοτρίωσης".

Apart from the integration of poetry into urban life which will be looked at under the heading of the poet's attitude to society, this new point of view is apparent from the way in which these poets regard nature. For example Agras, whose first collection was published under the title, *Τα Βουκολικά και τα Εγκώμια*, has been characterized as "*βουκολικός αγναντεύοντας τη φύση πίσω από το θαμπό τζάμι του σπιτιού του*".<sup>57</sup> Nature in *Βουκολικά* is presented in a fragmentary way and often serves as a point of comparison with the speaker's mood or situation. In the first poem of the collection, for example, the speaker compares the fate of his songs to the fate of leaves: "*Τότες γιατί να θλίβομαι ; έλαχαν όμοιο κλήρο / και τα τραγούδια με τα φύλλα*". In this way, which is characteristic of many of the poems in the collection, nature is present not as an entity but rather as a point of reference. Thus, nature functions as the vehicle of a simile while the centre of gravity of the poems is situated in the tenor of the simile. Consequently nature is undermined by its position in the poetic language.

Agras continued along the same lines in his later collections, while at the same time the nature he depicts there is the nature of the town (see, for example, the title of the first subsection of *Καθημερινές*: *Το σπίτι κι η γειτονιά*). The fragmented nature of the first collection becomes urban (e.g. "*ενορία [...] ζωσμένη γιασεμιά*", *Καθημερινές*, "*Μιαν ενορία*", p. 9, "*δέντρο [...] στην αυλή*", *Καθημερινές*, "*Ανέμου πέρασμα*", p. 16<sup>58</sup>) which continues to be linked to moods. At the same time the speaker is conscious not only of a correspondence between his mood and

<sup>57</sup> Yeoryios Pratsikas, "*Η ποίηση του Τέλλου Αγρα*", *Ελληνική Δημιουργία*, γκ. 7, vol. 13, no. 152 (1954), p. 652.

<sup>58</sup> Tellos Agras, *Καθημερινές*, Athens, Dimitrakos 1940.

the fragmentary urban nature he describes, but also of alienation:

Πράμα από ' δώ δεν έχει φύγει  
κάθε κοτσάνι απ' τις φραγές  
σπάει στην καρδιά και της ανοίγει  
- δεν ξέρω πώς - γλυκές πληγές.

Κι όμως τί χάθηκεν ωστόσο  
ανάμεσά μου και σ' αυτά  
και δεν είμαι άξιος να τα νιώσω  
δικά, σαν πρώτα, και πιστά ;

(Καθημερινές, "Παντοτεινός χωρισμός", p. 25).

Nature in Agras's poetry becomes both urban and fragmented, while at the same time it is undermined by its position in the language and the speaker is sometimes depicted as alienated from it. Similar techniques are employed by other Post-Symbolists, as for example by Romos Filyras, in whose poetry references to nature together with references to urban life constitute the "real" world. This real world is, however, undermined by its depiction in the subjunctive and the centre of gravity is usually situated in the interplay between the actual world and another one, which is undefined and unattainable. Moreover the elements of nature which appear in the poems are often contrasted with elements of urban or at least indoor life (e.g. "τα ειδύλλια [...] μαδούν στ' άγγιγμα πνοής καινούριας, / σαν ρόδου πρώιμου φύλλα, κρόσσια ούγιας ", Filyras, "Χωρίς σκοπό ", p. 63<sup>59</sup> ); thus they are used as parts of a verbal image rather than as parts of an external image that the poem aspires at depicting.

This technique exemplifies the Symbolist development of poetic images observed by Ján Mukařovský: "Among the Symbolists the development of poetic images into themes occurs under the constant

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<sup>59</sup> Romos Filyras, *Απαντα Α*, ed. Emilios Hourmouzios, Athens, Govostis 1939, p. 63.

oscillation between the literal and figurative meanings of the words of which the developed image is composed. Thus originates the semantic effect of a verbal 'realization' of the poetic image which in later Symbolist poetry was intensified to such an extent that the image as image prevailed over the reality represented by it".<sup>60</sup>

Where nature is concerned, the oscillation between the literal and figurative meanings of words functions on two levels. The first is the level referred to by Mukařovský: the level of poetic technique, which results for example in the de-emphasizing of external reality and the creation of a self-referential language. The second is the level of the poet's viewpoint which seems to be determined by the fact that the poets are urban. The poetic technique and the poet's place in society interact, resulting both in a new perspective on nature and in verbal images connected with this new perspective; these verbal images and this perspective interact with other factors of the Post-Symbolist poetic system, such as the de-emphasizing of reality. Therefore the urban view of nature functions as part of the poetic system.

The connection of the new view of nature with the new poetic system is sometimes dealt with in Post-Symbolist poetry, as for example in Karyotakis's "*Επιστροφή*" (Karyotakis, p. 68). This poem begins with a negative statement - "*Εγώ δεν επλανήθηκα σε δάση απάρθена, βουερά, / μηδέ η ριπή μ' εχτύπησε του ωκεανείου ανέμου*" - which probably refers both to a relationship with nature and to poetic discourse. The speaker states not only the lack of a relationship with nature but also the absence of a certain kind of poetic imagery from his poems. The

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<sup>60</sup> Ján Mukařovský, *The Word and Verbal Art*, transl. and ed. by John Burbank and Peter Steiner, New York, Yale UP 1977, p. 45.

elements of nature which he introduces are both urban and fragmented: "ένα χορτάρι ανάμεσα στις πλάκες όλες της αυλής", "ακρούλα σύννεφου", "μαραμένο βρύο". These elements convey the voice of nature to the speaker for whom "return" to nature means death or return to a state of non-being. The fragmented, urban view of nature is connected with the voice of death both as a presence (e.g. "μαραμένο βρύο") and as an absence ("δεν επλανήθηκα [...] και δε θα ιδώ τους ουρανούς που νοσταλγώ, ποτέ μου"). This connection is made through the poem's technique, which is based on connotations, or on "the figurative meaning of the words of which the developed image is composed". Thus, on one of its levels the poem appears to refer to the relationship between its technique and the view of nature it presents.

### 2. 3. 2. The Poet as Penpusher

The poet as a townsman promotes a new view of nature, while at the same time the place of the poet in society is partly determined by his view of nature and by his relationship with it. Here, according to René Wellek, lies one of the main differences between the Romantics and the Symbolists: for the Romantics man was part of nature, whereas the Symbolists "knew that man is limited and is in conflict with nature".<sup>61</sup> Instead of the "unity within the universe" to which the Romantics aspired,<sup>62</sup> the Symbolists are conscious of fragmentation.

This fragmentation also seems to result from the sense of a lack of

<sup>61</sup> René Wellek, "What is Symbolism?", in *The Symbolist Movement*, ed. Balakian, pp. 22-23.

<sup>62</sup> Lilian R. Furst, *Romanticism in Perspective*, London, Macmillan 1969, p. 136.

creativity which in turn may result from the poet's relationship with his work.

According to Agras,

Στην πρώτη περίοδο των Νεοελληνικών Γραμμάτων, την Επτανησιακή, ο άνθρωπος των γραμμάτων είν' ο ευγενής, ο ευπατρίδης. Στη δεύτερη περίοδο, την Αθηναϊκή - κλασική και ρομαντική - είν' ο λόγιος. Στην τρίτη, την προπολεμική, είν' ο δημοσιογράφος. Στην τετάρτη, τη μεταπολεμική (η κατάπτωση συνεχίζεται), ο άνθρωπος των γραμμάτων είναι ο υπάλληλος.<sup>63</sup>

The figure of the penpusher is presented in Karyotakis's poetry and constitutes the subject of three poems: "*Δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι* " in *Σάτιρες*, "*Μίσθια δουλειά* " in *Ελεγεία* and "*Γραφιάς* " in *Νηπενθή* (Karyotakis, pp. 104, 73, 37). In these three poems Karyotakis touches upon different aspects of the life and work of the penpusher. These aspects are of interest here in connection with aspects of the work of the poet as presented in the poems.

In "*Δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι* " Karyotakis touches upon the problems of impersonality, of useless and "*χωρίς αιτία* " writing and of the consequence of these, which is the loss of authentic existence. In "*Μίσθια δουλειά* " he again touches upon the same subject, which is that of alienated labour. Karyotakis was the first Greek poet to introduce this concept into poetry.<sup>64</sup> Here, however, the element of impersonality has not yet been introduced, since the speaker employs the first person singular and moreover describes an action of his which is placed outside "*Μίσθια δουλειά* ": "*Μόνο είδα, φεύγοντας πρωί, στην πόρτα μου τολύπες / τα ρόδα, και γυρίζοντας έκοψα μια γιρλάντα* ". The speaker tries,

<sup>63</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά Β*, p. 201.

<sup>64</sup> Titos Patrikios, "*Κώστας Καρυωτάκης* ", in *Σάτιρα και Πολιτική στη Νεώτερη Ελλάδα* , Athens, Eteria Spoudon 1979, p. 252.

then, to retain a personality of his own through contact with nature, which is, however, the urban and fragmented nature of Post-Symbolist poetry. The contrast between nature or life in general and the work of the penpusher is the subject of "Γραφιάς ". In this poem, however, it is not clear whether Karyotakis is talking about the penpushing clerk or the penpushing poet. The emphasis in this poem is on the act of writing in general. The lack of colour and of air ("οι ώρες μ' εχλώμιαναν ", "γυρεύω αναπνοή ") is contrasted with the sunshine and the freedom of life outside. The only life within the reach of the penpusher are two lilies in a vase. The penpusher, however, does not look at, smell or touch the lilies ("στο βάζο ξέρω δίπλα μου ") which, being within his reach and as alienated from their natural environment as the penpusher himself, are connected with death ("σα να ' χουν βγει σε τάφο "). At the same time the act of writing is depicted as a process which will end in death: the penpusher is pale; bending over his papers, he breathes with difficulty and he feels that his eyes and mind are dim. The final connection between the act of writing and death is achieved through the rhyme: γράφω - τάφο.

Similar connections between writing and death and between writing and alienation from life are made in a poem from Karyotakis's next collection: "Όλα τα πράγματά μου έμειναν" (Karyotakis, p. 66). There the "σκόνη των χαρτιών μου " of "Γραφιάς " has become "σκόνη τη σκόνη εγέμισεν ο τόπος ", while the distant presence of sunshine ("Απ' τ' ανοιχτό παράθυρο στον τοίχο αντικρινά / ο ήλιος γλιστράει και παίζει ") has become an absence ("Κανένας, ούτε ο ήλιος πια δεν μπαίνει "). Writing in this case has been reduced to "γράφω με το

δάχτυλο σταυρούς ", while death is present not as a physical process but as a spiritual state. In both cases, however, death is related to society, since it is caused by solitude and alienation from life or even from oneself. Society therefore, as the creator of a "μίσθια δουλειά " of an uncreative character, produces the alienated penpusher and the general alienation and self-alienation of human beings which in turn resembles or even results in death.

Since the poet has a "χάρτινη καρδιά" (Karyotakis, "Όλοι μαζί ", p. 103) his position is similar to that of the penpusher in that he is alienated from life because of his work. Thus, the poet is linked to the penpusher not only through biographical coincidence but also through the lack of creative writing. The poet no longer "ξέρει / πώς να το ζήσει / το θείο Τραγούδι " (Karyotakis, "Byron", p. 97). Instead, reading and writing are a means of losing life: "είκοσι χρόνια παίζοντας / αντί χαρτιά βιβλία, / είκοσι χρόνια παίζοντας, / έχασα τη ζωή ". (Karyotakis, "Στροφές ", p. 31). Paper-life seems to be contrasted with the life of the "μπρούτζινος γύφτος " (Karyotakis, "Στροφές ", p. 35), where the gypsy's work is creative because it is part of his life and incorporates him into its essence (the gypsy "εδούλευε / το μπρούτζον " and was "μπρούτζινος ").

The poet's place in society is similar to that of the penpusher in that his writing is not related to life and is a cause of alienation from life. Although it is Karyotakis who presents the figure of the penpusher and associates the poet with him, the solitude and alienation from society which is a prevailing theme in Post-Symbolist poetry seems to be generally connected with the idea of the poet as a penpusher. This



connection is made through suggestions that writing is non-creative; the poet, having lost his links with society, does not even find fulfilment in his art. He regards poetry either as a "παιχνίδι μάταιο και γελοίο " (Lapathiotis, "Ποιητής ", p. 230) or as something unattainable.

Thus, lack of creativity and alienation from life as a result of the nature of his writing are the defining characteristics of the poet as a penpusher. The Post-Symbolist poet is an example of "the progressive disintegration of the human personality, the image of the badly fractured and spiritually homeless self".<sup>65</sup> Moreover, he is presented as existing in a vicious circle, since his poetry, which results in alienation from society, is in itself a consequence of alienation from society, since it is a necessary, even if unattainable, refuge from society<sup>66</sup> and a vain attempt to create a new area of existence, not only for the poet himself but also for other members of society (Lapathiotis, p. 230). The vain efforts of the poets are related to those of the penpushers who "μουτζουρώνουν / αθώα λευκά χαρτιά χωρίς αιτία "; the penpusher-poet does not, however, appear to form part of society as the penpusher-clerk does, since one "αιτία " for which the penpusher-poet writes is alienation from society.

Thus, the depiction of the poet as a penpusher is closely connected with the depiction of the poet as an outcast, which posits alienation from society as both cause and effect of the poet's work and thus conditions socially some of the prevailing themes of Post-Symbolist poetry.

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<sup>65</sup> Charles I. Glicksberg, *The Self in Modern Literature*, Pennsylvania State UP 1963, p. 182.

<sup>66</sup> Karyotakis, p. 87: "η πόησις / είναι το καταφύγιο που φθονούμε ".

### 2. 3. 3. The Poet as Outcast and Observer

The poet, composing his poetry because of his alienation from society and creating alienation from society by means of his poetic composition, becomes a social outcast. Moreover, society leads to a disintegration of the poet : "Κι εγώ βρίσκομαι ξένος / μέσα στον κόσμο αυτό, / σαν ένας πεθαμένος / στον ίδιο του εαυτό " (Papanikolaou, "Δεν είν' εδώ...", p. 58).

This is probably behind the kind of defamiliarization achieved by Post-Symbolist poetry. Defamiliarization had been proposed by the Romantics; Shelley defined poetry as lifting "the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and mak[ing] familiar objects be as if they were not familiar".<sup>67</sup> In Post-Symbolism, however, this process is reversed. The result of defamiliarization in Post-Symbolism is to emphasize the emptiness of objects and to loosen their denotative connections while reinforcing their connotative ones. The use of language in Post-Symbolism, which will be examined in Chapters 4 and 5, is therefore connected with the poet's place in society.

The poet-outcast defamiliarizes the world by pointing to its emptiness. For example Papanikolaou, in the same poem in which he depicts himself as "ξένο " and "πεθαμένο στον ίδιο του εαυτό ", characterizes the moon as "νεκρό ". Tellos Agras observed that Karyotakis's "οπτική εποπτεία " was empty and blurred, while his images lacked "υλικό βάρος ".<sup>68</sup> An example of this lack of "υλικό

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<sup>67</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A defence of Poetry" [1821] in *English Literary Criticism*, 1966, p. 169.

<sup>68</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά Β* , pp. 209-11.

βάρος " is "Ο κήπος είμαι... " (Karyotakis, p. 64). The first stanza evokes a happy past through scent ("με τ' άνθη ευωδούσε") and sound (χαρωπό τιτύβισμα πουλιών, κρυφομιλήματα, ψίθυρο φιλιών ). The second stanza evokes the present which is dominated by absences and death: "μάταια προσμένοντας κάποιαν επιστροφή ", thorns instead of flowers and snakes instead of nightingales. At the same time, the garden loses even more of its substance, since it acts only as a metaphor for the speaker: "ο κήπος είμαι ". The poem functions therefore on two levels: on one level it depicts the situation of the outcast speaker, while on another the outcast speaker renders the reality he depicts insubstantial and empty.

A similar process is at work in other Post-Symbolist poems where the poet-outcast defamiliarizes the world by foregrounding elements such as emptiness, insubstantiality and death. That is, the process of defamiliarization is not based on the presence of certain foregrounded elements but rather on the foregrounding of an absence (together with the foregrounding of language, which acquires the proportions of an entity that undermines and replaces the materiality of objects).

The poet-outcast sometimes seeks refuge in nature, as in Lapathiotis's "Μακριά, μακριά θα πάω..." (Lapathiotis, p. 29), where the speaker states his intention: "μακριά απ' τον κόσμο, πάω στη φύση". The nature he depicts, however, is fragmented or moribund while the assimilation of poetry to nature may take place only after the poet's death:

Και τη φτωχή καρδιά μου οι κλώνοι  
θα την αρπάξουν, πριν πνιγώ,  
και θα την κάμουν έν' αηδόνι,  
γλυκό-γλυκό, σιγό-σιγό...

Apart from nature and objects, people and poetry itself are also defamiliarized through the foregrounding of absence or the fragmentation of the poet-outcast. For example in Skarimbas's "*Χαλκίδα*" (Skarimbas, p. 13)<sup>69</sup> the speaker can be defined as a poet in that he creates the image he depicts through language ("*να φυσάει ο νότος*" - "*φύσαε - είπα - ο νότος*"). The poet is an outcast, being "*καταμόναχος*". Apart from the streets of the town which are depicted as "*σπασμένοι*", human beings are also fragmented, and moreover transformed: "*πάν' σε ξύλο κούφιο, πρόστυχο, ανάρια, / ως θερία, ως δέντρα - αναγλυμένοι - ως ψάρια / τα όνειρά μου (μούμιες) κι οι ανθρώποι*". Poetry itself becomes fragmented through the use of such syntax.

The poet-outcast may experience solitude or nostalgia for a lost paradise, as is often the case in Post-Symbolist poetry - for example in Ouranis's *Νοσταλγίες* - or may move on a different plane from that of other people, as for example "*ένας κλόουν τραγικός, που οι άνθρωποι θα δούνε / να παίζει, να συντρίβεται με την οπλή του αλόγου*" (Karyotakis, [*Αλογα μαύρα* ], p. 74). This different plane is created by others who observe the poet. At the same time, however, the defamiliarization of the world achieved by the poet-outcast is brought about through his being an observer. The poet's position as an observer is also linked to his position as an outcast by virtue of the fact that he or the speakers of his poems are not usually the subjects of verbs referring to action. In this, too, Post-Symbolism is a part of modern literature where "the grammatical fiction 'I' persists, but it is only a semantic

<sup>69</sup> Yannis Skarimbas, *Ουλαλούμ, Εαυτούληδες, Βοϊδάγγελοι*, Athens, Kaktos 1976, p. 13.

phantom. The self as doer is as ghostlike as the self as subject. It is a detached introvert self, at best a spectator of the phenomenal world".<sup>70</sup>

The poet as speaker may sometimes become an observer of himself, reaching a stage of self-detachment. This occurs in Emmanouil's poetry, where the speaker often observes himself from an external standpoint. For example in the last stanza of "Η Κυρία, ο Θάνατος κι εγώ " (Emmanouil, p. 41) where the speaker states his feelings, offering several possible explanations for them, he assumes the attitude of an indifferent and resigned observer. Nevertheless even here the poet or speaker observes and notes his own experiences rather than any sensations he might experience by looking beyond the actual world, as was for example Rimbaud's theory. For Rimbaud the poet "is not personally involved, since it is a mere accident that he happens to possess the faculty for receiving and transmitting visions of another world: JE est un autre".<sup>71</sup> In Greek Post-Symbolism the object of observation is the phenomenal world and in most cases the observer is personally involved in the observation, either expressing his reactions to the impressions he receives or projecting his vision onto the phenomenal world and defamiliarizing it.

The poet as outcast and observer may also employ, as a means of defamiliarizing reality, the formation of a poetic creature. This is the case in Filyras's "Ο Πιερότος " (Filyras, p. 79), where the speaker begins the process of defamiliarization by introducing himself and the reader as "pierrots", thus reversing the expected image and introducing an interplay between reality and unreality. Although the use of the two subjects "εσύ

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<sup>70</sup> Glicksberg, *The Self*, p. xii.

<sup>71</sup> Charles Chadwick, "Rimbaud", in *French Literature and its Background*, ed. by John Cruickshank, vol. 5, The Late Nineteenth Century, London, Oxford UP 1969, p. 104.

κι εγώ " in the first line links the speaker to his readers, the fact that the pierrot is "το σύμβολό μας" and the reduction of the existential subjects to anonymity and uniformity ("είχε τον ξένο μορφασμό και το δικό μας ") renders them symbols of the self-alienation of mankind. Moreover, the pierrot, apart from being a creature and a symbol of the speaker's and the reader's existence, is also a poetic creature, since the interplay between the various levels of the poem connects the entity of the pierrot with the entity of the poem. The "εγώ " of the poem, then, can be said to be the poet, who this time is an outcast from society together with his reader in that they are both self-alienated and in that by creating the pierrot they both move on a level different from that of society. The pierrot behaves "σα να 'ταν ανεμπόδιστος στην πλάση".

Whether he represents the free individual unhindered by social inhibitions and is thus contrasted with the poet and the reader or whether this freedom is questioned by the poet, the pierrot cannot live:

Είχε πρωθύστερη η μορφή του σημασία  
κι όμως μας απατούσε όλους μαζί  
κι ενώ ήταν άνθρωπος σωστός, ουσία  
γυρεύαμε και θέλαμε να ζει...

Since the pierrot is a poetic creature, poetry is thus depicted as having the power to create creatures which defamiliarize reality, but also as powerless outside its own domain. It is thus poetry itself that becomes an outcast from society, through its failure to function within it.

Therefore the poet becomes a social outcast because his poetry is at odds with society. From the point of view of the outcast he defamiliarizes reality by pointing to its emptiness, its lack of substance or its fragmentation, thereby becoming an observer. Part of the reality he

defamiliarizes may be himself and even poetry. Just as society and reality in general are seen through the prism of language and are a projection of the poet's vision, so poetry is sometimes seen through the prism of society and reality and in connection with them or in contrast to them. Thus, the Post-Symbolists' attitude to society derives both from their concept of the role of poetry and from their concept of the poet's place in society as a townsman, at the margins of society as a penpusher, or outside society as an outcast and an observer.

#### 2. 3. 4. The Poet's Attitude to Society

Apart from being a result of these conceptions of the poet's place in society, the poet's attitude to society also constitutes a factor of his place in it. That is, if the poet-townsman, the poet-penpusher and the poet-outcast are created by society, and thus constitute a passive aspect of poetics, the poet's attitude to society constitutes the active side of this, and a probable link between the two is the poet-observer.

The integration of poetry into urban life constitutes a part of the poet's attitude to society. This integration takes place through the various references in Post-Symbolist poems to urban life (e.g. Agras often refers to "γειτονιά " and its life, Filyras to "σαλόνι ", Emmanouil to bars and dance-halls) which partly replaces nature both as backdrop and as subject. Urban life thus acts as a source of inspiration, while at the same time its suitability as a source of inspiration is sometimes questioned, as for example in Agras's "Καιρός για τραγούδι ": "Στο λιμάνι, κρύο και μαύρο / στα χαμώγεια, εδώ κι εκεί, / αχ πού, τέτοιαν ώρα, να ' βρω

*/ νότες, μουσική ; " (Agras, Τριαντάφυλλα , p. 149).<sup>72</sup>*

Thus, poetry fluctuates between integration into urban life and a rejection both by it and of it, while the poet's "*Σταδιοδρομία* " (Karyotakis, p. 112) is integrated into urban life, since it includes meetings with other writers in cafés or publishing houses and in reviews in newspapers. In the cafés, the poet is conscious of a marginal existence and therefore of the irony of the statement, "*τα λόγια μου θα ' χουν ουσία, / η σιωπή μου μια σημασία* " (Karyotakis, p. 112). The "*φιλολογικός ρεαλισμός* " Agras discerns in Karyotakis<sup>73</sup> is a part of the fluctuation between the integration and the non-integration of poetry into urban life, since the references to other poets and their milieu point to the existence of a "special milieu composed of poets and other artists who separate themselves from the social hierarchy" and resist "social incorporation"<sup>74</sup>, while at the same time the actual and intellectual space where this separation takes place forms part of urban life and bourgeois society.

This fluctuation colours the poet's attitude towards society on a broader scale, too: "*Οι κοσμικοί κι οι απόκοσμοι μαζί/ να πούμε πως εζήσαμε σε αμάχη, / μέσα, μα και σαν έξω απ' τη ζωή* " (Filyras, "*Υπεράνω* ", p. 47). One pole of this fluctuation is constituted by the sparsity of references to historical or political events of the time: Karyotakis refers to the "*αγχόνη του Παγκάλου* " (Karyotakis, "*Η πεδιάς και το νεκροταφείον* ", p. 110) and to the "*δάφνες του*

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<sup>72</sup> Tellos Agras, *Τριαντάφυλλα μινής ημέρας*, ed. Kostas Steryopoulos, Athens, Fexis, p. 149.

<sup>73</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά Β* , pp. 201-202.

<sup>74</sup> Mukařovský, p. 157.



Σαγγάριου " ("Εἰς Ἀνδρέαν Κάλβον ", p. 100), Lapathiotis prays to France in 1916 ("Κραυγή ", p. 83) and Filyras refers to the "Θρήνο των προσφύγων " (p. 110). Certain poems contain implicit references to events or to the situation of the time which are masked by a general or ambiguous vocabulary, such as Papanikolaou's: "τα ρόδα τ' απριλιάτικα που πια μας τα ' χουν πάρει / η Μοίρα μας κι οι ξένοι " (1922; Papanikolaou, "Χειμώνας ", p. 19).

This becomes more obvious, perhaps, if one looks at the first form of Karyotakis's "Δον Κιχώτες " as published in *Νουμάς* in 1920.<sup>75</sup> There, the phrase of the final form " των μεγάλων / σχεδίων αντάξιοι μένουνε " is "των μεγάλων / ονείρων αντάξιοι μένουνε ", the "στη μίαν ανάληπτη Ζωή, του Ονείρου τους ιππότες / άναντρα να πεζέψουνε " is "στην ιστορία μιας Ζωής, τους μανιακούς ιππότες / αποσταμένοι να σταθούν ", while the last stanza is:

Αραδιαστά τους είδα εγώ, πεσμένους στα χαντάκια,  
ξαρμάτωτοι να ηλιάζουνε την ανοιχτή πληγή τους,  
κι ακούγοντας πόσον απαλά λαλούνε τα πουλάκια,  
να κλαίνε μάτια που έζησαν στον κόσμο τη ζωή τους.

References to the war exist then below the surface of a poem which deals generally with the poet's attitude to society and the attitude of society to the poet. In response to Ouranis's "Δον Κιχώτης " who compares the poet to Don Quixote, Karyotakis attacks the figure of the poet-leader who refuses to face reality. Beneath this figure lurks the figure of the *μεγαλοϊδεάτης* . Therefore the poem is both a poem of poetics and of politics and, moreover, the attitude to the place of the poet in society is apparently determined by the attitude to the events and the

<sup>75</sup> Ο *Νουμάς* , γρ. 17, no. 692 (1920) p. 20, now in K.G. Karyotakis, *Άπαντα τα Ευρισκόμενα* , ed. G.P. Savidis, vol. 1, Athens 1965, pp. 209-10.

political situation of the time.

The second pole of the fluctuation between the integration and the non-integration of poetry into the historical and socio-political situation of the time consists in the lack of references to that situation. This characterizes the majority of Post-Symbolist poems. What the Post-Symbolists seem once more to be foregrounding is an absence, which interacts with the absence of life, materiality and unity in their vision of the actual world. In this way they create a negative attitude to society which in turn has been engendered by the attitude of society to the poets, by the historical, socio-political and ideological situation of the time. That is to say, the absence of references to historical and political reality can be seen both as a result of the poet's being an outcast and as an act of the poet-observer who, by foregrounding this absence, defamiliarizes the ideological reality of the time.

While the first pole of the fluctuation is sometimes (in Karyotakis's case) characterized by satire, the second pole is usually characterized by the promotion of pessimism and melancholy (as for example in the case of Ouranis and Lapathiotis) which can be combined with irony and humour (as in the case of Skarimbass). Therefore, apart from foregrounding an absence, another way in which the poet's attitude to society is manifested in the pole of non-integration of poetry into reality is in the poetic discourse. According to Mukařovský, "poetry influences the way in which the entire society views the world through creating reading individuals. The relation of poetry to reality is thus powerful, and this is precisely because the poetic work does not refer only to particular realities but to the total reality reflected in the individual and collective

consciousness. Since, then, poetic designation [...] often sets into motion the entire lexical system of a given language, the thesis we have adduced may also be formulated in the sense that poetry in the course of its development constantly, and always in new ways, confronts the vocabulary of the given language with the world of things which this vocabulary is supposed to reflect and to whose changes it is continuously adapting itself".<sup>76</sup>

The fluctuation between integration and non-integration of poetry into reality is itself depicted in two varieties of discourse: statement and satire. Lapathiotis, for example, writes:

Με γιομίζει τ' όραμα του Απείρου,  
- κι όμως η καρδιά μου είναι στη γη [...]

Τίποτα, στη γη, δεν μου είναι ξένο,  
τίποτα πικρό και τρυφερό,  
μα έξω κι από τόπο κι από χρόνο,  
ζω μες στον Απέραντο Καιρό...

(Lapathiotis, "Homo sum", p. 233).

Karyotakis writes:

Αν έρθει κανείς την πόρτα μας να χτυπήσει  
θα φαντάζεται πως έχουμε ζήσει [...]

Κι αν ποτέ στα νύχια μας ανασηκωθούμε,  
τις βίλες του Posilipo θα ιδούμε,  
Κύριε, Κύριε, και το τερραίν του Παραδείσου  
όπου θα παίζουν cricket οι οπαδοί Σου

(Karyotakis, [Όταν κατέβουμε], p. 140).

In Karyotakis's poem the fluctuation between integration and non-integration is perpetuated after death where the observation of a Paradise created along the lines of the accepted social values does not offer the poet material for poetic discourse ("τί θα πούμε ;"), reducing him to

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<sup>76</sup> Mukařovský, p. 72.

silence.

Thus, the poet's attitude to society consists in a fluctuation between the integration and non-integration of poetry into reality in general. This attitude results from the existence of the poet in society, at its margins and outside society, and it provides the poetic answer to this situation; this answer consists in different kinds of poetic discourse and in silence. The attitude of the Post-Symbolists to society is in turn connected with their efforts to find either escape routes leading out of society or alternatives in life within society.

### 2. 3. 5. Solutions Proposed

Since the poet, as presented in Post-Symbolist poetry, is at odds with society and does not occupy a central place in it, the type of poetry promoted falls chiefly into the category of "λυρισμός του εγώ".<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the experience of the 'εγώ' is not related to a general experience, thus integrating the poet into society, but, in contrast, isolates the poet from society. Much of the subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry aims at creating a space for the poet that separates and protects him from society and reality in general, although at the same time this subject-matter suggests the vulnerability of this space, since the poet characterizes himself as a "φλογέρα" into which pain blows (Lapathiotis, "Λυπητερή μελωδία", p. 10) or as "κάτι σαν κύμα μες σ' απέραντο πέλαγο" (Ouranis, *Spleen*, p. 14).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Palamas, 10, pp. 508 ff.

<sup>78</sup> Kostas Ouranis, *Spleen*, Athens, 1912, p. 14.

The space created by poetry is composed, apart from language, chiefly of escape and memory. These two themes are linked to other themes, such as nostalgia and desire; their function in Post-Symbolist poetry will be looked at in Chapter 3, under the heading "subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry". Nevertheless their dominant presence in the poems is conditioned by the poet's place in society and therefore they can probably be defined as ways of escaping from society. While escape consists of a negative relationship to a present time or space (e.g. "Θέλω να φύγω πια από 'δώ, θέλω να φύγω πέρα, / σε κάποιο τόπο αγνώριστο και νέο ", Karyotakis, [Θέλω να φύγω πια από ' δώ...], p. 79), memory can be either a way out of society or an alternative way of life within society by acting as a centrifugal or a centripetal force. An example of collective memory is Palamas's "Η Φλογέρα του Βασιλιά ", where the created memory can act as a uniting force for society, which can then aspire to a common future, determined by the collective memory. The Post-Symbolists reject collective memory, at least of the type promoted by Palamas's generation. For example, I.M. Panayotopoulos observed a lack of a "συνείδηση ιστορίας " in Agras's poetry: "Αυτός ο φιλίστορας, ο πολύμαθος, δεν περιδιαβάζει ανάμεσα στα μάρμαρα, για να ξυπνήσει τους αρχαίους αντίλαλους, όπως τόσοι και τόσοι ".<sup>79</sup> At the same time, individual memory is linked either to nostalgia for a happier past or to an intensification of present sorrow and of the sense of isolation, or both. For example in Papanikolaou's "Μέσα στη βουή του δρόμου " (Papanikolaou, p. 37) the speaker talks about a dream which he found and lost in the past. The result of the

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<sup>79</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos, *Τα πρόσωπα και τα κείμενα*, vol. 5, (1949), p. 83.

"πέρασμα" of the dream which was "μιαν ελπίδα πεθαμένη / που μας ζει και μας πεθαίνει / κι όλο μας τραβάει ' δώ κάτου / ώς την πόρτα του θανάτου ". This dead hope, being a result of the "πέρασμα" of the dream, is a form of memory in itself. Memory in this case provokes pain and leads to death. One example of memory in the form of nostalgia for a happier past is Papanikolaou's "Εν' απόγευμα " (p. 21) where the speaker talks about a lost love, which had filled "με άπειρη γλυκύτητα τα ξένα". Memory acquires the form of the sense of touch: "Και νιώθω ακόμα σήμερα, που σ' έχω πια χαμένα, / απ' το κορμί μου να περνά κάποιο δικό σου χάδι", and ties the speaker to a private past: "σ' αγάπησα και σ' αγαπώ και τώρα - ", "σε θέλω και σε νοσταλγώ ".

Memory is linked to nostalgia and to a sense of isolation from the present. Nostalgia, in turn, is often linked to escape - e.g. "τον ουρανό εγώ νοσταλγώ, που κάποτε είχα ζήσει, / δίχως χαρές και συφορές κι ανθρώπους, πάντα Μόνος " (Ouranis, *Spleen* , V, p. 14) - it therefore forms part of a system of forces, which create a space protecting the individual from society and distancing him from it.

At the same time, certain aspects of these themes are connected with other elements of Post-Symbolist poetics. For example the lack of a collective memory is probably linked to the reaction of the Post-Symbolists against the nationalism of Palamas's generation. Moreover, the frequently cosmopolitan nature of escape (as for example in Ouranis's poetry) again appears to be negatively connected with nationalism, promoting cosmopolitanism instead.

If cosmopolitanism can be seen as something opposed to

nationalism, it constitutes an alternative suggestion to life within society; therefore escape, apart from being a way out of society, can also be a way of life within society.

The same may apply at a more general level to the kind of "λυρισμός του εγώ" prevalent in Post-Symbolist poetry. While on one level it aims at creating a separate space for the poet, on another level it breaks down the barrier between the poet and society, which was intrinsic to the concept of the poet as a prophet, seer and leader of society. The existence of this barrier was for example implied in Palamas's depiction of the poet as a "διαλεχτός [που] δεν μνησικακεί κατά του πλήθους" that may turn against the poet because he has "την υψηλή συνείδηση μιας αλήθειας που δεν έφτασε ακόμα να φωτίσει τους άλλους γύρω του".<sup>80</sup> The change in the role of poetry and in the poet's place in society led to the breaking down of this barrier. For example Emilios Hourmouzios pointed out in connection with Ouranis, that "η ποίησις με τον Ουράνη, άπλωνε ένα χέρι συντροφικό στον αναγνώστη της. Δεν του ζητούσε ούτε έξαρση ούτε φιλοσοφική προπαίδεια".<sup>81</sup> On one of its levels poetry dominated by subjects such as memory, nostalgia, desire and escape links the poet to all other individuals, thus transposing the centre of gravity of society to individual discourse and thereby proposing alternative ways of life and poetry within society.

Thus, part of the subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry, i.e. memory and escape, points to ways out of society while at the same time

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<sup>80</sup> Palamas, 10, p. 421.

<sup>81</sup> Emilios Hourmouzios, *Ελληνική Δημιουργία*, yr. 6, vol. 12, no. 132 (1953), p. 160 ff.

it may be connected with the concepts of antinationalism and cosmopolitanism, thus pointing to ways of life within society. Moreover, the poetic discourse itself, although on one level it tries to separate the poet from society (chiefly through a space created by language), on another level comes nearer to the discourse of individual members of society; thus once again a way out of society interacts with a way of life within society.

If this interaction can be said to result in "the type of reading (attitude de lecture) which the poem imposes on its readers",<sup>82</sup> another type of reading that seems to be proposed by Post-Symbolist poetry is that of poetry as dialogue either between individuals (in Polydouri's case) or between poems (in Skarimbass's case).

In Polydouri's case the dialogue takes place between the speaker and her beloved. Since the beloved occupies the centre of the speaker's world, acting as a filter transforming the world, or a prism through which the speaker looks at the world, the dialogue between the two constitutes the pivot of the poetic discourse. This dialogue takes various forms: the beloved acts or speaks, and his speech is often connected with action, since his song can, for example, dominate nature: "Μόνο έφτανε ο αχός του τραγουδιού σου, / μία ανάστερη νυχτιά χωρίς πνοή" (Polydouri, [Κι ήρθε μοιραία...], p. 102).<sup>83</sup> The beloved is also the recipient of the speaker's poems, while at the same time there exists an interplay between the speech of the one and the silence of the other. For example the speaker "ξεφυλλίζει] τα ποιήματα" of her beloved "με της σιωπής

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<sup>82</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics : Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* , London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1975, p. 164.

<sup>83</sup> Maria Polydouri, *Απαντα* , ed. Lili Zografou, Athens, Estia 1961, p. 102.



τα κρίνα που λυγούνε " in her hands, or the silent beloved may become a song for the speaker: "Κι όπως θα βλέπεις γύρω σου, βουβά και λυπημένα / θα γίνεις όνειρο, καημός, τραγούδι εσύ για μένα " (Polydouri, "Τα σονέττα του κυνηγού ", p. 129). Poetic language for Polydouri has both a transmitter and a recipient and it may contain silence as a form of expression rather than as a result of the inadequacy of poetic language to express feelings as appears to be the case in other Post-Symbolists. In Polydouri's poems the expression of feelings is not an aim in itself but part of a communication.

Thus, poetry as communication between individuals seems to be one alternative suggestion for existence within society proposed by some Post-Symbolist poetry. Another suggestion is that of communication between poems, that is, intertextuality. In Skarimbas's poetry this is a prevailing feature, not only adding semantic levels to his poems but also proposing new readings of other poems.

For example "Μπαλάντα " (Skarimbas, p. 27) appears to contain references to three poems by Karyotakis. The repetition of the phrases, "τί ωραία " and "που είμαι ωραίος " may refer to Karyotakis's "ωραία να ' ναι τα πρόσωπα και να χαμογελούνε, / ωραίος ακόμη ο ίδιος εαυτός μου " ([Θέλω να φύγω πια από 'δώ... ]). Phrases such as the repeated "ακόμη νέος " and "να φτάσω / σέρνοντας της νοσταλγίας το βήμα " may refer to [Τί νέοι που φτάσαμεν εδώ ], constituting both a serious comment on it (that arriving young "στο χείλος / του κόσμου" or "όξ' απ' το σχήμα " has its positive aspects) and an ironic one, since Karyotakis's "στο χείλος / του κόσμου, δώθε απ' τ' όνειρο και κείθε από τη γη " is echoed in the lines, "πίσω απ' το σκέδιό μου να

περάσω, όξ' απ' το σχήμα ". While for Karyotakis the world and the non-world have an objective value, and so has the passage from the one to the other, for Skarimbas the two worlds and the passage from the one to the other have more to do with shadow-theatre. The third poem Skarimbas is probably referring to is [Όταν κατέβουμε ]. Phrases such as: "με δίχως στόμα / κι όμως μιλάνε ", "άυλοι φίλοι ", "σαν με φιλήσει, / με δίχως χείλη " seem to allude to Karyotakis's "όταν κατέβουμε τη σκάλα τί θα πούμε " and "αλλά εκεί κάτου τί να πούμε, πού να πάμε ; ". Since the last six stanzas in "Μπαλάντα " depend on "να ξέρω τί να πω " (να πω, να λέω, να ορκίζομαι), they seem to constitute an answer to Karyotakis's question. This answer is both serious (the dead man will talk about his unrequited love) and ironic, since the speaker satirizes certain romantic motifs: "Δίχως - τί ωραία ! - ν' αγαπηθώ στη Γη της ", "Αγνός, αγνός - να ορκίζομαι - είμαι."

For Skarimbas, then, a poem may constitute a comment on or a response to other poems and therefore a communication between poems. Taking into account the place of poetry in society, as depicted in Post-Symbolist poems, this communication may constitute both a way out of society through the creation of an intercommunicating poetic system and an alternative way for poetry to exist within society, since it provides a commentary on the special character of the poetic discourse, treating its distance from everyday discourse ironically (i. e. implicitly suggesting an integration of poetic discourse into everyday discourse).

Therefore the ways out of society proposed by Post-Symbolist poetry are connected with the attitude of the Post-Symbolists to society

and with the place of the poet as defined by society. Apart from ways out of society, the Post-Symbolists propose alternatives within society, deviating from the ones proposed by society itself. They promote, for example, individual discourse and dialogue between individuals or between poems instead of a hierarchical relationship of leadership and subordination between poetry and society. They also promote cosmopolitanism instead of nationalism. The alternatives within society interact with the alternatives to society, pointing once more to the place of the poet within society, at its margins and outside it, and at the same time to the existence of poetry at the boundaries between language and reality and between language and silence.

Thus, the place of the poet in society as seen by the Post-Symbolists consists of some interlinked aspects, such as the poet as townsman, existing in an urban society and presenting a new view of nature, the uncreative penpusher-poet, feeling alienated from society, and the poet-outcast who defamiliarizes society and reality by becoming an observer who foregrounds fragmentation, insubstantiality and absence. The Post-Symbolist attitude to society fluctuates between integration and non-integration into it. Moreover, the effort of the poets to find both ways out of society and alternatives within it, is connected with their concept of their place in society and with their attitude towards it.

Through this effort and consequently through the system of concepts behind it, concerning both the role of poetry and the poet's place in society, the Post-Symbolists defamiliarize not only society and reality but also poetry itself. This is achieved through the transposition of the centre

of gravity from the connection of poetry with history and with the aspirations of the establishment, to its means of expression and to forces within the individual, such as memory, nostalgia, desire and escape. The choice of these themes therefore, derives from concepts of the role of poetry, of the poet's place as defined by society, and of his attitude towards it.

## Chapter 3

### The Subject-Matter of Post-Symbolist Poetry

In "La statue dans la symbolique de Pouchkine" Jakobson examines the symbols which recur in Pushkin's poetry and defines these symbols as the dominant or organizing factors of Pushkin's poetic system.<sup>1</sup> In this way Jakobson examines the poetic system of an individual poet through the recurrent and interlinked symbols which constitute the "particular mythology" ("mythologie particulière") of the poet.

In order to deal with the works of a group of poets such as the Post-Symbolists, Jakobson's approach may be modified by a shift of focus from symbols to subject-matter since the common recurrent elements of poetics where a group of poets is concerned are more likely to be thematic than symbolic.

This chapter will therefore examine the dominant factors of the subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry, that is, some themes, which function as organizers of Post-Symbolist poetry in that they not only recur in the works of the Post-Symbolists but also shed light on how other themes are viewed. These recurrent themes are memory, nostalgia, desire and escape from the real world to an imaginary one by means of poetry.

The emphasis on these themes is connected with the attempts of the Post-Symbolists to seek refuge from society in their poetry and to

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<sup>1</sup> Roman Jakobson, *Questions de Poétique*, Paris, Seuil 1973, pp. 152-53.

reinterpret the role of poetry within society. Thus, the subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry is to a large extent socially conditioned. That is, the poet's place in society, as viewed by the Post-Symbolists, and the poet's attitude to society, as expressed in their poetry, circumscribe the thematic area of Post-Symbolist poetry. Therefore the subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry is closely related to the historical, socio-political and ideological context of the period in which the Post-Symbolists composed their works and to their way of viewing the role of poetry and the poet's place in society.

Taking into account the context of the period in which the Post-Symbolists composed their poems and the attitude of the Post-Symbolists to the role of poetry and to society (dealt with in Chapters 1 and 2), this chapter will examine the thematic function of memory, nostalgia, desire and escape in Post-Symbolist poetry.

The thematic function of memory, nostalgia, desire and escape consists in the effort of Post-Symbolist poetry to transform reality or to move away from it. This is also characteristic of Romantic literature where the real world clashes with the imaginary and where "the unreal world created by imagination reflects and projects the private reality of feeling".<sup>2</sup> In Symbolism, however, the poets sometimes express an awareness of the attempt itself. In Baudelaire's poetry, for example, nostalgia is a dominant theme; it is, however, viewed explicitly as nostalgia. "The speaker unmistakably places himself outside the world he longs for: 'Je n'ai pas oublié', he boasts; which means that he lives in a

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<sup>2</sup> Margery Sabin, *English Romanticism and the French Tradition*, USA, Harvard University Press 1976, p. 72.

time and in a manner which might well have made him forget. The negative, in keeping with the general pragmatic principle of non-obviousness, implies the normality of the positive that is denied".<sup>3</sup> In this way another kind of reality is created somewhere between the real world and that of imagination, and this "reality", which is the reality of poetry, functions as a link between the two worlds. In Greek Post-Symbolism this link is often depicted as inadequate and therefore the attempt to pass from one world to the other by means of poetry frequently fails.

The themes of memory, nostalgia, desire and escape assume a special character in Greek Post-Symbolism, since they form part of the inadequate link between the real and the imaginary worlds and are consequently connected with the act of composing poetry. The dominant presence of these themes, together with their position in poetic reality and the doubts expressed as to their effectiveness constitutes a special feature of Post-Symbolist poetry.

The approach to these themes will here consist in examining their function in connection with the act of poetic composition and attempting to distinguish the elements thereby introduced into Greek poetry by the Post-Symbolists. I will look first at the way in which these themes function in the poetry of Palamas, the Greek Symbolists (Gryparis, Porfyra and Hatzopoulos), and Cavafy. These poets have been selected because of the chronological connection of their poetry with Post-Symbolism. Palamas was the leading figure of the Generation of the 1880s, the Greek Symbolists were the immediate predecessors of the Post-Symbolists, and Cavafy was a contemporary <sup>writer</sup> whose poetry the Post-

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<sup>3</sup> R.A. York, *The Poem as Utterance*, London, Methuen 1986, p. 31.

Symbolists tried to promote. Some reference will also be made to the treatment of these themes in the poetry of Sikelianos because, although the Post-Symbolists rarely seem to refer or react explicitly to him, his was undeniably a dominant poetic voice of the period. I shall then examine the functioning of these themes in Post-Symbolist poetry. In looking at the dominant presence of memory, nostalgia, desire and escape in Post-Symbolist poetry I shall concentrate on three problems, which it poses: (a) the objects of memory, nostalgia, and desire, (b) the effectiveness of memory, desire and escape and (c) the relationships of memory, nostalgia, desire and escape to the poetic language.

### 3. 1. Other Poetic Voices

#### 3. 1. 1. Palamas

In those of Palamas's poems that belong to the categories defined by the poet himself as "*λυρισμός του εμείς*" or "*λυρισμός των όλων*", memory, nostalgia and desire function in a macroscopic and indirect way. That is, poetry contains the memory of the Greek nation and expresses nostalgia for a glorious past and the desire for a glorious future. For example, "*Η Φλογέρα του Βασιλιά*" could be considered to be a manifestation of historical memory, since it deals with Byzantium. Poetry is depicted as a means through which this memory is transmitted to the people as the poet transforms the sound of the emperor's flute into words. The role assumed by poetry is, however, far more active than this, since poetry does not act simply as a medium for memory but rather as a way



of creating memory for the reader. This is achieved both by the selection of the historical moments depicted in the poems and by the prism through which these moments are viewed. Thus, the relation of poetry to memory is one of both selection and combination. Moreover, the creative force in this relationship is poetry; that is, memory is not depicted as producing poetry but as being produced by it. Since a prevailing factor in the poems which belong to "λυρισμός του εμείς " is nationalistic ideology, memory is a product of this ideology as well as a means of expressing it.

The same applies to nostalgia and desire. Nostalgia for a glorious past is implicitly contained in memory as well as in the desire for a glorious future. Sometimes nostalgia for the past is castigated, as for example in "Λόγος Ε " of "Ο Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου " where the gypsy affirms the "θάνατος των Αρχαίων":

ποτέ πια  
δε θα ξαναζήσετε τη ζωή σας,  
ξωτικά ! [...]

Κι όποιος δούλος σας θα γίνει  
και σας πάρει καταπόδι,  
ή ένας μόνος, ή όλο γένος  
θα σβηστεί με σας.

The object of disapproval is, however, sterile nostalgia that leads to attempts to imitate and reproduce the past rather than produce a future inspired by the past and equal to it. Therefore, Palamas promotes the idea of creative nostalgia as opposed to the nostalgia promoted by the Romantics and the supporters of Katharevousa:

Και μονάχα όποιος μαζί σας  
δε θα χάσει τον εαυτό του  
και θα κόψει μόνο απ' τ' άνθια σας  
για να στεφανώσει τα μαλλιά του -

μόνο εκείνος εδώ κάτου  
στολισμένος θα τραβήξει σα γαμπρός,  
θα τραβήξει στολισμένος με τη χάρη σας,  
θα τραβήξει εμπρός !<sup>4</sup>

The desire for a glorious future or for a future characterized by a realization of various ideals promoted by Palamas is often explicitly stated in the poems. Thus, memory serves to accentuate this desire by creating a history that justifies it, while nostalgia may function as a source of this desire.

Apart from the national or international scale on which memory, nostalgia and desire function, there is also an individual scale, in poems belonging to the category defined as "λυρισμός του εγώ ". In these poems, references to memory and nostalgia are rare (e.g. there are some in "Γυρισμός ", such as "γύρισα στα ξανθά παιδιάτικα λημέρια, / γύρισα στο λευκό της νιότης μονοπάτι " <sup>5</sup> ), whilst desire is usually specified as desire for a beloved person. There are a few exceptions to this, as for example in *Τα Παθητικά Κρυφομιλήματα* : "Στον κόσμο ετούτο με τον καημό / σα να ' χω ζήσει μιας άλλης πλάσης " <sup>6</sup> or in "Ασκραίος " where the speaker "όνειρα βοσκολογούσ[ε] μαύρα " until he meets the Muses and becomes "ο ποιητής, ο μαντευτής και ο μάγος " <sup>7</sup> . Desire either as "καημός " or as "όνειρα " is connected with poetry, which acts as a fulfilment of desire by providing the means for the poet to communicate with the "άλλη πλάση " or for the speaker to become "μαντευτής και μάγος".

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<sup>4</sup> Palamas, 3, p. 352.

<sup>5</sup> Palamas, 3, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Palamas, 7, p. 530.

<sup>7</sup> Palamas, 3, pp. 204-205.

This function of poetry as a fulfilment of desire is related to the "orphyic" notion of "poetic speech as the ground of all signification". Poetry possesses the power not only of speaking about all things but of bringing everything into existence as well. "The world is brought into being and upheld there by the energy of words".<sup>8</sup> A main concern of the "orphyic" poet is to name things or ideas in order to bring them into being and thus create his world. This concern prevails in Palamas's poetry and is explicitly mentioned, for example, in "Ηγησώ " where the poet brings the statue of Hegeso to life and is asked by it: "Παρακαλώ σε, / όνομα δώσε "<sup>9</sup>. Thus, poetic language and consequently poetic imagination are omnipotent; for example, Palamas addresses rhyme, saying: "της Φαντασίας το καράβι πάει μ' εσένα πρίμα "<sup>10</sup> or speaks about the dynamic power of imagination : "Η Φαντασία μας πάει αλλού, στα τάρταρα και στ' άστρα, / κι είναι πλανεύτρα μάγισσα και ξένη ξελογιάστρα ".<sup>11</sup>

For Palamas, poetic imagination can fulfil the poet's every desire while poetic language can bring into existence a world that contains not only people, objects and ideas but the whole of time and space as well. Therefore, memory does not constitute an important force in itself, since it is embodied in poetic language. This may account for the sparsity of references in Palamas's poetry to memory or nostalgia and also for the specific character of memory and nostalgia where they are mentioned. For example, the speaker expresses his nostalgia for Missolonghi and for

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<sup>8</sup> Bruns, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Palamas, 7, pp. 509-10.

<sup>10</sup> Palamas, 3, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Palamas, 5, p. 176.

another kind of life: "Να ήμουν, ξυπνώντας ρυθμικά, ψαράς με το σταλίκι / τα κοιμισμένα σου νερά, καημένο Μισολόγγι!"<sup>12</sup> or again a memory: "κι η μνήμη μου σαν όνειρο του ονείρου πλέκει / γλυκιά μισοσβημέν' εικόνα, μια μητέρα"<sup>13</sup>. The objects of memory and nostalgia are specified and form at the same time a part of the poetic language by which they are controlled. That is, the speaker is able to depict Missolonghi and the life he would like to lead, and his memory "πλέκει" an image, thereby following a process of composition inherent in poetic language. Memory is realized within the poetic language and nostalgia is fulfilled by it because the poetic language possesses the power of recalling the past by describing it. Thus the answer to the poet's nostalgia: "Το περασμένο καλοκαίρι / (τάχα θα το 'βρω άλλη φορά ;) / απ' όλα εκείνα εγώ είχα πλάσει / μιαν ασυνήθιστη χαρά" is the detailed description of the events and the scenes of last summer.<sup>14</sup>

An exception to this is "Ο Τάφος", where "Λόγος", "Στίχος" and "Ρυθμός" prove inadequate to preserve the memory of the dead son:

Τούτων όλων ο καημός  
και ο θρήνος και η φροντίδα  
είναι μιαν ολόχρυση  
της μνήμης προσωπίδα  
  
καρφωτή στο πρόσωπο  
τ' αμάλαγο της λήθης.

Nevertheless, although the poet expresses doubts about the power and truth of poetic language ("Κάθε στίχος πλάνημα / και κάθε λόγος ψέμα") his doubts seem to concern only one level of memory and poetic

<sup>12</sup> Palamas, 5, p. 176.

<sup>13</sup> Palamas, 3, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Palamas, 5, p. 437.

language: the failure of poetic language to preserve *μνήμη* in life; poetic language can, however, build a *μνήμα* outside time and space:

Το σπιτάκι σου έπλασα  
Παντοτεινό για σένα

Μόνο με του πνεύματος  
Τα μάγια ! Σου το υψώνω  
Σ' ένα τόπον άυλον,  
απείραχτο απ' το χρόνο.<sup>15</sup>

Some more exceptions to the successful outcome of memory or desire within poetic language can be found in Palamas's later collections where he introduces the themes of the evanescence of poetry and silence. An example of the first is the "Ενας επίλογος" of *Περάσματα και Χαιρετισμοί* (1931):<sup>16</sup>

Στίχοι. Δεν έχουν ζωής μακροήμερης τη χάρη.  
Πρόφτασέ τους. Γυρεύουν μια ματιά.  
Κομμάτια ο άνεμος όλους θα τους πάρει,  
όσους δεν κάψει η φωτιά.

An example of the second is "Η Σιωπή " from the same collection:<sup>17</sup>

Να σου μεστώνουν και το νου σκοποί και πόθοι,  
σαν άγραφα δεφτέρια πόθοι και σκοποί,  
ν' αγαπάς ό,τι δεν απλώθη, δεν ειπώθη·  
να ζεις με τη σιωπή.

These themes are not frequent in the poetry of Palamas; they raise doubts about the omnipotence of poetic language and, in particular, its ability to express everything, and thus create a space for the ineffable (e.g. "μα τίποτε // [...] σαν εσέ; θείε πόθε, / κι ανείπωτε !" <sup>18</sup> ).

Therefore in the poetry of Palamas that has a national or universal

<sup>15</sup> Palamas, 1, pp. 425, 381.

<sup>16</sup> Palamas, 9, p. 440.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>18</sup> Palamas, 11, p. 97.

outlook, memory is dictated by the prevailing ideology of Palamas's poetry, whilst nostalgia is implicitly contained in the desire for a future as described by the poet. On the individual scale, memory, nostalgia and desire are not often mentioned in relation to poetic language, since for Palamas poetic language constitutes the object of desire, to which he already has access, and is omnipotent and all-enclosing, thus creating no space for nostalgia. Moreover, with a few significant exceptions, mostly in his later collections, the rare objects of nostalgia are usually specific moments, places or events of the past and are attained by the poetic language itself.

### 3. 1. 2. Sikelianos

Poetic language is characterized by omnipotence in Sikelianos's poetry too. The "Λόγος" is *πάθος, μέθη, ρίζα, Ελλάδα, Ρυθμιστή[ς] μαζί και Αριθμητή[ς]*<sup>19</sup> and thus incorporates and satisfies memory and desire. "Λόγος" is defined by the speaker as "*Θεία ενότητα βαθιά μου, / μες στην άσωτη αρμονία ή μες στη μάχη / των λαών μαζί και των ουράνιων από πάνω μου σφαιρών*"<sup>20</sup> and this unity includes "[της] Μνήμης / βαθιά το φως τ' αδιαίρετο".<sup>21</sup> Poetic language can transform illusion into actual reality:

Οχι, δεν είναι χίμαιρα  
να καβαλάμε τ' όνειρο τη θείαν ετούτη μέρα,  
που όλα, ορατά κι αόρατα, κι εμείς και οι ήρωες, κι οι θεοί,  
στην ίδια ορμάμε μέσα αιώνια σφαίρα !<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Anghelos Sikelianos, *Λυρικός Βίος*, Athens, Ikaros 1966, vol. 3, p. 233 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>21</sup> Sikelianos, vol. 5, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

The desires expressed in Sikelianos's poetic language are fulfilled within and through it; for example, the phrase "Κι εἶπα [...] θα ῥτεί " expresses both prophecy and desire, and both the prophecy and the desire are fulfilled in the poem: "Και νά ἦρτε ! / Η πλέρια εικόνα Του ἦρτε ".<sup>23</sup> This fulfilment depends on the verb "εἶπα ": that is, poetic language itself possesses the power to fulfil the desires it expresses.

Another feature of Sikelianos's poetry which conditions the nature of memory and desire and the absence of escape and nostalgia in his poems is his Orphic notion of life. That is, since Sikelianos believes in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, memory is satisfied within this cycle: "Τέλος κι αρχήν η μνήμη εδῶ δεν ἔχει ",<sup>24</sup> while desire consists in the existence of this cycle and of unity: "Το αύριο, το χτες, το σήμερα, ο ένας παλμός να ορίζει".<sup>25</sup>

If viewed in the general historical and socio-political context of the period in which he is writing, Sikelianos's poetry may be considered to incorporate nostalgia for a mythical past where "λόγος " was identified with "μύθος ", and an escape to the realm of an omnipotent poetic language. What, however, is of interest here is the cyclical notion of life and consequently of memory and desire, and at the same time the prevailing omnipotence of poetic language which allows for the fulfilment of desires. Thus, although Sikelianos's approach to memory and desire deviates from that of Palamas, there are certain similarities between Sikelianos's and Palamas's approaches as regards the omnipotence of

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<sup>23</sup> Sikelianos, 3, p. 203 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Sikelianos, 5, p. 105.

<sup>25</sup> Sikelianos, 4, p. 40.

poetic language in its relation to memory and desire.

### 3. 1. 3. The Symbolists

The presence of memory, desire, nostalgia and sometimes escape in the poetry of the Greek Symbolists<sup>26</sup> marks a deviation from Palamas's poetics. Moreover in Symbolist poetry memory and desire are no longer connected with nationalist ideology, but instead belong to the individual scale. In Gryparis's poetry, however, the confidence in poetic language continues to prevail and to determine the function of memory, nostalgia and desire.

In "Σαπφώ", for example,<sup>27</sup> poetic language creates a dream and preserves memory: "Τη λύρα για παντοτεινό προσκέφαλό της έχει / ν' ακούει και στον ύπνο της σαν όνειρο να τρέχει / καινούριος πάντα ο αντίλαλος απ' τα παλιά της πάθη". The result of poetry here is the fulfilment of desire since through the acoustic and semantic link established between "φως" and "Φάωνας", Sappho's unrequited love becomes requited: the light of the sun "θαρρείς και είναι ο Φάωνας...μετάνιωσε κι εστάθη / και της νεκρής αγάπης του την κεφαλή χαϊδεύει". The transformation of the light into Sappho's beloved is achieved through poetic language. Poetic language seems to constitute

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<sup>26</sup> The poets examined here are Gryparis, Porfyra and Hatzopoulos, although, as mentioned in the Introduction and in Chapter 1, works of other poets can also be said to be Symbolist, such as Varnalis's *Κηρήθρες* of 1905 and *Προσκυνητής* of 1919, both of which Varnalis later disowned (see, for example, Yeoryios Valetas, "Η ζωή και το έργο του Κώστα Βάρναλη", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 98, number 1163 (Christmas 1975), p. 140; Thanassis Papathanassopoulos, "Η ποίηση του Βάρναλη", *Ibid.*, p. 75). In *Κηρήθρες* and *Προσκυνητής* Varnalis refers to memory and desire. The examination of these themes is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis, since Varnalis does not appear to constitute a dominant poetic voice for the Post-Symbolists.

<sup>27</sup> I.N. Gryparis, *Σκαρβαλοί και Τερρακότες*, Athens, Sideris, p. 20.



the dominant element in the poetry of Gryparis as in that of Palamas. In Gryparis's case, however, poetic language is characterized by omnipresence rather than, as in the case of Palamas, omnipotence.

In Gryparis's poetry, memory, nostalgia and desire are usually transformed into language; in "Χωρισμός",<sup>28</sup> for example, the speaker says, "Μια θάλασσα και στην καρδιά έχω κλείσει"; this sea becomes articulate ("έναν θρήνον αντίφωνο ν' αρχίσει ") and transforms pain into song: "τους πόνους μου τραγούδια να σου κάμω ". Apart from being transformed into language, these elements are also controlled by language; for example in "Το ωραίο νησί "<sup>29</sup> the speaker describes his despair at seeing the island of his desire sail away from him; the whole image depends, however, on the main verb of the first sentence: "Το ωραίο νησί, που ο πόθος του με ανάβει, / φαντάζομαι πως φεύγει κι αρμενίζει".

To sum up, the subjects of memory, nostalgia and desire enter Gryparis's poetry, and this marks a deviation from Palamas's poetics. They are, however, subordinate to poetic language.

In Porfyra's poetry, on the other hand, poetic language tends to emphasize silence, marking a more radical deviation from Palamas's poetics than that of Gryparis. The subject of silence recurs frequently in the poems of Porfyra, often connected with oblivion, loss and unfulfilled desire. For example clouds are depicted as "βουβά ", "δε βρέχουνε τον πόνο τους να πούνε " and are compared to the speaker: "Τα σύννεφα, για ιδέες τα - ωσάν εμένα - / Γυρεύουν, αχ απόψε πέρα ως πέρα, /

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. , p. 34.

Κάποια καλά, μα ολότελα χαμένα".<sup>30</sup> Thus, unfulfilled desire is related to an inability to express. The inability to express constitutes one aspect of the silence that prevails in Porfyras's poetic space.

This silence forms part of the general absence of life which is often referred to in the poetry of Porfyras. In "Lacrimae Rerum",<sup>31</sup> for example, the prevailing silence reduces the memory implicitly referred to in the first stanza ("Το σπιτάκι μας εστοίχειωσεν / από την ομορφιά σου τη θλιμμένη ") to oblivion ("ο καλός της Λήθης σύντροφος [...] ρυθμίζει αργά, φριχτά το μοιρολόι "). The only sound heard in the house is the lament of the objects and this in itself forms part of the silence as it is only heard because of the silence. The poetic language tends to incorporate the inarticulate and quiet sounds of objects or nature. In "Το έρημο μονοπάτι "<sup>32</sup> the speaker depicts himself as possessor of the sighs of nature:

Σ' ένα καλάμι λεπτό μαγικόν έχω κλείσει,  
Σε μια χρυσή που οι Νεράιδες μου εδώσαν φλογέρα,  
Ολους τους ήχους που κλαιν και στενάζουν στη φύση:  
Της ρεματιάς, της βροχής, των δεντρών και του αγέρα.

This poetic language is connected with silence ("Η σιωπή κατεβαίνει απ' τη στέγη μου αγάλι") as well as with memory almost reduced to oblivion: "Φαίνεται μόνο βαθιά στο θαμπό μας καθρέφτη/ Κάποια σκια, μια σκια μορφονιάς π' αγαπούσα. // Λησμονημένον ακόμα χαμόγελο ανθίζει... ".

Thus poetic language stresses silence and at the same time includes nostalgia and the possibility of escape. For example in "Χειμωνιάτικα

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<sup>30</sup> Lambros Porfyras, *Σκιές*, Athens, Vasiliou 1920, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

δέντρα "<sup>33</sup> the willow-trees "τον κήπο της Νεράιδας σβημένο νοσταλγούνε "; this garden exists in a fairy tale, that is in language. In "Το έρημο μονοπάτι " the possibility of escape "πέρ' απ' τη μαύρη ζωή, στο γλαυκό Αποσπερίτη " is not realized, it is however depicted as the aim of poetic language.

In the poetry of Porfyras, poetic language is neither omnipotent nor omnipresent; in contrast, it tends to be reduced to silence by being identified with the inarticulate and quiet sounds of nature and objects. In this way it may include nostalgia or the possibility of escape but it fails to realize this possibility or to restore the objects of nostalgia. At the same time this "silent" poetic language is related to unfulfilled desire and to the transformation of memory into oblivion. Thus, Porfyras's poetics differs from that of Palamas or Gryparis and has more affinities with the poetics of the Post-Symbolists.

Poetic language is not omnipotent or omnipresent in the poetry of Hatzopoulos either. At the same time, its interrelation with memory or desire is not frequently mentioned. Hatzopoulos often refers to desire, usually as "όνειρο " or "καημός " and sometimes as "πόθος ", he does not, however, question the ability of poetic language to depict desire nor does he regard poetic language as a transformation or creation of desire.

Song is usually portrayed as a part of nature. For example the speaker asks:

Στου τραγουδιού μου απάνω τα φτερά  
που φεύγει στο βαρύ ύπνο σου τριγύρω,  
άπλωσε τα ισκιωμένα σου όνειρα  
σα μαδημένα ρόδα να τα σύρω

Να σμίξουν με των φύλλων το χορό

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

στο φθινοπωριασμένο δάσος πέρα,  
με της αυγής την άχνα να σκορπίζουνε  
καθώς ροδοχαράζει τώρα η μέρα.<sup>34</sup>

The only power that poetry possesses is that of turning dreams into a part of nature and letting them follow a process determined by nature. Songs are included among the positive forces of nature, but they do not possess any more power when confronted with pain or death than do flowers or birds. All these forces can be obliterated by pain: "Και πέφτουνε στο διάβα σου / τα ρόδα μαδημένα / και τα δαφνόκλαδα ξερά / και τα τραγούδια νεκρωμένα".<sup>35</sup> As a positive force of nature, song can awaken certain sleeping elements of nature but it cannot prevent or reverse death, and this is the cause of the singer's "καημός". Hatzopoulos deals, for example, with the tale of the Sleeping Beauty who in this case is waiting for a singer to awaken her. The singer appears, "ξυπνούν λουλούδια και πουλιά, / μα δεν ξυπνά κι η κοιμισμένη, / κι άδικη μοίρα ! απ' τον καημό / ο τραγουδιστής πεθαίνει".<sup>36</sup>

Desire is inherent in poetic language, that is, it consists in the omnipotence of poetic language. Hatzopoulos is, however, conscious of the absence of this omnipotence and thus reduces his song to an element of nature together with desire or nostalgia. Contrary to what is happening in the poetry of Gryparis or Porfyra, in Hatzopoulos's poems poetic language does not exist on a level different from its subject-matter; that is, the question of the relationship of poetic language to the subject-matter of poetry is not posed.

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<sup>34</sup> Konstantinos Hatzopoulos, *Ποιήματα*, Athens, Ikaros 1955, p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

Thus, the Symbolists adopt three different approaches to the subjects of memory, nostalgia and desire. For Gryparis these elements are controlled by language, whilst in Porfyra poetic language tries to satisfy nostalgia or desire but fails to do so, and for Hatzopoulos poetic language can convey desire or nostalgia but does not attempt to supply their objects. The common feature shared by these three poets is that all of them introduced the subjects of memory, nostalgia, desire and more rarely escape into their poetry, thereby preparing the ground for the formulation of new questions concerning the possibilities of poetic language.

#### 3. 1. 4. Cavafy

The question of poetic possibility occupies a central position in Cavafy's poetic system, according to which a major task of poetry is that of preserving the memory of the past. According to Gregory Jusdanis, "memory [in Cavafy] is inseparable from the artistic process. It is the preliminary step in saving worldly beauty, and is a prerequisite to composition. Often the poet addresses memory in a manner reminiscent of the epic's invocation of the muse".<sup>37</sup>

Memory is necessary for poetry while at the same time poetry is an invocation of memory ("Μνήμη μου, φύλαξέ τα συ ως ήσαν. / Και, μνήμη, ό,τι μπορείς από τον έρωτά μου αυτόν, / ό,τι μπορείς φέρε με πίσω απόψε "<sup>38</sup>). The two processes, however, - that of poetic

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<sup>37</sup> Gregory Jusdanis, *The Poetics of Cavafy. Textuality, Eroticism, History*, New Jersey, Princeton UP 1987, p. 90.

<sup>38</sup> C.P. Cavafy, *Ποιήματα*, Athens, Ikaros 1975, vol. 1, p. 88.

composition and that of memory - often seem separate. This separation creates the doubts Cavafy expresses as to the ability of the poet to preserve his memories and desires: "Προσπάθησε να τα φυλάξεις, ποιητή, / όσο κι αν είναι λίγα αυτά που σταματιούνται" <sup>39</sup> or "Θα 'θελα αυτήν την μνήμη να την πω... / Μα έτσι εσβύσθη πια... σαν τίποτε δεν απομένει". <sup>40</sup>

Poetry for Cavafy possesses the power of defeating time; memory helps the poet preserve faces and events from the past and make them a part of his poem; from the moment <sup>they are converted in poetry</sup> these faces and events acquire a permanent or eternal character. In "Να μείνει", <sup>41</sup> for example, the speaker begins by depicting a concrete memory and ends by stating the eternal character with which poetry is able to endow this memory: "γρήγορο σάρκας γύμνωμα - που το ίνδαλμά του / είκοσι έξι χρόνους διάβηκε και τώρα ήλθε/ να μείνει μες στην ποίησιν αυτή". Poetry compensates for the inability of memory to preserve things faithfully (e.g. "Ικέτευσα, ω μνήμη, / να σ' εύρω βοηθόν αρίστην, για να κάμω / του νέου που αγαπούσα το πρόσωπον ως ήταν. / Μεγάλη η δυσκολία απέβη" <sup>42</sup>) and also for irrevocable losses ("Χάσαμεν όμως το πιο τίμιο - τη μορφή του" <sup>43</sup>) by offering an eternal existence to everything that enters its space. The "transforming power of memory", <sup>44</sup> then, interacts with the transforming power of art in order to create a

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>41</sup> Cavafy, vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> Cavafy, vol. 1, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> Christopher Robinson, *C.P. Cavafy*, U.K., Bristol Classical Press 1988, p. 7.

different space with its own laws.

Writing also contains imagination and desire and thus creates the space of art and compensates for the "αβέβαιες μνήμες". Poetry constitutes a space which is adjacent to life ("σχεδόν ανεπαισθήτως του βίου συμπληρούσα"<sup>45</sup>) but which at the same time allows the poet to dwell within it ("Και μες στην τέχνη πάλι, ξεκουράζομαι απ' τη δούλεψή της"<sup>46</sup>). While for Palamas poetic language constitutes the aim or object of desire, for Cavafy it constitutes the space in which desire can be fulfilled by being depicted in art and projected into eternity through art. Thus, poetry acquires for Cavafy an autonomous entity.

To achieve the fulfilment of desire in poetry the poet has to employ imagination. The use of imagination in Cavafy involves many questions and is related to a variety of subjects. Here it is of interest in its connection with memory and desire. Poetry is defined by a speaker as "νάρκης του άλγους δοκιμές, εν Φαντασία και Λόγω".<sup>47</sup> Imagination often assists memory or replaces it, thereby creating a poetic space; in "Καισαρίων",<sup>48</sup> for example, the poet imagines Caesarion: "Και τόσο πλήρως σε φαντάσθηκα, / που [...] εθάρεψα που μπήκες μες στην κάμαρά μου". The use of the verbs "εθάρεψα" and "με φάνηκε" implies, however, the poet's awareness that his poetic creation is the product of imagination.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, poetry may be a self-contained and solid structure, but the

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<sup>45</sup> Cavafy, vol. 2, p. 27.

<sup>46</sup> Cavafy, vol. 1, p. 51.

<sup>47</sup> Cavafy, vol. 2, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>49</sup> See also, Roderick Beaton, "The History Man", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, vol. X, nos 1, 2 (1983), p. 31.

poet is nevertheless conscious of the components of this structure, one of which is imagination. He is also conscious of the self-deceptive character of imagination and seems to promote this self-deception as a prerequisite for poetry and for existence in art. As David Holton has pointed out, with reference to "Απολείπειν ο θεός Αντώνιον", "on the face of it the poem is about acceptance of one's destiny, facing up to facts. There is no way now that Antony can win, even his protecting deity has forsaken him. But the sound of the mystic thiasos did not really exist - it was an illusion or so we must suppose. Such an interpretation gives a new twist to the meaning of 'μη γελασθείς'. What the poet is really saying is: 'Imagine the sound of Dionysiac revels and enjoy it'. He is urging Antony to escape from the reality of the defeat for one last time and permit himself this final sensual pleasure. The dividing line between objective reality and imagination is again blurred by the use of the verb 'γελώ'." <sup>50</sup>

Therefore self-deception as an element of imagination is not only justified but even promoted. One of its functions is connected with nostalgia, since the speaker proposes self-deception to Antony as a cure for nostalgia: by listening to the music of the 'thiasos' Antony is able to experience the essence of Alexandria and thus bid it farewell. Since the structure of the poetic world contains self-deception and imagination, poetry may constitute or possess "*φάρμακα*" for nostalgia as well as for desire. In its turn poetic language is often "shaped and coloured" by memory, desire or nostalgia. As David Holton has observed in connection with "Ο Δεκέμβρης του 1903", "The illusion [...] has become almost reality, permanently present and afflicting the poet's every word,

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<sup>50</sup> David Holton, "Cavafy and the art of self-deception", *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook*, vol. 5 (1989), p. 147.



even though he cannot talk about it in a direct, explicit way ".<sup>51</sup>

Imagination is connected with memory, desire and nostalgia in a double way: imagination may assist or replace memory and fulfil desire or assuage nostalgia, while memory, desire or nostalgia may provide the raw materials of imagination and consequently of poetry. Nevertheless, as is the case with memory, imagination is not a process inseparable from poetry but rather an element employed in poetry. Cavafy lays stress upon the fact that his poetry is an artefact (he speaks of "Τέχνη της Ποιήσεως " and frequently refers to "τεχνίτης ") and that, therefore, imagination is one of the materials he uses in order to construct this artefact. Thus, the use of imagination is self-conscious, and imagination, together with the elements of memory, nostalgia and desire that it incorporates, can reign only in the poetic space. While poetry can render memory eternal and fulfil desire or assuage nostalgia by transposing these into the space of art, its power in relation to outside reality is often limited: "Τα φάρμακά σου φέρε Τέχνη της Ποιήσεως, / που κάμνουνε - για λίγο - να μη νοιώθεται η πληγή ".<sup>52</sup>

Thus, the functioning of memory, desire and nostalgia in Cavafy's poetics has a bearing upon various levels of his poetry. The areas in which the functioning of the same elements in Post-Symbolist poetry presents points of affinity or contrast are those in which poetry invokes memory, assuages nostalgia and fulfils desire. Memory is frequently replaced or assisted by imagination, which also plays an important role in the satisfying of desire and nostalgia, since it constitutes a basic

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>52</sup> Cavafy, vol. 2, p. 24.

component of poetry. The poet regards the poetic space he creates as a solid, self-contained and permanent artefact; therefore memory, nostalgia and desire play their role or attain fulfilment within this artefact and according to its rules. The relation of this artefact to external reality presents various aspects that might be divided into two categories: on the one hand the poet sometimes states the difficulties confronting his poetry where it attempts to protect him from external reality or to preserve elements of external reality, while on the other, external reality sometimes functions only as a space that provides material for poetry: "Τί μεταμέλεις περιττές, τί μάταιες... // Αλλά δεν έβλεπα το νόημα τότε. // Μέσα στον έκλυτο της νεότητός μου βίο / μορφώνονταν βουλές της ποιήσεώς μου, / σχεδιάζονταν της τέχνης μου η περιοχή".<sup>53</sup> This interplay between external reality and poetry, defines to a great extent the function of memory, desire and nostalgia in the poetry of Cavafy, while at the same time it may partly account for the absence of the theme of escape in the poetry of Cavafy.<sup>54</sup> Escape is often successfully achieved by transference from the space of external reality to the space of poetic reality, while for the Post-Symbolists the case is different, as we shall see.

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<sup>53</sup> Cavafy, vol. 1, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> As Yeoryios Themelis puts it, "Ο Καβάφης δεν ξέρει το όνειρο, ούτε τη δίψα του απείρου, επειδή δεν πιστεύει σε κανένα άπειρο. Ο μόνος χώρος υψηλός, όπου καταφεύγει, είναι η ίδια η ποίηση, όπως την αντιλαμβάνεται και την ενεργεί ο ίδιος" (Yeoryios Themelis, *Η ποίηση του Καβάφη. Διαστάσεις και όρια. Δοκιμή για μια βαθύτερη ερμηνεία*, Thessaloniki, Konstantinidis 1970, p. 92).

### 3. 2. Post-Symbolist Poetry

#### 3. 2. 1. The Objects of Memory, Nostalgia and Desire

The objects of memory, nostalgia and desire in Post-Symbolist poetry can be divided into two categories: specific and non-specific objects. The function of memory, nostalgia and desire in connection with the function of poetry, as the Post-Symbolists perceive it, is related to the specificity or non-specificity of these objects.

The specific objects of memory, nostalgia and desire are frequently unconnected with the act of poetry in any way other than by their existence in the poems. The speakers often depict a memory or their nostalgia for a person in a poem. The object of the poem is the depiction of this memory, nostalgia or desire without offering a solution to it. That is, whilst for Cavafy nostalgia or desire for a person is often assuaged in poetry by the transformation of this person into an element of poetry, Post-Symbolist poetry lacks this self-confidence. The persons referred to by the speakers exist or existed in external reality and the speakers do not attempt to distinguish external from poetic reality by creating different rules to apply to memory, desire or nostalgia in poetic reality. These poems usually consist of a direct narration or statement of feelings without any apparent self-reference. Through the poetic diction, however, the poems become self-referential by implication, thus imperceptibly transforming memory, desire or nostalgia into poetic elements.

Taking, for example, Papanikolaou's "*Μια λύπη* " (Papanikolaou, p.

20): at the first level of the poem the speaker describes the sorrow caused by the absence of a person, and speaks of the "μνήμη αυτού που λείπει". At a second level, however, memory acquires an almost material substance, since it is the sound of rain on the window-pane that brings the memory of the absent person into the room. In this way memory acquires acoustic connotations as well as a presence. Both the acoustic connotations and the presence persist and develop throughout the poem: the "μνήμη αυτού που λείπει " is acoustically linked on the one hand to "χτύποι " and on the other to "λύπη ", the word-play "λύπη-λείπει " is repeated, the "χτύποι " is repeated in "καρδιοχτύπι " and the alliteration of - π - recalls the "χτύποι " on the window-pane. In addition to the acoustic patterning of the whole image there is also a visual pattern: the rain-drops from a cloud that constitute a simile for sorrow are visually repeated in "άχνα ", in the eyes that "υγραίνουνε " and finally in "κλαιν ". Therefore memory, being the centre around which the whole image revolves, creates various threads that link the abstract nouns (e.g. "λύπη ", "πόνος ") to the verbs (e.g. "χτυπά ", "λείπει "), thus lending a sort of materiality to the whole image.

In this way memory is transformed into a poetic element through the structure of the poetic diction, which renders memory (and through it the rest of the image depicted) material. This indirect transformation is sometimes thematically underlined, as for example in Polydouri's "Κι ήταν μια νύχτα ωραία " (Polydouri, p. 100). The speaker recalls: "Κι ήταν μια νύχτα ωραία και στη ματιά σου / και στα τραγούδια σου " and goes on to talk about "τα παλιά τραγούδια σου ", thus referring to the songs not only as an object of memory but also as a filter

through which the memory of the event depicted passes.

When the object of memory, desire or nostalgia is specific, then, the relationship of these elements to poetry is based on their indirect transformation into poetic elements, chiefly through poetic diction. That is, although the Post-Symbolists do not explicitly separate poetic from external reality, the interaction between these elements and the structure of the poetic diction shapes a poetic reality that differs from the external one in that memory, nostalgia or desire may acquire a material presence.

In Post-Symbolist poetry, however, memory, nostalgia or desire often point to a non-specific object (e.g. "Με τα μάτια που κάτι νοσταλγούνε, κάτι που μου είναι αγνοημένο πλέρια ", Polydouri, [Με της σιωπής τα κρίνα] p. 103). The connection of these elements with poetry seems not only to be based on the acoustic structure of the poetic diction but also to be semantic. In Karyotakis's "Ποιητές " (Karyotakis, p. 26), for example, the existence of the poets is related to nostalgia and desire:

Πώς σβήνετε πικροί ξενιτεμένοι !  
[...] Βιολέτες κι ανεμώνες, ξεχασμένες  
στα ξένα που πεθαίνετε παρτέρια,  
κρατώντας, αργυρή δροσοσταλίδα,  
βαθιά σας την ελπίδα της πατρίδας.

Although the chief theme of the poem is the alienation of poets from society, the themes of memory and nostalgia are interwoven with it. The existence of poets is identified with the feeling of nostalgia or desire for a homeland that remains undefined while at the same time their poetry is incapable of producing memory: the poets deal with memories and desires ("Χτυπιούνται, πληγωμένες πεταλούδες, / στο χώμα σας οι θύμησες κι οι πόθοι ") while they themselves are forgotten. This

interplay between memory as the subject of a poem and poetry as an object of memory or oblivion is related to the non-specificity of the objects of memory, nostalgia and desire in Post-Symbolist poetry.

These objects, apart from being non-specific, are often self-negating as well. For example in Papanikolaou's "Θάλασσα του Βορρά " (p. 63) the speaker depicts his nostalgia for "μια θάλασσα του ονείρου " "στα χιονισμένα σύνορα του κόσμου και του απείρου ". The object of the nostalgia depicted belongs to another world or exists on the borders of the actual world and another one. That other world is connected with writing, since the birds which the speaker wishes to see in his land of dreams are "πουλιά λευκά, φανταστικά, των μυθιστορημάτων" and the land itself is "η χώρα που γι ' αυτήν γράφει το παραμύθι". Dream is therefore related to writing and the nostalgia the speaker describes can be interpreted as nostalgia for a poetic world. The speaker considers this world, which is also related to death and non-existence, to be his first homeland, yet he is conscious of the self-refutation of this homeland: "τα σκότη / για πάντα θα ξεγράφουνε ό,τι η καρδιά μου γράφει ". Poetry constitutes here the object of nostalgia but because of its relation to dream, unreality and death, constitutes at the same time a self-negating and evanescent reality.

Therefore Ouranis's statement "μια νοσταλγία ολάκερη η ζωή μου κι ένας πόθος " (Νοσταλγίες, "Η ζωή μου ", p. 35)<sup>55</sup> is in part a statement of poetics. If taken as such, then the next lines, "Πότε παλάτια θέλοντας χιμαιρικά να χτίσω / και πότε ξεφυλλίζοντας τις σκέψεις μου σα ρόδα / στον τάφο του ό,τι πέρασε, λησμόνησα να

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<sup>55</sup> Kostas Ouranis, *Νοσταλγίες*, Athens, Typos 1920, p. 35.

*ζήσω* " contain references to the subjects of poetry: desire and memory. Desire is, however, defined as an illusion and memory functions in a way contrary to that in which it functions in the poetry of Cavafy. Memory as depicted here does not possess the power to resurrect the past or to preserve it by transforming it into an element of art; on the contrary it is connected with death and defined as a useless act. Moreover, through the connection of poetry to nostalgia and desire, it is poetry itself that constitutes here an act of unfulfilled nostalgia and desire as well as an otiose act of memory.

The object of this act of nostalgia is related to poetry itself. For example in Skarimbass's "*Ο Γλάρος* " (p. 21) the poet defines himself as an "*εκπεσμένο αλαργινό / αδέρφι [...] νοσταλγικό* " of the seagull. Freedom and the heights enjoyed by the seagull and envied by the speaker constitute not only a desire of the speaker but unattained aims of poetry as well. Poetry expresses nostalgia or desire for another kind of poetry that will be free from the pain expressed by Post-Symbolist poetry or from the external reality that imposes itself on Post-Symbolist poetry, constitutes its framework and thereby shapes its character.

Apart from this, the objects of nostalgia, memory or desire in Post-Symbolist poetry are connected to poetry itself through music. For example in Lapathiotis's "*Εαρινό* " (p. 97) the speaker compares memory to music: "*που σαν τραγούδια, λες, βιολιών, μέσα στα βράδια των ψυχών, / μας κυβερνούν και μας δονούν, οι πρώτες οι αναμνήσεις* " while in "*Όταν βραδιάζει* " (p. 133) music is compared to the past: "*Όταν βραδιάζει, μέσα μου, ξυπνούν τα περασμένα / ξυπνούν αργά σα μουσικές νεκρές από καιρό* ". Thus, music is not only an object of

memory and nostalgia but also comprises memory and nostalgia, and poetry aspires to this music: "σα μουσικές που χάθηκαν, και που τις λαχταρώ, / κι έρχονται πάλι, μαγικά κι ανέλπιδα, σε μένα ". This aspiration or nostalgia of poetry for music is related to the use of language in Post-Symbolist poetry, which is also characterized by a nostalgia for music, or for the elements of music that should belong to poetry , as the French Symbolists put it. Andreas Karandonis ( speaking of Seferis's *Στροφή* ) has talked about

μουσική νοσταλγία. Η μουσική νοσταλγία  
που κατακλύζει την ψυχή δεν είναι ο απλός  
πόθος του γυρισμού σε μια εποχή ή σ' έναν  
τόπο που τον ζήσαμε κάποτε, αλλά η ανεξήγητη  
και απροσδιόριστη έλξη ενός ωραιόκοσμου, που  
τον διαισθανόμαστε δίχως να υπάρχει, έχοντας  
μέσα μας την υποσυνείδητη εντύπωση πως  
κάποτε τον έχουμε ζήσει, ή πως κάποτε  
θα τον ζήσουμε.<sup>56</sup>

Music points to an undefined paradise; therefore the use of music in poetic language constitutes the double act of nostalgia or desire: the poet "λαχταρά" to transform his poetry into music and also, through music, to attain a desirable world in which music participates. This world is free from death ("ένα τραγούδι καθαρό, καθώς τα δειλινά, / που μέσα του λυτρώνονται, και ζουν οι πεθαμένοι "). Moreover it comprises the "πόθοι, παράπονα παλιά, νοσταλγικές φωνές, / λόγια βαθιά κι αξέχαστα, κι ωστόσο ξεχασμένα, / παράξενα, χιμαιρικές αγάπες μακρινές "; it is, therefore, a world in which poetic reality prevails and negates external reality.

The object of nostalgia or desire in Post-Symbolist poetry is thus directly connected with poetry , since this object is the creation of a self-

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<sup>56</sup> Andreas Karandonis, *Ο ποιητής Γιώργος Σεφέρης*, Athens, Galaxias 1971, p. 85.



contained poetic world. As we have seen, the objects of memory, nostalgia and desire in Post-Symbolist poetry differ radically from those in the poetry of Palamas. In the poetry of Palamas, memory, nostalgia and desire play an important role in nationalist terms but are seldom connected with the function of poetry in terms of the individual, since poetry is omnipotent. In contrast, Post-Symbolist poetry itself constitutes an act of memory, nostalgia and desire. When dealing with specific objects, Post-Symbolist poetry lacks the self-confidence displayed by the poetry of Cavafy. The Post-Symbolists do not consider themselves capable of preserving or perpetuating memory or of satisfying nostalgia and desire by transforming these elements and their objects into elements of art. The transformation through which these elements pass in Post-Symbolist poetry is less obvious and is connected with the acoustic and connotative elements of poetic language.

The non-specific objects of memory, nostalgia and desire point, at a first level, to a lost and undefined paradise, as is also the case in the poetry of Porfyras. At a second level, however, these objects are identified or connected with poetry itself; Post-Symbolist poetry aspires to transform itself into a poetry free from pain, as well as into music, and to create a self-contained world consisting of poetic reality independent of external reality. Thus, the Post-Symbolists expand some ideas present in the poetry of Porfyras. While for Porfyras, poetry includes memory, nostalgia and desire, for the Post-Symbolists poetry is an act of memory, nostalgia and desire. Since the object of memory, nostalgia and desire is a reality created by poetry, the act of poetry is self-referential. This self-referential act renders the objects of memory, nostalgia and desire

unattainable precisely because the Post-Symbolists are expressing their longing for one kind of poetic language and reality in terms of another.

### 3. 2. 2. The Effectiveness of Memory, Desire and Escape

Escape is the fourth dominant element in Post-Symbolist poetry and is closely related to desire. Its effectiveness, like that of memory and desire, is connected with the self-referential and unattainable aspiration of Post-Symbolist poetry to a different kind of poetic language from their own and to a different relationship between poetry and reality from the one referred to in their poetry. Here I shall look at the extent to which memory, desire and escape function successfully in Post-Symbolist poetry and at how they function in connection with their subjects and objects.

Memory in Post-Symbolist poetry may act as consolation for the speaker by taking him away from the painful present. In "*Τώρα που μήτε ο έρωτας*" (p. 49), for example, Karyotakis depicts a return to the past as the only way out of the impasse of his life. The past is identified with a paradise where the speaker felt himself to be part of society or of the universe ("*ήταν η απάρθρευση ζωή μου, η ζωή του κόσμου η μιά*") and where he felt the presence of poetry as a positive element in his life ("*Ο νους μου σάμπως ξύπνημα τη χαρηνγή. Και η Μούσα / μου άγγιζε τα μαλλιά* "). Poetic memory, however, proves incapable of bringing the past back to the speaker in a satisfactory way, and so the speaker asks other people to fulfil this task: "*Δώστε μου τα παιδιάτικα χρόνια μου* ". The speaker is aware of his inability to retrieve the past by himself: "*φέρετε την ελπίδα, / χαμένη τώρα πια*". At the end of the

poem the sorrow of the beginning remains unaltered and is moreover inconsolable:

Α, πώς η λύπη μου κατά τα περασμένα στρέφει !  
Ομοια και η νύχτα πάντοτε γυρίζει στο πρωί.  
Α, πώς τα χρόνια σα καπνός εχάθηκαν, σα νέφη,  
σαν πάχνη, σα ζωή !

The poet turns at first to memory and asks it to take him away from the painful present to the happy past; this motion is parallel to the motion from life within society to life within poetry. Poetic memory proves incapable of restoring the poet's past to him and, by the same token, of offering him any more of a solution than does society.

Memory serves only as an additional pain; as Karyotakis puts it, "στο σώμα, στην ενθύμηση πονούμε " ( [Είμαστε κάτι ], p. 87). Both this statement and Agras's "πληγή η μνήμη " (Τριαντάφυλλα , p. 191) refer not only to particular painful memories but also to the inability of memory to retrieve a happier past and thereby diminish the pain of the present.

Thus, in Post-Symbolist poetry escape into the past through poetic memory is usually doomed to failure. Escape can, however, also be connected with oblivion. Filyras, for example, asks poetry to give him joy and let his soul "να λησμονάει και θάνατο και Μοίρα" (Filyras, "Μύρο ψυχής ", p. 60). This can be achieved only through passion and inspiration ("με πάθος κι εμπνοή να κρούω μια λύρα "), yet it is phrased as a wish, since Filyras employs the subjunctive mood. In the last two stanzas, where the mood becomes indicative, the poet manages to achieve his escape ("Και στ' όνειρο που πλέκω στη μαγεία,/ προς κάποια μακρινή αρμενίζω χώρα ") and to move away from the

surrounding reality ("πλήθος χαρές η θύμηση του Κόσμου"). Poetry is sometimes able to secure oblivion for the poet (e.g. "Η Τέχνη μονάχα / σαν κάποιος φεγγίτης, / του δίνει τη λήθη, / με τη μουσική της ", Lapathiotis, "Ωραιοπαθής ", p. 171) or to obliterate unpleasant things connected with the memory of pleasant ones. This escape, however, is rarely achieved in Post-Symbolist poetry. Usually, poetry itself obstructs this kind of escape by acting as an object of memory and consequently causing pain. For example, Lapathiotis in "Ερινύες " (p. 214) addresses his old songs, saying, "το βράδυ που σας θυμηθώ μοιάζει με βράδυ τρόμου ". Whilst poetry is intended to act as a consolation ("κι εσάς που πάντα φύλαγα για μια παρηγοριά ") it ultimately produces the opposite effect: "σας βλέπω [...] να ' στε απ' όλες τις πληγές, η πιο μαρτυρική μου ". Lapathiotis depicts the other side of the poetic coin here: poetry acts as a desire for and escape to a dreamt-of reality, but when it fails to achieve this, it becomes a testimony to the poet's failure. Consequently, instead of being the space of dreams, it becomes the space of "πικρούς [...] εμπαιγμούς και [...] ειρωνείες " as well as of death ("σφαλώντας τη ματιά πηγαίνω να χαθώ ").

Thus, escape through oblivion is occasionally possible but more usually poetry acts as an object of memory and merely serves to demonstrate the impossibility of such an escape.

At the same time, the connection of poetry to memory does not secure an escape from death, as it appears to do in Cavafy's epitaphs where poetry perpetuates the memory of the lost person. In Post-Symbolism this escape is not achieved, since poetry stands in a different relationship to death. This relationship is implicit in the rhyming of

"γράφω " to "τάφο " which is frequent in Karyotakis's poetry, and also occurs in Papanikolaou's "In questa tomba" (p. 44): "*Και το τραγούδι μου αυτό γιατί το γράφω ; / Ω... σε ποιο σκοτεινό τάφο...*" Whilst for Cavafy poetry is written on tombstones in order to preserve the memory of the dead person, in Post-Symbolism poetry either leads to death, as for example in Karyotakis's "Γραφιάς " (p. 37) where the act of writing causes physical problems to the writer, or is recorded on a tomb in order to commemorate the death of poetry itself. Papanikolaou's poem, for example, starts by stating the speaker's despair because "*απάτη τ' όνειρο κι η φαντασία* ". Therefore poetry, which was supposed to employ imagination and attain a dreamt-of reality, has failed to do so, that is, has failed to create a life of its own. Poetry, instead of securing an escape from death, is connected with death because of its inability to create a viable poetic world.

The ineffectiveness of escape from death through poetry is connected with the ineffectiveness of escape from pain; the poet can sing of his pain or write about it; he finds, however, no consolation in so doing. While for Cavafy the "*φάρμακα*" of the art of poetry "*κάμνουνε - για λίγο - να μη νοιώθεται η πληγή*", Karyotakis offers "*λάγνα [...] μύρα / για μπάλαμο και αφιόνια* ". On the other hand, he does urge a fellow-poet: "*μη δέσεις την πληγή σου, / και το αίμα σου πορφύρα*" ("*Ευγένεια*", p. 21). The expression of pain leads to death ("*κάνε τον πόνο σου άρπα / και γέλασε και σβήσου*") and, moreover, does not negate alienation or solitude. For example, Lapathiotis writes, "*κι όλοι, ξένοι, τραγουδάμε, μες τη νύχτα που σιμώνει* " ("*Αποχαιρετισμοί στη μουσική* ", p. 245) while Ouranis's epilogue in *Νοσταλγίες* is an

invocation to solitude: "Και τώρα, / έλα πάλι σταθερή και παλιά εσύ  
συντρόφισσα / της ζωής μου της άχαρης, Μοναξιά, και της  
στείρας " ("Επίλογος ", p. 77). Thus, although poetry may temporarily  
alleviate solitude by creating an illusion of communication, ultimately the  
poet recognizes both the illusion and his failure to escape from solitude,  
alienation (from society or the universe) or death. This failure creates an  
impasse for the poet, who realizes that he cannot create any viable space  
for himself or for others if he escapes from external reality, which  
contains solitude and alienation, both of which are seen as forms of death.

As Agras writes,

Μα απ' το έργο τούτο της νυχτός  
σα φύγω, πες μου, πού είν' η ζωή;  
πού δε μου μέλλει ο θάνατος;  
Οι μικροί μ' έχασαν οι θεοί...  
(Τριαντάφυλλα, "Μικροί θεοί", p. 290).

Therefore the poets are torn between their desire to escape from  
external reality and their awareness that their attempts to achieve this in  
poetry are doomed. This dilemma is sometimes satirized, as, for example,  
in Skarimbas's "Το βαπόρι " (p. 23) and "Το εισιτήριο " (p. 47). The  
satire in these poems is achieved by the interaction of the various levels  
of the poems and is directed not only at the divided poetic self but also at  
Post-Symbolist poetry in general. In "Το βαπόρι " the ship is initially  
perceived as a symbol of death and is described as "βαπόρι-όρνιο " and  
"ύαινα τυφλή ", whereas in the last two stanzas its absence transforms  
it into a symbol of a desired escape that has now been rendered  
impossible. A similar image of the appearance of the ship connected with  
an unrealized escape appears in "Το εισιτήριο " where the desired  
escape is not effected because the speaker cannot find his ticket for the

ship. The description of the ship relates it once more both to death and to escape and thereby to fear and desire. Apart from the interplay between fear and desire and the interplay between earnestness and playfulness which can be seen as satire directed towards Post-Symbolist motifs, there is also a desire to experience or to create this interplay. This desire is implied by the use of the subjunctive mood throughout the poem as well as by the use of the comparative conditional phrases, "σαν νά 'μουν έτοιμος ", "σαν νά 'χω χάσει το εισιτήριο ". The poem aspires, then, to create a situation which would resemble the situation depicted. The desire expressed in the situation depicted is removed from the actual writing of the poem, as these two are separated by intermediate levels, such as the creation of a situation, which would allow for the expression of a desire. At another level, then, the poem may constitute a satire on the distance between the act of writing and the fulfilment or even expression of a desire, while it presents at the same time the act of writing itself as a desire.

In most cases in Post-Symbolist poetry, memory, desire and escape do not fulfil their roles. Poetic memory proves unsatisfactory when confronted with external reality and instead of acting as a source of consolation, causes pain. On the other hand, oblivion can only rarely be attained, since poetry itself constitutes an object of memory. As an object of memory, poetry is related to death, the relationship is however not based upon opposition but upon similarity or cause and effect. Poetry fails to create a viable world, and therefore its fate is death. In this way the desire of the speakers to escape from external to a poetic reality is usually not put into effect, since the effectiveness of desire is related to

the power of poetic language about which the Post-Symbolists express doubts. The interplay between the expression of desire and its non-fulfilment, because of the nature of poetic language, is one aspect of Post-Symbolist poetics that differs not only from the poetics of Palamas and Sikelianos, but also from the poetics of Cavafy and the Symbolists. The interplay between expression and non-fulfilment of desire is related to the presentation of poetry as an interplay between desire and reality. Thus, memory, desire and escape in Post-Symbolist poetry are, in most cases, ineffectual. In this way a dichotomy is created in Post-Symbolist poetry; on the one hand, poetry constitutes an act of memory, nostalgia and desire, while on the other, it actually hinders any attempt to escape to the past or to a more desirable reality.

### 3. 2. 3. The Relationships of Poetic Language to Memory, Nostalgia, Desire and Escape

The above-mentioned dichotomy is connected to the nature of poetic language in Post-Symbolism and, more specifically, to the relationship of poetic language to memory, nostalgia, desire and escape.

This relationship has a positive and a negative aspect. The positive aspect consists in poetic language being regarded by the poet as a viable means of expression. For example, Filyras wishes "*στα κύπελλα του Στίχου να μελίσσει, / στης Ρίμας να γλυκάνει τη μαγεία, / την πικρή της ζωής μας ιστορία*" (p. 89). Poetic language is linked here to desire ("*της ομορφιάς η γνώση να μου αυξήσει / τη λαχτάρα μες στο γλυκό φιλί σας*"), even though this connection is expressed as a wish. A similar connection is the one which Lapathiotis makes between



memory and language, if we consider music to be a form of language:

"σα μουσική που βγαίνει / μέσ' απ' τις αναμνήσεις "

("Αναμνήσεις ", p. 199), as well as that which Polydouri makes between

memory, desire and language; "Πάντα γυρίζω εκεί προς τα χαράματα/  
της όμορφης αγάπης μας [...] θαρρώ ζωή της δίνω ανακαλώντας/ τα  
πρωτινά φεγγοβολήματά της" ("Πάντα γυρίζω ", p. 111).

Both these connections contain an element of uncertainty, since Polydouri employs the verb "θαρρώ ", while for Lapathiotis the music springing from memories can only cause his soul to vibrate "θαμπά και μακρινά ". A similar uncertainty is implied in Papanikolaou's "Εισαγωγή " (p. 45). Whilst he identifies dream with his song ("αχ, όνειρο γαλάζιο και μεγάλο, / απ' το τραγούδι μου δεν είσαι τίποτ' άλλο "), he doubts his ability to sing this song: "φωνή που λείπει για να τραγουδήσω ". Thus the poem, which would realize the link between desire and language exists as a possibility rather than as a reality. In one of Polydouri's "Σονέττα του κυνηγού " (p. 129) this link exists as a future reality ("θα γίνεις όνειρο, καημός, τραγούδι εσύ για μένα"), it is, however, based on frustration of the speaker's desire; the person who constitutes the object of desire does not respond to the speaker's desire or does not perceive it: "δε θ' ακούς τί ψάλλουν, κρυφά, καθώς ερωτικά τρυγόνια τα όνειρά μου ", therefore this desire dies: the dreams are now depicted as "πληγωμένα και νεκρά ". The connection between poetic language and desire is based on the non-realization of desire at the level of reality.

Therefore poetic language is sometimes positively related to memory or desire. This positive relationship is, however, undermined by the

doubts expressed about the possibility of its realization or by its realization through the destruction of desire at the level of external reality.

Ultimately, then, poetic language, because of its inability to achieve identification with desire or memory, becomes a reality of its own, and one from which the poets wish to escape. This escape probably constitutes one aspect of the escape talked about in "Εμβατήριο πένθιμο και κατακόρυφο " (p. 113). The speaker intends to escape from reality by committing suicide ("Α ! πρέπει τώρα να φορέσω / τ' ωραίο εκείνο γύψινο στεφάνι ") but at the same time he intends to escape from his art. The "δίδαγμα " which the "ταπεινή τέχνη χωρίς ύφος " offers him may be that the escape he has been desiring cannot be realized through his poetic language, both because the poetic language does not manage to fulfil its role by acting as desire, memory or nostalgia and because this failure creates another reality in poetic language from which the poet can escape only through the "όνειρο ανάγλυφο " that is "χωρίς ύφος ".<sup>57</sup>

This functioning of poetic language as a reality from which the poet wishes to escape is implied elsewhere in Karyotakis's poems, as, for example, in "Σαν δέσμη από τριαντάφυλλα " (p. 83) where poems are considered to be "βάρος περιττό ". Thus, poetic language, instead of creating the reality desired by the poets (i.e. a reality in which they would find refuge from external reality), creates a reality situated within the dilemma of Post-Symbolist poetry. That is, the Post-Symbolists feel trapped between poetic language acting as a means of desire, memory and nostalgia, and poetic language hindering any attempt to escape to the

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<sup>57</sup> For a different interpretation of this poem, see Peter Mackridge, "Ζητήματα ύψους και ύφους στην ποίηση του Καρυωτάκη", *Συμπόσιο για τον Κ.Γ. Καρυωτάκη*, ed. Memi Melissaratou, Preveza 1990, p. 64.

desired world it portrays because of its ineffectiveness.

In "Χαλκίδα " (p. 23) Skarimbass deals with the undesirable reality created by poetic language. In the first stanza of the poem the verbs employed, including the verb "να λέω ", are in the subjunctive mood; therefore speech forms part of the desirable situation. In the second stanza this situation becomes real in that it is depicted in the indicative mood. In the situation depicted the speaker perceives that "ήσαν μάταιοί μου οι κόποι " as his dreams become "μούμιες ". Thus poetic speech here is an object of desire and then aspires to create a desirable situation but only succeeds in creating a different reality. This reality is based on the failure of poetic speech to create the situation desired, and the speaker feels that he is unable to escape from this reality which is destroying him: at the beginning of the poem the speaker identifies himself with a "πιερρότος " or a "Περικλέτος " while at the end of the poem a pierrot dies. The only escape from this reality is the abandonment of poetry; while in "Το εισιτήριο " or "Το βαπόρι ", for example, the speaker fails to realize the escape he dreams of because he is trapped within the space of poetry, in "Χορός συρτός " (p. 64) he depicts the way to escape from his city: "θα σερνα συρτό χορό χέρι με χέρι ". This escape includes the destruction of the speaker's work, and therefore his exit from the space of poetry:

Γιαλό-γιαλό να φεύγουμε και - άντε -  
να λέμε όλο για μάτια, όλο για μάτια  
κι εκεί - λες κομφετί μες στο λεβάντε -  
όλα μου τα γραφτά χίλια κομμάτια.

Thus, the undermining of the positive relationship of poetic language to memory, nostalgia and desire creates within language a reality that

differs from the reality desired. This reality constitutes a space from which the poets can only escape by giving up writing. Therefore, apart from the escape from external reality that the Post-Symbolists try to achieve through poetry, there is also in Post-Symbolist poetry the wish to escape from the space of poetry itself. This escape is rendered more difficult by the connection between the act of writing, that creates the space of poetry, and fate ("γραφτό "). For example, Agras in "Πληγή " (p. 101) talks about the past that has been turned to ashes and to "σκιες φευγάτες ", and plays with the two meanings of the word "γραφτό " which has created these shadows: "το άπαρτο που σας έπλασε γραφτό ".

This undesirable reality, created in poetic language, constitutes the negative aspect of the relationship of poetic language to desire, memory and nostalgia, because by creating this reality, poetic language fails to act as a means of expressing the reality desired. Apart from the wish to escape, this negative reality can be seen in the references to silence. Lapathiotis, for example, in "Τραγούδι των καλοκαιριών " (p. 110) portrays desire as dumb ("πόθοι βουβοί ") and refers to "λόγια φτερά " as part of the desired situation depicted in the poem. These "λόγια " are probably implicitly contrasted with the language of poetry. Thus, silence or the language of silence constitutes one way out of the reality of poetic language.

For the Post-Symbolists, poetic language contains an element of evanescence and impermanence (e.g. "το γραφτό - μικρό κι εφήμερο κι αυτό ", Lapathiotis, "Γραμμένο σ' ένα λεύκωμα", p. 107). The final object of nostalgia and desire exists beyond language (e.g. "ώρα τερπνή,

που καθετί φαντάζει πλάνο και πλατύ, / και νοσταλγεί κι αποζητεί  
 μιαν άφραστην ειρήνη ", Lapathiotis, "Εαρινό ", p. 97), therefore it  
 cannot be attained through poetry. The possibility of attaining this object  
 pre-exists poetry; for example Filyras wishes "νά ηταν γραφτό στου  
 πόθου μας τ' αρπάγι / να σε κρατήσουμε για πάντα, θεία, /  
 αγγελική, ουράνια οπτασία "; the way to achieve this seems to be: "και  
 να μη βρίσκουμε ποτέ τη ρίμα,/ που της ζωής σου θά ' κλεινε το  
 κύμα " ("Νάντα ", p. 108). Poetic language acts in a negative and  
 destructive way on desire, nostalgia and their objects, thus rendering  
 silence a desired but unattainable reality.

Therefore poetic language presents both a positive and a negative  
 relationship to memory, desire and nostalgia. The positive relationship is  
 presented but at the same time doubted or undermined: poetic language  
 may constitute a means of expressing memory, desire and nostalgia but it  
 remains an unsatisfactory means. Its failure renders the reality created  
 by and within poetic language different from the reality desired.  
 Consequently, poetic language not only often fails to fulfil its role but at  
 the same time creates an undesirable reality. One aspect of the desired  
 escape to which the Post-Symbolists refer consists in an escape from the  
 space of poetic language. A space to which the Post-Symbolists wish to  
 escape is silence. In this matter the Post-Symbolists continue to work  
 along the same lines as Porfyra. The Post-Symbolists, however, place  
 even more emphasis than Porfyra does on the inability of poetic  
 language to fulfil its role. Moreover they speak of the reality created  
 within poetic language, as Cavafy does, but their attitude to this reality is  
 quite different from Cavafy's. Whilst for Cavafy the reality thus created

is a desirable one, for the Post-Symbolists it is an undesired one and is created by the interaction of the positive with the negative relationship of poetic language to memory, nostalgia and desire.

Thus, the Post-Symbolist poetic system, where it concerns the relationship of poetry to its subject-matter, differs radically from the poetics of Palamas and Sikelianos and also differs in many ways from the poetics of Cavafy and the Symbolists. Both the frequent recurrence of subjects such as memory, nostalgia, desire and escape, and the questions posed, shift the focus of poetry from references to external reality to references to itself, while the answers given sometimes contrast with the answers given by Cavafy to similar questions.

Self-referentiality occupies a central position in the interplay between memory, nostalgia, desire and escape on the one hand, and poetic language on the other. Poetry acts as a means of expressing memory, nostalgia or desire, while at the same time it constitutes the object of nostalgia or desire. This self-referentiality, however, is to some extent deceptive, since the object of nostalgia or desire consists in another kind of poetic language that cannot be attained through the poetic language used. This accounts for the ineffectiveness of memory, desire and escape in Post-Symbolist poetry, since the very nature of the poetic language hinders the restitution of memory, the fulfilment of desire and the achievement of escape that it promotes. This dichotomy constitutes the reality of the poetic language from which the Post-Symbolists seek escape.

Thus, the central concern of Post-Symbolist poetry consists in the interaction between the function of poetic language as an act of memory, nostalgia, desire or escape and its ineffectiveness in the fulfilment of this role. The recurrent themes of Post-Symbolist poetry revolve around this central problem, that is the relationship of Post-Symbolist poetic language to its subject-matter. This relationship will be examined in Chapters 4 and 5 through the interaction between syntactical and semantic structures, between acoustic and semantic structures and between metrical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language.

## Chapter 4

### The Interaction between the Syntactical and Semantic Structures of Post-Symbolist Poetic Language

According to Clive Scott, the most fundamental achievement of the "Symbolist revolution" was that "it awakened an acute consciousness of language. Language was no longer treated as a natural outcrop of the person but as a material with its own laws and its peculiar forms of life".<sup>1</sup> In the light of this argument the use of language in Symbolist or Post-Symbolist poetry constitutes a central factor in Symbolist or Post-Symbolist poetics. Most Symbolist poetry can be seen as falling into the category defined by Gerald Bruns as "hermetic" poetry. That is, "the direction of the poet's activity is toward the literary work as such, that is, the work as a self-contained linguistic structure. [...] Language itself speaks and so offers itself as an object for experience".<sup>2</sup> Language as an object for experience in poetry presents four chief interconnected structures: the semantic, the syntactical, the acoustic and the metrical.

In "The Word and Verbal Art" Ján Mukařovský talks about the structuralist concept of "semantic dynamics" which stopped meaning from being "conceived as a passive component of the 'formal' interplay of linguistic signs".

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<sup>1</sup> Clive Scott, "Symbolism, Decadence and Impressionism", *Modernism 1880-1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James MacFarlane, Penguin 1976, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Bruns, pp. 1-2.



This concept of "semantic dynamics" is based "on the fact that every semantic unit in a syntactic bond (a word, a syntactic unit) tends, on the one hand, to establish an immediate reference to reality which it represents in itself and is, on the other hand, bound by the context of the sentence as a whole, establishing contact with reality only by means of this whole". Following Mukařovský's conclusion that "the imminent initiative belongs to meaning"<sup>3</sup>, I shall examine the syntactical, acoustic and metrical structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language in connection with the semantic structure of the language, that is the interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures, between the acoustic and semantic structures and between the metrical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language. In this way "the internal structure of the sign", on which, according to Jakobson, attention is focussed in a poetic work,<sup>4</sup> can be looked at as an interaction of linguistic structures. The present chapter will examine the interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language, while Chapter 5 will examine the interaction between the acoustic and semantic and between the metrical and semantic structures.

The interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures is related to the interaction between the denotations and connotations of the words in ordinary language and the connotations the same words acquire through their syntagmatic arrangement in the poem. As Winifred Nowotny puts it, "single

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<sup>3</sup> Mukařovský, *The Word*, pp. 52, 64.

<sup>4</sup> Roman Jakobson, "The Dominant", *Readings in Russian Poetics : Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska, USA, The MIT Press 1971, p. 84.

words bring to a 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".<sup>5</sup>

Here, the setting of the power of words to work can be looked at from the point of view of the interaction of recurrent themes of Post-Symbolist poetry with prevailing syntactical features of the Post-Symbolist poetic language. As has been argued in Chapter 3, the dominant themes of Post-Symbolist poetry revolve around the central problem of the interplay between the role of the poetic language as an act of memory, nostalgia, desire or escape, and the ineffectiveness of poetic language to fulfil its role. The question posed in this chapter is whether the syntactic level of the poems supports the thematic level and, if so, how.

In order to examine this, I shall look at the role the dominant syntactic features of the Post-Symbolist poetic language play in poems dealing with recurrent themes of Post-Symbolist poetry; in poems dealing with (a) memory, nostalgia, desire and escape (the dominant themes of Post-Symbolist poetry) (b) love and death, (c) solitude and unhappiness and (d) writing and singing (three other recurrent thematic areas of Post-Symbolist poetry).

Since this chapter focusses on the interaction between the syntactic and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language, an exhaustive study of all the syntactic phenomena is beyond its scope. The syntactic phenomena selected are those that play a significant role in the structure of the recurrent themes of Post-Symbolist poetry. Therefore the division is thematic, while each

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<sup>5</sup> Winifred Nowotny, *The Language Poets Use*, London, The Athlone Press 1965, p. 46.

section will concentrate on different syntactic features that are prevalent in each category of poems and on the functioning of these features.

The functioning of prevailing syntactical features in Post-Symbolist poetic language can be seen as including three interrelated issues : the fluctuation between the denotative and connotative values of words, the presence and function of similes, metaphors and symbols in a poem, and the effect produced on the semantic level by the syntactic structure of verbal images. This third issue covers several aspects, such as the syntactical function of the existential subject in a poem, the dynamic or static nature of the syntactical structures, their semantically positive or negative value, the parataxis or subordination of the various semantic elements of a poem and their presence in a poem as parts of a synthesis or as fragments. Most of these aspects are among those analyzed by Eratosthenis Kapsomenos in his study of the poetic language of Seferis.<sup>6</sup> Here, however, these aspects are not going to be looked at in isolation or from the point of view of the frequency with which they occur in Post-Symbolist poetry, but in terms of their relationship to the other two issues mentioned above, in their functional presence in a sample selection of poems.

#### 4. 1. Memory, nostalgia, desire and escape

In the poems dealing with memory, nostalgia, desire and escape which will be examined here, the prevailing syntactic phenomenon is the interaction

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<sup>6</sup> Eratosthenis Kapsomenos, *Η συντακτική δομή της ποιητικής γλώσσας του Σεφέρη*, Υφολογική μελέτη, Thessaloniki 1975.

between the dynamic and static structures of the poem. Eratosthenis Kapsomenos has defined as dynamic the syntactic structures : subject-verb, subject-verb-object, and as static the syntactic structures : subject-verb-complement, verb-complement.<sup>7</sup>

In the poems dealing with memory, nostalgia, desire and escape the interaction between the dynamic and static syntactic structures plays an important role, reflecting the thematic interaction between the role of poetry and the non-fulfilment of this role.

Lapathiotis's "*Τί κι αν η μοίρα μας στεφάνωσε* " (p. 98) builds the semantic level of the poem on the syntactical interaction between dynamic and static structures. The first stanza begins with a dynamic structure where fate is the subject, the poets are the objects, and poetry is defined as the result of the action of fate, whose effectiveness is nevertheless called into question by the phrase : "*Τί κι αν η μοίρα μας στεφάνωσε / με τ' άσπρα ρόδα των ιάμβων* ". The next two lines comprise a static structure and constitute an answer to the question; this answer negates the action of fate, and therefore the static structure proves to be semantically stronger than the dynamic : "*Είμαι τα πάντα μας ανήμπορα / για τις πορφύρες των θριάμβων* ". In this way an image of poets connected with nationalism and confidence in their lyrical powers, such as Palamas or Sikelianos (the rhyme "*ιάμβων-θριάμβων* " probably refers to Palamas<sup>8</sup> ), is put forward and immediately rejected.

The explanation is provided in the second stanza in a combination of

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 529.

<sup>8</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 337: "*Ταιριασμένοι οι Ανάπαιστοι / γενναία με τους Ιάμβους, / στίχων ύψωσαν τρόπαια / και τραγουνδιών θριάμβους*".

dynamic structures, where the poets assume a passive position, with a static structure, which moves along the lines of the static structure of the first stanza :  
"γιατι μας τέλεψαν τ' απόλυτα, / κι οι θείοι καημοί μας έχουν κάψει· /  
γιατ' είν' η σκέψη μας ανέλπιδη, / και μ' όλα βιάζεται να κλάψει! "

The third stanza follows a similar pattern and once more introduces fate as the subject of the syntactically dynamic structure. This fate, however, is different from the one mentioned in the first stanza and is connected with the syntactically static structures, which have been interposed between the action of fate in the first stanza and the burden of fate : "γιατι στους πόθους και στα πάθη μας, / μια μοίρα βάσκανη βαραίνει ". On the semantic level, the "action" of this fate is static; it therefore complies with the static structures that depict the poets' state of being or rather their attitude to reality. This "μοίρα βάσκανη " is explained in the last two lines of the stanza and in the last two lines of the poem : "γιατ' είναι μέσα, μες στα σπλάχνα μας, / ένα 'γιατί ' - και μας μαραίνει ", "γιατ' είναι μέσα, μες στα σπλάχνα μας, / ένα βιολί, και μας μαραίνει".

The intervening stanzas continue the interplay between static and dynamic structures, with the static structures negating the dynamic ones or dominating them. For example the series of dynamic structures, "Γι' αυτό, κι εμείς, όλο παλεύουμε, / σαν τα παιδιά που παίζουν τόπι, / - μα ό,τι να πούμε, και να κάνουμε " leads to the static structure "πάνε χαμένοι μας οι κόποι ", which negates the actions described. In the last two stanzas the dynamic structures become semantically and syntactically self-negating :

Και μήτε την κραυγή που λύνεται,

γεμάτη φλόγα, μες στη μπόρα,  
μήτε τ' απόκοτα τολμήματα,  
να νιώσουμε μπορούμε, τώρα  
και μήτε των ηρώων τα βλέμματα.

Therefore through the interaction of the syntactically dynamic but semantically undermined structures with the syntactically static but semantically dominant ones, the first fate is refuted and the second becomes dominant. The interaction takes place between the two fates mentioned; both of these are fates of poetry, the first because it is connected with the "άσπρα ρόδα των ιάμβων" and the second because it is connected with two dominant features of Post-Symbolist poetry, as referred to in 2. 2. 5. : music ("βιολί") and a chiefly negative relationship with reality ("ένα 'γιατί' - και μας μαραίνει"). Through its syntactical structure the poem suggests at first one kind of poetry linked to triumphs and heroes, and then rejects it and promotes another kind of poetry, which brings unhappiness and pain to its creators but is more closely related both to reality and to their state of being. Thus, the "μοίρα βάσκανη" is the nature of Post-Symbolist poetry which is imposed on its creators because of external reality or because of the way the poets view external reality (e.g. "γιατι μας τέλεψαν τ' απόλυτα").

This fate is connected with desire in both a negative and a positive way. On the one hand it "βαραίνει" "στους πόθους" which may mean both that desire is to some extent determined by the nature of poetry and that the nature of poetry does not allow desire to be fulfilled, and on the other hand it renders the poets "ονειροπόλ[ους]", thus creating desire. The kind of poetry which these poets choose, or which is imposed on them, leads to a vicious circle of desire

and non-fulfilment, since it creates desire but does not allow it to be fulfilled. This vicious circle of desire and non-fulfilment is nevertheless proposed and preferred to the circle of "ίαμβοι-θρίαμβοι " which is finally undermined in the last stanza ("και μήτε των ηρώων τα βλέμματα, / που αργά περνούν, σα μαρμαρένιοι "). At the same time, however, the nature of the poetry selected does not permit the desired expression ("την κραυγή που λύνεται "), so the speaker is conscious that the poetry he proposes constitutes an impasse.

The interaction of the two categories of structures on the syntactical level of the poem creates both the vicious circle of desire and non-fulfilment and the impasse of poetry on the semantic level of the poem, while at the same time it implies that this impasse is not an impasse of poetry but of reality, since it is reality itself that does not permit any other kind of poetry. This interaction may finally imply a rejection of the active model of poetry which seeks to transform reality or play a leading role in society, and a promotion of a passive model of poetry which is determined by reality, although this passive attitude leads to an impasse of poetic expression.

Another example of the interaction between the dynamic and the static structures of a poem is Karyotakis's "Τώρα που μήτε ο έρωτας..." (p. 49). In this poem, dynamic structures are far more numerous than the static ones, but nevertheless the static structures determine the function of the dynamic ones from the semantic point of view.

The first stanza explains the turn to the past by depicting the speaker's present state of being as irremediable. The second and third stanzas depict the happy past, at first in dynamic structures, where the speaker occupies the

syntactical position of an object ("Χορδή η καρδιά μου δέχονταν το Μάρτη ανατριχίλα. / Ακόμα με συνέπαιρνε γλυκιά μια συλλογή ") or of a subject ("Μια πεταλούδα επέταγε και την ακολουθούσα ") and then in static structures, which sum up the happiness of the past and also the speaker's relationship with poetry during that past : "ήταν η απάρθενη ζωή μου, η ζωή του κόσμου η μια . / Ο νους μου σάμπως ξύπνημα τη χαραυγή ". The result of this situation was poetry : "Και η Μούσα / μου άγγιζε τα μαλλιά ". While the past can be summed up in static structures implying a permanent situation ("ήτανε [...] η ζωή μου... "), which is in this case a happy one, the present is fragmented in dynamic structures where the poetic subject occupies the position of an object, or in dynamic structures depicting an absence of positive elements.

In the following stanzas the speaker puts himself in the position of an object and asks other people to give him back his childhood, his hopes and dreams. From a syntactical point of view the object of nostalgia is a static situation, while the cause of nostalgia is the position the speaker occupies in the dynamic situation or even his realization that this seemingly dynamic situation is actually an absence. In the stanzas where the speaker asks the others to give him back his past, the static structures appear twice and their presence shows the futility of the request and thus negates it. The first one appears after the first verb suggesting request : "Δώστε μου τα παιδιάτικα χρόνια μου πόχουν γίνει / στην ηρεμία του δειλινού χρυσός, ωραίος καπνός". Apart from the result of the request the speaker doubts the result of memory too. Poetry is incapable of restoring the past, as is implied by the finality of the static structures; it can only



plead for memory in the present, which, however, puts poetry in a passive position and renders its pleading futile too. This impotence of poetry is emphasized in the second static structure : "*φέρετε την ελπίδα, / χαμένη τώρα πια* ".

The static structures negate the dynamic ones by demonstrating their inability to be fulfilled. Therefore the interaction of the dynamic with the static structures of the poem points to the difference between the nature of the time of memory and the time of the present, to the inability of poetry to satisfy nostalgia and hope, and to the place of poetry in present reality. The time and space of poetry are those of a past unity and harmony with the universe which are described in the static structures of the third stanza ; this time and space are opposed to the present time and space, which are chiefly characterized by absence. The role of poetry consists in filling this absence but poetry fails to fulfil this role - that is, to participate actively in a dynamic structure - because of its awareness of the static and permanent character of the absence and also of the poet's passive position in the dynamic structures.

Apart from negating the dynamic structures or being opposed to them, the static structures can also interact with the dynamic, by being their cause and their conclusion. An example of this is Lapathiotis's "*Ερινύες* " (p. 214), where one static structure appears in each of the three stanzas.

The first stanza introduces the subject of memory in a dynamic structure; the speaker addresses his songs; the result of memory is, however, determined by the static structure :

*Παλιά τραγούδια μακρινά, χαμένα από καιρό,  
μες σε στιγμές αγγελικές ή μέσα στ' όνειρό μου,*

τώρα που, εντός μου, τίποτα δεν μένει πια γερό,  
το βράδυ που σας θυμηθώ μοιάζει με βράδυ τρόμου.

Memory results in horror because of the destruction and absence implied in the static structure : "εντός μου τίποτα δε μένει πια γερό ". Memory follows a different process from the one the speaker wants it to follow; while the speaker seeks consolation in poetry and in the memory of his old poems, the result is the reverse. The speaker's wish is expressed in a dynamic structure ("κι εσάς, που πάντα φύλαγα, για μια παρηγοριά, / - σα μια στερνή και μαγική παρηγοριά δική μου "), while the result consists in a static structure: "και να'στε απ' όλες τις πληγές, η πιο μαρτυρική μου ". The link between them is a dynamic structure where the speaker abandons action and becomes an observer: "σας βλέπω τώρα, ξαφνικά, ν' αλλάζετε θωριά ". The speaker acts and his act is an act of memory and an attempt to find consolation; nevertheless because of his state of being his attempt fails and the result of memory turns out to be a "wound". Both the speaker's state of being and the wound are depicted in static structures, which thus constitute both the effect of the dynamic structures and the cause of this effect.

In the last stanza the speaker's actions cease to consist in an attempt to find consolation, and comply instead with the situation created by the static structures: "Γι' αυτό, σφαλώντας τη ματιά, πηγαίνω να χαθώ, / μες στους πικρούς σας εμπαιγμούς και μες στις ειρωνείες". Here the active position has actually been reversed. While the speaker still retains the position of syntactical subject, the semantically active elements of the sentence are the songs: "εμπαιγμοί ", "ειρωνείες ". At the same time, the speaker's state of

being has expanded into a state of the world: "τώρα που τίποτα γερό δεν έμεινε κι ορθό ". Therefore not even memory has remained intact, and instead of acting as a consolation, it haunts and chastises the speaker: "τραγούδια μου, Ερινύες ! "

Memory of poetry and consequently consolation constitute at first the object of the speaker's actions, depicted in dynamic structures; the static structures, however, bring about the reverse of the speaker's aim. The dynamic structures that follow describe this reversal, which weakens the speaker and reinforces poetry, which turns memory into "wound". Therefore the interaction between the dynamic and static structures of the poem constitutes an interplay between the poet, his poetry and memory; finally, through memory, poetry becomes the dynamic element of this interplay and torments the poet, who loses his active position and assumes a passive one. The poem completes its circle ("Παλιά τραγούδια... τραγούδια μου, Ερινύες "), having expanded the space of destruction ("εντός μου τίποτα δε μένει πια γερό " - "τίποτα γερό δεν έμεινε κι ορθό ") and having described the interplay between the poet and his poetry which on the syntactical level is based on the interaction between the dynamic and static structures of the poem.

Thus, the combination of the dynamic with the static structures in a poem sets up an interaction between these two categories of structures. This interaction may consist in the subordination of the dynamic structures to the static structures, in a semantic opposition of the dynamic to the static structures or in a relationship based on cause and effect.

Thus the syntax of the poems dealing with memory, nostalgia, desire or escape enacts the function of these elements on the semantic level of the poems. That is, the interaction between the syntactically dynamic and static structures on the one hand and the semantic dimensions of these structures on the other suggests the inability of poetry to fulfil memory, nostalgia, desire or escape. This ineffectiveness of poetry, which constitutes a central component of Post-Symbolist poetics and defines the relationship of poetic language to its subject-matter, is enacted on the syntactical level of the poems which includes the negation of activity, the reduction of the poetic subjects to objects and the self-negation of poetic language, thus rendering poetry an impasse.

#### 4. 2. Love and Death

In the poems dealing with love and death which will be examined here, one syntactical feature that plays a significant role is the interplay between positive (affirmative) and negative structures. On the thematic level this interplay is related to the interplay between love and death, while on the syntactical level it is related both to the interplay between dynamic and static structures and to the symbolic system of the poems. This symbolic system includes the fluctuation between the denotative and connotative values of words, as well as certain types of metaphor and symbol which will also be examined here.

Lapathiotis's "*Ερωτικό* " (p.153) consists chiefly in dynamic structures, while the existential subject fluctuates between the positions of syntactical subject and object. Nevertheless the dynamic nature of the structures in which

the existential subject is a syntactical subject is semantically weak, since the subject walks, remembers, seeks a kiss and dies. The semantically dynamic actions in the poem belong to unnamed others and to death, but they are not always carried out.

In the first stanza the speaker expresses his "καημό":

Καημός, αλήθεια, να περνώ του έρωτα πάλι το στενό,  
ώσπου να πέσει η σκοτεινιά, μια μέρα, του θανάτου,  
στενό βαθύ και θλιβερό, που θα θυμάμαι για καιρό,  
τί μου στοιχίζει, στην καρδιά, το ξαναπέρασμά του.

The chief dynamic structure here is set in the future and will be accomplished by death or rather by the darkness of death. The metaphor "η σκοτεινιά του θανάτου" performs two functions in the poem: on the one hand it is opposed to "μέρα" and on the other it is linked to the "Νύχτα" of the last stanza which refers to death. In this way the timelessness of the poem ("γυρεύω πάντα το φιλί", "δεν μπόρεσε κανείς, ποτέ να μου το δώσει") is set against the time of death, which may fulfil the speaker's wish:

Ίσως, μια μέρα, όταν χαθώ, γυρνώντας, πάλι, στο βυθό,  
και με τη Νύχτα, μυστικά, γίνουμε, πάλι, ταίρι,  
αυτό τ' ανεύρετο φιλί, που το λαχτάρησα πολύ,  
σα μια παλιά της οφειλή, να μου το ξαναφέρει.

The speaker's desire remains unfulfilled during his lifetime because of others, as stated in the middle stanza: "Γυρεύω πάντα το φιλί, που μου το τάξανε πολλοί, / κι όμως δεν μπόρεσε κανείς, ποτέ, να μου το δώσει".

The first stanza consists in positive structures, (e.g. "περνώ [...] το στενό"), the second in both positive (e.g. "γυρεύω [...] το φιλί") and negative ("δεν μπόρεσε..." ) ones and the third in positive (e.g. "να μου το

ξαναφέρει ") ones. This syntactical pattern contrasts with the semantic pattern which fluctuates between existence and non-existence. That is, desire remains unfulfilled during the speaker's lifetime, while it may be fulfilled after his death. At the same time the speaker's semantically most dynamic action is a syntactically static one: "και με τη Νύχτα, μυστικά, γίνουμε, πάλι, τσίρι ". The dynamic nature of his actions is suggested in the beginning of the poem and rejected ("μου στοιχίζει ", "τί ωφελεί; "), to be replaced by a static and passive state ("να μου το ξαναφέρει " instead of "γυρεύω "), which may allow for the fulfilment of desire. In this way the poem moves from dynamic to static, from activity to passivity, from existence to non-existence, but at the same time from non-fulfilment to a possible fulfilment; thus it creates, through its syntactical structures, a semantic paradox and turns the "Ερωτικό " of the title into a love-poem of death.

A reverse process takes place in "Στο κέντρο το νυχτερινό " (Lapathiotis, p. 174), where death is not hoped for but dreaded and placed in opposition to love. The first stanza speaks of the present, where the speaker participates in a first person plural subject:

Τώρα που παίζει το βιολί, κι έχουμε πει τόσο πολύ,  
που μ' έναν έρωτα τρελό, σα να' μαστε δεμένοι,  
σ' ένα συντρόφεμα ζεστό, βάνε ξανά, να ζαλιστώ,  
μες στ' όνειρό σου να κλειστώ - το μόνο που μου μένει.

The first person plural subject is undermined by the presence of the "σαν " and this undermining leads to the last phrase of the stanza. In turn the phrase "το μόνο που μου μένει " is denotatively connected with the previous phrases of the first stanza but its connotations lead to the second stanza, which

constitutes the depiction of a future solitude. "Το μόνο " then connotes "μοναξιά ", which is not mentioned but evoked by dynamic structures where the first person plural has been replaced by the first and second persons singular:

γιατι, άμα λείψει το κρασί, και φύγεις, άξαφνα, και συ,  
και βουβαθεί και το βιολί, με το γλυκό βραχνά του  
μες στην καρδιάς μου το κενό, μεγάλο σαν τον ουρανό,  
θ' ακούσω πάλι το βραχνό τραγούδι του θανάτου...

The structures denoting presence are replaced by structures denoting absence, while the only dynamic structure where the speaker does not occupy a passive position is the last phrase, which constitutes the culmination of the progression towards absence. Along with the interplay between the syntactical structures, connotations are the other prominent linguistic device in this poem. Apart from the passage from present to future and from presence to absence through the connotation of "το μόνο ", in the second stanza the "βραχνάς " of the violin points to the "βραχνό τραγούδι του θανάτου ". In this way music, which in the first stanza is associated with love by virtue of its presence as part of the scenery, becomes in the second stanza connotatively and then metaphorically linked to death. The connection between love and death is semantically rejected and defined as an antithesis, while in terms of linguistic connotations its inevitability is suggested. It is suggested that this conflict between the denotative and the connotative levels of the poem constitutes the area of poetry: while in the first stanza false love ("σα να ' μαστε δεμένοι") and wine create a distance from reality and from music (the playing of the violin is just an external element), the contact with reality which is dreaded in the

second stanza links the music of the violin to the song of death which is now heard by the speaker "μες στην καρδιάς μου το κενό". Music becomes an internal element and is thus linked to the song produced by the speaker himself. Poetry, although not directly referred to in the poem, constitutes the outcome of the contact between the speaker's consciousness and reality (a contact reflected in the connotative and syntactical structure of the poem), and also the outcome of his desire to avoid this contact (a desire reflected in the semantic structure of the poem).

The connection between love, death and poetry is dealt with in a different way in Skarimbass's "Το καράβι" (p.49). Here the speaker asks:

Ειπέ μου, αγάπη μου, για ένα καράβι  
θολό που ολομόναχα πάει  
χρυσά, για' να πλοίο, τα φώτα που ανάβει  
στα χάη .

Love is explicitly mentioned in the poem, while death is hinted at by the ship. The poem is structured around the connotations of the image of the ship. These connotations are intertextual, that is the ship is linked elsewhere in Skarimbass's poetry (e.g. "Το βαπόρι", p. 23, or "Το εισιτήριο", p. 47) and also in Karyotakis's poetry (e.g. "Τελευταίο ταξίδι", p. 65) with death or with an escape in the direction of the infinite. Thus, it functions as an intertextual metaphor.

Throughout the poem the speaker uses the imperative and asks his love to talk to him about the ship and the moon (e.g. "Γι' αυτό μόνον, 'πέ μου, και για - που να βγαίνει - / μια Σελήνη θεόρατη, ειπέ μου / - κι αυτό να τραβάει, να τραβάει, να πηγαίνει, Θεέ μου! ") In this way the prominent



dynamic structures of the poem are connected with speech, since the speaker's beloved is asked to describe an image, while at the same time the speaker himself describes this image in his poem. In this case poetry does not try to suppress death or to overlook its connection with love; in contrast, it talks about it, creating however a double linguistic filter between the speaker and death: the filter of affectionate speech ("ειπέ μου, αγάπη μου, για ") and the filter of metaphorical speech. The poem ends, unlike Lapathiotis's, with the acceptance of the presence of death and, again, in contrast to Lapathiotis's, with an act of love:

Και ύστερα μείνε - κι εγώ - σ' ένα δρόμο  
και - τί όνειρο στο σβήσε και στ' άψε ! -  
το κεφάλι ακουμπώντας - ολόρθη - στον ώμο  
μου κλάψε...

At the same time another contrast to Lapathiotis's poem is that Skarimbass's poem progresses from speech to silence. Speech is achieved in the first stanza by repetitions, is momentarily interrupted in the penultimate stanza ("Και σώπασε πάλι και πάλι άρχισέ μου ") and ceases in the last stanza. The prominent uses of language in the poem, that is the presence of the metaphor, the repetitions and the dynamic imperatives work towards a negation of speech as well as towards a negation of poetry, since the last action ("κλάψε ") destroys the double linguistic filter between the speaker and death, thereby demonstrating the inadequacy of poetry to act as such a filter.

Love and death are often interwoven in the poetry of Polydouri too. The way in which the speaker lives, dies and writes is frequently determined by the presence of the beloved (e.g. "Δεν τραγουδώ παρά γιατί μ' αγάπησες ",

"Μόνο γιατι μ' αγάπησες γεννήθηκα ", "κι έτσι γλυκά πεθαίνω / μονάχα γιατι τόσο ωραία μ' αγάπησες", in "Γιατι μ' αγάπησες", p. 167 ff) and at the same time the absence of the beloved constitutes a kind of death for the speaker. For example in "Ονειρο " (p. 174) the first stanza depicts the speaker's situation before the appearance of the beloved, the next two stanzas depict the appearance of the beloved and the last one predicts his absence.

The first stanza comprises negative structures:

Δε μ' έφτανε ούτε καν αχός  
μες στη ζωή που ζούσα.  
Κι η θύμηση λιγόθυμη  
των όσων αγαπούσα.

In the second stanza the speaker's position continues to be a passive one but the structures become positive:

Κι ήρθε η ματιά σου γελαστή  
εαρινή αχτίδα  
και για τα που μου λείψανε  
μου μίλησε μ' ελπίδα.

The positive structures describe a resurrection of the speaker; the "θύμηση λιγόθυμη " is replaced by hope and the lack of sound by speech. The static structure of the third stanza plays the role of fate:

μα είναι οι χαρές μας φτερωτές,  
thus determining both the hope and the speech of the previous stanza and the speech which follows:

και το φθινόπωρο είναι  
μέσα στην ίδια μου φωνη  
που σου φωνάζει: μείνε.

The semantically weak dynamic structures of the previous stanzas are refuted

and lead to the prediction:

Και της ματιάς σου ο γελαστός  
ήλιος θα βασιλέψει  
και τ' όνειρο θα ξεχαστεί  
προτού καν αληθέψει .

In the last stanza therefore the semantically negative structures prevail again, but this time not as an absence as in the first stanza but as a kind of death.

The fluctuation between the negative and the positive structures is reinforced by the fluctuation between metaphors of spring and autumn. The "ματιά " of the beloved is an "εαρινή αχτίδα ", while the speaker's voice contains autumn. This juxtaposition of the two metaphors leads up to the last stanza where the sun sets, thus implying the death of the dream and the speaker's return to a situation similar to non-existence, like the one depicted in the first stanza. These metaphors point to the theme of love from different aspects. While the first one simply identifies the presence of the beloved with an "εαρινή αχτίδα ", the second one acquires a connotative value by being connected with death, decay, sorrow (these connections may be partly, as in Skarimbass's case, a result of intertextual references). So the third metaphor constitutes not only a repetition but also an expansion of the first, which has now acquired further dimensions because of its juxtaposition with the metaphor of autumn. The third metaphor points then not only to the absence of the beloved but to death as well.

Thus, on the one hand the fluctuation between the negative and the positive structures results in semantically negative structures depicting not only an absence but also a loss or a death, and on the other the fluctuation between

spring and autumn acquires, as the poem progresses, more than one metaphorical meaning and leads again to loss or death. The syntactically passive position of the speaker renders her capable only of depicting this progression to death, while the only dynamic action in which the speaker participates is speech itself; her voice "σου φωνάζει: μέλνε "; this action is however doomed because of the presence of autumn in her voice; thus "φθινόπωρο " may also refer to the speaker's position, which on the syntactical level is passive and subject to decay and death. The progression of love towards death is enacted in the use of language, which excludes or undermines the dynamic and evolves towards passivity, at the same time expanding the area of its metaphorical references.

Thus, the distinction made by Beauzée between "métaphore simple" and "métaphore soutenue" becomes questionable. That is, Polydouri's metaphors belong to the category defined by Beauzée as "métaphore simple, qui ne consiste que dans un mot ou deux" as distinct from "la métaphore soutenue, qui occupe une plus grande étendue dans le discours".<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless these metaphors are interrelated and their meaning to some extent depends upon this interrelationship. This often appears to be applicable to Post-Symbolist poetry, and moreover the interrelationship of metaphors may take place not only in one poem but also from poem to poem. In this case these intertextually related metaphors may sometimes be considered as symbols, although not if one adheres strictly to the definition of a symbol as "a prolonged comparison of

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<sup>9</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Théories du Symbole*, Paris, Editions du Seuil 1977, p. 95.

which the first term is suppressed - a system of sustained metaphors"<sup>10</sup> or to Clive Scott's distinction between symbol and metaphor: "What then differentiates symbol from metaphor is that while metaphor has only a local existence within the poem, the symbol informs the whole poem and can subsume it, rather as a title does. Indeed, the emergence of the symbol usually coincides with the poem's discovery of its subject".<sup>11</sup> In Post-Symbolist poetry there are very few symbols which fit these definitions. One exception is Filyras's "*Πλερότος*". The intertextually interrelated metaphors on the other hand do not always present a consistency, but depend on the context of the poem. For example, autumn can suggest death, decay, decline, sorrow, melancholy; a ship in the night may connote death or escape. These metaphors can be considered as symbols only if one accepts the view of symbols proposed by Kapsomenos. He regards the metaphors repeated in more than one poem as acquiring the status of symbols even if they assume more than one meaning according to the context.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, leaving aside the vexed question of whether or not intertextual metaphors may be regarded as symbols, the rest of this chapter will concentrate on broader issues of the Post-Symbolist symbolic system: recurrent linguistic structures, such as the interaction between static and dynamic structures or between affirmation and negation. In the case of the poems dealing with love and death which have been examined, there is a set of themes and structures related to the theme of love and death, such as the interplay between the active or passive role of the existential subject, the

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<sup>10</sup> Ramsey, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, "Symbolism", pp. 209-210.

<sup>12</sup> Kapsomenos, p. 408.

connection of poetry with death and the inability of poetry to protect the speaker or the poet from reality.

Thus, a part of the thematic and structural or symbolic system of the poems is connected with poetry itself: its role, its function, its space. This system is therefore to a large extent self-referential.

#### 4. 3. Solitude and Unhappiness

In the poems dealing with solitude and unhappiness the prevailing syntactical feature is again the interplay between dynamic and static, and between positive and negative structures, together with the interplay between the active and passive position of the existential subject. On the thematic level these interplays are connected with the existence of solitude and unhappiness, the effort of the speaker to escape and his failure to do so. On the syntactic level, they are also connected with the issue of parataxis and subordination. Here I will examine the effects of these and their significance in the Post-Symbolist symbolic system.

Karyotakis's "*Τελευταίο ταξίδι* " (p. 65) sets up a tension between the expression of the desire to escape from a negative situation and its non-fulfilment. The first stanza expresses the speaker's desire: "*Νά 'μουν στην πλώρη σου ήθελα, για να κοιτάζω γύρου / σε λιτανεία να περνούν τα ονείρατα τα πρώτα*". The grammatical mood of the phrase and the definition of the ship as "*αλαργινό* " in the first line imply that the desire is unlikely to be

fulfilled. At the same time, what is actually desired is, paradoxically, an escape from desires.

In the second stanza semantically negative structures prevail: "η τρικυμία στο πέλαγος και στη ζωή να παύει ", "δίχως να ξέρω πού με πας και δίχως να γυρίσω ", while the dynamic action of the speaker is a metaphorical one: "πέτρα να ρίχνω πίσω ". Sorrow is not negated but is rendered eternal and placed under control: "να μου λικνίζεις την αιώνια θλίψη μου, καράβι". In the second stanza the "αλαργινό καράβι " of the first apostrophe has become simply "καράβι ", while the voyage "στον απείρου και της νυχτός την αγκαλιά " has become a voyage "στο πέλαγος " and although the verbs of the second stanza depend on the verb "ήθελα ", the tense changes from the past tense of "να 'μουν " to the present of "να παύει ", "να ρίχνω ", "να μου λικνίζεις ", "να ξέρω ".

While on the semantic level the desire expressed is described as incapable of fulfilment, on the level of the syntactical structure of the poem the desire strives for fulfilment. This attempt is impeded by the structure of the second line of the second stanza which depicts a momentary action as a duration: "πέτρα να ρίχνω πίσω ", and is only successful in the last line where the verb becomes an aorist subjunctive instead of a present one: "δίχως να γυρίσω ". Through the structure of the poem the desire expressed at the beginning is forced to change into a different desire or to be specified: the speaker is not allowed to look eternally at his dead dreams or to escape from the present and continue to exist in a different reality, which would however retain some elements of the present one ("ονείρατα " and "θλίψη "). He is only permitted

to escape from this reality if he escapes in the direction of death, which entails the complete passivity of the speaker ("δίχως...δίχως").

The negative structures as well as the speaker's undermined dynamic actions lead to death, which may not fulfil desire but at least allows for its expression. Therefore the tension between the expression of desire and its non-fulfilment becomes through the linguistic structures of the poem parallel but at the same time antithetical to the tension between life and death.

Death is compared to life in "Όλα τα πράγματά μου έμειναν " (p. 66).

The speaker opposes the life of the past to the non-life of the present, the difference between the two being from the linguistic point of view the grammatical number employed. Speaking about life in the past the speaker employs the first person plural: "μιαν ώρα που περάσαμε μαζί", while when he speaks about the present he employs the first person singular: "όπως / να 'χω πεθάνει πριν από καιρούς ", "γράφω με το δάχτυλο σταυρούς ". Moreover in the first two stanzas the speaker is only present in the two phrases above - both referring to death - while his memory is projected onto his things, which are the only living elements:

Όλα τα πράγματά μου αναθυμούνται  
μιαν ώρα που περάσαμε μαζί,  
σ' εκείνη τα βιβλία μου λησμονούνται,  
σ' εκείνη το ρολόι ακόμα ζει .

The middle stanza opposes happiness in the past ("Ήταν ευτυχισμένη τότε η ώρα, / ήταν ένα δείλι ζωγραφιστό ") to absence and death in the present ("Έχω πεθάνει τόσα χρόνια τώρα, / κι έμεινε το παράθυρο κλειστό"). The theme of absence continues in the next stanza ("Κανένας, ούτε ο ήλιος, πια



δε μπαίνει ") and culminates in the last: "Δεν ξέρω 'δώ ποιος είναι τώρα ο τόπος, / δεν ξέρω ποιος χαράζει τους σταυρούς ". The speaker is thus alienated even from the only action that he has performed in the poem and also from the place itself. The repetition of the first two lines at the end of the poem does not actually form a circle, since the poem has evolved towards absence and is self-negating, if we consider it to be one of the crosses the speaker "έγραφε " at the beginning.

Therefore the positive and negative structures that constitute the "θέση " and "άρση " that Kapsomenos talks about in his study, do not create a balance but a progression towards negation on the level of the structure which at the semantic level points to solitude, unhappiness, decay or death.

This is a characteristic of Post-Symbolist poetry: in many poems a conflict arises between dynamic and static structures, the activity and passivity of the speaker, affirmation and negation, and usually the structures that prevail are the static, passive and negative ones. Just as the antitheses in Seferis constitute an element of that poet's symbolic system<sup>13</sup> and their structural symmetry constitutes the basis of the architecture of Seferis's poems,<sup>14</sup> so the symbolic system of Greek Post-Symbolism too is dominated by antitheses. In this case, however, the antitheses do not create a balance but a progression towards negation.

This phenomenon is probably related both to the absence of the kind of symbols which are present in French Symbolist poetry and to the absence of a

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<sup>13</sup> Kapsomenos, p. 408.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 525.

poetic myth, which characterizes, for example, the poetry of Seferis.<sup>15</sup> In French Symbolist poetry, or at least in a large part of it, symbols are used both to subsume the poem and to act as links between external reality and another reality. In contrast, in Greek Post-Symbolism the poems cannot be subsumed by symbols because what they are talking about is negation and absence. Since this negation and absence are also self-referential - that is, the poems partly refer to the inability of the poetic language employed to create a viable space - and the poetic language enacts this inability on the structural level, symbols which constitute a linguistic presence are de facto excluded. In other words, since a symbol either subsumes a poem or acts as a link between the reality depicted in the poem and another reality to which it points, it is a powerful linguistic sign. Moreover, the other reality must be suggested by poetry and this is not practicable where the poetry in question consists chiefly of absences and negations. The absence of symbols in Post-Symbolist poetry, therefore, seems to be directly related to the linguistic structure of the poems. The same applies to the absence of a poetic myth. The presence of a poetic myth at least in Seferis's case, according to Kapsomenos, requires a tension between prevailing antithetical motifs, while in Post-Symbolism the prevailing motifs are motifs of negation and absence, and therefore there is no relationship of opposition between them.

Therefore the symbolic system of Post-Symbolism, that is the totality of recurrent structures and themes or motifs, excludes symbols and poetic myths, and consists chiefly in negations and absences or in the progression towards

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 408.

these both on the semantic and on a syntactical level.

An example of a poem consisting of negations is Papanikolaou's "Ένα χέρι μαύρο" (p. 57). The first stanza comprises positive dynamic structures, which, however, on the semantic level point to absence, horror and death:

Ένα χέρι μαύρο μες στη νύχτα ψάχνει,  
ένα φως μονάχα λάμπει στα κλαδιά  
Βγήκαν μάγισσες να κλέψουνε παιδιά  
και τα μάτια σφράγισε μι' αράχνη .

Although each individual sentence cannot be regarded as a metaphor, the reference to horror-stories and fairy-tales emphasizes the connotative rather than the denotative value of the image. The second stanza contains both negative and positive structures but the positive ones on the semantic level point to absence and death:

Η σβηστή μου λάμπα δε θ' ανάψει πάλι,  
έχουνε παγώσει τα θερμά κρεβάτια,  
κι ούτε που θ' ανοίξουν ποτέ πια τα μάτια  
που ' κλεισαν κοιτώντας κατά τ' ακρογιαλί .

Again the image is a connotative one although none of the words can be said to stand as a symbol of anything specific. The image is suggestive of solitude, absence and death. It also suggests the impossibility to escape from the negative situation, since the people who had been looking in the direction of the sea are depicted as dead. This suggestion is made explicit in the first lines of the next stanza, where the speaker talks about the only possible escape: "Άλλοι έχουνε μείνει κι άλλοι έχουνε φύγει, / έχουνε τραβήξει για τους ουρανούς ". The last stanza constitutes the culmination of the negative structures by implying the complete absence of life, and also the lack of serenity

after death: "Πουθενά τριγύρω δεν ακούς ανάσα, / αυτοί που κοιμούνται δε χαμογελάνε ". These two absences lead to a sense of suffocation for the speaker: "Νιώθω τον αέρα σα να με σφαλάνε / σε μια νεκροκάσα ". The prevailing features of this poem are the structures of negation and absence, and also the connotations, which evolve from a general sense of horror to the suffocation of the speaker who experiences his own death.

A similar experience is the one described by Karyotakis in "Τί νέοι που φτάσαμεν εδώ..." (p.67). Here again the "έρμο νησί " does not seem to be a symbol but rather to be associated with other spaces mentioned in Post-Symbolist poetry, such as for example the deserted garden in Karyotakis which is also suggestive of, or even characterized by solitude, unhappiness or absence.

The first stanza comprises verbs of motion ( "φτάσαμεν ", "απομακρύνθηκεν ", "ήρθαμε ") and depicts the solitude and state of being of the "νέοι " ("απομακρύνθηκεν ο τελευταίος μας φίλος ", "έρμο νησί ", "αιωνία πληγή ") and the geographical position of their island ("στο χείλος του κόσμου "). The structures of the second stanza imply both alienation and fragmentation: the first person plural employed is shown to be illusory: "τον ίδιο δρόμο παίρνουμε καθένας μοναχός", while each person is alienated from their own body and voice: "νιώθουμε τ' άρρωστο κορμί, που εβάρυνε, σαν ξένο, / υπόκωφος από μακριά η φωνή μας φτάνει αχός ". In the third stanza the verbs of motion refer to life ("η ζωή διαβαίνει, πέρα στον ορίζοντα σειρήνα ", "η ζωή θα φέρει "), while what life brings to these people is placed in a relation of opposition to life itself ("θάνατο, καθημερινό θάνατο "). The following phrases extend the opposition into an opposition between a

syntactically static structure expressing a state of being ("Κι είμαστε νέοι, πολύ / νέοι ") and a dynamic structure expressing an event in which the "νέοι " are the objects: "και μας άφησεν εδώ, μια νύχτα, σ' ένα βράχο". An opposition also takes place between a verb expressing motion ("χάνεται " [το πλοίο]) and a reflexive verb: "ρωτιόμαστε ". The point of the question ("τί να 'χουμε, τί να 'χω, / που σβήνουμε όλοι, φεύγουμε ' έτσι νέοι, σχεδόν παιδιά ") includes a verb expressing motion, which has now been connected with "σβήνουμε ".

The verbs of motion at the beginning then give way to a final verb of motion that suggests a motion towards death. Therefore the progression towards solitude and alienation and the semantic and syntactical oppositions of the poem are bound together and point on the one hand to the death of the speaker and his fellow-exiles and on the other to his and their inability to find a reason for this progression.

Thus, the poem constitutes the antithesis of a poetic myth, since it offers no resistance to the negative forces and moreover does not possess the knowledge revealed by a poetic myth. Its only knowledge is self-referential, since the answer to the question "τί να 'χουμε, τί να 'χω " is connected with the geography of the poem, that is with the existence of the island "δώθε απ' τ' όνειρο και κείθε από τη γη ". This may be taken as a statement about the position of Post-Symbolist poetry, which, according to the Post-Symbolists, does not fit into reality, while on the other hand it is unable to fulfil desire or create a viable space in which the poets can seek refuge from reality. Therefore the question towards which the poem evolves actually points back to the beginning

of the poem, but without being answered. Thus, if the "έρμο-νισί" refers among other things to poetry itself, instead of being a symbol it points to the inability of poetry to create symbols and consequently a viable reality of its own. In this way the poem completes a circle of isolation and alienation from reality as well as of self-alienation, since it enacts on the linguistic level its inability to provide the answer to the question it poses.

Negations and absences can be juxtaposed with positive structures referring to the past or to an ideal life, as for example in Filyras's "Μπόρα του Μάη" (p. 45), which could also serve as an example of one of the ways the Post-Symbolist poetic system functions.

The first stanza describes a scene of nature by means of syntactically affirmative structures whose semantic value, however, refers to destruction:

Μέσα στο Μάη αλάλαζεν ο θρίαμβος του χειμώνα  
και στης βροχής το σύθαμπον εβρόντα ο κεραυνός  
και το χαλάζι εμάραινε την τροφαντή ανεμώνα  
και τα μπουμπούκια που άνοιγαν ματάκια προς το φως.

Both the objects and the instruments of destruction are elements of nature.

The speaker appears in the second stanza and uses the first person plural in a negative structure. Both the negative structures of the second stanza imply the speaker's overturned expectations: "Και μέσα στο τρισκόταδο δεν έλαμψεν η μέρα / και δεν ακούσαμε γλυκό κελάιδισμα πουλιών ". The speaker's expectations coincide with the normal course of things but are unexpectedly reversed, as is indicated in the next two lines, which still depend on the verb "ακούσαμε ": "μα να βογγάει απόκοσμα τον καταλύτη αγέρα / στα τρίσπατα των λειβαδιών και των περιβολιών ". Until now the speaker has

been playing the role of an observer who watches and hears the destruction of nature in spring.

The last stanza, however, shifts the point of reference from nature to dream and the position of the speaker from observer to victim of the destruction:

Και τ' όνειρό μας που έλεγε να λουλουδιάσει τώρα  
προσμένοντας τόσον καιρό του Μάη το λαύρο φως,  
αλλοίμονον! η απάντεχη το πρόφτασεν η μπόρα  
και σαν μπουμπούκι το 'καψεν ο μέγας Κεραυνός .

Syntactically the dream assumes the function of an object in the last two lines, as is the case with the flowers in the first stanza; the connection is also made through the verb "να λουλουδιάσει " and the simile "σα μπουμπούκι ". At the same time this position is antithetically linked to the syntactical position of the dream in the first two lines of the stanza. These two lines, in which the dream occupies the position of the subject, comprise dynamic structures, which are however of a semantically weak dynamism: "έλεγε να λουλουδιάσει ", "προσμένοντας ". These structures are placed in opposition to the dynamic structures of the last two lines: "το πρόφτασεν " instead of "προσμένοντας " and "το ' καψεν " instead of "έλεγε να λουλουδιάσει ".

On the narrative level the poem proceeds from describing a scene in nature towards describing the destruction of a dream, which remains undefined, that is from apparent referentiality towards metaphor. On the level of the speaker's presence, the speaker progresses from an observer to a sufferer. On the level of syntax there is an interplay between affirmative structures related to the destructive activity of nature and negative structures related to the thwarted expectations of the speaker. Moreover dynamism is opposed to non-dynamism.

These levels are bound together in the structure of the poem, thus establishing an interrelation between spring and dream, between the speaker as an observer of nature and as a dreamer, and between the destructive forces of nature and other destructive forces which are unspecified but may be connected with historical or political events. Thus the poem does not contain any symbols, but with the interrelationships it creates it proposes a way of looking at exterior reality and at the same time a way of looking at elements of interior or poetic reality. That is, what this poem, as well as many other Post-Symbolist poems, actually foregrounds is the interrelationship between exterior and interior reality. Although this does not constitute a new suggestion, it contains some new aspects, such as the selection of the elements presented as interrelated and the way this interrelationship is set up.

For example a relationship between nature and the speaker's state of being is the subject of Palamas's "*Ρόδου μοσκοβόλημα* " <sup>16</sup> . Here, however, the connection is made in a different way. The speaker assumes the position either of the object of the phrases ("*Εφέτος άγρια μ' έδειρεν η βαρυχειμωνιά, / που μ' έπιασε χωρίς φωτιά και μ' ηύρε χωρίς νιάτα* ", "*Μα χτες καθώς με θάρρεψε το γέλιο του Μαρτιού* ") or of the subject ("*κι ώρα την ώρα πρόσμενα να σωριαστώ βαριά / στη χιονισμένη στράτα* ", "*και τράβηξα να ξαναβρώ τ' αρχαία τα μονοπάτια, / στο πρώτο μοσκοβόλημα ενός ρόδου μακρινού / μου δάκρυσαν τα μάτια* ") and remains throughout the poem the chief point of reference. Thus, there exists no syntactical or general structural interplay between the speaker and elements of nature. The connection

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<sup>16</sup> Palamas, 5, p. 431.



between the two is made on the semantic level, while in Post-Symbolism it is usually suggested through the syntactical and acoustic structures of language in the poems. In this way this interrelationship becomes a structural element of the poems rather than a part of the subject-matter. This interrelationship can be considered to constitute a part of the Post-Symbolist symbolic system and it can be established either through a direct statement as in Filyras's case or through suggestion and connotations, as for example in Lapathiotis's "Νυχτερινό " (p.176).

This poem consists of four couplets all of which end in the same phrase, while there is no main verb. The only verbs are contained in relative clauses. The first couplet comprises an image of nature: "Ένα φεγγάρι πράσινο, μεγάλο / που λάμπει μες στη νύχτα - τίποτ' άλλο "; the "τίποτ' άλλο " is the speaker's comment either on what he can see in the night or on what is important for him in this poem. In the second couplet the observer becomes a listener: "Μια φωνή που γροικιέται μες στο σάλο, / και που σε λίγο παύει, - τίποτ' άλλο ". The speaker again singles out one feature of the reality around him (a voice amidst the noise) and states its progression towards silence. In the third couplet the progression that takes place is towards absence and is visual: "Πέρα, μακριά, κάποιο στερνό σινιάλο / του βαποριού που φεύγει - τίποτ' άλλο ", while the last couplet, like the first one, suggests a dominating presence: "Και μόνο ένα παράπονο μεγάλο, / στα βάθη του μυαλού μου. - Τίποτ' άλλο ".

Through the syntactically affirmative structures the poem suggests an interplay between presence and absence, while the syntactically dynamic

structures contain no objects and suggest either a static state or a progression ("φεύγει "). The elliptical structure of the poem may imply both fragmentation and things left unsaid, while the repeated comment "τίποτ' άλλο ", apart from referring to the things on which the speaker is concentrating, may also imply that these things are sufficient for the suggestion he wants to make. This suggestion consists both in the relationship between the images presented and in the fact that the cause of the "παράπονο " mentioned in the last couplet is the scene described in the first three couplets. The first suggestion is conveyed by the parallel syntactical structure of the couplets, and the second by the semantic structure of the scene which refers to a departure in the night. The elements of the landscape (moon, voice, ship) are connected with the interior landscape of the speaker ("παράπονο ") both in a relationship of cause and effect and in a relationship of parallelism. This double relationship precludes the existence of symbols but establishes a system of connotations and connections which constitutes the subject of the poem and is characteristic of the Post-Symbolist poetic system.

Solitude can be depicted as a product not only of the interplay between absence and presence but also of the absence of both positive and negative elements. This is, for example, suggested by the predominance of negative structures in Ouranis's "Μοναξιά " (*Νοσταλγίες* , p.13). Apart from the line "τί, που δεν έρχεται, να 'ρθεί προσμένουμε, ψυχή μου;" which suggests an interplay between a present absence and a possible future presence, the poem can be seen as a process of negation. That is, the negative structures begin by referring to elements related to the speaker's life through prepositional phrases

("στ' αυτιά μου που αφογκράζονται ηχώ καμιά δε σβήνει", "στους διαδρόμους του καιρού κανένα πλέον βήμα / δεν αντηχεί"), then become integrated in a verb connected with the speaker through an adverbial phrase ("μοιάζουμε σα ζωντανοί σε μνήμα / που γύρω τους η ανθρώπινη ζωή αποτραβιέται") and lastly affect the speaker more closely by containing him as an object: "Όλα μας απαράτησαν, ψυχή μου, - ως κι ο Πόνος". Syntactically then the poem consists in a culminating series of negative structures, which gradually comprise more elements of exterior and interior reality, while at the same time they contain the speaker, at first indirectly and at the end directly, as an object. Here again the progression dominating the poem is a progression towards negation.

This progression probably partly accounts for the parataxis prevailing in Post-Symbolist poetry. In Ouranis's poem, for example, as in many others, most sentences consist of main clauses paratactically linked to each other; or, in the case of subordination, the secondary clauses are relative. Such clauses together with temporal and final clauses, which are also present in Post-Symbolist poetry, express pragmatic rather than logical relationships. Moreover, according to Kapsomenos,

η εκφορά σε κύρια πρόταση ενός νοήματος που  
θα μπορούσε να εξαρτηθεί από άλλο μας δίνει  
το πράγμα αυτόνομο, που σημαίνει ισότιμο με 'κείνο  
από το οποίο λογικά εξαρτάται. Αυτό έχει  
ως συνέπεια τη ζωηρότερη προβολή του, στοιχείο  
που για την ποίηση έχει σημασία. Αφετέρου η  
παρατακτική σύνδεση, χωρίς να καταργεί τις  
λογικές σχέσεις των νοημάτων, τις υποβιβάζει  
σε δεύτερο επίπεδο προβάλλοντας πρώτ' απ'  
όλα το νόημα καθαυτό. Αντίθετα από την υπόταξη,  
που δίνει έμφαση στις λογικές σχέσεις (εφόσον τις  
λογικές σχέσεις εκφράζει), η παράταξη, δίνοντας

*κάποτε υπαινικτικά μόνο τη λογική συνάρτηση,  
προσδιορίζεται περισσότερο από τις ψυχολογικές  
διαδικασίες (ψυχικό πάθος, συνειρμό.)*<sup>17</sup>

For example in Ouranis's poem, solitude, unhappiness and non-fulfilment of an expectation are not causally but paratactically linked:

*Σα νύχτα αγρύπνιας πένθιμη κι ατέλειωτη, σα νύχτα  
γεμάτη από μυστήριο και σιωπή η Ζωή μου.  
Αμίλητοι και σκεφτικοί στην τρομερή ησυχία  
τί, που δεν έρχεται, να 'ρθεί προσμένουμε, ψυχή μου;  
Περνάν βαριές από κενό και προσδοκία οι ώρες*

In this way the poem foregrounds feelings, not the logical relationships between feelings, and at the same time implies that it is unable to seek out these logical relationships and to state them.

So, what is stated on the semantic level of Post-Symbolist poems seems to be enacted on their syntactical level. That is, the sense of inability to cope with reality or to understand it and be integrated into it is enacted in the paratactical syntax, which expresses feelings and situations or events belonging to exterior reality without linking them logically. In this way the negative structures or the progression towards negation constitute an impasse, since the syntactical structures offer neither a positive counterbalance to the situation they describe nor an exit through the understanding of this situation. Therefore the syntactical structures enact the inability of poetry to provide an escape from the world it describes, either towards exterior reality or towards a different poetic reality.

Solitude, unhappiness and pain are usually presented as inescapable. In Karyotakis's "Θάλασσα" (p.14) the speaker describes pain as his present reality and rejects joy or participation in joy as a future possibility.

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<sup>17</sup> Kapsomenos, pp. 89-90.

The first three stanzas describe the landscape, while in the last three the speaker's presence gradually becomes more dominant. In the first three stanzas there is an interplay between static and dynamic structures, in which the elements of the landscape - clouds, sea and waves - occupy the position of objects. The clouds both when static and when moving depend upon sun and wind:

Τα σύννεφα γιγάντικα φαντάζουν κι ασημένια  
στο μολυβένιου ουρανό  
σαν τα χτυπά του ήλιου το φως· σαν τα χτυπά ο αγέρας  
φεύγουνε πίσω απ' το βουνό.

In the second stanza the static structure is a metaphor: "Κι είναι θερίο η θάλασσα", while in the dynamic structure that follows the colour of the sea occupies the position of subject and the sea takes the position of object:

Το παρδαλό της χρώμα  
δίνει της - μπλάβο εκεί μακριά  
πιο δώθε ανοιχτοπράσινο κι ακόμα δώθε γκρίζο -  
κάποια παράξενη θωριά.

This phrase probably serves both to emphasize the metaphor by personifying the sea and to point once more to the dependence of the elements of the image on more powerful elements. A similar structure is repeated in the third stanza

Τα κύματα τα πράσινα, τα γκρίζα και τα μπλάβα,  
πέρα απ' του πέλαου τα φαρδιά,  
τα φέρνει ρήγας ο βοριάς

The waves are the only elements which become subjects of a dynamic structure:

μπατσίζουνε τα βράχια, μπατσίζουνε την αμμουδιά.

The position of the various elements in the syntactical structures of the first

three stanzas is utilized in the fifth stanza:

Σα γλάρος μαυροφτέρουγος πετά η ψυχή μου, σμίγει  
με την ψυχούλα του νερού  
και τηνε πάει ο άνεμος και τηνε πάει το κύμα  
κι είναι παιχνίδι του καιρού.

The wind, the waves and the weather dominate the speaker's soul too. The dynamic structure of the first line of the stanza is undermined by the position of the "ψυχή " as an object in the third line and a subject in the static structure of the fourth line.

Apart from making use of the structures of the first three stanzas, the fifth stanza is also set in opposition to the fourth in which the speaker's thought contrasts with the elements or objects that occupy a passive position:

Τις βάρκες, τις ψαρόβαρκες ο φόβος κυβερνήτης  
μες στο λιμάνι τις κρατεί.  
μα η σκέψη μου όλο σέρνεται στα γαλανά τα πλάτια  
μ' ένα χρυσόνειρο δετή.

In this fourth stanza the speaker is implying that his thought is independent of the relationships of subordination which dominate the other elements of the landscape. His thought, however, moves outside the reality described in the poem: "γαλανά πλάτια " and "χρυσόνειρο " instead of "μπλάβο ", "γκρίζο " and "πράσινο " "θερίο ". It is therefore trying to escape from a reality characterized by the personifications "θερίο η θάλασσα ", "ρήγας ο βοριάς ", "ο φόβος κυβερνήτης ". In the next two stanzas it is implied that this effort has failed. The fifth stanza resumes the relationships of subordination and also the colouring ("μαυροφτέρουγος " instead of "χρυσόνειρο ") of the image of the first three stanzas, while the metaphor ("παιχνίδι του καιρού ") repeats the

pattern of the three personifications by adopting the reverse aspect, that is the aspect of the passive rather than of the active element.

The last stanza is a statement of the speaker's only possible position and actions:

Κι ενώ πονώ τον πόνο σου και πάω προς το βυθό σου  
και χάνομαι με τον αφρό,  
ύστερα στο γαλήνεμα, την ηλιακή χαρά σου,  
θάλασσα, δε θαν τη χαρώ.

The syntactically dynamic structures indicate a semantic subordination of the speaker to the exterior reality described, since the simile employed and continued here ("σα γλάρος ") depicts the speaker at the mercy of the storm, while at the same time these dynamic structures lend strength to the depiction of pain as a present interior reality and exclude joy.

The syntactical structures of the poem, together with the metaphors and the simile, create a reality characterized by the subordination of certain elements to others. The speaker tries to escape this subordination by escaping from the reality itself, but fails, and the poem ends with a statement of his failure by means of a negative structure referring to the future. Thus, the syntactical structures create the poems' present and exclude any possible escape from this present, since the interplay between the strong and the weak elements of the image entails the possibility of the destruction of the speaker, who belongs to the latter.

In this way the syntactical structures of the poem create a reality within language which both reflects and enacts the relationship of poetry to exterior reality. This relationship therefore results largely from the language employed.

As Mukařovský puts it, "since poetic designation [...] often sets into motion the entire lexical system of a given language [...] poetry in the course of its development constantly and always in new ways, confronts the vocabulary of the given language with the world of things which this vocabulary is supposed to reflect and to whose changes it is continuously adapting itself".<sup>18</sup> Post-Symbolist poetic language involves a confrontation between language and exterior reality and thus its syntactical structures constitute a stylistic choice in the sense that a poetic style entails a relationship with and an attitude towards reality and poetry itself.

#### 4. 4. The Act of Writing or Singing

In poems dealing with the act of writing or singing a significant syntactical feature is fragmentation, which on the semantic level refers both to external reality and to poetic discourse. Here the syntactical phenomenon of subordination will be explored in connection with the subordination of poetry to external reality. This section will also briefly recapitulate the syntactical phenomena examined in the three previous sections, in order to point out their direct relationship to the act of poetry as viewed by the Post-Symbolists.

Karyotakis's "Θάνατοι " (p. 3) is structurally characterized by repetitions and metaphors. The poem consists in a series of apostrophes ending in an imperative. The repetitions serve as motifs of affirmation and negation. The first stanza, for example, begins with a semantically positive image ("Χεράκια

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<sup>18</sup> Mukařovský, p. 72.



που κρατώντας τα τριαντάφυλλα / κι απ' τη χαρά ζεστά των  
φιλημάτων "), the first part of which is repeated in preparation for the reversal  
or the negation of the image: "χεράκια που κρατώντας τα τριαντάφυλλα /  
χτυπήσατε τις πόρτες των θανάτων". In the second stanza a similar pattern  
occurs, but this time the negative element is already present in the first part of  
the image and is merely stressed in the second:

ματάκια μου που κάτι το εδιψάσατε  
και διψασμένα εμείνατε ποτήρια,  
ματάκια μου που κάτι το εδιψάσατε  
κι εμείνατε κλεισμένα παραθύρια .

Thus, the interaction between affirmation and negation has already, in this  
second stanza, started to turn into a progression towards negation. In the third  
stanza, the semantically negative element is strongly present in both parts of the  
image:

ω, που 'χατε πολλά να ειπείτε, στόματα,  
κι ο λόγος σάς edιάλεξε για τάφο,  
ω, που 'χατε πολλά να ειπείτε, στόματα,  
και τον καημό δεν είπατε που γράφω .

The only syntactically and semantically positive structure of the stanza  
appears in the last relative clause: "που γράφω ". This positive structure is  
continued in the last stanza with the imperatives "ιστορήστε μου ". From the  
point of view of repetition, the poem begins with an interplay between  
affirmation and negation, proceeds towards negation and finally reverses this  
process and ends with affirmative structures.

From the point of view of metaphors, however, the process appears to be  
different. That is, since all the semantically negative elements of the images

denote or connote death, the apostrophe of the last stanza,

μάτια, χεράκια, στόματα, ιστορήστε μου  
τον πόνο κάποιας ώρας, κάποιου τόπου,  
μάτια, χεράκια, στόματα, ιστορήστε μου  
τον Πόνο των Πραμάτων και του Ανθρώπου

connects the result of the imperative with death. Thus, writing is both a product of death and related to the process of death, since the "καημός" and the "Πόνος" about which the speaker wishes to write point back to the progression towards negation and death. The metaphors of the first three stanzas suggest failed attempts (e.g. "και διψασμένα εμείνατε ποτήριδ"), and a similar process is under way where the speaker's connection with writing is concerned. That is, at the end of the third stanza the speaker is the subject of the verb "γράφω", and "καημός" is the object. In the fourth stanza, however, the speaker's position is reversed and he becomes the indirect object of "ιστορήστε", while the subjects of the verb are parts of bodies which have already completed the progression towards death, and the direct object is semantically similar to the "καημός" of the previous structure. The unsuccessful attempts of the parts of the human body to live find an echo in the speaker's attempt to subordinate writing to himself and to achieve expression; and also in his final subordination to writing and, through its connotations, to death.

The dissolution of the human body goes along with the undermining of the denotative elements of speech. The first phrase, for example, can be considered to be denotative, but its denotative value is undermined by the metaphors that follow. In the genitive metaphor "τις πόρτες των θανάτων"

the word "πόρτες " loses its denotative value and consequently so does the semantically active verb "χτυπήσατε ". Thus, the unsuccessful attempts of "μάτια, χεράκια, στόματά" to live are accompanied by the undermining of the actions described, through metaphors and connotations. The combination of the dissolution of the human body with the undermining of denotations is a determining factor in the writing to which the speaker aspires or which he achieves at the end of the poem. That is, the synthesis to which he aspires - the expression of pain - actually consists in fragments both of people and of the discourse, which is dominated by reality and reduced to an unsuccessful attempt: "ω, που'χατε πολλά να ειπείτε, στόματα, / κι ο λόγος σάς εδιάλεξε για τάφο".

This fragmentation constitutes a part of the Post-Symbolist symbolic system; it exists on both the semantic and the structural level. On the semantic level, it manifests itself as part of the Post-Symbolist view of reality and experience; the Post-Symbolists single out certain fragments of reality or experience to present in their poems. They avoid the holistic views promoted by poets such as Palamas or Sikelianos. Moreover, their subject-matter is often concerned with either their alienation from reality or their affinities with some elements of it, i.e. with some elements of nature; the elements which they select, however, are subject to decay or destruction, as for example in Filyras's "Μπόρα του Μάη".

This sense of a fragmented reality together with the sense of the estrangement of poetry from reality are enacted on the structural level of the poems. Most Post-Symbolist poems are both short and divided into stanzas. Their images do not form part of a synthesis but either of a fragmented picture

or of negation, that is of a synthesis which negates itself. Moreover, the promotion of the connotative rather than the denotative value of words works not towards the creation of symbols or sustained images but rather towards the de-emphasizing of external reality; this de-emphasizing is connected with "the revolt against exteriority, against rhetoric, against a materialistic tradition" which, according to Arthur Symonds characterizes the Symbolist movement in poetry<sup>19</sup> and which in the case of the Greek Post-Symbolists can be seen partly as a revolt against forms of poetry which were prevalent in their time. The Post-Symbolists are orientated towards the expression of both fragmentation and evanescence. This accounts for the undermining of denotations and for the lack of synthesis. As Joseph Chiari puts it, "the words, used like Tom Thumb's pebbles in his journey through the wood of memory or the past, will be arranged according to their capacity to suggest this very fleeting experience, and not as a firm receptacle of an already existing core; they will be essentially transient and fleeting, and their symbolic value, I mean their referential value to logical meaning, will be reduced to the minimum".<sup>20</sup>

The promotion of connotations and the undermining of denotations is related to the view of a fragmented and alien reality which prevails in Post-Symbolist poetry. This view, which exists both on the semantic and on the structural level of the poems, is related to the views, promoted and enacted by the Post-Symbolists, about poetry itself.

Karyotakis's "Υστεροφημία" (p. 63), for example, implies this relationship.

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism. A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922*, Cambridge U.P. 1984, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Chiari, *Symbolisme from Poe to Mallarmé, The Growth of a Myth*, London, Rockliff 1956, pp. 38-39.

The beginning of the poem refers to death and the end to poetry. Death assumes the position of the object of a verb whose subjects are elements of nature: "Το θάνατό μας χρειάζεται η άμετρη γύρω φύση/ και τον ζητούν τα πορφυρά στόματα των ανθών ", "Το θάνατό μας καρτερεί το λαμπρό φως του ηλίου ". In the first stanza, the existential subject alternates between the position of object in a dynamic structure and subject in a negative and static structure: "Αν έρθει πάλιν η άνοιξη, πάλι θα μας αφήσει, / κι ύστερα πια μήτε σκιές δεν είμεθα σκιών ". In the second stanza, the existential subject assumes the position of grammatical subject in positive structures semantically related to death: "Τέτοια θα δούμε ακόμη μια δύση θριαμβική, / κι ύστερα φεύγουμεν από τα βράδια του Απριλίου , / στα σκοτεινά πηγαίνοντας βασίλεια πέρα 'κεί". The only action the speaker and his fellow-beings are allowed to perform amounts to moving in the direction of death. Their deaths are required by reality, which this time is connected with the universe. In this way, the speaker presents the motif of a positive, limitless universe, only to describe his alienation from it and his destruction by it.

The first two lines of the last stanza offer the possibility of escape from death through poetry. While the existential subjects were either the objects of dynamic structures or the subjects of verbs related to death, the "στίχοι " of the last stanza assume the position of subject of a verb contrasted with "φεύγουμεν " and related to permanence: "Μόνο μπορεί να μένουνε κατόπι μας οι στίχοι, / δέκα μονάχα στίχοι μας να μένουνε ". This positive structure is undermined by the simile in the last two lines of the stanza: "καθώς / τα περιστέρια που σκορπούν οι ναυαγοί στην τύχη, / κι όταν φέρουν το

μήνυμα δεν είναι πια καιρός ". In the simile, the "στίχοι " become syntactical objects and are thus semantically connected with an action of the speakers. Poetry, then, is the only other action, apart from death, permitted to the speakers; it cannot, however, save them from death, but can only offer them an "υστεροφημία ", which is not depicted as the aim of poetry. Poetry, as is implied by the structure in the last stanza, aspires at saving its creators, so the verses that "μπορεί να μείνουνε " actually imply the failure of poetry to achieve its goal; therefore the "υστεροφημία " is somewhat ironical, and poetry is finally not opposed to death but proves unable to cope with the forces that impose death on the speakers.

A similar structure to "μόνο μπορεί να μείνουνε κατόπι μας οι στίχοι" is used by Skarimbass at the end of "Μόνο δυο στίχους " (p.11): "μόνο δυο στίχους μου σκληρούς να πω και να χαθώ ". Here, however, the speaker assumes a more active attitude towards his verses, which are also defined as "σκληροί ", thus acquiring a materiality. Nevertheless the context undermines the positive attitude by contrasting to reality, which here consists mostly in scenes of nature. These scenes are characterized by permanence:

Ετσι λοιπόν! Πάντα ωραία και πάντα, θα 'ναι, σάμπως,  
όνειρο αέρινο οι άνεμοι κι οι φουσκοθαλασσιές

or:

κι η λεύκα θα 'ν' παντοτεινά ωραία, πάντα και πάντα,  
όταν - τρελή - με τις φωνές των άνεμων σφυρά.

This permanence is contrasted with the speaker's mortality:

Μόνον εγώ, μόνον εγώ, ποτέ δεν ήμουν πλοίο,  
μήτε αέρινο όνειρο, μήτε πουλί σε ανθό,  
ήρθα στον κόσμο με πλατύ μέτωπο, ορθό και λείο,  
μόνο δυο στίχους μου σκληρούς να πω και να χαθώ .

Apart from the contrast between mortality and permanence, the speaker also seems to imply a permanent contrast between nature and his poetry; an element of nature is the "όνειρο αέρινο ", while his verses are "σκληροί ". Poetry is therefore by implication both alien to nature and related to its permanence, while at the same time it is capable of satirizing the concept of permanence:

*Πάντα και πάντα, ναι χρυσός - άνθινη ωραία γιρλάντα,  
θα 'ρχετ' ο κύκλος των πουλιών στου χρόνου τα φτερά .*

Therefore poetry for the Post-Symbolists is alienated both from society and from nature or the universe and related to death. This alienation and relationship with death are enacted both in structures which show the poet's passive position and in connotations which create a chain of negations in the poems. The various linguistic structures point to the inability of poetry to cope with exterior reality.

Moreover, poetry can be depicted as incapable of coping with interior reality, as for example in Karyotakis's "Αλογα μαύρα " (p.74):

*Αλογα μαύρα, θίασος ιπποδρομίου, πετούνε  
οι σκέψεις τώρα, φεύγοντας τη μάστιγα του λόγου.  
Κι είμαι ένας κλόουν τραγικός, που οι άνθρωποι θα δούνε  
να παίζει, να συντρίβεται με την οπλή του αλόγου.*

The most striking rhetorical device in this poem is its metaphors, which show various aspects of the relationship of the poet to his poetry and to thoughts or interior reality. "Λόγος " is depicted as powerful but unable to express thoughts, while at the same time the choice of the word "μάστιγα " instead of "μαστίγιο " allows for the connotation of poetry as a scourge. Thoughts

manage to escape both the whip and the scourge; their escape is not, however, complete, since their space is circumscribed: "ιπποδρόμιο ". Moreover, the adjective "μαύρα " entails the connotation of melancholic thoughts, while the explanatory phrase "θίασος ιπποδρομίου " implies, apart from the captivity of thoughts, their exploitation for the purposes of a spectacle. Not only the resultant poetry but even the process leading to it is viewed as a spectacle offered by the poet to his readers. This idea is developed in the two succeeding lines, where the poet portrays himself as a tragic clown. The adjective "τραγικός " probably refers both to the poet's own experience of his struggle and to his death, as witnessed by others. The process of composition is thus depicted as a dangerous game leading to the poet's destruction. This destruction forms part of the spectacle, but at the same time implies the failure of poetry to express the poet's interior reality, or else the failure of "λόγος ", in both its meanings, to master the "άλογο " element of a human being. Poetry exists on the borderline between the rational and verbal on the one hand and the irrational and inexpressible on the other. Similarly, the poet exists on the borderline between poetry and society, and is finally destroyed. Moreover, poetic discourse can only aim at conveying fragments of the poet's interior reality, and often fails in this task as well.

This fragmented reality and accompanying fragmented poetic discourse may account for the identification of poetry with dream, as for example in Papanikolaou's "Εισαγωγή " (p.45). The first phrase of the stanza is elliptical: "Η θάλασσα από τον εξώστη κι ο ουρανός... " while the next ones are interrogative: "Επιθυμία γλαυκή, πώς να σε ζήσω; / Πού'ν' το καράβι να



με φέρει πίσω / εκεί που είν' ο μεγάλος ωκεανός ; " The speaker doubts his ability to attain his desire, which is expressed through connotations: the image of the sea and the ship suggest escape. The second stanza develops the metaphor of the first and the desire becomes: "Επιθυμία γλαυκή: χρώμα, καπνός ". The language continues to be elliptical and full of ambiguous connotations; "καπνός " may on the one hand refer to the smoke of the ship and on the other to the unattainability of the desire. This connotation is continued in the following lines: "Φωνή που λείπει για να τραγουδήσω, / τραγούδι που ποτέ δε θα γρικήσω / και πόθος που δεν είν' ανθρωπινός ". The desire can be attained neither in reality nor in poetry; in reality because it consists in an escape from it and in poetry because poetry does not possess the power to fulfil this desire.

The poet's unsuccessful song is juxtaposed in the next lines to the songs of the sailors: "Οι ναύτες τραγουδάνε στο καράβι / τραγούδια με φωνή θαλασσινή ". On the one hand songs exist which are integrated into reality and into a voyage within reality, while on the other hand the speaker aspires to a song which is not integrated into reality and which helps him to escape from reality. This song is finally identified with his desire: "Αχ, όνειρο γαλάζιο και μεγάλο, / απ' το τραγούδι μου δεν είσαι τίποτ' άλλό " This identification constitutes a positive view of language and of desire on its own; however, through the connections already made it constitutes a negative view. That is, both the desire and the song remain excluded from reality and unattainable.

Connotations and metaphors are used in a way which resembles the interplay between static and dynamic or positive and negative structures, that is,

to imply the ineffectiveness of poetic language either to depict reality or to provide the poets with a way to escape from reality. Although the language retains its metrical and syntactical structures, from the point of view of its effectiveness it is pushed to the limits. This is expressed on the semantic level by means of various implications and statements concerning the inability of language to play the role its users require of it, while on the syntactical level it is enacted by the various syntactical structures pointing towards negation, absence or identification with the unattainable.

In this way, poetic language is deprived of its aims and serves to undermine or negate itself, while the poets are conscious of their captivity within it. Karyotakis's [Σύμβολα ] (p.73) for example may be read as an expression of the poet's consciousness of his inability to achieve anything through language:

*Σύμβολα εμείναμε καιρών που απάνω μας βαραίνουν,  
άλυτοι γρίφοι που μιλούν μονάχα στον εαυτό τους,  
τάφοι που πάντα με ανοιχτή χρονολογία προσμένουν,  
γράμματα που δεν έφτασαν ποτέ στον προορισμό τους.*

This poem touches upon various aspects of Post-Symbolist poetic language. The first is the relationship of language and poets to reality. In the first line, the existential subjects occupy the position of syntactical subject in a static structure, while in the dynamic structure they are reduced to an adverbial phrase. The objective genitive (καιρών ) which depends on the complement in the main clause (σύμβολα) becomes the subject in the relative clause and thus the positions are reversed and the "καιροί " acquire a syntactical as well as a semantic "βάρος ". Therefore there is an imbalance between poets and reality. The poets and their poetry symbolize reality but at the same time reality is a

burden to them and determines them; in this way the poets and their poetry actually symbolize this burden and determination by reality. Therefore, although Post-Symbolist poems are not characterized by the presence of symbols, they themselves constitute symbols of reality. Thus, symbols, instead of constituting a linguistic presence in poems linking empirical reality with some other reality, as is often the case with French Symbolist poetry, are a linguistic presence (the poems themselves) characterized by self-negation and subordination to reality. Moreover, although Post-Symbolist poetry frequently turns its back on the historical and socio-political reality of the time, Karyotakis is actually saying here that the nature of Post-Symbolist poetry is determined by this reality and constitutes an attitude towards it and an answer to it, although the attitude is passive and the answer indirect.

From this point of view, poems can be seen as "*άλυτοι γρίφοι*". The phrase "*μιλούν μονάχα στον εαυτό τους*" may point both to the readers' attitude towards this poetry and to the poets' attitude towards their poetry. That is, it may imply the inability of the readers to understand the response of these poets to the reality of their time. It may also imply that poetic language is ultimately self-referential. By de-emphasizing external reality - which is part of the Post-Symbolists' response to reality - and by feeling at the same time unable to create another reality in language, the Post-Symbolists create a self-referential poetic system, which is an impasse.

This impasse accounts partly for the relationship of Post-Symbolist poetry to death; a relationship mentioned in the third line of [*Σύμβολα*]. Since poetic language consists of negations and absences, its relationship to death exists both

on the semantic and on the structural level. Karyotakis once more plays on the words "γράφω" and "τάφο", only this time the verb "γράφω" seems to have been glossed in the "γρίφοι" of the second line and the "γράμματα" of the fourth. If this is the case, Karyotakis is presenting two aspects of the act of writing: the self-referential and the communicative. Both of them, however, are depicted as failures, since the riddles remain unsolved and the letters never reach their destination.

The act of writing is doubly connected with death and the four metaphors of the poem are interlinked. The first points to a static state ("εμείναμε") combined with a crushing presence ("βαρύνουν"), the second and the third to negative presences - the one excluding communication ("γρίφοι") and the other connected with death ("τάφοι") - while the fourth metaphor is syntactically negative and thus refutes the only positive possibility ("γράμματα"). The verbs of the four lines have either subjects with complements or objects or adjuncts, and thus fulfil their negative or self-referential function, except for the verb "προσμένουν", which has no object. Thus, the only action that has not yet been tried is death and this is the only action the poem allows for, having demonstrated the impasse to which the other actions referred to lead. The poem points to death not only semantically but also syntactically, thus pointing to the impasse of the poetic language employed.

This impasse is stated again in "Αισιοδοξία" (p.139). The poem begins with a series of suggestions for make-believe: "Ας υποθέσουμε πως δεν έχουμε φτάσει / στο μαύρο αδιέξοδο, στην άβυσσο του νου", "Ας υποθέσουμε πως είμαστε εκείπέρα, σε χώρες άγνωστες της Δύσης, του Βορρά "; follows

these with a satire on various attitudes towards reality which do not acknowledge the impasse (e.g. the lines which, as G.P. Savidis has suggested<sup>21</sup>, probably refer to Kazantzakis's "Salvatores Dei ": "Πηγαίνουμε - σημαίες στον άνεμο χτυπούν - / ήρωες σταυροφόροι, Σωτήρες του Σωτήρος"), and closes with another hypothetical suggestion concerning language itself: "Ας υποθέσουμε πως δεν έχουμε φτάσει / από εκατό δρόμους τα όρια της σιγής, / κι ας τραγουδήσουμε ". The boundaries of silence have been intertextually reached, that is, both Karyotakis's poetry and that of the other Post-Symbolists is conscious semantically and syntactically of its progression towards negation, absence and self-negation. There is, then, no way out of this impasse other than the one proposed in the next lines of the stanza: "το τραγούδι να μοιάσει / νικητήριο σάλπισμα, ξέσπασμα κραυγής - / τους πυρρούς δαίμονες, στα έγκατα της γης, / και, ψηλά, τους ανθρώπους να διασκεδάσει". This satirical suggestion is self-referential, since the "νικητήριο σάλπισμα " is incorporated in lines such as "με του πτερνιστήρος / το πρόσταγμα, / χιλιάδες άλογα κινούν " or "ήρθανε τα δάση / μ' αυτοκρατορικήν εξάρτυση πρωινού θριάμβου". This "σάλπισμα " is, however, undermined by the repeated phrase "ας υποθέσουμε ", that is by the impossibility to utter such a song. This impossibility is emphasized by the position of the singers: they dwell in or near "στα έγκατα της γης", since the other people are "ψηλά ".

Exterior reality has thus rendered the triumphal song impossible, or at least placed it outside time and space, while the poems composed by Karyotakis's

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<sup>21</sup> Karyotakis, p. 139.

generation have reached "*τα όρια της σιγής* " through the consciousness projected both on the semantic and on the structural level of their poetic language that their poetry is subordinate to exterior reality, unable to achieve its own aims and, through its self-referentiality, stretched to its limits.

Thus, the interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures in Post-Symbolism creates a consistent symbolic system, chiefly characterized by a progression towards negation and absence, as well as by self-referentiality. This can be seen in the attitude of the Post-Symbolists both towards external reality and towards poetic language.

External reality is de-emphasized through the undermining of denotations and the promotion of connotations as well as by its fragmented presence in the poems. At the same time, this reality imposes itself on poetry and renders the existential subject passive. Poetic language, then, is considered by the Post-Symbolists to be incapable both of protecting them from reality and of creating a viable reality of its own, or even of acting as a link between actual reality and some other reality. These inabilities are enacted on the syntactical level by the progression towards negative structures, by the absence of symbols or of a poetic myth and by the undermining of the dynamic nature of structures connected with the act of poetry. The fragmented presence of exterior reality is related to a fragmented poetic discourse, which proceeds towards alienation from reality and the universe; an affinity with elements of nature susceptible to destruction; a connection with death; an identification with the unattainable and

a self-undermining synthesis. This process is realized through connotations, interrelated metaphors and similes and through parataxis of syntactically or semantically negative structures.

Thus, the attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards language, as enacted by their use of language in the interplay between its syntactical and semantic structures, constitutes a response or an attitude towards external reality. This response pushes Post-Symbolist poetic language "από εκατό δρόμους" towards self-negation.

## Chapter 5

### The Interaction between the Acoustic and Semantic and between the Metrical and Semantic Structures of Post- Symbolist Poetic Language

The examination of the interaction between the acoustic and semantic and between the metrical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language will follow a similar method to the examination of the interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures. That is, attention will be focussed on those features of the acoustic and metrical structures that are closely related to the subject-matter of the poems.

The acoustic and metrical structures of Post-Symbolist poetry will be discussed in the same chapter because, although the metrical structure of poetry organizes the semantic, the syntactical and the acoustic structures, on the other hand it forms a part of the acoustic structure in the sense that it plays an important role in the sound of the poems. Moreover, in Post-Symbolist poetry both the acoustic and the metrical structures are connected with aspirations to music, expressed in the subject-matter of some of the poems and related in turn to more general issues of Post-Symbolist poetics, as will be argued below.



## 5. 1. The Interaction between the Acoustic and Semantic Structures of Post-Symbolist Poetic Language

The interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures of language plays an important part in Symbolist and Post-Symbolist poetry, since this poetry has often been defined as "musical", that is, as placing an emphasis on its acoustic structure. According to T.S. Eliot, "*a musical poem* is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of the secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and [...] these patterns are indissoluble and one. And if you object that it is only the pure sound, apart from the sense, to which the adjective *musical* can be rightly applied, I can only reaffirm my previous assertion that the sound of the poem is as much an abstraction from the poem as is the sense".<sup>1</sup>

Musicality or "euphony", as Mukařovský terms it, can only be examined in connection with meaning, since "individual speech sounds are semantically indifferent in themselves". According to Mukařovský, "the aesthetic effect of speech sounds has its source in the serial arrangement which attracts attention to them, whereas semantic value adheres only additionally as a consequence of the contact between the euphonic speech sound pattern and the content. Therefore euphony is not only polymorphous [...] but also polysemous. [...] Speech sounds or their sequence [...] can also become an

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<sup>1</sup>T.S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets*, London, Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 33.

indirect semantic factor as mediators of semantic relations by putting words similar in sound into semantic contact with one another".<sup>2</sup>

On this argument, sound in poetry can interact with meaning in two ways: on the one hand it can create or emphasize semantic relationships between words, and on the other it can undermine the semantic value of words and promote acoustic cross-references. These two types of relationship between sound and meaning are perhaps implied in Mallarmé's statement that poetry can reconstitute words: "Le vers qui de plusieurs vocables refait un mot total, neuf, étranger à la langue et comme incantatoire achève cet isolement de la parole: niant, d'un trait souverain, le hasard demeure aux termes malgré l'artifice de leur retrempe alternée en le sens et la sonorité, et vous cause cette surprise de n'avoir oui jamais tel fragment ordinaire d'élocution, en même temps que la reminiscence de l'objet nommé baigne dans une neuve atmosphère".<sup>3</sup>

Greek Post-Symbolist poetry, for reasons connected with other aspects of its poetics, which have been discussed in previous chapters, does not grant such a primary position to music and incantation as Mallarmé does; acoustic structure, however, plays an important part in the formation of the semantic structure of their poetry.

In this section, I am going to examine the interaction between acoustic and semantic structures in Post-Symbolist poetry through (a) some poems where semantic relations between words are created or emphasized by the

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<sup>2</sup> Ján Mukařovský, *The Word and Verbal Art*, pp. 21, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris, Gallimard 1945, p. 368.

acoustic structure and (b) some poems where the semantic value of words is undermined by the acoustic structure.

#### 5. 1. 1. The Creation or Emphasizing of Semantic Relationships between Words by means of the Acoustic Structure

The technique of establishing or emphasizing semantic connections between words through their acoustic structure is a common feature of Post-Symbolist poetry and is largely responsible for its symbolic character. As I have argued in Chapter 4, the relationship between the syntactical and semantic structures of the poems precludes symbols of the kind at work in French Symbolist poetry, and the symbolic character of Post-Symbolist poems depends instead on the cross-references, which confer a connotative value on recurring words. The semantic connections established between unrelated words through their acoustic structure can only be examined in the context of other such connections established by non-acoustic means in the poems.

Taking for example Ouranis's "Η Φράγκισσα " (*Noostalγίες*, p. 22), which starts with the word "ξενητεμένη " ("Ξενητεμένη στην ξερή τη γη της Αττικής ") and ends with the word "ξένος " ("Κι αύριο ο κρίος τάφος της ο οικοσημασμένος / μέσα στη γη της Αττικής θα ' ναι κι εκείνος ξένος "), we find that the word initially used to describe the princess is employed at the end in the description of her tomb, and so the sense of "ξενητειά " acquires an eternal aspect.

The sense of "ξενητειά " is acoustically evoked in the poem by the repeated group of sounds -ks- : ξερή, ξενικά, εξώστης (twice), ταξιδιάρικο, ξανθή, εξορία. It is also semantically evoked by various phrases such as "κι ούτ' ένας ίσκιος να σταθεί ν' αναπαυτεί η ψυχή της ", "και η ξανθή πριγκίπισσα μονάχη".

The acoustic structure of the poem creates threads along which the semantic structure is built. These threads are the threads of immobility and infertility. Immobility is connected with exile and contrasted with inner turbulence. After "ξενητειά " and the sense of exile have been mentioned ("η Φράγκισσα η Αυθέντισσα, στου πύργου τον εξώστη, / κοιτάει ρεμβήτα ξενικά για την ψυχή της μέρη ") it is stated that "όλα στο φως ακινητούν ". The verbs describing the princess's actions are "κοιτάει ", "νιώθει " and "μαραίνεται ". The immobility becomes more acute when contrasted with inner turbulence ("κι ούτ' ένας ίσκιος να σταθεί ν' αναπαυτεί η ψυχή της "). The consequence of this antithesis is that the princess remains "δίχως ιστορία ", since she cannot be integrated into the landscape.

The theme of infertility is linked to the themes of outer immobility / inner turmoil and to the theme of exile: in the first line the soil of Attica is defined as "ξηρή ", the summer is "καυτερό ", the only vegetation is olive-trees and the landscape otherwise consists of mountains and monuments ("Όλα στο φως ακινητούν : ελιές, βουνά, μνημεία "). There are neither shadows nor clouds ("κι ούτε να πάρει την μαζί περνάει σύγνεφο ένα "): the absence of the latter possibly refers to the absence of rain which leads to

infertility.

In this infertile landscape (rendered even more infertile by the fact that the soul of the princess constantly moves and so does not take root), the princess "μαραίνεται [...] σαν κρίνος μες στο κάμα ". The phrase "οικοσημασμένος τάφος " ("κι αύριο ο κρίνος τάφος της ο οικοσημασμένος ") awakens the hope that the princess will eventually acquire an "ιστορία ", but this hope is dashed in the last line, since the tomb will be situated "μέσα στη γη της Αττικής " where it has already been demonstrated that the princess was unable to take root. Moreover, since the tomb "θα ' ναι κι εκείνος ξένος ", the hope of "ιστορία " is in any case groundless. "Ιστορία ", which is the fate of the landscape, since the landscape contains "μνημεία ", is contrasted with the fate of the princess through the rhyme "ιστορία " - "πικρία ".

The repetition of the group of sounds -ks- throughout the poem links words such as "ξενητεμένη ", "ξερή ", "εξορία ", thus creating connections between the themes of exile, immobility and infertility, and causing each of these themes to refer to the others.

If "Η Φράγκισσα " constitutes an example of a simple acoustic structure, consisting chiefly of one repeated sound, Ouranis's "Ιουλιανός " (*Νοσταλγίες*, p. 23) may serve as an example of a contrast created on both the semantic and the acoustic level of the poem, or else of a contrast between two semantic elements of the poem which is supported by the acoustic structure. On the semantic level the poem speaks of a contrast between the Hellenic and the Christian world or rather of the suppression of

the former by the latter. On the acoustic level there are (i) words linked to "Ιουλιανός " and "ελληνισμός ": *λάλο* [νερό ], *ελληνι* *κές* [δάφνες ], *ελιάς* [κλώνοι ], *Ιουλιανέ*, *Ολυμπο*, *ομφαλό* [του ελληνικού κόσμου την ] *Ολυμπία*, and (ii) words linked to "στεριότητα " and "σταυρός ": *στείρα*, *κοίτη*, *εγείρανε βαριά* [κι ] *εμαραθήκαν* [οι δάφνες οι Ελληνικές ], *παντέρημο* [τον Ολυμπο ], *Μοίρα* .

"Στείρα " [κοίτη ] also leads to: *εσταυρώθηκε*, *σταυρό*, *σταυρωμένη* - words prevailing in the last sentence ("*Δεν εσταυρώθηκε ο θεός της Ναζαρέθ μονάχος, / Ιουλιανέ, αλλά μ' αυτόν μαζί η πλατιά οικουμένη / στον ξύλινο του Γολγοθά σταυρό είναι σταυρωμένη* ") after the acoustic sequence which implies the transformation from the one world to the other: "*κάτου απ' το φως κατάλευκη φαντάζει τώρα ως τάφος* ".

Thus the contrast between the two worlds and the suppression of the one by the other is sustained in the acoustic structure of the poem.

Apart from supporting or underlining connections already created on the semantic level of the poems, as is the case in the two poems by Ouranis referred to above, the acoustic structure can also create new semantic connections, thus promoting the connotative value of words and adding new dimensions to the meaning of the poem. For example in Polydouri's stanza "*Όλα είναι ωραία / όλα είναι αγάπη κι αγάπης πόθος / τα ξεφυλλά . / Τόσο είναι ωραία καθώς πεθαίνουν / τόσο μοιραία / και σιωπηλά* " ([*Όλα είναι ωραία*] p. 209) the chief acoustic connection made is between "*πόθος*" and "*πεθαίνουν* ". Apart from the sequence "*ποθ* "- "*πεθ* ", the two words are placed at the end of the only lines in the stanza that do not rhyme. The

other words that are acoustically linked are the words "ωραία-μοιραία " and "ξεφυλλά-σιωπηλά ", which thus support the meaning of the stanza and relate beauty to death and death to silence. The connection of "πόθος " to "πεθαίνουν " relates two recurrent themes of Post-Symbolist poetry - death and desire - to one another.

Similar connections of recurrent themes are produced in other Post-Symbolist poems by recurrent rhymes. The most striking examples are the rhyming of "τάφο " with "γράφω ", which occurs in Karyotakis, Papanikolaou and Lapathiotis, and of "στίχοι " with "τύχη ", which is also frequent in Post-Symbolist poetry. Two examples of how these rhymes work can be seen in Papanikolaou's "Θάλασσα του Βορρά " (p. 63) and Karyotakis's "Byron" (p. 97).

In "Θάλασσα του Βορρά " Papanikolaou begins by establishing an acoustic connection between dream and the infinite; the words "του ονείρου " and "του απείρου " rhyme in the first stanza; from then on the speaker describes the sea and the land of his dream which has now been geographically placed. In the penultimate stanza, the speaker deals with the subject of oblivion:

Και τα βουνά, και τα βουνά που, πίσω απ' τις κορφές τους,  
αρχίζει η χώρα που γι' αυτήν γράφει το παραμύθι  
μ' όλα τα βασιλόπουλα και τις πριγκίπισσές τους,  
με τα νερά τ' αθάνατα, τα θαύματα, τη λήθη .

The alliteration of -θ in παραμύθι, αθάνατα, θαύματα, λήθη, the

loosening chiasmus<sup>4</sup> : *αρχίζει, χώρα*, and the sequence : *χώρα , γράφει, παραμύθι, νερά* suggest that the land described is a land that consists of poetry and exists only within it. At the same time, the rhyme "*παραμύθι* " - "*λήθη* " suggests that oblivion is impossible in real life and, consequently, that memory (which is not mentioned) prevails. The subject of oblivion persists in the last stanza, chiefly through the acoustic and semantic connection: *τάφοι-ξεγράφουνε-γράφει* :

Εκεί πια την πατρίδα μου να ξαναβρώ την πρώτη,  
εκεί που οι πάγοι ορθώνονται μυστηριώδεις τάφοι,  
κι όπου, παραπετάσματα μπροστά στη γη, τα σκόττη  
για πάντα θα ξεγράφουνε ό,τι η καρδιά μου γράφει.

There is a dual connection between "*τάφοι* " and "*γράφει* " : on the one hand, the tombs form a part of the scenery which "*ξεγράφει* " the speaker's desires and memories, and thus form a part of the desired oblivion and are antithetically related to the act of writing, while on the other, the act of writing leads to its own self-negation, and is thus positively related to death and tombs.

Therefore the acoustic structure of these two stanzas establishes the existence of the land depicted within the realm of poetry, while at the same time, through the rhyme "*τάφοι* " - "*γράφει* ", it leads to the denial of this realm.

Karyotakis rhymes "*στίχοι* " with "*τύχη* " in the first stanza of "Byron": "*Ενίωσεν ότι / του ήσαν οι στίχοι / άχαρη τύχη / και ματαιότη* " where

<sup>4</sup> The phenomenon in which certain sounds are repeated in reverse order (chiasmus) with another sound between them (David J. Masson, "Vowel and Consonant Patterns in Poetry", *Essays on the Language of Literature* , ed. Seymour Chatman, Samuel R. Levin, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company 1967, p. 4 ff).



this rhyme contrasts with the last stanza: "Κι ο Μπαίρον ξέρει / πώς να το ζήσει / το θέλο Τραγούδι ". "Τραγούδι " rhymes with "[ανδρών ] λουλούδι " of the penultimate stanza and thus acquires positive connotations. Moreover song is something the poet "ζει " and consequently a matter of choice and action, while "στίχοι " are a matter of "τύχη ", which in this case suggests fate rather than luck. The rhyme "στίχοι "- "τύχη " occupies a key position in the poem and through its connotations and its contrast with the rhyme "τραγούδι "- "λουλούδι " raises a subject which evolves in parallel to the main subject of the poem. That is, the poem describes Byron's decision to stop dealing with poetry only and to participate in fighting, while the subject raised by the acoustic structure of the poem is that of the negative aspect of literate poetry and the positive aspect of oral poetry, as well as the question of whether poetry is a matter of fate or of choice.

The word "τύχη " is used by Karyotakis in another sense in the last stanza of "Υστεροφημία " (p. 63):

Μόνο μπορεί να μείνουνε κατόπι μας οι στίχοι,  
δέκα μονάχα στίχοι μας να μείνουνε, καθώς  
τα περιστέρια που σκορπούν οι ναυαγοί στην τύχη,  
κι όταν φέρουν το μήνυμα δεν είναι πια καιρός .

As in Papanikolaou's "Θάλασσα του Βορρά ", here again the sequences: *μείνουνε-μήνυμα, περιστέρια-φέρουν-καιρός, μπορεί-σκορπούν, στίχοι-περιστέρια* suggest that the message the poems are supposed to carry has at least partly to do with the creation of a poetic world. In the first two stanzas of the poem, in lines such as "το θάνατό μας χρειάζεται η άμετρη γύρω φύση " and "το θάνατό μας καρτερεί το λαμπρό φως του

ηλίου " it is stated that poets and consequently the poetic world to which they aspire have no place in the universe; therefore the message the poems bear is doomed. "Τύχη " in the sense of luck/chance is against the poets, as was also the case with "τύχη " in the sense of fate. Thus, through the acoustic structure of the poem, the poet suggests an interpretation of the "μήνυμα " the cause of which otherwise remains undefined, and at the same time emphasizes the alienation of poetry from the universe: while nature and the sun need and await something, the effect of poetry depends on luck / chance and is thus contrasted to the laws of the universe.

The theme of poetry as something out of harmony with the universe or society is also present in the acoustic structure of Karyotakis's [Είμαστε κάτι... ] (p. 87), where although this discord is suggested metrically, from the point of view of rhyme the sonnet follows the pattern ABBA-ABBA-CDC-D[C]D. The C rhyme is -isis ("αισθήσεις "- "φύσις ") and the only word that produces a discord in the rhyming is the third word of the C rhyme: "ποίησις " ("Μας διώχνουνε τα πράγματα, κι η ποίησις ...").

Karyotakis, in general, plays more on the interaction between the metrical and semantic structures than on the interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures of his poems. This is probably connected with the subject-matter of his poetry, which deals with the relationship between poetic and external reality rather than with the structure of the poetic reality itself. This is a theme of Post-Symbolist poetry in general; Karyotakis however places more emphasis on it, especially in his second and third collections. By playing on the metrical structure of his poems and deviating from metrical

rules, he suggests the loss of a "centre" in poetry as Zissimos Lorentzatos<sup>5</sup> has argued. This suggestion is in keeping with the discord between the poet and society or between poetry and the universe as well as with the loss with which Karyotakis deals, especially in *Σάτιρες*.

Similar questions are raised in the poetry of Skarimbas. Skarimbas does not explicitly deal with the relationship between poetic and external reality, but he depicts a fragmented world and comments at the same time on the structure of language and on its deceitfulness. In this way he expresses his awareness of the poetic reality created by language. This fragmentation and this awareness are enacted in a fragmented and self-conscious poetic discourse, which precludes a self-contained poetic reality. This may account for the lack of a predominant interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures of his poetry and for the ironic functioning of this interaction in the few cases where it does exist.

For example "Το φιδάκι " (p. 68) seems to satirize the kind of philosophically orientated poetry and poetic diction which prevails in Sikelianos or Kazantzakis; e.g. Skarimbas mentions "το Νιρβανά " and rhymes "ρυθμό " to "Αριθμό " <sup>6</sup>. The poem is based on acoustic connections between words; these connections are intended to create irony on the structural as well as the semantic level of the poem. Thus, the acoustic structure constitutes a part of the play on words that prevails in the poem.

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<sup>5</sup> Zissimos Lorentzatos, "Το Χαμένο Κέντρο ", *Για τον Σεφέρη. Τιμητικό αφιέρωμα στα τριάντα χρόνια της Στροφής*, Athens 1961, pp. 86-146.

<sup>6</sup> Possible references to one of Kazantzakis's pen-names (Κάρμα Νιρβαμή) and to a characteristic rhyme of Sikelianos, see, for example, Sikelianos, E, p. 93: "Αφαία ".

For example the word "στροφή " is used in both senses: turning and stanza ("να στρέφουμαι ελλειπτικά στης ύλης τη στροφή" and later on: "και θα με κατεργάζεται στην αστρική του κλίση / ο εφιάλτης των στροφών πάντα σε νέους ρυθμούς ;") and at the same time it is acoustically linked to the adjective "στρυφνός ", which constitutes the self-definition of the speaker who is going to find an "άλλο ρυθμό " : "Ωω !... Οχι !. Τις λυχνίες μου - Μάγος στρυφνός - θ' ανάβω ". Another acoustic connection is the one between "λήθη " ("κι είμαι λοξά - σχήμα ζαβό - γιομάτος φως και λήθη ") and "λίθο " ("και - λίθο φιλοσοφική - θα βρω άλλον ρυθμό "), while the connection between "ρυθμός " and "Αριθμός " is a part of the word-play on the verb "συλλαμβάνω " ("conceive of" and "arrest") of the last stanza: "θα βρω άλλον ρυθμό, / και μια στιγμήν ανύποπτη ύλη θα σε συλλάβω / επ' αυτοφώρω : Σύνθημα, Σημείο ή Αριθμό ". Apart from the semantic play on the verb "συλλαμβάνω ", the form "συλλάβω " is acoustically related to the "ζαβό " and the "ζαβολιά " of the first stanza ("Η ζαβολιά κι η σιωπή, το σκέδιο μου εβουλήθη "). In this way, through the acoustic relationships between semantically unrelated words (e.g. "λήθη "- "λίθος ") and through the creation of semantic relationships between words as a result of their acoustic connections (e.g. the speaker's statement that he is going to "συλλάβ[ει ] [την ύλη ] / επ' αυτοφώρω " can be regarded as a "ζαβολιά "), the structure of the poem enacts the irony expressed in it.

In a similar way, Skarimbass's rhymes can often be considered to be ironic comments on the convention of rhyming itself. Two extreme examples are

the division of the word "δηλαδή " in order to make it rhyme with "προφίλ " ("Και η μαμζέλα μας δηλ- / αδή ο αέρας του μπάτη [...] στο σκοτάδι προφίλ ", p. 39) and the invention of the musical instrument "μπραμ-πάφες ", which rhymes with "γκάφες " : "Κι ως τα γνώρισα όλα μου γύρω - μπραμ-πάφες / όλα κράταγαν, / τρουμπίτες και βιόλες / - ΕΑΥΤΟΥΛΗΔΕΣ που με βλέπαν, / οι γκάφες / μου όλες " (p. 45).

Skarimbas's poetry, like that of Karyotakis, rarely foregrounds the acoustic structure, and this phenomenon is related to the subject-matter. That is, Karyotakis is often dealing with the relationship between poetic and external reality, with the lack of ideals and with the inability of the poet to create a viable poetic world, and Skarimbas is frequently commenting on the structure of language and on the ways in which it is employed in poetry. Thus, Karyotakis foregrounds the interaction between metrical and semantic structures, while Skarimbas foregrounds the interplay between metrical and syntactical structures as well as the interplay between various functions of language, such as narration, irony and self-commentary.

If Karyotakis and Skarimbas constitute one category of Post-Symbolist poets in this matter, the remaining Post-Symbolists can be divided into two categories according to whether their poetry foregrounds music or painting. The major <sup>part</sup> of Post-Symbolist poetry aspires to music (i.e. references to music, harmony and song prevail in the poems) and in fewer cases to painting or the visual arts in general. These two aspirations are connected with central concerns of Post-Symbolist poetics and are to some extent antithetical. The acoustic structure of the poems is related to these concerns

and therefore to the aspiration of the poems to music or painting.

The aspiration to painting or the visual arts prevails in the poetry of Tellos Agras and in much of the poetry of Kesar Emmanouil. Mitsos Lygizos refers to the "ζωγραφικό περίγραμμα" of the poems of Agras and Kostas Steryopoulos to their "πλαστικότητα":

Ο συμβολισμός είναι ποίηση αφηρημένη, που διαλύει το συγκεκριμένο αντικείμενο. Δεν έχει πλαστικότητα· έχει μουσικότητα. Δεν προσφέρει τη συγκεκριμένη εικόνα, αλλά την προέκταση που παίρνει μέσα από την αφηρημένη της εντύπωση. Ο Αγρας θέλησε να τα συνδυάσει και τα δυο. Η ποίησή του είναι συγκεκριμένη μαζί κι αφηρημένη. Πλαστική και σχηματική. Όχι όμως και μουσική. [...] Ο Αγρας είχε την αίσθηση των όγκων, και μάλιστα μια αίσθηση πλαστική.<sup>7</sup>

One aspect of Post-Symbolist poetics related to the acoustic structure and to the two different aspirations of Post-Symbolist poetry is the underlining or undermining of the denotative value of words, and this will be examined in section 5. 1. 2. (acoustic structure undermining the semantic value of words). Another aspect is the way in which the poet selects and approaches his subject-matter, and this accounts for the absence or presence of a predominant acoustic structure.

Agras's poetry takes most of its images from the natural world (in *Τα Βουκολικά και τα Εγκώμια*) and the urban environment - mostly urban nature and household objects (in *Καθημερινές* and *Τριαντάφυλλα μιανής ημέρας*). Agras's images are usually presented through detailed description on the one hand and through a connection with a transcendental reality or abstractions on the other. As Agras himself puts it (*Καθημερινές*,

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<sup>7</sup> Steryopoulos, *Ο Τέλλος Αγρας*, pp. 78, 86.

"Αμουσία ", p. 131), poetry has to do with "ματιά και νόηση", that is, with both observation and abstractions. This visual and mental process may be related to the static character of the world Agras depicts and, therefore, contrasted to a poetic world where music prevails, that is, to the aspiration to music and the predominance of the acoustic structure in the poems. According to Warren Ramsey (see also 2. 2.), "music is the art of the thing in flight, the essentially dynamic art contrasting radically with the pictorial, the static".<sup>8</sup>

Agras refers more frequently to "στίχος" than to "τραγούδι" and more frequently to "ζωγραφιά" or "ακουαρέλλα" than to music, which in turn is sometimes perceived as a colour, e.g. "του κίτρινου όλο να διαβαίνει η μουσική αρμονία" (*Βουκολικά*, p. 98).<sup>9</sup> His static world is often transmitted through verbs that suggest immobility. For example in "Καλοσύνη" (*Καθημερινές*, p. 44) the life of a neighbourhood is described through the verbs "εγελάσαν [φως οι γειτονιές]", "έφεξαν", "έλαμψαν", "έδειξαν [οι ράχες οι γλαυκές / και τις πιο κρυφές τους χαρακιές]".

The poetry of Agras deals with static reality dominated by visual images and abstractions and is thus, both through its character and through its references, related to painting rather than music. This accounts for the absence of a predominant acoustic structure in his poems and is also connected with the emphasis on the denotative value of words (to be

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<sup>8</sup> Ramsey, *Jules Laforgue*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> This correspondence between colour and music is one of the themes of French Symbolism, see for example Rimbaud's "Voyelles": "A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu".

examined below).

In this matter, Emmanouil's poetry functions in a similar way. As is also generally the case with Agras, Emmanouil refers to his poems as "ποιήματα" rather than "τραγούδια". Moreover, the speaker in his poems often assumes the position of an observer, and his observations are made through the filter of literary or artistic references. For example the speaker sees the image of himself and others like him, attracted both by life and by death, through an image from a play by Ibsen: "Έτσι, χλομοί, βραχνά τον ήλιο κράζουμε / σαν άλλοι ιψευτικοί τρισάθλιοι Οσβάλδοι" ("Η νευρασθενική ελεγεία", p. 35). Such references occur frequently - e.g. "το δράμα σου μονόπραχτο ήταν, σύντομο / κι ακατανόητο ως δράμα πιραντέλιο" ("Dandy's Pleen", p. 36), "την άυλη, βραδιασμένη σου όψη, που έμοιαζε / σαν κάποια του Γκρομαίρ μακάβρια εικόνα" (p. 49), and their functioning suggests that they are not just similes but rather a way of viewing reality. Reality for Emmanouil undergoes a double transformation: the poet transforms into language a reality which has already been transformed into language by others, and finally regards the whole of reality as a reality within language: "πρόσωπα γυναικεία, σπαρτά είστε ποιήματα / στο ανούσιο, το πεζό της ζωής βιβλίο" ("Περαστικές", p. 33). Thus, the reality Emmanouil depicts is more distanced from him than it is from other Post-Symbolists: since the speakers in the poems view reality through the filters of literature and art, they do not participate in it emotionally. Therefore the correspondence poetry aspires to create between reality and the mood of the speaker (or a collective mood) in other Post-Symbolist



poems, is absent here.

This absence is probably related to the absence of an aspiration to music and to the non-foregrounding of the acoustic structure in Emmanouil's poems. Since the reality depicted is viewed through the filters of an already existing language, it is a static reality and therefore does not correspond to the art of music.

Thus, the poetry of Emmanouil aspires more to painting or to a kind of a static drama (tableaux). References to music do occur in the poems, but music is usually depicted as an element of drama. Apart from the references to drama (δράμα, ήρωας, αυλαία, θεατρίνος, σκηνογραφία ) the whole structure of many of his poems refers to drama, as there is a story, one or more actors, a monologue or dialogue and scenery. The concept of drama is, however, undermined by the absence of two major elements of drama: action and characters. In this way the poetry of Emmanouil focusses on situations, on scenes and on a correspondence to a transcendental reality. In "Εαρινή συνομιλία μ' έναν ποιητή " (p. 31) the speaker refers to an "ανέκφραστο θαύμα ", which poets experience without being able to translate it into words, since their attempts at expression acquire the form of "ανούσιοι στίχοι ". This focussing precludes music and consequently also an emphasis on the acoustic structure of the poems, since music is connected with fluidity, evanescence and a correspondence between external reality and a mood.

In the preface to one of his last collections - *Η δυναστεία των*

χιμαιρών - <sup>10</sup> Emmanouil defines poetry as "μια υπέρτατη αναγωγή στις πηγές της μουσικής" (p. 81). Nevertheless, although this collection differs radically from the previous ones, music does not actually play an important role in it. References to music (e.g. "πίδακες πολυκέλαδοι", "εύρυθμη ανάπαυλα", p. 83) are far rarer than references to sculpture, e.g. "πλαστικό σώμα" (p. 83); "διάγλυφη αίθουσα με τους λαμπρούς πυλώνες" (p. 84); "ο γλυπτός της ώμος" (p. 85); "σταλακτίτες λαξευτοί" (p. 88). Even music is conceived visually, e.g. "εύρυθμη ανάπαυλα η σιωπή μιας όργας γοτθικής" (p. 83), "Μια ώρα όπου τήκεται πυκνός ενετικός χρυσός/ μια εράσμια θνήσκει ραψωδία". Therefore these poems are dominated by static images. Music forms part of the general immobility and is thus deprived of its fluid character.

The aspiration to sculpture is emphasized by the emphasis on hard, unbreakable materials, often combined either with abstractions or with ephemeral objects, e.g. "ένα γρανίτινον όραμα" (p. 87) or "μες στον λαμπρό, τον συμπαγή του κήπου της ροδώνα" (p. 88). Moreover there is an emphasis on various "λίθους πολυτίμους" (p. 83), "εξαίσιους μαργαρίτες" (p. 88).

The only kind of motion that is achieved in the poems is destruction. Since the world depicted consists of sculpted and static objects, this motion does not acquire the form of departure or dissolution, as in most Post-Symbolist poems, but of destruction and disappearance. The static world is

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<sup>10</sup> This collection is not within the scope of this thesis, as has been explained in the Introduction. Here, however, it is referred to because the attitude towards music adopted in this collection is closely related to and sheds light on the attitude adopted in the first collections.

annihilated and this annihilation probably leads to the creation of another static world; for example at the end of the poem XV (p. 89) an angel breaks a girl's soul into "*διαφανείς δροσopaγείς αστέρας*". In this way both the structure and the annihilation of Emmanouil's poetic world preclude music, since they preclude evanescence and fluidity.

Thus, the poetry of Agras and Emmanouil constitutes the category of Post-Symbolist poetry which aspires to painting or the visual arts in general.

This aspiration contrasts with the aspiration to music because it is connected with a static poetic reality, whereas music is connected with a fluid one.

Moreover, in addition to its preoccupation with the visual arts, the poetry of these two poets deals with the correspondence between external reality and

a transcendental one, while the Post-Symbolist poetry which aspires to music

deals mostly with the correspondence between external reality and a mood

or an interior landscape. The aspiration to music coincides with the

predominant presence of an acoustic structure in the poems, whereas the

aspiration to the visual arts coincides with the opposite of this. Therefore the

very presence or absence of a predominant acoustic structure in Post-

Symbolist poetry interacts with its semantic structure in that the acoustic

structure is related to the fluid or static character of Post-Symbolist poetry,

its aspirations and the way in which external reality is viewed.

The remaining Post-Symbolists, that is Ouranis, Filyras, Lapathiotis,

Papanikolaou, Polydouri, belong to the category of poets whose poetry often

aspires to music. This aspiration is enacted in the structure of their poems.

Some examples of how the acoustic structure functions in its interaction with

the semantic structure have already been examined; here then I will look at a few examples where the use of acoustic connections between words is combined with references to music on the semantic level.

Most of these examples come from poems by Lapathiotis who seems to emphasize music as an aspiration of poetry more frequently than any other Post-Symbolist poet. In the first six stanzas of Lapathiotis's "*Λυπημένο τραγούδι*" (p. 31) the speaker refers to his pain and to that of the sea and compares his song of pain to the sea's. The speaker projects his pain onto the sea on the semantic level of the poem and sings with the sea. In the penultimate stanza this projection is enacted on the acoustic level: "*Πονούν κι οι θάλασσες, το ξέρουμε : / μέρα και νύχτα μας το λένε ! / Ως τα μεσάνυχτα, πικρόλογα / στενάζεις, πόντε απελπισμένε...*". The "*πόνος*" of the previous stanza has, through the song of the speaker and the parallel song of the sea, finally been projected onto the "*πόντος*" both semantically and acoustically.

A similar interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures occurs in "*Όταν βραδιάζει*" (p. 133). The poem starts with a reference both to its subject-matter ("*τα περασμένα*") and to music: "*Όταν βραδιάζει, μέσα μου, ξυπνούν τα περασμένα / ξυπνούν αργά, σα μουσικές νεκρές από καιρό*". In the first two stanzas, the speaker connects himself with the past through the rhymes: "*τα περασμένα*", for example, rhymes with "*σεμένα*" (the lost and dead "*μουσικές*" "*έρχονται πάλι, μαγικά κι ανέλπιστα, σεμένα*"). This music is analyzed in the second stanza in its elements: "*πόθοι, παράπονα παλιά, νοσταλγικές φωνές, / λόγια βαθιά κι αξέχαστα*

κι ωστόσο ξεχασμένα". "Ξεχασμένα" rhymes again to "σε μένα" of the last stanza; so these unforgettable and forgotten words "υψώνονται" to the speaker. After this connection between the speaker and the music of the past, which is dead for everybody else, has been established, in the last stanza the speaker is able to sing his song where the past is resurrected:

Μια βρύση, τότε, μαγική, μου λύνεται ξανά,  
και το τραγούδι ρυθμικό στα χείλη μου ανεβαίνει,  
- ένα τραγούδι καθαρό, καθώς τα δειλινά,  
που μέσα του λυτρώνονται, και ζουν οι πεθαμένοι.

In this case, then, the pattern followed is parallel to but the reverse of the one followed in "Λυπημένο τραγούδι". While there the semantic structure leads to an acoustic interplay, which enacts and subsumes the meaning of the poem, here the acoustic interplay leads to the semantic culmination of the poem, that is, to the creation of a song consisting of the elements that had been acoustically connected with the speaker in the previous stanzas. Through the interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures, these elements, which were passive, now become active, and music, together with the past, is revived.

A parallel acoustic and semantic statement occurs in Polydouri's farewell to rhythm and rhyme ([Χαίρε, Ρυθμέ και Ρίμα ], p. 274). The second stanza of the poem acoustically enacts the reduction of the speaker's song to one single sound. That is, the repeated alliteration of -χ- in the stanza enacts the semantic structure of the stanza:

Σκοπέ, σ' αφήνω. Ηχε, Τραγούδι  
μ' αφήνετε. Τη μονάχη  
χορδή μάταια κρούω στη λύρα μου.  
Νά ' χει μόνο ένα "χαίρε",

νά ' ναι μονάχη του "χαίρε " η χορδή  
στην καρδιά μου!

Another parallel progression on the semantic and acoustic levels occurs in Lapathiotis's "Τί κι αν η μοίρα μάς στεφάνωσε " (p. 98). Apart from the interplay between the dynamic and static structures, which has already been examined in connection with the interaction between syntactical and semantic structures, on the level of the acoustic structure the speaker promotes the relation between the words "μοίρα " and "μαραίνει ". Through the interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures, the "μοίρα " of the first stanza (the one connected with triumphs) is replaced by the "μοίρα βάσκανη" which "βαραίνει " the poets who write in a way similar to Lapathiotis (see 4. 1.). This "μοίρα " is related to both the semantic and acoustic structures, since it consists of meaning and music ("γιατί ", "βιολί "). This acoustically and semantically constructed fate conditions the choices of the poets (e.g. rejection of the "απόλυτα") and the impasse of their poetry ("μα ό,τι να πούμε, και να κάνουμε, πάνε χαμένοι μας οι κόποι "), that is, it defines their poetry on the semantic level. At the same time it defines their poetry on the acoustic level, since it rejects not only a triumphant tone but a "κραυγή " as well ("Και μήτε την κραυγή που λύνεται, / γιομάτη φλόγα μες στην μπόρα [...] να νιώσουμε μπορούμε τώρα"), and promotes an inter-referentiality of poetry, since the acoustic connection prevailing in the poem is that between the "μοίρα " of poetry and its effect on the poets ("μαραίνει ").

Thus the acoustic structure of poems which aspire to music often enacts this aspiration . The interaction between the semantic and acoustic structures defines the character of the music to which the poems aspire. Therefore, as is the case with both the subject-matter and the interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetry, the interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures promotes or underlines the inter-referentiality of Post-Symbolist poetic language.

Therefore the absence or presence of a predominant acoustic structure in the poems of the Post-Symbolists is related to some major aspects of their subject-matter, such as the aspiration to visual arts or to music; the presentation of a static or dynamic and fluid world; the correspondence between external reality and a transcendental reality or a mood. When a predominant acoustic structure is present in a poem, its interaction with the semantic structure of the poem can reinforce the semantic structure of the poem, as in the examples examined here. This reinforcement can be achieved in various ways. The acoustic structure of a poem can create threads along which the semantic structure is built, it can support or emphasize the meaning, it can create and define connections between recurrent themes and it can enact the aspiration to music, while underlining the inter-referentiality of the poems.

### 5. 1. 2. The Undermining of Semantic Relationships between Words by means of the Acoustic Structure

The second function of a predominant acoustic structure in a poem is related to the first one both positively and negatively. That is, the acoustic structure of a poem often serves to undermine those semantic relationships that are based on the denotative meaning of words. In this way the acoustic structure on the one hand undermines the semantic structure but on the other emphasizes it by underlining the connotative meanings (or what Eliot calls the "secondary meanings") of words.

The undermining of denotations and the creation of connotations through the acoustic structure of a poem can be viewed as a phenomenon linked to the other means employed by Post-Symbolist poetry to the same end. The interaction between the syntactical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetry leads to the undermining of denotations as a way of de-emphasizing external reality. Therefore the undermining of denotations and the promotion of connotations constitutes a central feature of Post-Symbolist poetics and is related to other aspects of this poetics, such as the relationship between external and poetic reality, and the role of poetry.

The functioning of the acoustic structure as regards the denotative and connotative values of words can be seen as a part of the Post-Symbolist attempt to renew poetic language. Lapathiotis's "*Απόψε πρόβαλεν ο κάμπος*" (p. 219) can be viewed as a reference to the phenomenon of connotations and to the way connotations function. The speaker presents a



landscape, which evokes a mood:

Απόψε πρόβαλεν ο κάμπος,  
πλημμυρισμένος απ' το θάμπος  
μιας ανοιξιάτικης βραδιάς,  
που καθώς έγειρε να φύγει  
μαζί του ξύπνησε τα ρίγη  
και της δικής μου της καρδιάς.

The landscape vanishes surrendering its place to the feelings it has evoked ("Τον κήπο, που έσβησε κι εχάθη, / τον πλημμυρίσαν ως τα βάθη, / των περασμένων οι λυγμοί "), while the feelings, sensations and memories acquire a material form for a little while and then vanish too:

Κι ήρθαν μορφές αγαπημένες,  
σαν αναμνήσεις λυπημένες  
εικόνων, ήχων κι ευωδιάς !  
Κι έπειτα χάθηκαν και πάλι  
μες στην απέραντην αγκάλη  
της ανοιξιάτικης βραδιάς...

Lapathiotis seems to be talking here about the correspondence between a landscape and a mood, that is, of the connotations of a landscape. Such connotations are frequently brought to the fore in Post-Symbolist poetry by the emphasis on the connotative meaning of words.

In "Βαρύ τραγούδι του κάμπου " (p. 23) Papanikolaou both speaks about the correspondence between a landscape and a speaker ("Κι από την ψυχή μου βρίσκω / μέσα στην ψυχή του κάμπου κάποιον ίσκιο ") and enacts it in the acoustic structure ("Και τα δέντρα έχουνε δέσει στα κλαδιά τους / την καρδιά τους ", "πάντα αντάμα με το κλάμα των καρδιών / των καρυδιών "). The acoustic structure creates a connection between trees and hearts, thus undermining the denotative value of these words and

promoting connotations that enact the correspondence, expressed on the semantic level, between the landscape and the speaker's mood or state of being.

A similar functioning of the acoustic structure occurs in Lapathiotis's "Τραγούδι των καλοκαιριών" (p. 110). Here the speaker apostrophizes various images of summer and connects some key-words acoustically, thus furnishing them with additional connotations: "Καλοκαιράκια αλάβαστρα, μουχρώματα, / γλύκες-πληγές - / άυλοι κρουνοί, δροσάκια μες στα σύθαμπα, / - γλυκές πηγές ". This process culminates in the third stanza ("Ελάτε, ελάτε, πράσινα χρυσόμηλα / της χαραυγής ! / Ελα, γλυκό μου βράδυ, άρρητα μήλινο, / - και μην αργείς ! ") where the metaphor "πράσινα χρυσόμηλα της χαραυγής " seems to depend on the acoustic structure, that is, on the chiasmus : *πράσινα-χαραυγής-άρρητα* and on the loosening sequence: *χρυσόμηλα-χαραυγής*, while the description of the evening as "μήλινο " is again connected with the acoustic reference to "χρυσόμηλα ". At the same time the adverb "άρρητα " may speak on the semantic level about what is enacted on the acoustic level of the poem. That is, the speaker doubts his ability or the ability of poetic language in general to describe the experience he wants to evoke and thus he prefers a connotative to a denotative description. At the end of the poem, the speaker comments once more on his diction ("λόγια-φτερά "), while at the same time these "λόγια-φτερά " constitute a part of the experience referred to ("Πόθοι βουβοί, πλανέματα, λυσίματα / θανατερά, / - λαγγέματα, σβησίματα, / λόγια-φτερά..."). In this way the speaker suggests both the evanescence

and fluidity of the experience he attempts to evoke and the evanescence and fluidity of a poem based on the acoustic structure and hence on connotations.

Apart from evanescence and fluidity this kind of poetic diction is also characterized by a kind of freedom, as is suggested in Filyras's "Ειδύλλιο " (2), (p. 53), where the speaker decides to declare his love freely, while at the same time this decision is phrased through acoustically rather than logically related metaphors: "Ελεύθερο το κίνημα - κυλίμι / απέραντο η αγάπη μου η φαμόζα".

Therefore the predominant presence of an acoustic structure in Post-Symbolist poetry which aspires to music frequently undermines the denotations of words. This sometimes contrasts with the techniques employed by Post-Symbolist poetry which aspires to the visual arts. This category of poetry, by combining "ματιά και νόηση", usually indicates the connection between the external reality depicted and the thoughts it evokes, while in the category of poetry which aspires to music, this connection is usually achieved through acoustic or otherwise connotative interplay between words.

For example an acoustic interplay between words predominates in the first stanza of Lapathiotis's "Dolente" :

Και στο χλωμό το δείλι που πεθαίνει,  
λιποθυμάει στα ρόδα τα κοράλλινα,  
αναστενάζουν γύρω αχνοί θλιμμένοι,  
των πεθαμένων τα όνειρα τα οπάλινα.

There is an alliteration of -θ- in: πεθαίνει, λιποθυμάει, θλιμμένοι, πεθαμένων, alliterations of -λ- but longer sequences or chiasmus too, e.g. :

λιποθυμάει-οπάλινα or: λιποθυμάει-θλιμμένοι. This acoustic interplay between words connects what appear to be the two components of the image. The first two lines depict a scene, while the last two constitute the abstraction. The scene however is not just a depiction of a sunset but is invaded by the "αχνοί θλιμμένοι", which are somewhere between a visual image ("αχνοί") and an abstraction (since the "αχνοί" represent the "όνειρα"). On the other hand, the first image invades the second by colouring it ("χλωμό", "αχνοί"), so there is no way of separating the two. Moreover, although vision and abstraction overlap in the imagery of the whole stanza, the verb of the main clause is a semantically acoustic one: "αναστενάζουν". The subject of the verb ("όνειρα") undermines its semantic value, but at the same time the verb itself undermines the visual image by pushing it in the direction of abstraction. Thus, the acoustic structure of the stanza creates or supports the connotative associations between words, and the two components of the image are interwoven, while the denotative value of individual words is undermined.

The description of autumn by Agras (*Βουκολικά*, p. 17) can serve as a thematically similar example of a poem constructed in a different way:

Η ιτιά που ακόμα ζώνεται - και σα χαθεί το δείλι -  
 μίαν ατμοσφαίρα φωτερή,  
 στα ολόχρυσά στολίζεται και, σαν καινούριο Απρίλη,  
 το θάνατό της καρτερεί.

- Το θάνατο στοχάζεστε τάχα - στ' αλήθεια - φύλλα ;  
 για ακόμα μια άνοιξη στερνή  
 και δίνετε ευκολόπιστα στην πρώτη ανατριχίλα,  
 μια νέα ζητώντας ηδονή;

Agras's image can be divided into depiction of scenery (colour of the willow-tree, falling of the leaves) and abstractions (the willow-tree awaits death, the leaves think of death or of a last spring) because there are no strong acoustic or otherwise connotative relationships between the two components of the image. Thus the relationship between the two components of the image is chiefly logical (*ματιά και νόηση*), whereas in Lapathiotis's case it is organic, since it is inherent in the structure of his poetic language. It can be argued that Agras, too, undermines the referentiality of the image he depicts by introducing abstractions into it; he retains, however, the denotative value of words, while Lapathiotis undermines the referential value of the individual words by promoting their acoustic and connotative values.

This difference between the two poetic techniques or sets of aspirations can be seen in Agras's lines "Λεύκα του δρόμου, η αντηλιά στη φυλλωσιά του ρίχνει / φαιδρή την όψη του θανάτου" (*Βουκολικά*, p. 16) and in the following lines by Lapathiotis:

Είν' η στιγμή που σαν κραυγή, για μιαν αλάλητην αυγή,  
κάποια παλιά λευκά φτερά ξυπνάνε και χτυπάνε,  
κι όπως βαθιά, και σαν τρελές, μοσκοβολούν κι οι λεμονιές,  
θυμίζουν θάνατο, γλυκά, σ' όσους περνάν και πάνε  
(p. 97).

In Agras's lines, the concrete image and the abstract vision are connected through the verb; in this way the two elements related to the action of the verb (*η αντηλιά, στη φυλλωσιά*) become elements of the "*όψη του θανάτου*" and thus belong both to external and to a transcendental reality. This is achieved through a semantic and syntactical process, whereas in

Lapathiotis's lines the relationships between the words are chiefly acoustic (παλιά - χτυπάνε - αλάλητη - λεμονιές ). While in Agras's lines the relationship between external and transcendental reality is based on the denotations of the words, in Lapathiotis's lines the denotations are undermined (κάποια παλιά λευκά φτερά, σαν τρελές, μοσκοβολούν βαθιά, μιαν αλάλητην αυγή ). This undermining is achieved mostly through the acoustic structure. Thus, while in Agras's poem death is evoked in a denotative way, in Lapathiotis's lines it is evoked, before being explicitly mentioned, in a connotative way (αλάλητη αυγή, λευκά φτερά, κραυγή).

Therefore the predominance of the acoustic structure in Post-Symbolist poetry can serve to undermine the denotative and promote the connotative value of words. This phenomenon is related to the aspiration of poetry to music and is one of the methods the Post-Symbolists employ in order to de-emphasize external reality.

Both the undermining and the underlining of the semantic structure by the acoustic structure of poetry constitute a central feature of Post-Symbolist poetics not only because they are related to the attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards external reality but also because they are related to their attitude towards poetic language. The very absence or presence of a predominant acoustic structure is connected with the semantic structure of Post-Symbolist poetry and with the aspiration either to visual arts or to music. These aspirations suggest two different approaches to poetic language within Post-Symbolism with regard to the techniques employed to construct the

meaning of a poem. The majority of the Post-Symbolists emphasize the interaction between the acoustic and semantic structures of their poetry and thereby cast doubt on the ability of poetic language to depict external reality, mood or feelings by signifying them objectively, that is, by relying on the denotative power of words. By undermining denotations and promoting connotations the Post-Symbolists present language no longer as "a medium for thought or feeling" but as "a power of pure formation, in which words take on value as realities in their own right and not simply as signifiers in a structure of meaning".<sup>11</sup>

## **5. 2. The Interaction between the Metrical and Semantic Structures of the Post-Symbolist Poetic Language**

The metrical structure of poetic language is connected with the other three structures - the semantic, the syntactical and the acoustic - in a relationship of organizing and organized factors. That is, the rhythm of a poem, apart from constituting a feature of the poem in itself, also constitutes the framework within which the semantic, syntactical and acoustic structures are presented and interwoven. As G.S. Fraser notes, "The difference between verse and prose or speech [...] is not that verse has rhythm and prose and speech have not, but that in verse a rhythmical unit, the line, is superimposed upon the general grammatical unit of all discourse, the

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<sup>11</sup> Bruns, p. 2.

sentence".<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the metrical features shared by a group of poets can be regarded as the elements that organize the features common to this group of poets on the semantic, syntactical and acoustic levels of their poetry.

Here, I will look at some of the metrical features shared by the Post-Symbolists, in order to describe the framework of the other three structures of their poetic language and, more specifically, to explore the interaction between the metrical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language. In order to do so, I will look (a) at some basic characteristics of the most recurrent metrical forms of their poems, that is at the general framework of the metrical character of Post-Symbolist poetry and (b) at the attitude the Post-Symbolists express or enact towards metre and rhythm, rather than attempting a metrical analysis or metrical categorization of Post-Symbolist poetry, since the Post-Symbolists use a variety of metrical forms, while their choice of the metrical form of a poem is not obviously related to the subject-matter of the poem<sup>13</sup>.

#### 5. 2. 1. Recurrent metrical characteristics

The Post-Symbolists mostly employ traditional metrical verse and "vers libéré" (ελευθερωμένο στίχο), although Papanikolaou and Ouranis

<sup>12</sup> G.S. Fraser, *Metre, Rhyme and Free Verse*, London, Methuen 1970, pp. 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> For an example of a contemporary poet (Sikelianos) in whose poetry metrical form and subject-matter are clearly related, see Sarah Ekdawi, "The Matter of Metre", *Μολυβδοκονδυλοπελεκητής*, vol. 2 (1990), pp. 203-212.



occasionally use free verse. In using the term "vers libéré" I am following the definition provided by Clive Scott: "Vers libéré refers to that French verse of the late nineteenth century which, while liberating itself from many of the classical rules of versification, still observes the principles of isosyllabism and regularly patterned rhyme"<sup>14</sup>. The term "vers libéré" was used by Greek critics either in the original, as by Agras<sup>15</sup>, or in various translations, such as "ελευθεριάζων στίχος"<sup>16</sup>, "πολύτροπος"<sup>17</sup>, and "ελευθερωμένος στίχος"<sup>18</sup>. For the purposes of this thesis, in applying the term "vers libéré" or "ελευθερωμένος στίχος" to some of the Post-Symbolist poems, I refer to poems which preserve their rhythmical units<sup>19</sup> and play upon the metrical units constituting the rhythmical unit; in using the term "free verse", I refer to poems which abolish their rhythmical units and either preserve or abolish their metrical units. Again for the purposes of this thesis, I employ the term "rhythmical unit" to mean the number of syllables constituting the line or stanza repeated regularly throughout the poem, and the term "metrical unit" to mean the accentual pattern (e.g. iamb) repeated throughout the line.

A second common characteristic of Post-Symbolist poetry is the short poem. This formal feature is related to the subject-matter of the poetry and to Post-Symbolist concepts of the role of poetry. As I have argued, Post-

<sup>14</sup> Clive Scott, *Vers Libre. The Emergence of Free Verse in France 1886-1914*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1990, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά Β*, p. 217.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>17</sup> e.g. Palamas, 13, p. 23 [1926].

<sup>18</sup> e.g. Cavafy, quoted in Athanassios Politis, *Ο Ελληνισμός και η Νεωτέρα Αίγυπτος*, vol. 2, Alexandria-Athens, Grammata 1930, p. 455.

<sup>19</sup> see Fraser, quoted above.

Symbolist poetry often casts doubt on the ability of poetic language to express either feelings or a relationship between external reality and a mood. Poetic language is often regarded as artifice and this artifice does not allow poetic language to fulfil a part of its role, i.e. to express feelings. Consequently, the Post-Symbolists express the need for the self-negation of poetic language. Moreover the Post-Symbolists frequently stress the impermanence of their poems. The ephemeral nature of their poetry to which the Post-Symbolists refer in terms of time, is enacted on the page in terms of space (i.e. choice of short poems).

The choice of the form of short poems may also indicate a reaction to Valaoritis's, Palamas's and Sikelianos's ambitious poetic compositions which imply an underlying confidence in poetic language. In electing to employ the short poem, the Post-Symbolists do not present an original form of poetry, since the short poem had already been used by previous generations including the Generation of the 1880s and Palamas himself. In the case of the Post-Symbolists, however, the use of this form is allied to some central concerns of their poetics, such as the inability of language to create a viable poetic reality and its inefficacy to express feelings or a relationship between external reality and a mood. The use of this form is also connected with the predominant features of the syntactical structure of Post-Symbolist poetic language (explored in Chapter 4), that is, with the predominance of structures indicating negations and absences. Therefore, the short poem form can be regarded as an organic part of the Post-Symbolist poetic system.

The same applies to the third feature the Post-Symbolists share

concerning the metrical form of their poetry. This is the division of their poems into stanzas. Apart from being a metrical convention frequently employed by previous generations of poets, in the case of the Post-Symbolists the division into stanzas may again be related to the subject-matter of their poetry. Contrary to the idea of unity expressed in the poetry of Palamas and Sikelianos, the Post-Symbolists promote a fragmented view of reality.

Here, once more, the Post-Symbolists follow a traditional metrical convention, which in their case becomes related to a concern of their poetics, that is to the fragmented character of the reality they depict. This fragmentation is in turn connected with other concerns of their poetics, such as the insubstantial character of external reality and the inefficacy of language. Thus, the division of the poems into stanzas, along with the selection of the form of the short poem, is bound up with major aspects of the Post-Symbolist poetic system and can therefore be considered to form part of this poetic system.

At the same time, the fact that the Post-Symbolists observe these metrical conventions also forms part of their poetic system in that it indicates a certain attitude towards metrical conventions and poetic language in general. The same applies to the other common metrical feature of their poetry: the use of traditional metrical verse and of vers libéré. Despite the reaction against the poetic system of Palamas's generation, the Post-Symbolists do not altogether escape from the poetic discourse of that generation. They rather seem to explore the limitations and state the

impasses of this poetic discourse from within its framework.

The implication of these three features of the most recurrent Post-Symbolist metrical forms will be now explored through some Post-Symbolist poems.

### 5.2.2. The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards metre and rhythm

The attitude the Post-Symbolists display or imply towards metre and rhythm can be examined through some of the ways in which they employ metre and rhythm along with some references they make to metre and rhythm.

A context for these references and the Post-Symbolist attitude to these issues in general can be provided by the references of previous or contemporary poets to metre and rhythm. The two poets who make abundant references to these two elements are Palamas and Sikelianos, whereas in Cavafy and the Symbolists these references are very rare. Here then I shall concentrate chiefly on the character of Palamas's and Sikelianos's references to metre and rhythm, in order to provide the context in which the Post-Symbolist attitude to metre and rhythm was expressed and enacted.

Palamas frequently expresses his awareness of the importance of metre and rhythm for his poetry, as for example in the titles of his collections, *Ιαμβοί και Ανάπαιστοι* (1897), *Τα δεκατετράστιχα* (1919), *Οι Πεντασύλλαβοι* (1925), *Ο κύκλος των Τετράστιχων* (1929). He is also

aware of a relationship between metrical form and context; for example, referring to the verse he uses in "Ο Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου", he defines it as a "στίχος ελεύτερα χυμένος" but "κανονισμένος [...] άνετα σαλεύοντας και καμιά φορά άταχτα, μα χωρίς ποτέ να είναι στίχος άμετρος και αναρχικός" and explains that the nature of this verse goes along with "τα φυσικά του ήρωά μου".<sup>20</sup>

One function of rhythm is to express feelings or dreams or even to create them by being a means through which the poet thinks ("ο ποιητής καλά-καλά δε σκέπτεται παρά με τη γλώσσα και με τον ήχο, με το στίχο και με τη ρίμα"<sup>21</sup>). In *Ασάλευτη Ζωή* rhythm becomes the speaker of a poem, refers to himself as if to a king and expresses his liberation from rhyme and his connection with dreams or feelings:

Εγώ ο Ρυθμός ο νεράιδος ο βασιλιάς την άφησα  
στον κρυσταλλένιο πύργο της την πολυαγαπημένη μου,  
τη Ρίμα τη βασίλισσα την ερωτοκρατόρισσα  
που πάντα σκλάβο ορέγεται να με κρατάει στα πόδια της [...]   
να σαϊτέψω ελεύτερα και να σκλαβώσω αξέταστα  
κι εγώ τα λάφια του όνειρου και του καημού τις πέρδικες.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, for Palamas rhythm is both a means of expression and a means through which the poet shapes his ideas. This functioning of rhythm leads to its connection with "Λόγος", which for Palamas possesses a prophetic and sacred character. This connection is stated in the prologue of "Η Φλογέρα του Βασιλιά":

Σβησμένες όλες οι φωτιές οι πλάστρες μες στη Χώρα

<sup>20</sup>Palamas, 3, pp. 300-301.

<sup>21</sup> Palamas, 1, pp. 326-27.

<sup>22</sup> Palamas, 3, p. 156.

[...] πάνε  
τα παλληκάρια, οι λειτουργοί, και του ρυθμού οι τεχνίτες,  
του Λόγου και οι προφήτες .<sup>23</sup>

Thus, rhythm acquires some of the connotations that Λόγος has for Palamas; it becomes for example a part of the "Τραγούδι των ηρώων " and of its nationalistic aspirations. It also becomes a part of the "λύτρωση " that Λόγος is supposed to bring about through its prophetic character:

Ω ! πότε θα προβάλεις, νέε Ποιητή,  
του τραγουδιού Μεσσία ;  
Πλάστρα σου η Λύρα πότε θ' ακουστεί ;  
Λόγε Ρυθμέ, σαρκώσου, λυτρωτή,  
νά η Πολιτεία !<sup>24</sup>

Therefore on the one hand rhythm is a dominating element of poetic thought and of verse and is thereby related to ideas; for example in *Δειλοί και Σκληροί Στίχοι* the speaker addresses the "Στίχο ", referring both to ideas - "Στα Ηλύσια γοργοδιάβαινε των ιδεών των άυλων, / του νέου καιρού τραγουδιστή " - and to rhythm: "Χαίρε, Βουκέφαλε, που δε σε δένει χαλινάρι, / μόνο το βασιλέα Ρυθμό δέχεσαι καβαλλάρη !"<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, through its connection with ideas, rhythm becomes related to the prophetic and nationalistic connotations which Λόγος has for Palamas.

Through both of these connections poetic rhythm becomes explicitly related to the "μέτρο " and the rhythm governing the universe. In "*Ηρωική Τριλογία* " the speaker relates "μέτρο " to Greece:

Πάλε σαν πρώτα, απ' τα βαθιά του αμέτρητού σου τραγουδιού

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<sup>23</sup> Palamas, 5, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Palamas, 5, p. 289.

<sup>25</sup> Palamas, 9, p. 160 ff.

κάμε η Ελλάδα να υψωθεί  
σε Ανατολή και Δύση,  
που είναι του μέτρου η μουσική και της υγείας η βρύση,  
η Ελλάδα· χαμογέλα της, αγέλαστε, κι εσύ!<sup>26</sup>

Apart from the nationalistic implications of these lines, the speaker here makes the connection between the metre of a song (which is for the time being "αμέτρητο") and a "μέτρο" which governs life. Song or poetry is thereby organically related to the rhythm of life or of the universe and is a way of expressing this universal rhythm in human language. This is also stated in the prologue of *Δειλοί και Σκληροί Στίχοι*, where Palamas speaks about the "λατρεία του Στίχου που είναι ο ανθρώπινος Λόγος 'εν τάξει και μεγέθει' και που είναι, στο μικροσκοπικό του ρυθμικό περιπάτημα, το σύμβολο του ρυθμού που κυβερνά το Σύμπαν".<sup>27</sup>

These three elements - ideas, messianism or nationalism, and the rhythm of the universe - seem to define the character and connotations of poetic rhythm and metre in the poetry of Palamas. The poet expresses the rhythm of the universe in his poem by using a rhythm which is related to the poet's ideas or is a way for the poet to shape his ideas. Thus, rhythm becomes a part of the prophetic, nationalistic and all-embracing Λόγος, thereby serving as a means for the integration of messianism and nationalism but also of the ideas of power and the leading role of poetry itself in the universe.

Similar connections are made in the poetry of Sikelianos. Sikelianos refers to the rhythm or the tune of the universe (e.g. "Ορθιέ Σκοπέ της

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<sup>26</sup> Palamas, 5, p. 154.

<sup>27</sup> Palamas, 9, p. 9.

Φύσης "<sup>28</sup>) and at the same time attaches great importance to the rhythm or metre of poetry. Rhythm is usually written with capital Ρ-, it is "ακατάλυτος "<sup>29</sup> and here too is related to Λόγος: in "Διοτίμα ", for example, the speaker names his soul "παντοδύναμη πνοή του Λόγου " and defines it as "ολόαγνη / λυτρωμένη στο Ρυθμό / του μυστικού πενταθλητή ψυχή ".<sup>30</sup> Λόγος is divine and donated by God:

όταν ξάφνου μόδωκες του κύκνου του υπερβόρειου τα φτερά  
να κρατηθώ στην άβυσσό σου  
Θεέ !

Ω Λόγε,  
κύκνε αστραφτερέ μεσουρανίς στο γαλανό<sup>31</sup> .

It is also closely related to Greece: "Ω Ελλάδα, / ιδές / ο λόγος μου  
αχτιδοβολάει αγνάντια Σου / σαν αρραβώνας νέος στον Ηλιο ! "<sup>32</sup> and blossoms around Greece which in "Ο Ορκος των κοινοτήτων στη Μάνα Ελλάδα " is compared to a pillar around which the speaker wishes "αμάραντα ν' ανθίσει / ο Μύθος Λόγος κι ο Χρησμός Θεσμός "<sup>33</sup>.

Rhythm is in itself divine; for example in "Η Συνείδηση της Γυναίκας " the phrase "και μες στις φλέβες απολυέται ακράτος ο Ρυθμός " follows the appearance of Dionysus<sup>34</sup>. It is moreover an all-encompassing entity ("Αλλη μια φορά η ψυχή μου αναπαύονταν στο Ρυθμό / σαν τη νεφέλη " or

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<sup>28</sup> Sikelianos, Γ, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>33</sup> Sikelianos, Β, p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> Sikelianos, Γ, p. 131.



"αρμενίζω μες στον άναρχο Ρυθμό "<sup>35</sup>). Rhythm therefore participates in the unity which Sikelianos is attempting to express. This participation is dual, since rhythm contributes both to the creation of this unity, by providing order for the universe, and to the expression of this unity and harmony.

In his preface to *Λυρικός Βίος* (1938) Sikelianos sums up and formulates these connections made in his poetry and this aspiration to unity as follows:

[Ο γνήσιος Ποιητής ] μονάχα αυτός, χάρη σ' αυτή τη βασική από γενετής του τοποθέτηση πάνω στον ίδιο το σφυγμό της Δημιουργίας, μπορεί να ιδεί συγκεντρικά τη Φύση, την Ψυχή, την Ιστορία, ν' αναζητούν να λυτρωθούνε σ' ένα ομόπνοο και ομόφωνο Ρυθμό, κι έχει για τούτο και το χρέος και τη δύναμη ν' ανακαλεί κάθε φορά την τριαδικήν αυτήν υπόσταση του κόσμου, από την άσκοπη συχνή διάσπασή της, στην ενότητα του πρώτου και αδιαίρετου Βιολογικού Δημιουργικού παλμού .

In the same text he defines "Λυρισμός " "ως θεμέλιο υπαρξιακό, ωσά συναίσθημα ενός κοσμικά δημιουργικού Ρυθμού "<sup>36</sup>

Thus, although for Sikelianos rhythm seems to possess a mystical and divine character while for Palamas it is more frequently a matter of poetic craftsmanship, they both connect it with the ambition of their poetry to express or create a sense of unity and of correspondence between their poetic discourse and the universe. By creating this correspondence they display confidence in their poetic language and they promote the idea that poetry can play a leading role in society which is often related to messianism or nationalism. Rhythm (either that of traditional or that of free verse) is therefore organically integrated into the poetics of Palamas and Sikelianos,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-58.

<sup>36</sup> Sikelianos, A, p. 74.

and references to rhythm by other poets might easily carry with them the connotations created by Palamas and Sikelianos.

Equally the absence of references to metre and rhythm may signify a tacit deviation from the context created by Palamas and Sikelianos. It may also indicate an altogether different system of poetics. This appears to be the case with Cavafy, whose poetry lacks references to the metre and rhythm either of his poems or of the universe. An exception to this, in "*Βυζαντινός άρχων, εξόριστος, στιχουργών* ",<sup>37</sup> is indicative of a completely different attitude towards metre and rhythm from that expressed by Palamas and Sikelianos: "*και δεινώς ανιών, / ουδόλως άτοπον είναι να διασκεδάζω / εξάστιχα κι οκτάστιχα ποιών - / να διασκεδάζω με μυθολογήματα / [...] / και να συνθέτω ιάμβους ορθοτάτους*". For the speaker of this poem, the composition of perfect iambs is a way of passing the time and amusing himself rather than an attempt to express the rhythms of the universe.

Although the poetry of the Symbolists (Gryparis, Porfyras and Hatzopoulos) frequently refers to music (especially the poetry of Porfyras) and aspires to it (especially the poetry of Porfyras and Hatzopoulos), it does not contain references to rhythm or metre. A reference made by Gryparis to "*σκοπός* " in "*Εστιάδες* "<sup>38</sup> may imply a response to the use of matters relevant to "*σκοπός* " by Palamas and Sikelianos:

Τάχα το θάμα κι έγινε; - πες μου να στο πω,  
γνώμη άβουλη, γνώμη άδικη μιας νιότης  
σαν τη δικιά μας, πόσβησεν έτσι χωρίς σκοπό  
κι ακόμα ζει και ζένεται - με το σκοπό της !

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<sup>37</sup> Cavafy, B, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> Gryparis, *Σκαραβαίοι και Τερρακότες*, p. 107.

Here Gryparis is probably playing on the two meanings of the word "*σκοπός*" : tune and purpose, and may be implicitly referring to a discordance between the socio-political and ideological situation of the time (the poem began to be written in 1908 and was published in 1910) and the triumphal tone which was predominant in the poetry of that time. Gryparis seems to be questioning the suitability of certain tones in poetry in that particular time. Rhythm forms a part of the triumphal tone, not in its performance, that is, in the existing rhythmical forms of poetry, but in its context.

Therefore the confidence displayed by Palamas and Sikelianos in the ability of poetic language to translate the rhythms of the universe and to be governed by them, and their assumption at the same time of a leading role in human society, is undermined in the poetry of Cavafy and the Symbolists.

The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards metre and rhythm develops along the same lines, and in some cases becomes explicitly differentiated from the attitude of Palamas and Sikelianos. The Post-Symbolists can be divided into two categories in respect of their attitude towards metre and rhythm: (i) the traditionalists and (ii) the innovators. The boundaries between these two categories are not clear-cut, since some of the poems of the "traditionalists" are characterized by a breaking of the metre, while conversely many of the poems of the "innovators" are written in traditional metrical verse. Nevertheless, if we employ the most consistent and striking metrical feature of their poetry as a criterion for the division, Filyras, Lapathiotis, Papanikolaou, Polydouri and Skarimbass can be classified under

the first heading, and Ouranis, Agras, Emmanouil and Karyotakis under the second. Here I will examine significant metrical characteristics of each category, together with some references by the poets in each category to metre and rhythm.

#### 5. 2. 2. 1. The Traditionalists

Within the category of the traditionalists differences in attitude towards metre and rhythm can be observed. The common characteristic, however, is that in most of their poems these poets use traditional metrical verse. The differences lie more in their references to rhythm.

The poet who refers most to rhythm is Filyras. His references to it are in one respect similar to those of Palamas and Sikelianos. That is, although he avoids making a connection between rhythm and Λόγος and thereby avoids the prophetic or nationalistic connotations these words frequently have for Palamas and Sikelianos, he sometimes refers to the rhythm of the universe which, according to him, is related to the rhythm of poetry. This relationship is stated in "Φωτολάτρης " (p. 17) : "Ω Φως... σε σένα η προσευχή κι η δέηση κι η λατρεία, / που νέο ρυθμόν αυτιάζομαι στ' ολόλαμπρό σου θάμα ". Rhythm is a dominating and divine element in the universe:

Αρμενισμένοι στα βαθιά κι απάνου το φεγγάρι...  
Κύλα τα κύματα, Ρυθμέ, νικώντας τον αγέρα,  
και σαν αρνιά σαλάγα τα στη νύχτα του Αλωνάρη,  
βοσκέ, ω απόκοσμε βοσκέ, που δεν κρατάς φλογέρα  
("Ρυθμός ", p. 11).

On the other hand, although rhythm is "θείος " ("Αγέρωχη ", p. 28),

nature and its serene and sacred character can also be "αρρύθμιστα" :

Κι αντιλαλούνε τα κουδούνια  
αρρύθμιστα, αργά, ιερά,  
των κοπαδιών μες στη γαλήνη,  
που απλώθηκε και στα νερά

της θάλασσας που αγνάντια στέκει  
ακύματη μέσα στο φως :  
του ξυλοκόπου το πελέκι  
μονάχα σκλάβωσε ο Ρυθμός...

("Από τη Ραψωδία της Ερημιάς", p. 6).

In this case human enslavement to rhythm is out of harmony with the non-rhythmical character of the rest of nature; this is stressed by the fact that in this poem human activity is destructive. This phenomenon is parallel to the one enacted in "Στρατός " (p. 9) but inverted. There, the metre is broken at the point where it refers to a destructive force. The eleven-syllable lines of the poem are iambic (e.g. "Ποδοβολή από μακριά γροικιέται / κι οι σάλπιγγες λαλούνε στον αέρα ") until the line where the reference to the army is made: "Ο στρατός...ο στρατός...απολογιέται..". This breaking of the metre is accentuated by the enjambments, which follow the reference to the army, while the previous lines of the poem are end-stopped. "Ο στρατός...ο στρατός...απολογιέται / κάθε φωνή και κάθε μια μητέρα / τρέμει, δακρύζει, αυτιάζεται και στέκει / σα να προσμένει κάποιο αστροπελέκι ! " In "Στρατός ", then, the appearance of a destructive and horrifying human element in the poem breaks the metre of the poem, while in "Από τη Ραψωδία της Ερημιάς", referred to above, the human element is out of harmony with nature because nature is "αρρύθμιστη ". Thus,

"Στρατός " indicates both that destructive human intervention can destroy the rhythm of the world and that such subjects cannot enter the rhythm of poetry (this latter indication contrasts with Palamas's hymns to the army<sup>39</sup> and Sikelianos's *Επίνικοι Α* <sup>40</sup> and probably their general nationalistic ideas).

If "Στρατός " questions' the suitability of certain subjects for a kind of poetry, which attempts to be in tune with the rhythms of the universe, "Από τη Ραψωδία της Ερημιάς" questions the existence of such a rhythm in the universe, or rather the belief that the rhythms of human activities (possibly including poetry) are capable of being in harmony with the universe.

A similarly ambivalent attitude is also present in the references Filyras makes to rhyme. On the one hand rhyme is "μαγεία " and poetry in general is an "αιώνια κυψέλη " :

Κι αν τ' απόσταγμα σύναξα, μελίσσι,  
αιώνια να φυλάξω σε κυψέλη,  
το κερί λιώνει κι αργοστάει το μέλι

Στα κύπελλα του Στίχου, να μελίσσει,  
στης Ρίμας να γλυκάνει τη μαγεία,  
την πικρή της ζωής μας ιστορία

("Σ ' εκείνες", p. 89).

In this case poetry, through its rhyme and rhythm, functions as a space in which pleasant memories can be preserved, while at the same time it constitutes the positive culmination of the remembered experience. On the other hand, rhyme and probably through it rhythm and poetry in general, can

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<sup>39</sup> Palamas, 1, p. 153 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Sikelianos, B, pp. 15-59.

put an end to an experience by expressing and thereby destroying it: as long as the "νάζι" of the beloved remains "ανέκφραστο" and the speaker's desire to describe his beloved "άφραστος", the experience is intact, whereas its expression in poetry destroys the "μαγεία": "και να μη βρίσκουμε ποτέ τη ρίμα, / που της ζωής σου θα 'κλεινε το κύμα", ("Νάντα", p. 108, referred to also in 3. 2. 3. in connection with the relationship of poetic language to desire).

This ambivalent attitude towards rhythm places Filyras half-way between Palamas and Sikelianos on the one hand and the majority of the Post-Symbolists on the other. This is in keeping with his poetics in general, and more specifically with a central concern of his poetics, which is the relationship between the poetic world and the actual world. While Palamas and Sikelianos believe that poetry possesses the power to transform the world, Filyras expresses his desire and his attempt to do so, but also his doubts as to whether he will succeed, thereby questioning the poet's power and opening the way for other Post-Symbolists who consider their poetry to be almost powerless when confronted with the actual world. An indication of this intermediate position in the poetry of Filyras is his use of words like: πόθος, πίστη, όνειρο, χίμαιρα. Contrary to what happens in the poetry of other Post-Symbolists, these words in Filyras usually do not refer to the past, nor are they related to a consciousness of non-realization or of failure. Instead, they refer to a future or to a timeless other world, which usually acquires a positive character, since it is linked to joy and elation. In some cases, however, "όνειρο", "χίμαιρα", "πόθοι", refer both to another world

and to an interplay between the real world and that other world. For example in "Υπεράνω " (p. 47) the speaker wavers between the "πίστη στη χίμαιρα άλλης πλάσης" and the "πίκρα ", and finally depicts his life and the lives of his fellow-beings as existing "μέσα μα και σαν έξω απ' τη Ζωή". The same experience is described in "Δισταγμοί " (p. 48) where the speaker remains at a distance from the dream he is seeking and finally fails to enter the gate of joy. In both these poems the speaker employs the word "απόκοσμος" to describe his state. In "Υπεράνω " he ends by saying "οι κοσμικοί κι οι απόκοσμοι μαζί / να πούμε πως εζήσαμε σε αμάχη, / μέσα μα και σαν έξω απ' τη Ζωή ", while in "Δισταγμοί " he ends by saying,

Κι αν αναπλάθω τ' όνειρο και πλέω στους ουραμούς,  
 στέκω στην πύλη της Χαράς, μα για να μπω δειλιάζω  
 κάθε Γυναίκα η Ζωή κι η Σάρκα όλος ο Νους,  
 μα ο θλιβερός κι απόκοσμος περνώ και δεν αράζω .

The same adjective - "απόκοσμος " - is applied to rhythm in the poem "Ρυθμός " referred to above ("βοσκέ, ω απόκοσμε βοσκέ, που δέν κρατάς φλογέρα "). This similarity between the state of the poet and the nature of rhythm may constitute an additional indication that the ambivalent attitude Filyras displays towards the relationship between the rhythm of poetry and the rhythms of the universe is organically connected with a primary concern of his poetics, that is, the relationship between the real world and a poetic world. This is why the attitude of Filyras towards rhythm appears to be half-way between Palamas and Sikelianos on the one hand and the majority of the Post-Symbolists on the other.



The poetry of Lapathiotis is one step further away from Palamas in terms of attitude towards rhythm. Although most of the poems of Lapathiotis are composed in traditional metrical verse, his references to rhythm or to matters relevant to rhythm indicate the belief that poetry and the poet are in discord not only with society but also with the universe. The "τραγούδι " remains "ρυθμικό " ("Όταν βραδιάζει ", p. 133), yet rhythm does not signify an imposition of order or the creation of a viable poetic world. In "Από τότε, πες, που ο νους μου... " (p. 236) the speaker talks about rhythm in connection with infertile hopes and desires:

κι η καρδιά μου, από το βάθος  
της αγάπης θαμπωμένη,  
σκλάβα στου ρυθμού το πάθος  
είχε αρχίσει ν' απομένει,  
πόσες άγονες ελπίδες,  
πόσα πάθη, πόσες λύπες,  
- πόσα, σκέψη μου, δεν είδες  
τραγουδώντας, και δεν είπες !

All those elements of the content of his songs "πήγαν, δίχως να γυρίσουν " and the only thing left is the desire for death. "Κι από τότε μέχρι τώρα, πιστή σκλάβα του Θανάτου / δε σταμάτησες μιαν ώρα / να τονίζεις τ' Ωσαννά του...". Rhythm, therefore, is identified with poetry, but its inefficacy is demonstrated, and it is related to death.

The persistent use of traditional rhythm and metre in the poems of Lapathiotis sometimes engenders a sense of irony, where the speaker describes or states an individual and general collapse and destruction, as for example in "Χειμώνας " (p. 224): "Δεν έχει μείνει τίποτα, μέσα και γύρω μου, γερó ". This irony or contradiction may be partly implied in

"Ερινύες " (p. 214), where the poet states that "εντός μου τίποτα δε μένει  
 πια γερό " and realizes that he cannot be consoled by his own songs. "Γι'  
 αυτό, σφαλώντας τη ματιά, πηγαίνω να χαθώ, / μες στους πικρούς σας  
 εμπαιγμούς και μες στις ειρωνείες, / τώρα που τίποτα γερό δεν έμεινε  
 κι ορθό, / - τραγούδια μου, Ερινύες ! " The rhythmical and metrical  
 character of his songs contrasts strongly with the dissolution and destruction  
 expressed in the poems, and this may constitute a cause for the εμπαιγμοί  
 and the ειρωνείες.

This contradiction between the expression of dissolution and destruction  
 on the one hand and the adherence to metre on the other is a point of  
 dissimilarity between Lapathiotis and Karyotakis, as will be argued below.

The fact that Lapathiotis adheres to metre and rhythm, however, does not  
 reflect an attitude similar to that of Palamas and Sikelianos, that is, that  
 poetry can embody the rhythms governing the universe. On the contrary  
 Lapathiotis states that he is unable to find the rhythm of the universe. Such a  
 statement may be implied in "Εκ Βαθέων " (p. 173) in the double meaning of  
 the word "σκοπός ": "Λυπήσου με, Θε μου, στο δρόμο που πήρα, /  
 χωρίς, ως το τέλος, να ξέρω το πώς, / - χωρίς να 'χω μάθει, με μια  
 τέτοια μοίρα, / ποιο κρίμα με δένει και ποιος ο σκοπός ! " If σκοπός  
 signifies here both "purpose" and "tune", the speaker is stating not only a  
 lack of purpose but also a lack of rhythm in his life and in his fate. A similar  
 statement is made in the last line of the poem: "να ζω δίχως λόγο, και  
 δίχως σκοπό ". If we take "λόγος" to mean discourse based on reason,  
 and "σκοπός " in the sense of tune, the speaker may be saying that his

poetry lacks both a discourse based on reason, since he cannot understand his fate, and a rhythm connected with a more general rhythm of the world.

Thus, the rhythm of poetry is completely separate from the rhythms of the universe and can only offer oblivion instead of communication with the laws

of the universe: "Και μέσα στη νύχτα, / που μένει δεσμώτης, / κοιτώντας του κάκου / να βρει το ρυθμό της, // η Τέχνη, μονάχα, / σαν κάποιος φεγγίτης, / του δίνει τη λήθη, με τη μουσική της..." ("Ωραιοπαθής", p.

171). Nevertheless this music can be a destructive rather than a consoling

force. This is often implied in the poems of Lapathiotis, and is metrically

enacted in "Κι έτσι με σύντριψε το φως... " (p. 69). In this poem

Lapathiotis breaks the metre by some syncopations and forced synizeses,

e.g. "και γιατι μέθυσ' από Ζωή , με έχει συντρίψει η Ζωή · / κι

επειδή στράφηκα, κι εγώ, και μ' όλη μου την πνοή, / στη Μελωδία, με

σύντριψεν η Μελωδία: Κουφός ! " Here Lapathiotis combines the breaking

of the metre with a statement about destruction, and refers to melody as one

of the destructive elements. Usually, however, the destruction referred to is

not metrically enacted, and the persistence of a kind of rhythm, which is said

to be irrelevant to the rhythms of the universe, leads to the isolation of poetry.

This is a theme that recurs in the poetry of Lapathiotis.

Although the poetry of Papanikolaou aspires to music, it does not refer to

rhythm or metre. His poems were traditionally metrical and rhythmical until

1938-39 (that is after free verse had been well established in Greece), when

he published eight poems in free verse. The subject-matter of the poems in

free verse remains similar to that of the ones in traditional verse (love,

memory, death), but the way in which this subject-matter is treated differs in that the despair expressed in the poems written in traditional verse is either absent or vastly diminished in the poems in free verse. For example, in the former type of traditional poems, death is presented as the opposite of love and dreams and appears as the only solution when the speaker has been disillusioned about love and dreams. In "Ραντεβού " (p. 51) the speaker waits in vain for his beloved to arrive and finally the contrast between his dream and reality leads him to a situation similar to death: "Και την καρδιά μου σ' άνοιξα, πόρτα που απάνου ως κάτου / τα μαύρα τη σφραγίσανε τα πέπλα του θανάτου ". The same happens after the disappearance of a dream in "Μέσα στη βουή του δρόμου" (p. 37) : the dream leaves behind it "Μιαν ελπίδα πεθαμένη / που μας ζει και μας πεθαίνει / κι όλο μας τραβάει 'δώ κάτου / ως την πόρτα του θανάτου ". In contrast, in "Φαύνοι " (p. 73), written in free verse, the dream is described in the first person plural ("Θα χορέψουμε στο φως των άστρων, / θα τρέξουμε ξυπόλητοι στην άσφαλτο του δρόμου.. ") and, although it culminates in death, love is a part of the scenario: "Επειτα θα 'ρθουν τα φιλήματα να κλείσουνε τα μάτια μας, / τα χέρια θα ενώσουμε στον ύπνο / και το πρωί θα ξυπνήσουμε πεθαμένοι".

A similar phenomenon can be observed in two poems which deal explicitly with the theme of dream: "Μέσα στη βουή του δρόμου", written in traditional verse, and "Εξοχικό όνειρο " (p. 70), written in free verse. The first one depicts the loss of a dream: "Μέσα στη βουή του δρόμου / ήταν να 'βρω τ' όνειρό μου, / να το βρω και να το χάσω/ κι ούτε πια που

θα το φτάσω ", and finally refers to a lost paradise. The second depicts a dream as a reality ("Οι ελιές διψούσαν μάταια νιότη. / Είχαν γεμίσει τα χέρια από φως του πεύκου "), employs the imperative mood ("Ανοίχτε πόρτες και παράθυρα / είναι η στερεά νύχτα της γης όπως η πρώτη") and finally states the realization of the dream as an event which will take place in the future: "Θα κοιμηθούμε σε λίγο / αγκαλιασμένοι ".

These two examples of different treatment of similar subject-matter in the two categories of Papanikolaou's poems may be indicative of two different concepts of poetic language. That is, whereas in the traditional poems, poetic language is regarded as ineffectual and incapable of creating a poetic reality which will contain the fulfilment of desires and dreams, in the poems written in free verse Papanikolaou displays a greater confidence in poetic language.

Although Papanikolaou does not refer to rhythm or metre, the difference between his two attitudes towards poetic language may be indicative of a negative attitude towards rhythm and metre, which imprison the poet in a language incapable of fulfilling its role. This inability is probably related in turn to rhythm. That is, the conservation of rhythm and metre in a poetic language that does not reflect the rhythms of the universe, reflects the limitations of language and renders it discordant with its time.

For Polydouri, poetic language aspires at achieving communication between individuals (e.g. "και σου μιλώ τραγούδια ", p. 219) rather than at creating a viable poetic reality. Thus, in her poetry, language is less self-referential than in the poetry of other Post-Symbolists, as I have argued in

## Chapter 2.

This comparative lack of self-referentiality in the poetic language of Polydouri may account for the absence of references to rhythm and metre. In most poems Polydouri observes the rules of traditional verse, and the poems where she breaks away from them do not seem to present any difference in subject-matter or treatment from the strictly traditional ones.

The only poem where Polydouri refers to the rhythm of her poetry is one of her last, written in a combination of traditional and free verse. This poem is a farewell to rhythm, rhyme, sound and song, and, apart from the fact that it enacts the farewell to rhythm and rhyme, it also indicates that Polydouri does not question the efficacy of poetic language. The farewell to rhythm and rhyme is enacted in the interplay between traditional and free verse; the poet tries to govern her voice, that is to keep it within the bounds of traditional verse, but her voice does not obey and breaks:

Χαίρε, Ρυθμέ και Ρίμα.  
Σας χαιρετίζω,  
πια δεν ορίζω  
τη φωνή μου.  
Ξεφεύγει παραλήρημα.  
Σας σμίγω μα η πνοή μου  
δε φτάνει, σπα

(p. 274).

Polydouri's satisfaction with poetic language is indicated by the identification of her life with song ("Πάνε τα ωραία, τ' αγνά, η ζωή. / Γλυκέ Σκοπέ, δεν μου αντέχει / η φωνή ") and by the last lines: "Σας χαιρετίζω. / Σκοποί όπου πάτε, μη με ξεχνάτε".

Thus, metre and rhythm constitute essential elements of poetic language,

which functions as a medium for dialogue. In this way Polydouri does not question the function of metre and rhythm within poetic language. Nevertheless by regarding them (along with the whole of poetic language) as a medium for dialogue, she reduces them to functional elements of communicative language rather than central and governing elements of poetry.

The adherence to metre in the poetry of Skarimbass (which, as I have argued in Chapter 2, is characterized by irony directed at poetic language itself) functions as one basis of the irony created by its structure, since this adherence stresses the artificial nature of poetic language, while at the same time the order of metre is opposed to the syntactical disorder which prevails in the poems. For example in "Χαλκίδα" (p. 13) the syntactical disorder implies both a fragmentation of actual reality and the artificial character of the reality created by language (cf. repetition of the verb "λέω"):

Η Χαλκίδα ,  
ω Χαλκίδα - πόλη (έλεγα) και φέτος  
ήμουν - στ' όνειρό μου είδα - Περικλέτος,  
πάλι Περικλέτος ήμουν - είδα...

Ετσι έλεγα ! Ησαν μάταιοί μου οι κόποι  
πάν' σε ξύλο κούφιο, πρόστυχο, ανάρια,  
ως θερία, ως δέντρα - αναγλυμένοι - ως ψάρια  
τα όνειρά μου (μούμιες) κι οι άνθρωποι .

The fragmentation of the reality depicted contrasts with the regular stanzas composed of three twelve- and one ten-syllable iambic lines, with ABBA rhyme. At the same time the metrical and rhythmical pattern of the verse seems to underline the artificial character of the language employed and, consequently, of the reality created by it.

Thus, the category of the traditionalists is characterized by the observation of the conventions of metre in most poems. This observation, however, indicates various different attitudes towards rhythm and metre. Filyras regards the rhythms of poetry as reflecting the rhythms of the universe, but at the same time he doubts the ability of poetry to reflect and enact these rhythms. Papanikolaou does not comment on rhythm, but seems to share Lapathiotis's attitude that the current poetic language, based on traditional rhythm and metre, is ineffectual because of its discordance both with society and with the universe. Papanikolaou's attitude is implicit in the difference between his traditional poems and his poems written in free verse, regarding the capacity of poetic language to fulfil a desire. Polydouri considers metre and rhythm to be identified with poetry, but she reduces them to functional elements, since she proposes poetic language as a medium for dialogue. Skarimbass employs metre to stress the irony he directs at poetic language, since metre emphasizes the artificial character of poetic language and contrasts with the fragmentation evoked by the semantic structure and enacted in the syntactical structure of his poems.

These attitudes appear to be different aspects of or variations on a general attitude of mistrust towards metre and rhythm, their functions and their efficacy. That is, the confidence that Palamas and Sikelianos display in the ability of their poetic rhythm to reflect universal rhythms is questioned and either rejected or undermined. Poetic metre and rhythm are still preserved in their traditional form, but either with the awareness that they do



not relate to universal rhythms, or as building blocks of a poetic language which serves as a medium for dialogue instead of a prophetic discourse with a major role in society, or again, as elements underlining the artificial character of poetic language. Therefore, the attitude of the "traditionalists" towards rhythm and metre is not totally traditional. The "lost centre" of poetry, to which Lorentzatos refers when talking about the metrical character of Karyotakis's poems, characterizes the poetry of these traditionalists too, not in their actual poetic practice but in terms of their questioning, ironical or negative attitude towards metre and rhythm.

#### 5. 2. 2. 2. The Innovators

This category of poets (Ouranis, Emmanouil, Agras and Karyotakis) is characterized by the frequent loosening of metre. That is, these poets usually adhere to the use of rhythmical units but loosen the internal structure of the metrical units. Here I will examine the connection between this phenomenon and the semantic structure of their poems.

Ouranis's *Spleen* (1912) contains poems written in metrical free verse, that is, poems which observe the metrical units but do not observe the rhythmical units as coinciding with the lines of a poem. The poetic language, however, is not totally liberated from both metrical and rhythmical conventions, as is the case with the poems in free verse by Papanikolaou. This may account for the fact that in *Spleen* Ouranis does not display a

positive attitude towards poetic language, that is, he does not consider his poetic language to be capable of fulfilling his desires. In contrast, he employs this metrical free verse (he adheres to the metrical units while dissolving the rhythmical) in order to transmit a sense of slackness, a lack of motion or a lifelessness (e.g. "Μοιάζει η ζωή μου μ' έκταση μαύρων νερών, τελμάτων / ακίνητων, γιομάτων βούρλα λασπωμένα κι έντομα / όπου βουίζουν ακατάπαυστα από πάνω τους / τον πυρετό και την αρρώστια σέρνοντας" (II, p. 9).

Thus, the breaking of the rhythmical units and the adherence to the metrical units suggest a poetic language still tied to some of the traditional conventions but at the same time decentred as far as rhythm is concerned. This lack of centre reflects the subject-matter which refers mainly to the lack of action or purpose.

In the first forty-five poems of *Νοσταλγίες* (1920) Ouranis adopts a metrical and rhythmical verse form (iambic fifteen-syllable line) and at the same time he refers to the poems as sonnets. Thus he chooses both traditional verse and a strict form and through these he displays his attitude to metre and rhythm.

These forty-five poems are composed of fourteen lines apiece, but lack either strict rhyme or division into stanzas. According to Politis<sup>41</sup> and Zakythenos<sup>42</sup>, a poem comprising fourteen lines without strict rhyme is not a sonnet but a *δεκατετράστιχο*. This name was used by Palamas for his

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<sup>41</sup> Linos Politis, *Μετρικά*, Thessaloniki, Konstantinidis, p. 130.

<sup>42</sup> Dionysios Zakythenos, *Το Σονέττο στη Νεοελληνική Ποίηση*, Athens, Athina 1926, p. 25.

Δεκατετράστιχα (1919), which do have rhymes but are not divided into stanzas. Palamas, however, speaking of his Δεκατετράστιχα, simply says that he prefers this term to the term sonnet,<sup>43</sup> while Thrasyvoulos Stavrout mentions that rhyme is very important for a fourteen-line poem to be a sonnet but does not actually exclude fourteen-line rhymeless poems from the category of sonnets.<sup>44</sup> These fourteen-line poems by Ouranis reflect the influence both of Gryparis, who was the first to compose sonnets in fifteen-syllable lines, and of Palamas, who abolished the division into stanzas.

Nevertheless Ouranis undermines the sonnet form even further than Palamas and in his poem "Το Σονέττο" (p. 34) states the priority of content over form; after presenting various possibilities for the acoustic structure of the sonnet (e.g. "ηχερό σα σάλπισμα πολεμικό, με ρίμες / ορμητικές"), he ends:

αν θέλεις να 'ναι τέλειο πάντοτε πρέπει νά 'χει  
βγαλμένο μέσ' απ' την καρδιά κι απ' την ψυχή σου μέσα,  
διακριτικά, σαν τ' όνομα τεχνίτη σε μιαν άκρη,  
κρυμμένο ένα όνειρο, μια χίμαιρα, ένα δάκρυ .

This privileging of content over form is probably the central factor in Ouranis's deviations from metre. For example the frequent separation of the last line from the rest of the poem (13 + 1 lines) creates a pause in the poem, due to the semantic weight carried by the last line, which seems to convey either a conclusion or a final image the speaker wants to impress upon the reader, or simply an additional and highly significant point. The pause

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<sup>43</sup> Palamas, 7, p. 303.

<sup>44</sup> Thrasyvoulos Stavrout, *Νεοελληνική Μετρική*, Thessaloniki 1974 pp. 121-24.

created is sometimes emphasized by the separation, through punctuation, of one or more words at the end or in the middle of the last line. From the semantic point of view, this separation serves the same purpose as the separation of the last line itself. This pause divides the line into two or three asymmetrical parts, e.g. "την παραλία τη νεκρή κοιτάζει - νυσταγμένος" or "Κι από χαράν ανάβλυσε - σαν προσευχή - το κλάμα".

This semantic pause indicates the privileging of meaning over rhythm. Another indication is the frequent lack of a caesura between the eighth and ninth syllables. This is due either to the use of polysyllabic words or to a syntactical structure within the line which creates a pause that does not coincide with the caesura, e.g. "Δεν πέθανες. Είσαι παντού και είσαι μέσα σ' όλα ", "Τώρα: το αίμα ορμητικό σαν χείμαρρος κυλάει ", "Ω ποιητή ! παρόμοια στο διάβα σου οι κοινοί " etc. Moreover, frequently stressed syllables coincide with weak positions, thus creating syncopations, e.g. "μήτε και ταξιδιάρικο περνάει σύγνεφο ένα".

At the same time the syntactical and semantic structures selected result in frequent enjambment, e.g. "Ας είμαστε σαν αδελφός και αδελφή, που ζούνε / στο πένθιμο...", "Στην ησυχία, ένα σκυλί θρηνητικά αλυχτάει / κάπου μακριά ". The syntactical structure is often based on the subordination of secondary clauses to the main one (e.g. "Δειλινά φθινοπώρου ", p. 65) and thus the semantic and syntactical units are either shorter or longer than the rhythmical ones. This marks a change both from the sonnets of Gryparis and from the δεκατετράστιχα of Palamas.

In this collection, therefore, Ouranis plays upon the metrical units while

adhering to the rhythmical units and at the same time creates syntactical and semantic units that do not coincide with the rhythmical units. In this way he gives priority to the semantic, syntactical and acoustic structures of his poems, while at the same time exploiting the fluidity of the metre and rhythm to underline the fluidity evoked in the semantic structure.

This aspiration and the devices he employs are along the same lines as the aspirations of and devices employed by the French Symbolists in their deviations from the traditional pattern of the alexandrine. Referring to the metre and rhythm of Verlaine, David Hillery notes that in his deviations Verlaine "intended to promote the idea of irregularity, "airiness" and lack of substance".<sup>45</sup> The Symbolists aspired at freedom from "la rigueur métrique des Parnassiens" <sup>46</sup> and this freedom "was not just a question of technical emancipation, though that in itself was a big enough step; it was also an emotional freedom relating to their basic belief that art was a form of self-expression and that no poet could fully express himself if he was obliged to write in a preconceived mould.[...] The variations within the regular forms are all connected with that characteristic conflict of "vers libéré" which is the way the rhythm of meaning acts against the metrical regularity. What the nineteenth century saw, in fact, was a gradually increasing insistence on that very rhythm of meaning".<sup>47</sup>

Thus, the subordination of metre and rhythm to meaning, and the use of

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<sup>45</sup> David Hillery, *Music and Poetry in France from Baudelaire to Mallarmé . An Essay on Poetic Theory and Practice*, Berne, Peter Lang Publishers 1980, p. 50.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. , p. 34.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. , pp. 64-65.

an undermined rhythmical pattern to underline the fluidity of the semantic structure implies a removal from the "centre" of poetry. This "centre" is not explicitly defined by Lorentzatos, who employs the term; he suggests, however, that this "centre" consists in a strong "*προσωδιακός οργανισμός* ",<sup>48</sup> which does not apparently rely only on a strict metrical and rhythmical pattern, since Palamas, who used *vers libéré* or metrical free verse, is not considered by Lorentzatos to have departed from it. It consists rather in an interaction between semantic and metrical structures. Lorentzatos's phrase about the "*νοσολογία της ποιητικής* " (referring to Karyotakis's metrical structure) suggests that the "centre" consists in a confidence in poetic language. That is, before Karyotakis the various metrical techniques or deviations did not reflect ambivalence concerning the ability of poetic language to express meaning, nor did they reflect the sense of dissolution enacted by the semantic, syntactical and metrical structures of Karyotakis's poetry. If this confidence in poetic language and the sense of solidity constitutes the "centre" of poetry, it seems that Ouranis in 1912 and 1920 was taking steps to distance himself from it. In this way he enacts the ambivalence which is expressed but not enacted by those Post-Symbolists who belong to the category of the "traditionalists".

A similar attitude is suggested by the metrical structure of the poetry of Emmanouil, who appeared later than Ouranis (first publications in magazines in 1924) and published his first collection, with the significant title *Ο Παράφωνος Αιολός* , after Karyotakis's last one (1929). One difference

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<sup>48</sup> Lorentzatos, p. 97.

from Ouranis is that Emmanouil does not aspire to music but to the visual arts, and therefore the fluidity of his verse does not interact with the acoustic structure in order to achieve a musical renewal of the poetic phrase. The fluidity of his verse, which in his first collection consists of an alternation between twelve-syllable iambic lines stressed on the antepenultimate and eleven-syllable iambic lines stressed on the penultimate, is based on forced synizeses (e.g. "Δεν πέθανε (νεκρός από καιρό ήταν) ", "η άσπρη του καβαλλιέρου σου το σφίξιμο "). It is also based on the contrast of the semantic and syntactical structures with the rhythmical structure. The semantic structure of Emmanouil's poetry, as has been argued in section 5.1.1, revolves around the indication of absences, e.g. the absence of action or the absence of a correspondence between external reality and the speaker's or a collective mood. Therefore the absence of a strict rhythmical structure underlines and enacts the absences referred to in the semantic structure of the poems. In this way the poetic "σήμα " Emmanouil gives is both a signal of absence and a signal consisting of and enacting absence: "Το σήμα αυτό η ψυχή μου μες στην πλήξη της, / σαν ένα τραγικό, σκορπάει, καράβι/ που έχει κυκλώσει η ομίχλη - ένα άσπρο φάντασμα, - / μακριά απ' τις γαληνές, γλαυκές ακτές του..." ("S.O.S.", p. 49).

Like Emmanouil (but before him), Agras is also conscious of a discordance or a jarring note in his poetry. A subsection of *Τα Βουκολικά και τα Εγκώμια* bears the title *Παραφωνίες* . In this subsection, as elsewhere in the collection, Agras employs the iambic fifteen-syllable line, but changes its character by syncopations and the abolition of the caesura

(e.g. "Των κρίνων ο χορός δεν είναι μες στο περιβόλι, / που των ανέμων η μονότονη ελεγεία στενάζει").

Kostas Steryopoulos, referring to the rhythmical structure of Agras's poetry, speaks about a "τάση ελευθερίας και απαλλαγής από τα καθιερωμένα δεσμά του στίχου, που ωστόσο, μοιάζει διαρκώς να την αναχαιτίζει η στερεή τους δομή".<sup>49</sup> This wavering between the choice of a traditional metrical form and its breaking or undermining is in accordance with the general character of Agras's poetics, which wavers between the depiction of a fragmented reality and the aspiration to a transcendental reality characterized by unity. Ideally the role of poetry for Agras would be to create a relationship between the two realities, but the poet questions his ability to create it:

Τάχα, ξανά θα τα χαρώ  
δικά μου, αυτά τα ξένα;  
και σ' ένα ανταύγασμα λαμπρό  
από παράταιρο σωρό  
θα ιδώ να γίνοντ' ένα;

(Καθημερινές, "Αναυλα εφύγαν", p. 32).

The wavering between a strict metrical form and its loosening enacts the wavering between a wish for the establishment of a relationship between the two realities through poetry and an awareness that poetry is not able to fulfil its role. Thus, the absence of a regular metrical and rhythmical pattern in his poetry dissatisfies Agras because it betokens the failure of his poetry to fulfil its role: he refers to his "άπλερο σκοπό" (Τριαντάφυλλα, "Σκοπός για φουσαρμόνικα, τη νύχτα", p. 39) or to the "λύπη, / πηγμένα δάκρυα και

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<sup>49</sup> Steryopoulos, *Ο Τέλλος Αγρας*, p. 105.



καημός / για το γραφτό σου, που του λείπει / η ειρήνη, η τάξη κι ο  
ρυθμός " (Καθημερινές, "Ψυχή μου ανάσαινε...", p. 28).

The metrical and rhythmical structures employed by Karyotakis have been analyzed by both Christos Papazoglou<sup>50</sup> and Massimo Peri.<sup>51</sup> Others have also referred to them, among them Zissimos Lorentzatos<sup>52</sup> and Tellos Agras.<sup>53</sup>

These critics have pointed out the relationship between metrical and semantic dissolution in Karyotakis's poetry. The detailed substantiation of this thesis is the central concern of Papazoglou's study. Papazoglou differentiates Karyotakis from other poets who had broken the metre, like Palamas, Gryparis, Ouranis, Filyras and Lapathiotis, by saying that Karyotakis's effort is

λειτουργική, για τις σχέσεις που αποκαθιστά μεταξύ  
του περιεχομένου και της μορφής του ποιήματος.

Και είναι ακόμη, και κυρίως, προσπάθεια ουσιαστική·  
γιατί τα κοινά για όλους γλωσσικά και μετρικά στοιχεία  
παύουν να είναι απλώς και μόνον τα τεχνικά μέσα μιας  
ποιητικής, η έκφραση ενός συντηρητισμού ή ενός  
μοντερνισμού, και ανάγονται μετά σχολαστικότητας και  
φειδούς σε μέσα ποιητικά, σε "κινήματα της ψυχής".

Μια διαφορά θεμελιώδης, ζωτική.<sup>54</sup>

Massimo Peri concludes that:

ο ποιητής ανήκει λοιπόν στο "συρφετό" εκείνο που γυρεύει  
την ομοιοκαταληξία, αλλά ταυτόχρονα [...] επιζητεί

<sup>50</sup> Papazoglou, *Παρατονισμένη Μουσική*.

<sup>51</sup> Massimo Peri, "Ανανέωση και παράδοση στα ρυθμικά-συντακτικά σχήματα του Καρυωτάκη", *Μολυβδοκουδυλοπελεκητής*, vol. 1, 1989, pp. 132-147.

<sup>52</sup> Lorentzatos, "Το Χαμένο Κέντρο".

<sup>53</sup> Agras, "Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι Σάτιρες".

<sup>54</sup> Papazoglou, p. 183.

ν' απορρίψει τον κανονικό ρυθμό και κάποτε μπορεί να προκαλέσει και οδυνηρές διαταραχές, τραυματικά σπασίματα, ταλαντευόμενος ανάμεσα στη νοσταλγία του στίχου και την επιθυμία της πρόζας.<sup>55</sup>

Tellos Agras talks about an "ελευθερία, ακαταστασία, αναρχία" in the poetry of Karyotakis and points out that "μέσα στην Τέχνη, η έκφραση των πεποιθήσεών μας δεν είναι μόνο το τί θα εκφράσωμε, αλλά κάπως και το πώς θα το εκφράσωμε"<sup>56</sup>; and Zissimos Lorentzatos, after talking about the "διαταραχή ολόκληρου του προσωδιακού οργανισμού" between traditional rhythmical structures and the rhythmical structures of the Generation of the 1930s, concludes: "Ο Καρυωτάκης είναι ο πορθμός ή ο δίαυλος. Χωρίζει και ενώνει. Η περίπτωση του πέφτει ακριβώς απάνω στο κεντρικό σημείο της έντασης, εκεί όπου το σκοινί αρχίζει και τινάζει ένα-ένα τα κλωνιά του ώσπου να σπάσει".<sup>57</sup>

While Lorentzatos suggests that Karyotakis constitutes "το κεντρικό σημείο της έντασης", his case belongs to the context of the attitude the other Post-Symbolists enact and display towards metre and rhythm. Just as the attitudes displayed by the traditionalists constitute different shades or gradations of the same preoccupation, the attitudes displayed and enacted by the innovators indicate the "ένταση" to which Lorentzatos refers. The difference between Karyotakis and Filyras and Lapathiotis to which Papazoglou refers is the difference between the two categories of Post-

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<sup>55</sup> Peri, "Ανανέωση και παράδοση", p. 147.

<sup>56</sup> Agras, "Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι Σάπρες", pp. 217, 208.

<sup>57</sup> Lorentzatos, p. 97.

Symbolists: the traditionalists display a doubting or negative attitude towards metre and rhythm without enacting it, while the innovators enact it.

Karyotakis's deviations from regular metre underline his depiction of a fragmentary reality. The poet "*σφυροκοπά / των ήχων τα στεφάνια* " ("*Στροφές* ", p. 34), therefore he is concerned with sounds. These *στεφάνια*, however, are probably connected with "*τ' ωραίο εκείνο γύψινο στεφάνι* " ("*Εμβατήριο πένθιμο και κατακόρυφο* ", p. 113). In this poem Karyotakis implicitly contrasts a "*ταπεινή τέχνη χωρίς ύφος* " to his own poetry, the *ύφος* of which has led him to the impasse indicated by the "*γύψινο στεφάνι* ". Sounds and music, therefore, do not constitute an aspiration but rather part of the poetic language and of its failure to which Karyotakis often refers.

Metre and rhythm in Karyotakis seem to be aspects of the artificial character of poetic language; Papazoglou refers to Karyotakis's metrical "*παραφωνίες*" as "*πίεση που ασκείται στα τοιχώματα του στίχου* " <sup>58</sup>. These *παραφωνίες*, however, are considered by Karyotakis to be more in accord with his time than a strictly metrical and rhythmical poetry would be; in his ode to Andreas Kalvos (p. 99) he refers to Kalvos's "*των ωδών [...] τα μέτρα* ", approves of them as suitable for the historical circumstances in which they were composed, and continues: "*Αλλά το θείον έναυσμα / η φωνή σου δεν είναι / τώρα πλέον. Μας έρχεται / μακρινός και παράταιρος / ήχος τυμπάνου* ".

The times in which Karyotakis lives, on the one hand render metrical and

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<sup>58</sup> Papazoglou, pp. 72-73.

rhythmical poetry useless and unsuitable, while on the other they preclude any sense of freedom, which might include rhythmical freedom: "το λεύτερο που εσκέφτηκα τραγούδι / [...] ξέρω πως ποτέ δε θα ειπωθεί " ("κι αν έσβησε σαν ίσκιος ", p. 53). In this context the poem [Θέλω να φύγω πια από 'δω..] may constitute a metrical reference to his poetry and to his wish to escape from it. The poem is composed in a combination of fifteen- and eleven-syllable iambic lines, that is in the two commonest metres in the poetry of Karyotakis.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the statement "θέλω να φύγω πια από 'δω " which is conveyed in those two metres and includes a wish to find a place where "να μιλούνε / έως την ψυχή τα πράγματα του κόσμου ", becomes in part a statement of poetics because of the rhythmical structure of the poem.

A major difference between Karyotakis and Ouranis concerning their attitudes to metre and rhythm is that, in contrast to Ouranis, Karyotakis does not aspire to music, nor does he attempt to suggest the fluid character of external reality and its corresponding moods. He breaks the metre in order to suggest both that external reality is fragmented and discordant and that poetry fits neither into society nor into the universe. Karyotakis's chief concern is to create a discordance.

This discordance also indicates a difference between his attitude towards metre and rhythm and that of Emmanouil, whose poetic language, as has been argued, is based on absences rather than discordances.

The difference between Karyotakis and Agras lies mainly in their

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

different attitudes towards a transcendental reality. While Agras believes that the role of poetry should be to relate external to transcendental reality and therefore laments the lack of rhythm which would indicate that relationship, the poetry of Karyotakis is more self-referential. That is, Karyotakis is preoccupied with the relationship between a poetic (rather than a transcendental) reality and external reality. On the level of metrical structure, he expresses the crushing presence of an unsatisfactory external reality and the non-viability of poetic reality through discordances.

Thus, the poets of the second category introduce innovations into the metrical structure of poetry by employing *vers libéré*, that is, by using traditional rhythmical structures and disrupting them internally, i.e. playing on their metrical units. The attitudes they enact and display towards metre and rhythm constitute various aspects of a common attitude which indicates dissatisfaction with their poetic language and a need to escape from it. This dissatisfaction and this need are also present in the semantic and syntactical structure of their poetry. All three structures, however, enact the inability of the poets to escape from their poetic language. In the metrical structure the impossibility of escape is enacted by the dominant presence of traditional metrical and rhythmical forms which these poets try to undermine. Therefore their innovative character does not lie in their suggesting new rhythmical structures but in their enactment of the ambivalent or negative attitude which both they and the traditionalist Post-Symbolists display towards metre and rhythm.

Although the difference between these two categories of Post-Symbolist poets does not coincide with strict chronological progression towards the undermining of metre and rhythm, it can be illustrated by a few lines from two thematically similar poems, the first written in 1907 by Lapathiotis and the second published in 1927 by Karyotakis.

The first stanza of Lapathiotis's "Λυπητερή Μελωδία" (p. 10) depicts the speaker as a flute which is blown by pain and creates harmony:

Είμαι φλογέρα ! Ο πόνος μ' άρπαξε,  
φύσηξε εντός μου με μανία:  
είμαι φλογέρα ! Ο πόνος μ' άρπαξε,  
στη μι' άκρη μου είν' ένα άγριο φύσημα,  
στην άλλη ερατεινή αρμονία.

To this harmony Karyotakis opposes his ήχους παράφωνους, to the unbroken flute ξεχαρβαλωμένες κιθάρες, to the human πόνος a non human άνεμος, to the first person singular the first person plural and to the aural and harmonious μελωδία ("και μελωδία στα χείλη βγαίνει ") the written and discordant verses:

Είμαστε κάτι ξεχαρβαλωμένες  
κιθάρες. Ο άνεμος όταν περνάει,  
στίχους, ήχους παράφωνους ξυπνάει  
στις χορδές που κρέμονται σαν καδένες.

The semantic dissimilarities between the two stanzas are enacted in their metrical structures. Lapathiotis produces "harmonious" verses by basing the harmony on the combination of ten- and nine-syllable iambic verses, on the repetition of the first line and on the coincidence of the syntactical units with

the rhythmical units (the only exception is the exclamation marks, which interrupt the rhythmical units in the first and third lines). Karyotakis on the other hand produces "παράφωνους " verses, basing the παραφωνία on the interruption of the iambic rhythm in the second and fourth lines and on enjambment.

Thus, in the poem of 1907 rhythm is still intact, although it is created by pain and consists in absences ("Είμαι ένας τάφος αδειανός ") and in the depiction of the failure of poetic language to fulfil its role ("Φίλησα τα όνειρα ; διαλύθηκαν "). In the poem of 1927 rhythm is undermined and this undermining is referred to explicitly. Therefore, while in 1907 poetic language, in spite of its connection with pain, failure, absence and death, is still a possibility, in 1927 it is unattainable both because its failure has been thoroughly explored and because this exploration has led to the internal dissolution of the structure of poetic language: "κι η ποίησις / είναι το καταφύγιο που φθονούμε ". The metrical dissolution is both a part of and the framework for this dissolution.

The internal dissolution of the metrical character of poetic language is a gradual process carried out both by the traditionalists and by the innovators, in the first case through the expression of an ambivalent or negative attitude towards metre and rhythm, and in the second case through both the expression and the enactment of this attitude. The two categories of Post-Symbolists share certain metrical features but, most importantly, they share the attitude referred to above. This attitude probably constitutes in part a reaction against the connotations that metre and rhythm had acquired

through the ways in which they were used and referred to by Palamas and Sikelianos. It is also related to major concerns of Post-Symbolist poetics, such as the inefficacy of poetic language, its artificial character and the need to escape from it.

In all three cases, that is in the interactions between the syntactical and semantic, between the acoustic and semantic and between the metrical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language, the predominant feature is the preoccupation with language itself and its possibilities. Poetic language usually proves to be inadequate either to depict an empirical or a transcendental reality or to create a viable poetic reality, which would protect the poets and their readers from external reality. Moreover, poetic language is frequently shown to be out of harmony with the universe and to constitute a self-referential artifice of which the Post-Symbolists explore the limitations.



## Chapter 6

### The Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s: Affinities, Differences and Mutual Reception

Post-Symbolist poetics can be viewed, as I have argued in Chapter 1, as a response to the prevailing poetic system of Palamas's generation and, in particular, to that of Palamas himself. Post-Symbolist poetics constitutes in turn a poetic system to which the Generation of the 1930s responds by deviating from it, rejecting it, reacting against it or being influenced by it. This response, as is also the case with the response of the Post-Symbolists to the Generation of the 1880s, is conditioned to a large extent by the historical, socio-political and ideological situation of the time. The relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s is pertinent to the definition of the Post-Symbolist poetic system just as the relationship between the Generation of the 1880s and the Post-Symbolists is. An examination of the Post-Symbolist poetic system as a response to the preceding poetic system and as a set of proposals to which the succeeding poetic system responds in turn sheds light on the key position Post-Symbolism occupies in the history of twentieth-century Greek literature.

Here, I will examine the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s through (a) specific references by the Post-Symbolists to poets belonging to the Generation of the 1930s and vice versa,

(b) main differences of ideology and poetics between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s and (c) affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s. The emphasis will be placed on the second issue, since it conditions the first and significantly affects the third. For the purposes of this thesis, the term "Γενιά του '30" is questioned only in what concerns the ideological implications of its use, and is otherwise employed as generally accepted by critics.

## 6. 1. Specific References

### 6. 1. 1. The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards the Generation of the 1930s

The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards the Generation of the 1930s as manifested in their references to individual poets is twofold. On the one hand there is the appreciation of Seferis, Elytis and to a lesser extent Ritsos, while on the other there is a generally hostile reception of Surrealism.

Kleon Paraschos was probably the first critic associated with the Post-Symbolists to review collections by Seferis, Elytis and Ritsos.<sup>1</sup> In 1935 in *Νέα Εστία*<sup>2</sup> he reviewed Seferis's *Μυθιστόρημα* favourably and made two

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<sup>1</sup> Paraschos's review of Seferis's *Στροφή*, published in 1931, will be referred to below. The short negative review of *Στροφή*, published in 1931 by Lapathiotis (see *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 92, no. 1087 [1972], "Πώς είδε η κριτική το πρώτο φανέρωμα του Σεφέρη", p. 1555) does not raise any significant questions, since it focusses only on the problem of French influences on *Στροφή*.

<sup>2</sup> Kleon Paraschos, *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 17, no. 204, pp. 595-96.

significant observations. In the first place he mentioned as "δασκάλους " of Seferis, Mallarmé, Valéry and Rimbaud, thereby placing Seferis in the Symbolist tradition and implying a relationship between Post-Symbolist poetry and the poetry of Seferis. Secondly Paraschos characterized *Μυθιστόρημα* as an "όραμα ποιητικό που συλλαμβάνεται και εκφράζεται πέρα από την περιοχή της λογικής " and regarded it as a quest along the same lines as the Surrealist quest, the difference being that Seferis employed myth, which "του δίνει, με μια κατάλληλη 'μετατόπιση ', τον ιδεατό χώρο και τον τόνο του υπέρλογου ". Paraschos considered *Μυθιστόρημα* to be a limit beyond which there was a danger of esotericism.

Both these points were repeated in 1936<sup>3</sup> when Paraschos reviewed *Προσανατολισμοί* (first published in *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* ) and Elytis's translations of Eluard. After observing that Symbolism and Surrealism have common roots, Paraschos went on to say that the Surrealist experiment of banishing logic from poetry reduced poetry to a monologue. His review of *Προσανατολισμοί* and the translations was nonetheless favourable, and the same applies to his review of Ritsos's *Πυραμίδες* <sup>4</sup>, although Paraschos expressed some reservations about Ritsos's verbosity.

Papanikolaou's reservations concerning the poetry of Ritsos were stronger<sup>5</sup>. He described "Το Εμβατήριο του Ωκεανού " as "ποίηση χωρίς συγκίνηση, χωρίς ευαισθησία ". He accused Ritsos of "λεξιθηρία " and added that in spite of the poet's efforts to create an atmosphere of mystery,

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<sup>3</sup> Kleon Paraschos, *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 20, no. 231, pp. 1092-94.

<sup>4</sup> Kleon Paraschos, *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 20, no. 229, pp. 954-55.

<sup>5</sup> Papanikolaou, *Κριτικά*, pp. 99-102.

the logical meaning of every line was too obvious.

The problem of the logical meaning of a poem appears to be a chief preoccupation of critics associated with the Post-Symbolist group. Papanikolaou was probably the only one of the Post-Symbolists who voiced positive opinions on Surrealism.<sup>6</sup> In his article on Elytis<sup>7</sup> he compared Surrealism favourably with other poetic trends: Surrealism, according to Papanikolaou, excised all artificial ingredients from poetry, thereby creating a sixth sense, which is the poetic one. *"Δημιουργία καθαρά ρομαντική που είχε συνέπεια [...] την αποκάλυψη, μέσα στο ανθρώπινο πνεύμα, μιας χώρας άγνωστης και μεγάλης, όπου εμποδίζαν ως τώρα την είσοδο η λογική και η γνώση"*.

Whereas Paraschos regarded the rejection of logic as a negative step, Papanikolaou regarded it as something positive: the very essence of Surrealism. He castigated the Greek Surrealists, however, with the exception of Elytis, for attempting to reduce the dimensions of the Surrealist theory. This narrowing down is again connected with the functioning of logic in poetry: *"αντί να δώσουν νέα σημασία στις παλιές λέξεις, έψαξαν να βρουν καινούριες και εξεζητημένες που, γυμνές από ποίηση, κάνουν, σχεδόν, κωμική εντύπωση.[...] Δεν είναι δυνατό να φανταστεί κανείς το υποσυνείδητο με λεξικά στη διάθεσή του για να βρίσκει τις λέξεις του"*.

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<sup>6</sup> Paraschos too, in 1938, expressed a positive if vague view on the poems of Engonopoulos; nevertheless after the collection of poems *Μην ομιλείτε εις τον οδηγόν* was published, Paraschos maintained silence. (Frangiski Ampatzopoulou, *Νίκος Εγγονόπουλος. Η ποίηση στον καιρό του τραβήγματος της ψηλής σκάλας*, Athens, Stigmis 1987, pp. 29-30).

<sup>7</sup> Papanikolaou, *Κριτικά*, pp. 67-71 ("*Οδυσσέας Ελύτης*", 1938).

A similar view was adopted by Ouranis in his article "Συρρεαλισμός" in 1935<sup>8</sup>. Ouranis remarked the lack of automatic writing in *Υψικάμινος* and what he termed the "συστηματική, κοπιώδη, συνειδητή προσπάθεια ενός λογικού ν' αποφύγει κάθε διατύπωση με λογικό ειρμό". Ouranis's hostile reactions to Surrealism also took the form of parodies of poems by Embirikos, Engonopoulos and Gatsos<sup>9</sup>. These parodies, under the general title *Παιχνίδια* consist in the imitation of the vocabulary of the parodied poets as well as of the appearance of their poems on the page (for example the parody of Engonopoulos's *Τα κλειδοκύμβαλα της σιωπής* has obvious references to at least four poems from that collection: "*Τα κλειδοκύμβαλα της σιωπής*", "*Η ζωή και ο θάνατος των ποιητών*", "*Στα όρη της Μιουπόλεως*", "*Ακριβώς όπως*".

Nevertheless Ouranis fails to capture the "logic" of the poems he parodies in the sense of both the meaning and the connotations created by acoustic or intertextual references between words. In the lines "*το / Βαλπαραίζο / όπερ στην αρχαιότητα / εκαλείτο Σινώπη*" he refers to Engonopoulos's placing Sinope between Maracaibo and Valparaiso or between Maracaibo and Elbasan, but by focussing on this geographically irrational element, he does not allow for the meanings South America and Elbasan carry in the poetry of Engonopoulos, nor for acoustic links, such as "*Σινώπη*" - "*Πόλις-Σύννεφο*". Moreover, as is more obvious in the parody of Gatsos's "*Αμοργός*", Ouranis fails to capture the rhythms of the poems

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<sup>8</sup> Kostas Ouranis, "Συρρεαλισμός", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 17, no. 203, p. 540.

<sup>9</sup> Ouranis, *Ποιήματα*, Athens, Estia, pp. 177-184.

he parodies. Thus, what these parodies reveal about Ouranis's readings of Surrealist poems is that he focussed his attention on the surface play of unfamiliar combinations of words or images without absorbing or entering the "logic" of the poems.

A hostile stance towards Surrealism was also adopted by I.M. Panayotopoulos<sup>10</sup> and Lapathiotis (Elytis referred to his dispute of 1938 with Lapathiotis concerning Surrealism in *Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά* ).<sup>11</sup> Neither Panayotopoulos nor Lapathiotis, however, substantiated their arguments.

The problem, therefore remains as posed by Papanikolaou, Paraschos and Ouranis, and concerns the functioning of logic in poetry. In 1945 in his article "*Αίτημα Γενεάς* (Η ποίηση, παλιά και νέα )" Emilios Hourmouzios<sup>12</sup> took a general view of the question, saying that the First World War had created needs for which the means of expression employed prior to that time were inadequate and that pre-war logic was no longer acceptable. The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards this problem is related to the position which they came to occupy in the history of Greek literature. Post-Symbolist poetry questions or undermines the power of *Λόγος* in which Palamas and Sikelianos display such faith; it does not, however, propose an alternative to the existing poetic discourse, namely a poetic discourse governed by a different kind of logic, as the Surrealists do. The reason for this is implicit in their poems, which enact the dichotomy between the need to escape both

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<sup>10</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos, "Η χώρα των ελεφάντων και των πιθήκων", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 42, no. 482, p. 911.

<sup>11</sup> Odysseas Elytis, *Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά*, Athens, Ikaros 1982, pp. 276, 333.

<sup>12</sup> Emilios Hourmouzios, *Γράμματα Ζ*, 1945, no. 1-3, p. 15.

from external reality and from poetic reality itself and the impossibility of realizing this escape because of the nature of the poetic language employed.

This borderline position of Post-Symbolist poetry may account for the attitude towards individual poets or trends of the Generation of the 1930s. Some of the responses by the Generation of the 1930s to the crisis enacted by Post-Symbolist poetry were accepted by the Post-Symbolists, for example in their reviews. Among them were the responses of Seferis and Elytis. In these cases the Post-Symbolists try to point out the common roots this new poetry shared with Post-Symbolism. The case of Surrealism divided the Post-Symbolists, who focussed their attention on the problem of the functioning of logic in poetry, and for the most part rejected or failed to understand the functioning of a different logic proposed by the Surrealists. Thus, this problem marked a boundary in Post-Symbolist poetry, which rejected or undermined the power of the poetic λόγος but did not escape from its logic.

#### 6. 1. 2. The attitude of the Generation of the 1930s towards Post-Symbolism

The reaction of the Generation of the 1930s is often described as being directed against Karyotakismos, that is, against the literary climate created by a number of Karyotakis's poetic successors who were influenced by him. In 1938 Seferis described the poetry of the years following 1928 as dominated by a "*γενική αφροντισιά στην έκφραση*" and added, "*Σ' αυτή τη διαλυτική κατάσταση ήρθαν να αντιδράσουν, πολύ συνειδητά κάποτε,*

οι ποιητές που φάνηκαν μετά το ' 30".<sup>13</sup> The reaction of the Generation of the 1930s against Karyotakismos is not of interest here, since Karyotakismos is not a part of Post-Symbolism but a short-lived successor to it.

Whereas the hostile reaction of the Generation of the 1930s to Karyotakismos was based on stylistic criteria, their hostility to Post-Symbolism had more to do with ideological criteria and will, therefore, be examined in the next section. Where the Generation of the 1930s refer to individual poets, they seem to divide the Post-Symbolists into two categories: (a) Karyotakis and (b) all the others.

Seferis regarded Karyotakis as the "*μοναδικός αντιπρόσωπος αυτής της σχολής*" (he referred to the years 1919-1928 but did not name the school of poetry, nor did he define it more explicitly than as: "*ποίηση που γύρεψε κυρίως την έμπνευσή της από τα συναισθήματα που μας δίνει η μεγάλη πολιτεία*"<sup>14</sup>). The same attitude towards Karyotakis was displayed by Karandonis and Elytis. Karandonis described Karyotakis as an "*αληθινό καλλιτέχνη*"<sup>15</sup> and Elytis regarded Karyotakis's poetry as a "new language".<sup>16</sup> While acknowledging the artistic value of his poetry, Karandonis and Elytis rejected Karyotakis's pessimism. Karandonis condemned Karyotakis for the influence he exercised on his successors; i.e. the

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<sup>13</sup> Yorgos Seferis, *Δοκιμές Α*, Athens, Ikaros 1974, p. 97 [1938].

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 167 [1941].

<sup>15</sup> Andreas Karandonis, "Η επίδραση του Καρυωτάκη στους νέους", *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, γρ. 1, no. 9 (1935), p. 479.

<sup>16</sup> Elytis, *Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά*, p. 237.



"Karyotakistes" who appeared after Karyotakis's death. This "depressing" influence was due, according to Karandonis, not to admiration for Karyotakis's poetry but to the fact that *"τους παρασέρνει εύκολα στη στιχουργία με την ξεγελαστικά πρόχειρη κι ευκολομεταχειρίστη αισθητική του"*.<sup>17</sup> He was also at pains to distinguish between the pessimism of Karyotakis and that of Seferis, characterizing Karyotakis as morbid but observing that Seferis displayed the *"απαισιοδοξία ενός γερού οργανισμού που δε φοβάται να ψηλαφήσει την αρρώστια του"*.<sup>18</sup> Elytis, too, found the "new language" of Karyotakis unsatisfying because of a discrepancy between the *"ύφος"* of the poems and the *"ύφος που έπαιρνε η ζωή μας τα χρόνια εκείνα"*.<sup>19</sup>

A different view was expressed by Embirikos many years later in *"Όταν οι ευκάλυπτοι θροίζουν στις αλλέες"* (1964<sup>20</sup>). Embirikos talked about Karyotakis's *"θεσπέσια οράματα"* and his *"ιδανικά"* and added, *"Ητο σπουδαίος ποιητής, που από τρέχα μόλις θα έψαλλε τους οργασμούς της γης και όλους τους έρωτας των άστρων"*, thereby implying that there is a relationship between Karyotakis's poetry and his own. This relationship appears to be one of similarity through antithesis. Embirikos depicts Karyotakis as writing about the same "ideals" and "Paradises" as he himself and other Surrealists do, but as describing the unattainability of these ideals rather than their realization. This view recalls Elytis's earlier

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<sup>17</sup> Karandonis, *"Η επίδραση"*, p. 479.

<sup>18</sup> Andreas Karandonis, *Ο ποιητής Γιώργος Σεφέρης*, p. 129.

<sup>19</sup> Elytis, p. 237.

<sup>20</sup> Andreas Embirikos, *Οκτάνα*, Athens, Ikaros 1980, p. 62.

comments: "Ήταν δική μας υπόθεση να επαναστατήσουμε, να πούμε όχι, και ν' απλώσουμε το χέρι μας πάνω σ' όλα τα Μυστήρια. Τί ωραία. Το κρεβάτι μου κιόλας γινόταν ελαφρότερο κι ο Καρυωτάκης πολύ μακριά, σμικρυνμένος, σα να τον έβλεπα από το αντίστροφο μέρος μιας διόπτρας".<sup>21</sup>

The relationship that Embirikos pointed out between Karyotakis's poetry and Surrealism could perhaps be extended to include the other Post-Symbolists. Such a relationship, however, was not suggested or implied by the Generation of the 1930s before "Όταν οι ευκάλυπτοι...". In the 1930s and the 1940s the poets of the Generation of the 1930s drew attention to differences rather than similarities between their poetry and that of Karyotakis.

Karyotakis, "το μεγάλο φαβορί της εποχής"<sup>22</sup>, as Elytis called him, was treated by the Generation of the 1930s in a different way from the other Post-Symbolists who were not usually mentioned. An exception was made by Elytis who, apart from Karyotakis's "new language" mentioned some "καινότροπα φανερώματα" of Tellos Agras<sup>23</sup> which captured his interest from a technical point of view ("το περιεχόμενο ελάχιστα μ' ενδιέφερε"). Elytis consigned Lapathiotis and Agras to the same category as Palamas, Drosinis and Gryparis, stating that their place in literature belongs to the era before the Second World War, after the outbreak of which they became a

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<sup>21</sup> Elytis, p. 248.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

part of the past.<sup>24</sup>

In 1945 Elytis appeared to be reiterating this statement: "*Αντίο λοιπόν του οναϊλδισμού, αντίο της μικροκλάψας, αντίο του αριστοκρατισμού, αντίο της σαδομαζοχιστικής κακομοιριάς με την ταβερνούλα, το κρασάκι και το 'αχ, εμείς οι καημένοι', ναι, αντίο, αντίο...*" Here Elytis was bidding farewell both to a system (or rather to different, and frequently antithetical systems) of poetics and to a way of life. He contrasted all this with the new poetic generation, an important part of which was Surrealism, which, according to Elytis, attempted "*στον τόπο μας να συνδεθεί με την κληρονομία των ελληνικών αξιών*".<sup>25</sup>

This emphasis on "Greek values" is one of the two main points of difference in poetics and ideology between Post-Symbolism and the Generation of the 1930s. Therefore the references of the Generation of the 1930s both to Karyotakis and to the other Post-Symbolists pointed to and reflected an ideological reaction against Post-Symbolism, based on the one hand on health and optimism versus pessimism, and on the other on Greekness versus Cosmopolitanism.

Thus, the reactions of the Post-Symbolists to individual poets or to trends of the Generation of the 1930s chiefly reflected the borderline position of the Post-Symbolist poetic system in Greek literature, while the attitude of the Generation of the 1930s towards Post-Symbolism was based rather on matters of ideology.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 393.

## 6. 2. Differences of Ideology and Poetics

In matters of ideology and of poetics connected with ideology the Generation of the 1930s took the initiative. That is, these matters were raised by the Generation of the 1930s, while the Post-Symbolists adopted a defensive position. The two issues to be examined here are related to the historical and political context of the Generation of the 1930s. This period was roughly defined on the one hand by the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922, which marked the end of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* , and on the other by the Metaxas dictatorship of 1936 and the ideology it promoted. Mario Vitti has noted that, in spite of laws such as Venizelos's "*Ιδιώνυμο* " of 1929, the years between 1930 and 1936 were years of free dialogue, since Marxist ideas, for example, penetrated Greece, while after 1936 the situation was that of an "*ιδεολογική αποτελμάτωση* ".<sup>26</sup> Although this is not directly related to the dialogue between the Generation of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolists, it is connected with ideas promoted by the Generation of the 1930s and consequently with the nature of that dialogue.

### 6. 2. 1. Health and optimism versus pessimism

Health and optimism were central factors in the ideology and poetics of the Generation of the 1930s and were related to such general issues as the choice of subject-matter, the use of free verse, and the adoption of Surrealist

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<sup>26</sup> Vitti, *Η Γενιά του Τριάντα* , p. 51 ff, p. 155.

elements. Here, the issue of health and optimism is of interest only in relation to the attitude of the Generation of the 1930s towards Post-Symbolism and the rejection this attitude provoked.

The "official" critic of the Generation of the 1930s, Andreas Karandonis, in an article in *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* in 1935 characterized Karyotakis's time as a "χαλαρή, ανήθικη και άγονη εποχή", full of "κλαψιάρικα, νευρασθενικά, ψευτορομαντικά και υπερατομιστικά ιδανικά" which had nothing in common with "μία εποχή σαν τη σημερινή".<sup>27</sup>

As Massimo Peri has pointed out, Karandonis did not analyze the historical reasons for the pessimism or "infertility" of Karyotakis's time.<sup>28</sup> He preferred instead to present the radical differences between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s as a biological evolution, thereby reducing the historical and political issues to "αφηρημένους όρους μιας σύγκρουσης μεταξύ γονιμότητας και ακαρπίας, νεότητας και άρνησης της νεότητας".<sup>29</sup> The frequent use of the term "γενιά" is significant in itself. Dimitris Tziovas has observed that the term "generation" was very rarely used in histories of Greek literature prior to the Generation of the 1930s, under whose influence it became an established term.<sup>30</sup> Health and optimism were justified in biological terms, and the same applies to the "παρακμή" of the older generation, the Post-Symbolist poets.

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<sup>27</sup> Karandonis, "Η επίδραση", p. 479.

<sup>28</sup> Massimo Peri, "Το περιοδικό *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*", *Παρουσία*, Παράρτημα 6, Athens 1989, p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>30</sup> Dimitris Tziovas, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο Μεσοπόλεμο*, Athens, Odysseas 1989, p. 24.

The question of "*παρακμή*" divided the Generation of the 1930s; Seferis's position differed from that of Karandonis, Dimaras and Theotokas. Seferis posed the question of what decadence was in the preface to his translation of Eliot's "Waste Land" (1936). Seferis believed that there are certain times in which poetry thrives and other times when it does not. Basing himself on the assumption that in history there may be times of *ακμή* and of decadence, he regarded as decadent those poets whose works identify themselves with their time and are representative of it. Moreover, in order to be regarded as decadent poets, their work should meet the full approval of the establishment.<sup>31</sup> Such a definition clearly indicates that for Seferis the Post-Symbolists cannot be regarded as decadent poets, since their poetry incorporates a rebellion against their time and because their works are not identified with the aims of the establishment.

Karandonis, Dimaras and Theotokas, however, adopted a different attitude towards the poetry of the Post-Symbolists. This attitude ignored the historical and political context, which Seferis took into account, and focussed instead on the poetry itself. In 1936 Karandonis implied that the decadent poetry is the poetry of "*στενός υποκειμενισμός*", while poetry that escapes decadence is poetry which "*απηχεί [...] γενικότερες καταστάσεις χαρακτηριστικές της εποχής μας και της φυλετικής μας ψυχολογίας*". Moreover Karandonis opposed the "subjective pessimism" of the poets preceding Seferis to Seferis's "*αντικειμενική και καθαρά ελληνική*

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<sup>31</sup> Seferis, *Δοκίμες Α*, p. 45 [1936].

απαισιοδοξία ".<sup>32</sup>

This opposition implies that the juxtaposition of health and optimism to pessimism was related to a new kind of nationalism or an emphasis on national identity, which arose in response to historical and political factors and which will be examined under the heading of "Greekness versus Cosmopolitanism". What is of interest here is the concept, asserted or implied by critics of the Generation of the 1930s, that poetry connected with nationalistic aspirations is healthy and optimistic, while pessimistic poetry is preoccupied with the individual. This implied definition of healthy and optimistic poetry may sometimes coincide with Seferis's definition of decadent poetry, but this was not a matter discussed by the poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s. It is nevertheless implied in Vitti's reference to the "ιδεολογική αποτελμάτωση ", which allowed for the coincidence of Metaxas's slogan "νιάτα-χαρά-υγεία " with the emphasis placed by the Generation of the 1930s on these topics.<sup>33</sup>

It was also implied in the articles "Βαρύ τίμημα " (1938) and "Η φυσιολογία της υπερβολής " (1947) by Tellos Agras and I.M. Panayotopoulos respectively. Tellos Agras contrasted the health, optimism and wide-ranging nature of the poetry of the 1930s with the "ρίγος " of the poetry of his own generation, and pointed out that the "ρίγος " of that poetry "ήταν φαρμακερό, αλλ' ήταν πραγματικό".<sup>34</sup> Thus, Agras implied that the

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<sup>32</sup> Karandonis, *Ο ποιητής Γιώργος Σεφέρης*, p. 113.

<sup>33</sup> Vitti, *Η Γενιά του Τριάντα*, p. 198.

<sup>34</sup> Tellos Agras, "Βαρύ τίμημα", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 23, no. 268 (1938), p. 268.

difference between health and optimism on the one hand and pessimism on the other may not be a difference between emphasis on the individual and emphasis on the nation, but a difference between descriptions of reality and attempts to escape from or transform it. A similar view was adopted by I.M. Panayotopoulos in 1947. Panayotopoulos referred to the importance the Generation of the 1930s attached to Theophilos and associated it with modern European Primitivism, pointing out that "ο νεοευρωπαϊκός πριμιτιβισμός δεν ήταν το κατάλληλο φάρμακο· ήταν ένα ξεγέλασμα". Panayotopoulos acknowledged the importance of Theophilos's work but observed that dubbing Theophilos a "πρότυπο" was something which required careful investigation.<sup>35</sup>

Panayotopoulos's article formed a part of his dispute with Karandonis. This dispute occupies a central position in the discussions between the Generation of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolists, but has more to do with aspects of the Greekness promoted by the Generation of the 1930s.

In relation to the issue of health and optimism versus pessimism and decadence, Theotokas and Dimaras adopted similar views to those of Karandonis. In 1933 Theotokas referred to the "στείρο παρελθόν" from which the new generation must escape<sup>36</sup> and can do so because of the "εφηβικότητα του έθνους μας". That was a reason why earlier on, in 1929, he rejected poetry which did not reflect this "εφηβικότητα", such as

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<sup>35</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos, "Η φυσιολογία της υπερβολής", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 42, no. 480 (1947), p. 786.

<sup>36</sup> Yorgos Theotokas, *Αργώ*, Athens, Pysos 1936 [1933], vol. A, pp. 47-48.



that of Cavafy, and promoted the poetry of Palamas.<sup>37</sup>

Dimaras in his History of Greek Literature refers to the "διαλυτική τάση" displayed by the generation which starts with Filyras, Ouranis and others. According to Dimaras,

η αυστηρή προσήλωση σε ιδανικά τέχνης, η  
αυστηρή προσήλωση της ελληνικής ζωής στο  
νόημα μιας γραμμής που ανεβαίνει, υποχωρεί  
εδώ εμπρός σε μια τάση καθαρά διαλυτική,  
άρνηση περισσότερο παρά θέση, έκφραση  
αδυναμίας μάλλον παρά μιας επιτακτικής  
δημιουργικής πνοής.

This dissolution involves an infidelity to language, Greece and rational knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Like Karandonis and Theotokas, Dimaras contrasts the emphasis on national ideas with dissolution and decadence. He avoids any reference to the historical and political context which might account for the "διαλυτική τάση", and implicitly accuses the Post-Symbolists of antipatriotic activities.

In contrast to this attitude, which isolates poetry from its context, the Post-Symbolists affirm the relationship between poetry and its time. This relationship was remarked by Tellos Agras in his article of 1938 but also at an earlier stage both by Agras himself and by others. During his dispute with Karandonis, I.M. Panayotopoulos reiterated this point, saying that his generation expressed all the agony and dissolution of the inter-war period.<sup>39</sup> Therefore the Generation of the 1930s critics talked about the "ηθικό και

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<sup>37</sup> Theotokas, *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα*, p. 48 ff.

<sup>38</sup> Dimaras, *Ιστορία*, pp. 446-47.

<sup>39</sup> Panayotopoulos, "Η χώρα των ελεφάντων", p. 910.

αισθητικό κακό"<sup>40</sup> caused by the Post-Symbolists, while the Post-Symbolists themselves drew attention to the relationship between their poetry and its historical and political context.

Apart from Seferis, who referred to the 1930s as a period of ideological reform similar to the one that followed the war of 1897<sup>41</sup>, the poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s did not place their optimism in its political context. Instead they promoted the pattern of biological evolution implicit in the use of the term "generation". This term, however, as Massimo Peri has pointed out, has a political significance, which the poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s attempted to obscure. The political significance is observable, for example, in the fact that Ritsos was excluded from the Generation of the 1930s because of his political beliefs, even though he chronologically belongs to it.<sup>42</sup> By using the term "generation", the Generation of the 1930s could view the whole history of Greek literature in terms of generations, divide it into vigorous and decadent generations and choose to associate themselves with the vigorous generations and ignore the others. Thus, they could choose to associate themselves with the generation of Palamas and ignore the intervening Post-Symbolists. This "άλμα", to borrow Massimo Peri's term, also has a political significance:

οι συγγραφείς του ' 30 [...] παρέβλεπαν τη  
στιγμή της λογοτεχνικής και ηθικής, αλλά

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<sup>40</sup> Karandonis, "Η επίδραση", p. 480.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted by Dimaras, *Ιστορία*, p. 472.

<sup>42</sup> Peri, "Το περιοδικό", p. 42. For Karandonis's attitude towards Ritsos, see Andreas Karandonis, *Η ποίησή μας μετά τον Σεφέρη*, Athens, Dodoni 1976, pp. 275-306. In his articles, published between 1935 and 1975, Karandonis treats the poetry of Ritsos as a phenomenon alien to the poetry of the Generation of the 1930s.

επίσης κοινωνικής και πολιτικής κρίσης, για να  
επανασυνδεθούν, ακριβώς ως "νέα γενιά", με  
την "παλιά γενιά" του Παλαμά, η οποία  
"μας δίδαξε την πνευματική ελευθερία και  
διακήρυξε την ανάγκη της ουσιαστικής  
πολιτικής ανεξαρτησίας του καλλιτέχνη".<sup>43</sup>

Palamas was chosen as an example by Karandonis, who denied that their time "ξεπέρασε και αχρήστεψε πολλές από τις ποιητικές αρχές του Παλαμά". Karandonis contrasted Palamas's poetic principles with Post-Symbolist decadence and also with Rados's "ουροπότιστη αισθητική".<sup>44</sup> In so doing, he rejected another member of the Generation of the 1930s, just as he had rejected or refused to incorporate into the Generation of the 1930s Embirikos and Engonopoulos when they first emerged on the literary scene. Mario Vitti has remarked that *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* did not publish any of Engonopoulos's works before 1944.<sup>45</sup> Taking into account that Engonopoulos's "Μπολιβάρ, ένα ελληνικό ποίημα" was written during the Occupation, the reason for this acceptance may be connected with his turn towards Greekness. Thus, the "Generation" of the 1930s is defined not by the age of its members but by common political views and aspirations. These aspirations were related to the demands of the establishment of their time; they combined health and optimism with an emphasis on Greekness.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>44</sup> Andreas Karandonis, *Ιδέα*, no. 4 (1933), p. 266.

Nikitas Rados's "αισθητική" combined an interest in Modernism with an interest in "προλεταριακή τέχνη", as Christina Dounia has observed, examining Rados's articles in 1931 and 1932 (Christina Dounia, *Λογοτεχνία και Πολιτική στον Μεσοπόλεμο. Τα λογοτεχνικά περιοδικά της αριστεράς: 1924-1936*, Thessaloniki 1988, vol. 1, p. 138).

<sup>45</sup> Vitti, *Η Γενιά του Τριάντα*, p. 129.

This characteristic of the Generation of the 1930s renders its attack on the pessimism of the Post-Symbolists political. The poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s opposed decadent poetry to the poetry of vigour and, with the exception of Seferis, defined decadent poetry as self-obsessed, and poetry of vigour as preoccupied with collective issues. Collective issues, however, acquired for the Generation of the 1930s the significance of national aspirations and thus, by accusing the Post-Symbolists of decadence, they were actually accusing them of indifference towards their nation or even of an unpatriotic attitude. The poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s avoided references to the political significance of their optimism or of Post-Symbolist pessimism, and employed, instead, terms associated either with morality (e.g. "ἠθικὸ κακὸ ") or biology (opposing a young and healthy generation to an older one). The Post-Symbolists entered the debate from a defensive position and drew attention to the historical and political context of their pessimism. They accepted the terms employed by the Generation of the 1930s, however, thereby not only adopting the division of literary history into generations, but also implicitly accepting the premiss that optimism is a positive and desirable factor in poetry whereas pessimism is something negative and therefore in need of justification.

Thus, the debate about optimism and pessimism was ostensibly stripped of its ideological basis, but this remains present both in the fact that the issue was raised and in the connotations that the terms employed acquired. One example of these connotations is the following passage from Karandonis in 1954, leading up to the issue of Greekness:

Ο "πόνος που κρημνίζεται"<sup>46</sup> είναι ο πόνος  
των ρομαντικών, των απομονωμένων στον  
ελεφάντινο πύργο τους ποιητών - ίσως  
να 'ναι ακόμη ο πόνος του Καρυωτάκη.  
Μια ελληνική, μια ανθρώπινη χαρά ανατέλλει  
μέσα από τα λόγια και τους ρυθμούς,  
τις εικόνες και τις φωταύγειες μιας νέας ποίησης<sup>47</sup>.

## 6. 2. 2. Greekness versus Cosmopolitanism

The issue of Greekness is the second major point of reference in the debate between the Generation of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolists. According to Eleni Vakalo, the Generation of the 1930s regarded Greekness as a central point of reference not only for Greek but also for European identity, and believed moreover that Greekness in the sense of a quest for Greek identity fulfils an "*ανάγκη ανεξαρτητοποίησης από τα μεγάλα κέντρα*".<sup>48</sup> The character and various aspects of Greekness have been examined by Dimitris Tziovas in his book *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο*. What is of interest here is the character of Greekness in relation to the reaction of the Generation of the 1930s against the "Cosmopolitanism" of the Post-Symbolists.

<sup>46</sup> A reference to Embirikos, *Υψικάμινος*: "Κλωστήριον νυκτερινής ανάπαυλας": "είμεθα εντός της σιωπής του κρημνιζομένου πόνου στα γάργαρα τεχνάσματα του μέλλοντός μας".

<sup>47</sup> Karandonis, *Εισαγωγή*, p. 186.

<sup>48</sup> Eleni Vakalo, *Η φυσιογνωμία της μεταπολεμικής τέχνης στην Ελλάδα*, vol. 3, *Ο μύθος της Ελληνικότητας*, Athens, Kedros 1983, p. 131.

According to Tziovas, the debates about Greekness were indicative of a more general clash between liberalism and conservative authoritarianism.<sup>49</sup> This clash is apparent, for example, in one of the most important theoretical texts of the Generation of the 1930s, the *Διάλογος για την Ποίηση* of Seferis and Tsatsos in 1938-39. Tsatsos was against foreign influences, and tried to establish rules for poetry based on logic and rationalism; poetry which falls outside his set of rules "είναι αντίθετη με τη βαθύτερη αρχή του ελληνικού πνεύματος και της ελληνικής ωραιότητας· αλλά είναι αντίθετη και με κάθε δυνατή αντίληψη του ωραίου".<sup>50</sup> Thus, the "ελληνικό πνεύμα" becomes both a criterion for and a method of censoring the way in which language is used in poetry, while at the same time it is identified with aesthetic criteria. Seferis denied the relevance of the issue of foreign influences to the issue of Greekness and added that "Greekness" is a difficult and dangerous word;

γιατι μπορεί να μας συμβεί, όπως το δείχνει η περίπτωση των λογιότατων, να καταστρέψουμε αξίες καθαρά ελληνικές, πιστεύοντας ότι υποστηρίζουμε την ελληνική τέχνη. Αλλά μπορεί να μας συμβεί και το αντίθετο [...]: να υποταχθούμε δηλαδή σε αξίες διόλου ή ελάχιστα ελληνικές, θαρρώντας πως ελληνίζουμε.<sup>51</sup>

For Seferis, Greekness is a broader issue, which cannot be reduced to a set of rules concerning either the influences on poetry or the presence of "λόγος" and the "άλογο" in poetry.

<sup>49</sup> Tziovas, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις*, p. 153.

<sup>50</sup> Yorgos Seferis - Konstantinos Tsatsos, *Ενας Διάλογος για την Ποίηση*, Athens, Ermis 1975 [1938-39], p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 27-28.

The dialogue itself, however, seems to have functioned in some measure as a set of rules for the Generation of the 1930s. Elytis commented that Seferis's views shaped the course of modern Greek poetry. The "intransigence" of Surrealism began to retreat and the contrast between tradition and the new forms of poetry started to become less extreme until it ended up as a "*φυσιολογική συγχώνευση. Κι ο αποκλειστικά διεθνής χαρακτήρας του κινήματος [του υπερρεαλιστικού] θα παραχωρούσε τη θέση του σε μια καινούρια ανανεωμένη άποψη ελληνικότητας*".<sup>52</sup>

This new view of Greekness promoted by the Surrealists after the first years of the appearance of Surrealism in Greece rendered Surrealism acceptable to Karandonis and Dimaras. The latter defined the Surrealist project as "*φως και πίστη*" and, referring to Elytis's Greekness, remarked that "*δεν πρέπει να ξεχνούμε ότι απλώς επέτυχε καλύτερα κάτι που ήταν μέσα στην ψυχή της γενιάς του*".<sup>53</sup>

The majority of poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s asserted that foreign influences were acceptable and even desirable for Greek poetry and that they reinforced rather than harmed its Greekness. In 1938 *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* republished Palamas's article, "*Η φαντασία και η πατρίς*", written in 1899 as an answer to Eftaliotis's attack against the literary magazine *Τέχνη*. Eftaliotis had attacked foreign influences and had asked for a "*ρωμαίικη τέχνη*". Palamas had supported the internationalization of the imagination and had spoken about an "*ευρωπαϊκή τέχνη*", adding,

*Η εθνικότης έργου τινός τέχνης δεν μετρείται*

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<sup>52</sup> Elytis, *Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά*, p. 279.

<sup>53</sup> Dimaras, *Ιστορία*, p. 481.

ή προς τον βαθμόν της εσωτερικής και αυτοτελούς  
αυτού αξίας, της καλλιτεχνικής[...]. Ο,τι είναι  
ωραίον εν τη τέχνη είναι της εθνικής ζωής  
απόρροια, μία των σημαντικών εκδηλώσεων αυτής.

*Τα Νέα Γράμματα* republished this article with a preface stating that Palamas's stance was a response to those who accused the young modern poets of being "σκοτεινοί ", "ξενότροποι ", "παράλογοι ", "περιφρονητές της ελληνικής πραγματικότητας".<sup>54</sup>

Although Palamas's attitude was one adopted by the majority of the poets and critics of the 1930s, one of the accusations levelled at Post-Symbolist poetry was connected with its foreign influences. The distinction made by the Generation of the 1930s was between influence and mimicry. Karandonis, for example, having rejected the accusation "περιφρονητές της ελληνικής πραγματικότητας" on behalf of the poets of his generation, used the same term for the Post-Symbolists:

Ο συμβολισμός των ποιητών του δημοτικισμού  
παραμένει βαθύτερα ελληνικός, ενώ των  
νεοτέρων προσπαθεί να χειραφετηθεί από  
τα ελληνικά ενδιαφέροντα· φιλοδοξεί να μοιάσει  
απευθείας με τα πρότυπά του. Χάνοντας  
όμως την επαφή του με την ελληνική  
πραγματικότητα, πέφτει συχνότατα  
σε μιαν αναφομοίωτη μίμηση.<sup>55</sup>

According to Karandonis, the foreign influences in Seferis's poetry are transformed into "ελληνικό πνεύμα, ελληνικό σώμα, σύγχρονη ελληνική πραγματικότητα ", while in Post-Symbolist poetry no such transformation takes place. Neither the reasons for the difference nor the difference itself

<sup>54</sup> *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, γρ. 4, nos. 10-12 (1938), p. 798.

<sup>55</sup> Karandonis, *Εισαγωγή*, p. 122.



was explained by Karandonis; it was, however, implicitly related to the issue of optimism versus pessimism. In the same text where he draws a distinction between influence and mimicry, he also distinguishes between the "ελληνική χαρά" of the poetry of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolist "πόνος", which was not defined as Greek or European, but which was to be obliterated by Greek joy. Therefore the participation of poetry in Greek reality actually assumed for Karandonis the aspect of optimism.

The answer to the question of what the relationship between Greekness and optimism, and between Greekness and the functioning of foreign influences in poetry actually was, can be found in the same text, that is Karandonis's *Εισαγωγή στη Νεώτερη Ποίηση*. Karandonis accepted foreign influences that reinforced the Greekness of the native elements of Greek poetry. These native elements can be found in

τις παραδόσεις μας, τη γλωσσική μας ετερόκλητη  
πολυμορφία, τα ελληνοχριστιανικά μας θρησκευτικά  
σύμβολα, την αίγλη περασμένων μεγαλείων, τη  
φύση μας, τη νεότερη ιστορική μας πραγματικότητα,  
τον φυλετικό μας μεσσιανισμό, το αίτημα της  
δημιουργίας ενός "τρίτου πολιτισμού", τη  
διευκρίνιση της θέσης μας απέναντι  
Ανατολής και Δύσης.<sup>56</sup>

The "messianism of the race" and the creation of a "third civilization", apart from placing Karandonis in his ideological context, also relate Greekness to optimism. Although the ideology proposed here was not shared by the majority of the writers of the 1930s, the demand for a renaissance of Greece and the creation of a civilization based on elements of

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

the Greek tradition was predominant in the works of the Generation of the 1930s, as can be seen, for example, in Theotokas's *Αργώ*:

Αισθανόντανε την ανάγκη να κλωστήσουνε τη  
ρουτίνα που τους σκέπαζε, να λυτρωθούνε από  
ένα στείρο παρελθόν, να ξανοιχτούνε στο πέλαγος,  
να ζήσουνε ξανά τη ζωή του πνεύματος, όχι  
πια σαν ταπεινοί μιμητές των μεγάλων προγόνων  
και σαν καθυστερημένοι μαθητές των ξένων,  
μα σαν εξερευνητές, σαν κατακτητές, σαν  
αληθινοί Έλληνες. [...] Το ξύπνημα του  
ελληνικού πνεύματος, η δημιουργία,  
η Αναγέννηση, η Δόξα...<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, in the role the intellectuals assigned to themselves, affirmation constituted an essential part of poetry in order for poetry to promote Greekness. At the same time, Greekness and consequently the roots of the civilization the intellectuals aspired to create can be found in Ancient Greece, Paganism, Christianity, nature and history. Poetry promoting Greekness should therefore deal with these themes.

The definition of Greekness seems to be the ideological basis of the attack launched by the Generation of the 1930s on Post-Symbolist poetry, to the effect that Post-Symbolist poetry is characterized by unassimilated foreign influences and by a lack of contact with Greek reality.

The reaction of the Post-Symbolists to these accusations took the form of a defence against the accusations themselves rather than an exploration of their ideological basis. That is, as was also the case with optimism and pessimism, the Post-Symbolists generally accepted the terms of the discussion as set out by the Generation of the 1930s. Thus, in 1938 Ouranis

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<sup>57</sup> Theotokas, *Αργώ* vol. A, p. 47-48.

stated that there is no difference between Greek and European "πνεύμα" and that therefore writers who orientated themselves towards European thought are not "ωχροί μιμητές των Ευρωπαίων" but are seeking their own identity.<sup>58</sup> In this way Ouranis implicitly accepted that the main aim of Greek poetry was the quest for a Greek identity. He adopted a similar attitude to that of Paraschos<sup>59</sup> and Seferis, namely that there is no point in differentiating between Greek and European poetic traditions.<sup>60</sup> He did not, however, place the quest for Greek identity in its political context, nor did he explore the ideological nature of the identity promoted by the Generation of the 1930s.

I.M. Panayotopoulos and Kleon Paraschos raised certain aspects of the problem in their debate with Karandonis. Panayotopoulos referred to the attempt of the Generation of the 1930s to combine Modernism with Greek tradition:

Οι νεοέλληνες υπερρεαλιστές [...] ζητούνε τόπο  
εθνικό να σταθούν, να γίνουν φυλή, να γίνουν  
παράδοση, να ριζώσουν. Σ' αυτό χρωσιέται  
η υπερβολή, σ' αυτό χρωσιέται η βακχεία τους.  
Υμνολογούν τον Παλαμά και τον Ελιοτ.  
Τον Αραγκόν και το Μακρυγιάννη. Τον Περικλή  
Γιαννόπουλο και τον Ερωτόκριτο.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, Panayotopoulos refers to some of the aims of the Generation of the 1930s which were connected with Greekness, and hinted at the nature of the Greek identity they were trying to create, which, to judge from the names he

<sup>58</sup> Kostas Ouranis, "Το Ευρωπαϊκό Πνεύμα", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 24, no. 279 (1938), p. 1061.

<sup>59</sup> Tziovas, *Μεταμορφώσεις*, p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> Peri, "Το περιοδικό", p. 56.

<sup>61</sup> Panayotopoulos, "Η φυσιολογία της υπερβολής", p. 787.

mentions, combined nationalism, modernism and the demoticist tradition. These three issues are pertinent to the relationship between the Generation of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolists. Demoticism and nationalism exist at the ideological basis of the reaction of the Generation of the 1930s against the Post-Symbolists, while modernism can be seen as an attitude towards poetic language introduced by the Post-Symbolists<sup>62</sup> and further explored and developed by the Generation of the 1930s. Modernism will be briefly examined under the heading "Affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s". Its functioning in combination with nationalism and demoticism will not be explored in detail, since this is an aspect of the poetics of the Generation of the 1930s which is not directly connected with the relationship between the Generation of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolists. The issue of the combination itself, however, was raised in early works of the Generation of the 1930s. In 1929 Theotokas called in *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα* for an increased opening-up towards Europe and modern literary currents, while at the same time stating that the major problem of his time was that "*μας λείπει [...] η ανάγκη της Ιδέας* ".<sup>63</sup> In 1931 Karandonis, referring to Seferis's *Στροφή* , spoke of the historical significance acquired by Seferis's fifteen-syllable lines: "*ο Σεφέρης είναι ίσως ο πρώτος νέος ποιητής που μορφικά γεφυρώνει τη νεότερη ποίηση με τη ζωντανή παράδοση του*

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<sup>62</sup> Modernism can also be said to have been introduced by Cavafy, see, for example, Panayiotis C. Bosnakis, "Facing Fragments: C.P. Cavafy's Poetic Experimentations with the *Iliad* ", *Modernism in Greece ? Essays on the Critical and Literary Margins of a Movement* , ed. Mary N. Layoun, New York, Pella 1990, pp. 161-179.

<sup>63</sup> Theotokas, *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα* , p. 74.

Δημοτικισμού και του δημοτικού τραγουδιού ".<sup>64</sup> In his book *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού*, Tziovas has referred to the combination of modernism with demoticism and "εθνικά οράματα " as "το τίμημα που έπρεπε να πληρώσει αυτή η γενιά για τον μετριοπαθή μοντερνισμό της αλλά και ένας έξυπνος ελιγμός που άνοιξε το δρόμο για τη γρήγορη καθιέρωσή της στα μάτια του έθνους ".<sup>65</sup>

Kleon Paraschos in his article "Μερικές ανακρίβειες" (1947) did not refer to demoticism but to the issue of the orientation towards modern European literary currents in combination with nationalism. Paraschos, entering into the dispute between Panayotopoulos and Karandonis, responded to Karandonis's definition of the Post-Symbolists as the generation of "ψευδοσυμβολισμός ". Paraschos explained that the only Greek Symbolist was Hatzopoulos. The poets of 1912, 1915, 1920, 1925 were not "ψευδοσυμβολιστές "; their poetry was not an unsuccessful mimicry of Symbolist poetry, because their poetic space was not just Symbolism. According to Paraschos, the Post-Symbolists "κινούνται στο χώρο της παγκόσμιας ποίησης " although the poetic atmosphere which prevails in their poetry has mostly been promoted by Symbolism. Having rebutted in this way the accusation of mimicry and suggested the international orientation of Post-Symbolist poetry, Paraschos asked:

Αν λοιπόν το "κλίμα " της παγκόσμιας ποίησης  
και λογοτεχνίας είναι διεθνισμός και  
κοσμοπολιτισμός, δεν καταλαβαίνω γιατί άλλο  
τόσο δεν είναι διεθνισμός και η σημερινή

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<sup>64</sup> Karandonis, *Ο ποιητής*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>65</sup> Tziovas, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις*, p. 29.

(ας πούμε) παγκόσμια υπερρεαλιστική ποίηση.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, Paraschos implicitly posed the question of what the ideology behind the references to mimicry and foreign influence was. Since the orientation towards modern European literary trends was shared by the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s,<sup>67</sup> such references, which implied a false antithesis in poetic practice, suggested an actual antithesis in ideology. Paraschos did not accept the division between a cosmopolitan generation and a Greek generation promoted by Karandonis:

Στην κοσμοπολιτική γενεά του 1925 (ας πούμε)  
αντιθέτει ο Καραντώνης την πέρα-πέρα (ουσία,  
μορφή, συναισθήματα, ιδέες) ελληνική γενεά του 1930.  
Είναι, λέει, η γενεά που μαζί με πολλά άλλα  
ανακάλυψε και αξιοποίησε καλλιτεχνικά το Αιγαίο.  
Κύριε των Δυνάμεων ! Στον Παπαδιαμάντη λοιπόν  
υπάρχει το χρώμα και το κλίμα και η πνοή  
της Κασπίας Θάλασσας και όχι του Αιγαίου ;  
Και τον Βόρειο Παγωμένο Ωκεανό αναπνέουμε  
στα Λόγια της Πλώρης ; [...] Πάλι καλά  
που δεν έκανε πρώτη και τον πλουν του Αιγαίου  
η περιούσια αυτή γενεά !

Paraschos observed the ideological basis underlying the promoted antithesis between Greekness and cosmopolitanism. Such an antithesis actually implied an antithesis between nationalism and internationalism.

The issue of unassimilated foreign influences was not explored in detail by the Generation of the 1930s. It was employed to reinforce the accusation

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<sup>66</sup> Kleon Paraschos, "Μερικές ανακρίβειες", p. 1007.

<sup>67</sup> About Seferis, for example, not only Paraschos, e.g. *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 10, no. 109 (1931) pointed out his connections with French Symbolism and Post-Symbolism (Paraschos mentioned Fargue and Milosz), but Karandonis, too, discerned Symbolist influences on *Στροφή* (Εισαγωγή, p. 153) and K. Th. Dimaras actually placed Seferis's "κλίμα" in Post-Symbolism, since he described it as "κάτι ανάμεσα στους *fantaisistes* και στον Valéry" (*Ιστορία*, p. 482).

that Post-Symbolist poetry had no contact with Greek reality. This desired contact with Greek reality was implicitly defined by references to messianism or to the need for a Greek renaissance after the Asia Minor Disaster. The Post-Symbolists once more accepted the terms of discussion suggested by the Generation of the 1930s and tried to defend themselves against the accusation of unassimilated influences and in certain cases of lack of interest in the quest for a Greek identity. In most cases they did not explore the ideology behind the attitude of the Generation of the 1930s. In two cases, however, those of Panayotopoulos's and Paraschos's articles, they hinted at the nationalism underlying this attitude and implied that the antithesis between Greekness and Cosmopolitanism was actually an antithesis between nationalism and internationalism.

While the poets of the 1920s tried to differentiate themselves from the older Generation, which they considered "ελληνόπληκτ[η]" and to emphasize their Cosmopolitanism,<sup>68</sup> the poets and critics of the 1930s turned back to Palamas, took up some of his ideas related to nationalist ideology and adapted them to the demands of their time. The Asia Minor Disaster probably accounts for the change in the main point of reference, as Tziovas has pointed out:

Μέχρι το 1922 το κύριο ζήτημα για το ελληνικό έθνος  
ήταν πρόβλημα ενότητας και συνέχειας, για αυτό  
άλλωστε και οι μεταφορές ήταν ανάλογα οργανικές  
(εθνική ψυχή, ελληνικό πνεύμα), ενώ από  
το 1923 το ζήτημα μετασχηματίζεται σε πρόβλημα  
διαφοράς (ελληνικότητα) : πώς δηλαδή θα ξεχωρίσουμε  
από τα άλλα έθνη και πώς θα προβληθεί

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<sup>68</sup> Tziovas, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις*, p. 23.

η ελληνική ιδιαιτερότητα.<sup>69</sup>

The return to Palamas had the dual aspect of emphasis on the "ελληνική ιδέα" and emphasis on demoticism. At the beginning of the serial publication of his article "Η ελληνική ιδέα στον παλαμικό Δωδεκάλογο" in *Ιδέα* in 1933, Tsatsos added a footnote about his reasons for publishing it: "Θα 'μενε βέβαια στο συρτάρι μου, αν δεν ήξερα πως το θέμα αυτής της μελέτης συγκεντρώνει όλη της την προσοχή και τη συμπάθεια [της *Ιδέας*] και στέκεται πολύ κοντά στις πνευματικές της κατευθύνσεις".<sup>70</sup>

*Ιδέα* was one of the literary magazines of the 1930s that adopted the most conservative views towards Greekness. Its principles and aims were published in its first issue and clearly indicated the nationalistic basis of the attitude of the Generation of the 1930s towards Post-Symbolism. *Ιδέα* declared that it was going to fight, among other things, against "ταξική-προπαγανδιστική τέχνη", "το πνεύμα του τυφλού μοντερνισμού, της επιπόλαιης αποδοχής όλων των νέων πραγμάτων, δίχως κανέναν έλεγχο" and "ορισμένες αρρωστιάρικες μεταπολεμικές τάσεις, που καλλιεργούν ηδονικά κάθε ψυχική και σωματική νοσηρότητα, κάθε βίτσιο, και συνάμα αρνιούνται και κουρελιάζουν κάθε αισθητική πειθαρχία".<sup>71</sup>

Post-Symbolism seems to belong to the latter category and was thus viewed as dangerous in the same way as leftist or modernist art was. All three

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>70</sup> Tsatsos, "Η ελληνική ιδέα", p. 68

<sup>71</sup> *Ιδέα*, no. 1 (1933), pp. 1-3.



threatened the restitution of the "εθνική μας αυτοπεποίθηση", which was the aim of *Ιδέα*.

Thus, the return to Palamas partly derived from a need to ignore or combat literary currents which undermined nationalist ideology and to promote the kind of poetry that affirmed nationalism and by association demoticism and orality. The emphasis on demoticism was obvious in the first issue of *Ιδέα* which declared its "αδιάλλακτη στάση στο γλωσσικό ζήτημα", in the first issue of *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* where Karandonis declared that his magazine would continue the tradition of demoticism<sup>72</sup>, and in articles by Karandonis, Seferis and others. The significance of this emphasis has been picked up by Peri in his "Εισαγωγή στο περιοδικό *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*". Referring to the aims of the magazine and its return to Palamas, Peri says that the magazine aimed to be "η αποκατάσταση της παλαμικής παράδοσης κι επομένως, ουτοπικά, η αποκατάσταση της εθνικής λειτουργίας των γραμμάτων στο χώρο της δημοτικιστικής μάχης".<sup>73</sup>

Demoticism and Palamas served as major points of reference in the historical view of Greek literature promoted by the generation of the 1930s. According to Seferis, Greek literature enters its "κανονικός δρόμος" with Palamas.

Από τις δυο παραδόσεις που συνεχίζονται αδιάκοπα  
από την εποχή της πρώτης "κοινής", η μια, η περίλαμπρη  
και η νεκρή, η λογία, βρίσκει το τέλος της στη ζωή  
της πόλησης με τον Καβάφη· η άλλη, η καταφρονεμένη  
και η ζωντανή, η λαϊκή παράδοση, αφού πήρε φωτιά

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<sup>72</sup> Peri, p. 51.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

από τα Τάρταρα και φως από τα Ηλύσια<sup>74</sup>, ξέσπασε  
στον απάνω κόσμο με τον Παλαμά. Από τον Παλαμά  
και πέρα, ύστερα από δυο χιλιάδες χρόνια, για πρώτη  
φορά, η διπλή ελληνική παράδοση ενώνεται σε μια γραμμή<sup>75</sup>.

Thus, Seferis emphasized the popular tradition of Greek literature, which, in his view, assimilated the learned tradition. Apart from the fact that these traditions are connected with the demotic language and katharevousa respectively, they are also connected with the subject-matter of poetry. This learned tradition of Seferis largely coincides with the "avant-garde and less Hellenocentric" category of poets, in Tziovas's taxonomy. According to Tziovas, "The esoteric character of their poetry, the distaste for the representation of nature, the abundant intertextual references (particularly in Cavafy), their European outlook and their linguistic peculiarity made them more germane to a textual world than to an oral society. This might also help us to explain why all of them [poets such as Cavafy, Karyotakis, Kalas, Embirikos, Engonopoulos] were received inimically by their contemporaries, accustomed as they were to a different kind of poetry which celebrated voice, nature and Greek tradition".<sup>76</sup>

This emphasis on popular tradition, orality and demoticism as essential components of Greekness is related to the negative attitude of the Generation of the 1930s towards the Post-Symbolists who did not celebrate nature or the Greek tradition and who undermined both voice and the written

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<sup>74</sup> A reference to Palamas's "Ασκραίος": "και τα τραγούδια μου τ' απλά και τα λιτά μου λόγια / φωτιά στα Τάρταρα ήυρανε και στα Ηλύσια φως" (Palamas, 3, p. 222).

<sup>75</sup> Seferis, *Δοκιμές* A, p. 224 [1943].

<sup>76</sup> Dimitris Tziovas, "Residual Orality and Belated Textuality in Greek Literature and Culture", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1989), p. 329.

word. The Post-Symbolists therefore did not fit into the rules created according to the criteria of demoticism and orality, the emphasis on which, as was also the case with Palamas's generation, is related to nationalism or "hellenocentrism". I.M. Panayotopoulos referred in 1947 to the creation of a new history of Greek literature by the Generation of the 1930s according to their own criteria, saying that the Generation of the 1930s "*ερήμωσε το πλούσιο δάσος της Νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας*".<sup>77</sup>

The "*κανονικός δρόμος*" of modern Greek literature which the Generation of the 1930s claimed to follow did not, therefore, include Post-Symbolism, which was regarded as a deviation. The Generation of the 1930s laid down criteria for the permissible use of Greek poetic language. These criteria were related to demoticism and orality; for example Seferis mentioned folk songs and Makriyannis as "*γνώμονας και βάση*" for the use of Greek poetic language.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the Generation of the 1930s posed the question of what kind of poetry is appropriate to the Greek language. Post-Symbolism was rejected as a poetic diction incompatible with the Greek language, and the question of poetic language became a question of ethos. Elytis, for example, referring to his optimism at a time when Karyotakis's poetry was still prevalent, accused admirers of Karyotakis's poetry of bad taste. This accusation was based on the fact that these people "*Έλληνες όντας, καλλιεργούσανε ένα πνεύμα που δεν άρμοζε στο ήθος της*

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<sup>77</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos, "*Τα συμπεράσματα*", *Νέα Εστία*, vol. 42, no. 490 (1947), p. 1463.

<sup>78</sup> Seferis, *Δοκιμές Α*, pp. 68-70 [1938].

ελληνικής γλώσσας".<sup>79</sup> Demoticism and orality were thus used not only as aesthetic but also as nationalistic criteria and therefore Post-Symbolism was rejected both as a poetic language which deviated from the tradition of demoticism, and as a poetic language which deviated from the tradition of nationalism.

In this context the emphasis placed by the Generation of the 1930s on the demoticist tradition was directly related to nationalism, as Yannis Miliadis pointed out in 1934 in *Σήμερα*.<sup>80</sup> At the same time, in the historical and political context of the 1930s such an emphasis and the examples used were probably chosen, as Tziovas has observed, in order to suggest a "*πρότυπο ελληνικότητας πιο λιτό και συγκεκριμένο*" than the one promoted by Metaxas.<sup>81</sup>

Apart from this attempt, which included the "discovery" of Makriyannis and Theophilos, the cultural nationalism promoted by the Generation of the 1930s is related to the collapse of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* after the Asia Minor disaster.<sup>82</sup> This was sometimes directly stated by writers, such as Theotokas, who in 1929 assessed the value of the new Generation in terms of the hope that it brought to the defeated Greece of revival and self-confidence.<sup>83</sup> Later, in 1948, Theotokas explained that the new

*Μεγάλη Ιδέα πρέπει να είναι η δημιουργία ενός*

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<sup>79</sup> Elytis, *Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά*, p. 243.

<sup>80</sup> Yannis Miliadis, "Η επανάσταση του Δημοτικισμού και άλλα ηχηρά παρόμοια", *Σήμερα*, γρ. 2, no. 1 (1934), pp. 17-23.

<sup>81</sup> Tziovas, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις*, p. 129.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 141. Tziovas uses the term "*πνευματικός εθνισμός*".

<sup>83</sup> Theotokas, *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα*, p. 74.

ζωντανού, ιδιόρρυθμου και γόνιμου πνευματικού πυρήνα,  
που να συνεχίζει τη μεγάλη παράδοση της Ελλάδας,  
να ζει έντονα τη σύγχρονη ζωή, να βρίσκεται σε  
ταυτόχρονη ανταπόκριση με τη Δύση και την Ανατολή  
και να μπορεί να ακτινοβολήσει με έργα και ιδέες  
έξω από τα εθνικά σύνορα.<sup>84</sup>

This new "Ιδέα", through the tradition of demoticism, orality and Palamas's poetics, was related to Greek nature. Peri has observed that this "φυσιολατρεία" was a refuge from political reality or political duty<sup>85</sup>; what, however, is of interest here is that relationship itself. The 1938 commemoration of *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, dedicated to Periklis Yannopoulos, is indicative of this relationship, although Yannopoulos's extreme views were questioned by various members of the Generation of the 1930s.<sup>86</sup> Also indicative are Elytis's references to Greek nature and its connections with Greek thought and language<sup>87</sup> or Tsatsos's articles "Ο Παλαμάς και η ελληνική γη" in 1935 or "Το Τραγούδι της Γης", του Μυριβήλη in 1937. Tsatsos related Greek nature to Greek history; both exist for him "σε απόλυτη ισοτιμία" and therefore "είναι φυσικό τα συναπαντήματα του έλληνα ποιητή με την ελληνική φύση να 'ναι ιστορικά βεβαρημένα"<sup>88</sup>. Both through its connection with Greek history and its continuity despite many historical changes, Greek nature becomes "ο υπέρτατος αναβαθμός

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<sup>84</sup> Yorgos Theotokas, *Πνευματική Πορεία*, Athens, Fexis 1961, p. 64 [1948].

<sup>85</sup> Peri, p. 23.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 45 ff.

<sup>87</sup> Elytis, *Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά*, pp. 30-32.

<sup>88</sup> Konstantinos Tsatsos, "Ο Παλαμάς και η ελληνική γη", *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, γρ. 1, no. 2 (1935), p. 73.

της ελληνικής ιδέας".<sup>89</sup> The preoccupation with Greek nature in poetry was related to the nationalist aspirations of the Generation of the 1930s. Poets celebrating Greek nature were identified with the "κανονικός δρόμος" of Greek poetry, while those who, like the Symbolists, sought their inspiration in urban life, as Seferis pointed out, or who did not connect Greek nature with history, were spurned. Tsatsos listed the poets who possessed the sense of Greek nature: Solomos, Valaoritis, Palamas and Sikelianos, and added that "ο Παλαμάς τελειωτικά είπε τον Έλληνα" and that "ο Σικελιανός είπε την ελληνική φύση".<sup>90</sup> Thus, Greekness and Greek nature acquired a specific character for the Generation of the 1930s, and this character, which was directly related to nationalism, *de facto* excluded Post-Symbolism from the accepted tradition of Greek poetry. In his History of Modern Greek Literature K.Th. Dimaras actually implied this exclusion by speaking of a choice the Generation of the 1930s had to make. According to Dimaras, the literary inheritance of the Generation of the 1930s was on the one hand "ο βασιλικός δρόμος της παράδοσης", that is the poetry of Palamas and Sikelianos, and on the other "η άρνηση των περασμένων, μια θέληση ανατροπής και ανανέωσης χωρίς όρια".<sup>91</sup>

Therefore, the Generation of the 1930s emphasized Greek nature and Greek history. These two were regarded as related and in combination were considered to be the incarnation of the Greek "ιδέα". This "ιδέα" after the

<sup>89</sup> Konstantinos Tsatsos, "Το Τραγούδι της Γης, του Μυριβήλη", *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, γρ. 3, no. 5 (1937), p. 400.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 401-2.

<sup>91</sup> Dimaras, *Ιστορία*, pp. 472-73.

Asia Minor disaster was transplanted to culture, and poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s considered it to be the duty of poetry to express it. Thus, they traced their line of descent back to poets whose poetry was characterized by nationalist aspirations, and in particular Palamas, who combined demoticism and orality with the emphasis on Greek nature and history, thereby creating a system of nationalist poetics based on both the subject-matter and the functioning of language. The Generation of the 1930s returned to this system and, in order to do so, rejected the Post-Symbolist poetic system, which undermined it.

The poetic affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s (to be examined in the next section) were passed over in silence or undermined by the Generation of the 1930s in order to point up ideological dissimilarities. In the 1930s Gryparis characterized Karyotakis as the representative poet of his time<sup>92</sup>, but the Generation of the 1930s wished to draw attention to the historical, linguistic and aesthetic gap that divided it from Karyotakis and the Post-Symbolists in general. This gap actually consisted of a radical difference in ideological orientation between Post-Symbolist poetry and the poetry of the 1930s. The main ideological points of reference for the Generation of the 1930s were optimism and health on the one hand and Greekness on the other. These two points of reference are interrelated aspects of the nationalist ideology predominant in the poetics of the Generation of the 1930s. This ideology forms the basis of the attitude of the Generation of the 1930s towards the Post-Symbolists, whom they

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<sup>92</sup> Agras, *Κριτικά Β*, p. 186.

accused of pessimism and Cosmopolitanism; this latter term was rendered negative by its implicit accusation of lack of contact with Greek reality.

In some cases the Post-Symbolists hinted at this ideological basis of the Generation of the 1930s; in most cases, however, they assumed a defensive position, simply responding to the accusations. Thus, although the clash between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s was actually a clash of different ideological systems and systems of poetics, the debate between them dealt in most of the cases with matters of aesthetics, themes of poetry, language or even the *modus vivendi* of the poets. While the poets and critics of the Generation of the 1930s placed themselves in the historical and political context of their time from the point of view of their aspirations (e.g. the creation of a cultural "ιδέα" to replace the lost Μεγάλη Ιδέα), they did not refer to the nationalist basis of their aspirations, nor did they place this nationalism in its historical and political context.

This can be exemplified by Karandonis's article "Ο Κοσμοπολιτισμός στη Νεοελληνική Ποίηση" in 1947.<sup>93</sup> In this article Karandonis tried to place Greek Cosmopolitanism in its historical and political context, but did so from a negative point of view. He regarded Greek Cosmopolitanism as a reaction against poetic demoticism, which had reached its acme with Palamas and then, after 1915, had lost its creative impetus. He also viewed it as an inevitable consequence of the urban development of Greece, although he did not explore Cosmopolitanism as a possible reaction against nationalism and a way of promoting internationalization.

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<sup>93</sup> Karandonis, *Προβολές* Α, pp 20-41.



Karandonis discerned seeds of Cosmopolitanism in the poetry of the demoticists, but added that these poets had deep roots in the soil of Greece and were preoccupied with Greek folk life. From 1915 onwards, however, poetic demoticism was beset on the one hand by its own lack of development and on the other by the opposition of history itself. After 1922 "ο δημοτικισμός λησμονιέται και σαν άμεση πείρα ποιητική, και σαν αισθητικό ιδανικό, και σαν άποψη ελληνικής ζωής " and the idea of the citizen poet, promoted by Palamas, was destroyed by the Asia Minor disaster. Karandonis did not further explain the idea of the "citizen poet" which, in the poetry of Palamas, frequently took the form of the identification of the aspirations and subject-matter of poetry with the demands of the establishment. For Karandonis, therefore, the reaction of a younger generation of poets against the poetics of Palamas was perceived as a non-fulfilment of their duty towards the race:

Οι πνευματικοί νέοι της εποχής εκείνης ήταν  
τραγικά ελεύθεροι να πάρουν όποιο δρόμο  
βλέπανε ανοιχτό μπροστά τους, όποιο δρόμο  
θα τους απομάκρυνε από τον ποιητικό  
δημοτικισμό, από τη Μεγάλη Ελλάδα, από την  
ιδέα του Έθνους, από την ανάγκη του χρέους  
προς το φυλετικό σύνολο. Γιατι όλα αυτά  
ακούγονταν την εποχή εκείνη σαν κούφια λόγια.

Although Karandonis did not explain here that his Generation had chosen to return to a large extent to the poetics of Palamas, his identification with the ideology of Palamas was clear from both his viewpoint and his vocabulary, for example "ιδέα του Έθνους " instead of "nationalism". Karandonis seems to be accusing Palamas of nothing more than a lack of poetic

development, a lack of innovation in poetic techniques. He appears to share their ideals and aspirations.

Even from his partisan vantage-point, however, Karandonis tried to place literary Cosmopolitanism in its historical and political context. What is indicative about the nature of the dialogue between the Generation of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolists is the fact that Karandonis failed to discern the relationship between the Generation of the 1930s and its historical and political context. Having defined Cosmopolitanism, Karandonis said that this trend was prevalent until the crisis of 1931, after which the economic considerations related to nationalism, which arose, blocked off the international roads along which the cosmopolitans had been travelling. The emergence of Fascism in Europe and concomitant harbingers of war created a situation in which *"η κοσμοπολιτική λογοτεχνία εκεί γύρω στα 1931 γυμνώθηκε σα δέντρο που ένας ξαφνικός άνεμος του πήρε όλα τα φύλλα"*. Karandonis was aware of the historical and political context of his generation, but failed to see any connection between the ideology and poetics of his generation and an historical and political context characterized by the rise of the new nationalism.

This failure is an example of the way in which the ideological basis of the dialogue between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s was passed over or disguised. This ideological basis, however, is implied both in the predominant subjects of this dialogue (health and optimism versus pessimism, and Greekness versus Cosmopolitanism) and in the connotations these subjects acquired in the course of the dialogue. From the point of view

of ideology, the two poetic systems, that of the Post-Symbolists and that of the Generation of the 1930s, are characterized by radical differences, which led to clashes, while from the point of view of poetic practice there are affinities both between individual poets and, more generally, between poetic systems.

### **6. 3. Poetic affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s**

The poetic affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s are the other side of the coin in the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s. That is, whereas this relationship, as reflected in articles and critical essays, is mainly one of rejection or of deep-rooted differences, the same relationship, as reflected in their poetry, is based to a large extent on affinities. This is another indication of the fact that the hostility was based on ideology, which in turn was conditioned by the historical and political context.

The poetic affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s may reflect both common influences and a common context; they may also sometimes reflect the ideological gulf by assuming the form of negative reactions. These kinds of affinities have been observed or explored by critics. Here then I will refer to these critics in order to trace certain specific affinities between individual poets. I shall then look briefly at some

broader affinities between the poetic systems of the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s.

### 6. 3. 1. Specific affinities

Since Karyotakis was, as Elytis put it "*το μεγάλο φαβορί της εποχής*" and moreover the predominant voice of the Post-Symbolist group of poets, the specific affinities that have been observed or explored, nearly all concern Karyotakis. One indicative reference is that of Seferis in 1936. Seferis, speaking about the influence of Laforgue on Eliot, listed various features of Laforgue's poetry and then concludes: "*Κάτι γνωρίσαμε κι εμείς από τη διάθεση αυτή με τον Καρυωτάκη*".<sup>94</sup> Through this reference, Karyotakis is connected with two poets with whom Seferis has expressed his own affinities.<sup>95</sup> Thus, indirectly, this "*γνωριμία*" with Karyotakis acquires the character of poetic affinities.

The affinities between Karyotakis and Seferis have been observed or explored by Vassos Varikas, G.P. Savidis and Mario Vitti among others. Savidis characterizes these affinities as "*χωνεμένη επίδραση*" or as "*παράλληλη εμπειρία*"<sup>96</sup> and traces them throughout Seferis's poetry. Mario Vitti qualifies the word "influence" as "*στενόχωρη*"<sup>97</sup> and prefers to speak about the "*βίωμα Καρυωτάκη*" which he defines as the "*συναίσθηση μιας μη*

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<sup>94</sup> Seferis, *Δοκίμες* Α , p. 21 [1936].

<sup>95</sup> Yorgos Seferis, *Δοκίμες* Β , Athens, Ikaros 1974, p. 12 ff [1948].

<sup>96</sup> G.P. Savidis, Introduction to K.G. Karyotakis, *Ποιήματα* , p. μγ.

<sup>97</sup> Vitti, *Η Γενιά του Τριάντα* , pp. 108-9.

αυθεντικής ύπαρξης ". This feeling is, according to Vitti, predominant both in Karyotakis and in Seferis, and is combined with a "στέρξη ηρωισμού".<sup>98</sup>

In speaking of this shared experience and predominant atmosphere in the poetry of Karyotakis and Seferis, Vitti refers to a question posed both by Karandonis in 1936 and by Varikas in 1939: whether one of the prevailing poets of the *αντικαρνωτακική* Generation of the 1930s was actually continuing the poetic atmosphere of Karyotakis. This question is implicitly posed and answered in the negative by Karandonis. Presenting Karyotakis as an example of "*πεισιθάνατοι ποιητές*", Karandonis denied that Seferis is a "*πεισιθάνατος*" poet (see above, section 6. 1. 2.). Nevertheless, in itself the distinction between Karyotakis and Seferis on the part of Karandonis who repeatedly emphasized the anti-Karyotakian character of the Generation of the 1930s, suggests the existence of an affinity between the poetry of Karyotakis and that of Seferis.

In contrast to Karandonis, Varikas believed that Karyotakis and Seferis share a common "*έδαφος*".<sup>99</sup> According to Varikas, Greek poetry after 1914 followed a process of dissolution, and this process came to an end with Karyotakis. After Karyotakis, who suggested by default the need for innovation in the subject-matter of poetry and techniques of expression, Greek poetry presents two trends according to Varikas. The first takes account of and expresses decline; it begins with Cavafy and Karyotakis and

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>99</sup> Vassos Varikas, *Η Μεταπολεμική μας Λογοτεχνία*, p. 84.

continues with Seferis. To this, Varikas contrasts the second, for which "φωτεινός οδηγός [στέκεται] το Παλαμικό οικοδόμημα" ; representatives of this trend are Sikelianos, Kazantzakis and Ritsos.

This division, as well as the reference of Varikas to Palamas, indicates which poetic systems were promoted by Varikas and serves to place his references to Seferis and Karyotakis in context. Varikas believed that, although Karyotakis's poetry was<sup>a</sup> dead end, "το έδαφος [...] που διέθρεψε τον Καρυωτάκη και οι επιρροές που δέχτηκε δεν εξαφανίστηκαν με το θάνατό του. Το έδαφος εξακολούθησε να αναπαράγει τις ίδιες δηλητηριώδεις τοξίνες". According to Varikas, certain poets of the 1930s "αρνούμενοι τον Καρυωτάκη σ' ό,τι το επεισοδιακό εξέφραζε, τον συνεχίζουν ή τουλάχιστον κινούνται στο ίδιο έδαφος, όσον αφορά την ουσία της ποίησής του, δηλαδή τη στάση του απέναντι στη ζωή". One of the poets is Seferis, whose poetry, although generally regarded as the beginning of a new poetic era, in fact continues the atmosphere of Karyotakis's poetry. Varikas regards Seferis's pessimism as more deeply rooted than Karyotakis's and views Karyotakis's poetry as a protest; but Seferis's as submission to fate.

The "κοινό έδαφος " or "βίωμα " can be found in the Asia Minor disaster and in the historical and political context of the years immediately preceding and following the disaster. Although the return of Venizelos to power in 1928 was probably related to the desire for a new renaissance promoted by the Generation of the 1930s and consequently to the optimism, health and Greekness that this generation put forward as the

basis of its poetics, the consequences of both the war and the pre-war period were present in Greek society and constituted a factor in Greek history. These consequences and the new historical reality were an experience shared by the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s, and the "κοινό έδαφος " or "βίωμα " Varikas and Vitti refer to probably consists in that experience.

Another part of this "κοινό έδαφος " or "βίωμα " consists in the readings of the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s in European literature, and French literature in particular. This experience constitutes a part of the poetics of the Generation of the 1930s irrespective of how they assimilated it and how their assimilation differs from the Post-Symbolists' assimilation of European literature. The fact that the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s actually belong to European trends which evolve each into other, was emphasized by I.M. Panayotopoulos in his dispute with Karandonis. Panayotopoulos refers to the changes the Post-Symbolists brought about in poetry; changes which had to do with the rejection of "ρητορεία ", sentimentalism and "ψευτοφιλοσοφική πολυλογία ", and the return of poetry to its lyrical roots. According to Panayotopoulos, these changes were effected "σύμφωνα με το παράδειγμα των ποιητών, που στάθηκαν οι δάσκαλοι των δασκάλων του κ. Α. Καραντώνη ".<sup>100</sup>

Therefore, common historical and political experience on the one hand and common reading experiences on the other are at the root of the poetic affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s.

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<sup>100</sup> Panayotopoulos, "Η χώρα των ελεφάντων", p. 910.

These affinities may take the form either of a continuation of the same poetic atmosphere or poetic themes, as in the case of Seferis,<sup>101</sup> or of reactions. In additions to similarities with Seferis, Savidis also discerns similarities between the poetry of Karyotakis and that of Ritsos. Apart from some influences, more or less assimilated, to which Savidis refers,<sup>102</sup> Savidis also poses a question concerning a general continuation or adaptation of Karyotakis's poetics in the poetry of Ritsos:

Ένα πρόχειρο παράδειγμα, ανάμεσα σε πολλά, με αφετηρία τις πυκνές διακρίσεις του Αγρα: στην ποίησή μας, λέει, ύστερα από τον ηθογραφικό ρεαλισμό, ο αστικός ρεαλισμός προβάλλει καθαρός με τον Καβάφη και γίνεται νεοαστικός με τον Καρυωτάκη. Η συνέχεια της γενεαλογίας αυτής δεν βρίσκεται άραγε κατεξοχήν στον μικροαστικό είτε προτελαριακό νεορεαλισμό του Ρίτσου;<sup>103</sup>

Savidis does not examine the case of Engonopoulos, since he is looking at

<sup>101</sup> For a different view on the relationship Karyotakis-Seferis, see Nassos Vayenas, *Ο Ποιητής και ο Χορευτής. Μια εξέταση της ποιητικής και της ποίησης του Σεφέρη*, Athens, Kedros 1980, p. 120. Vayenas considers the affinity between the two poets to be "περισσότερο συγγένεια συναισθηματική και λιγότερο εκφραστικών κατευθύνσεων", and traces any common modes of expression between the two poets to the fact that they both read Laforgue.

<sup>102</sup> Savidis quotes the poem "Ποιητές", dedicated to Karyotakis, from *Τρακτέρ* and speaks about the "καρυωτακισμός" of the first two collections of Ritsos: *Τρακτέρ*, 1934, and *Πυραμίδες*, 1935. In this context, it is interesting to note that the dialogue the poem "Ποιητές" (Yannis Ritsos, *Ποιήματα 1930-60*, Athens, Kedros 1967, vol. 1, p. 28) initiates with Karyotakis's "Όλοι μαζί" (as well as with other poems of Karyotakis), is continued in "Καταδίκη" from *Πυραμίδες* (Ibid., p. 99): "Εμείς, αγέρωχοι Ποιητές, φαιδρότατοι σοφοί, / με το λοφίο της έμπνευσης σα στρατηγοί σπουδαίοι, / το στράτευμα των συλλαβών κινούμε στη στροφή...". For a discussion of the nature and significance of this poetic dialogue, see also Kostas Demelis, "The Suppression of an Imminent Modernism: Y. Ritsos's Response to K. Karyotakis's Challenge", *Modernism in Greece?*, pp. 137-159.

<sup>103</sup> Savidis, Introduction in Karyotakis, *Ποιήματα*, p. λβ. The relationship between Ritsos and Karyotakis has also been mentioned by other critics; see, for example, Dinos Siotis, Yorgos Veloudis, Chryssa Prokopaki, Kalman Sambo in *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο*, Athens, Kedros 1981. This relationship was one of the points on which Karandonis based his attack on Ritsos in 1935 (Andreas Karandonis, "Γιάννη Ρίτσου, *Τρακτέρ*. Ποιήματα 1934", *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*, yr. 1, nos. 7-8 (1935), pp. 439-41).



poets who appeared between 1927 and 1935.<sup>104</sup> Engonopoulos's affinity with Karyotakis and with Post-Symbolism in general appears to be that of similarity as regards some recurrent themes. For example the poet as outcast, his sufferings while composing his poems, and his solitude or death as a result of poetry - these are recurrent themes in the poetry of both Engonopoulos and the Post-Symbolists. Moreover, as Frangiski Ampatzopoulou argues, Engonopoulos often refers implicitly or explicitly to Karyotakis, as for example in "Ο μυστικός ποιητής". Ampatzopoulou also argues that Karyotakis "μοιάζει να βρίσκεται στην αφετηρία των προβληματισμών του Εγγονόπουλου [...] κι ακόμη περισσότερο, μοιάζει να προκαλεί : ποιο θα είναι το νέο τραγούδι ; "<sup>105</sup>

In Embirikos's *Υψικάμινος*, according to Savidis, "δεν διακρίνεται [...] το παραμικρό ίχνος λώρου με οποιαδήποτε ελληνική λογοτεχνική παράδοση". This view is open to question but the point which is of interest here is Savidis's observation that in *Υψικάμινος* "τα πάντα έχουν καταλυθεί από την επανάσταση του υπερρεαλισμού" and that this dissolution had been promoted by Karyotakis.<sup>106</sup> Embirikos himself, as has been pointed out above (section 6. 1. 2.) in "Όταν οι ευκάλυπτοι θροΐζουν στις αλλέες" suggests even broader affinities between his poetry and that of Karyotakis, saying that Karyotakis dreamt of a Paradise and depicted its absence instead of its presence; therefore, according to Embirikos, the difference between his poetry and that of Karyotakis consists in the choice of

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. λγ.

<sup>105</sup> Ampatzopoulou, *Νίκος Εγγονόπουλος*, p. 40.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. νε.

looking at different sides of the same coin: the relationship between reality and dream. Both the affinity mentioned by Savidis and the one implied by Embirikos can apply not only to Karyotakis but to Post-Symbolism in general. The dissolution promoted by Karyotakis is also present, if to a lesser extent, in the poetry of other Post-Symbolists, while the nostalgia for Paradise is a recurrent theme in Post-Symbolist poetics.

Another affinity, frequently referred to, for example by Karandonis in 1947, concerns the poetry of Ouranis and Kavadias.<sup>107</sup> Kavadias appears to act as a link between Post-Symbolist poetry and the poetry of the 1930s,<sup>108</sup> since he uses motifs of Post-Symbolist poetry, such as escape and travelling, and develops them into a new outlook related to the broadening of horizons that Seferis mentioned in 1941.<sup>109</sup>

Elytis's poetry, especially the first collections, is regarded by Savidis, Vitti and others as a reaction against Karyotakis.<sup>110</sup> This image of Elytis, however, may to a large extent have been a creation of his critics, as Alexandros Aryriou suggested in 1958 and as Savidis and Vitti have

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<sup>107</sup> Karandonis, "ο Κοσμοπολιτισμός", p. 27 ff

<sup>108</sup> The question of links between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s (such as Kavadias, Baras, Papatsonis) is not furtherly dealt with here, since it has not been one of the issues foregrounded by critics or by the Generation of the 1930s itself. Another question not dealt with here is the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and other poets who first appeared in the 1920s or early 1930s, such as Y.Th. Vafopoulos, whose collection *Τα Ρόδα της Μυρτάλης* (1924-1931), in *Τα Ποιητικά*, Athens, Estia 1970, pp. 21-96, could be examined from the point of view of motifs connected with Post-Symbolist motifs.

<sup>109</sup> Seferis, *Δοκιμές* Α, p. 167.

<sup>110</sup> D.N. Maronitis explores the contrast between Karyotakis and Elytis in Elytis's post-1960 poetry and speaks about the "*ακραία αντίθεση*" between the two poets but also of their "*συμπληρωματικ[οὺς] και συγκρίσιμ[ους] τρόπ[ους]*" (D.N. Maronitis, "*Η ποιητική αισιοδοξία του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη*", *Πίσω Μπρος. Προτάσεις και υποθέσεις για τη νεοελληνική ποίηση και πεζογραφία*, Athens, Stigmi 1986, pp. 107-129).

observed. Aryiriou points out that Elytis's critics harped on the bright tones of his poetry, without paying attention to the elegiac tones or the hesitations and doubts, which are also present in his poems. According to Aryiriou, "σ' ένα βαθμό ο Ελύτης έπεσε θύμα των κριτικών του ". In order to emphasize the anti-Karyotakian aspect of his poetry, his critics "δεν επισήμαναν ό,τι πιο μόνιμο και πιο ουσιαστικό πνεύμα διέθετε ".<sup>111</sup>

Vitti, too, refers to the role Karandonis played in the creation of Elytis's image. Karandonis emphasized the presence of youth, health, happiness and the Aegean sea in Elytis's poetry and presented this as a permanent and ideal situation. Taking account of the "ιδεολογική αποτελμάτωση " of the time, this portrait of Elytis was a highly acceptable one. As Vitti puts it, at the time there were "διάχυτες [...] προσλαμβάνουσες για να γίνει αποδεκτός δίχως επιφυλάξεις και για να αποτελέσει ένα πρότυπο προς απομίμηση, ο ιλαρός και ξέγνοιαστος Ελύτης, και να περάσει απαρατήρητος ο υπόλοιπος Ελύτης ".<sup>112</sup>

This emphasis by his critics on the anti-Karyotakian aspect of Elytis may indirectly indicate the existence of an "έδαφος " shared by the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s. The reaction against the poetry of the Post-Symbolists in general and Karyotakis in particular was based on ideological considerations rather than poetic dissimilarities.

Specific poetic affinities between Post-Symbolism and the Generation of the 1930s have been explored or observed by various critics, particularly

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<sup>111</sup> Alexandros Aryiriou, *Διαδοχικές Αναγνώσεις Ελλήνων Υπερρεαλιστών*, Athens, Gnessi 1983, p. 52 [1958].

<sup>112</sup> Vitti, *Η Γενιά του Τριάντα*, p. 157.

where Karyotakis is concerned. These affinities take the form either of similarities or responses and indicate shared historical experience and common readings. Moreover the themes or poetic techniques of Post-Symbolist poetry were exploited or further developed by the Generation of the 1930s.

Apart from specific themes and poetic techniques the affinities between the Post-Symbolist school and the Generation of the 1930s appear to be broader and to concern their attitude towards poetic language.

#### 6. 3. 2. Broader affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s

The broader affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s include two points which will not be explored here in detail, since this would involve a study of the poetics of the Generation of the 1930s.

The first point consists in the transplantation of Greek poetry into the field of European poetry. This transplantation was suggested by the Post-Symbolists who regarded as their antecedents both Greek and French or other European poets, and viewed their own poetry as part of a European trend. Thus, they shifted the central point of reference of Greek poetry from national tradition to an intra-European dialogue. This remained a central point of reference for the Generation of the 1930s too. Although the Generation of the 1930s resumed the preoccupation with tradition, it combined this preoccupation with an intra-European poetic dialogue. This

combination was reflected, although from a negative point of view, in Panayotopoulos's phrases: "Ύμνολογούν τον Παλαμά και τον Ελιοτ. Τον Αραγκόν και το Μακρυγιάννη ". The nature of the dialogue can be adduced from translations of foreign poetry into Greek, such as Seferis's translations of Eliot or Elytis's translations of Eluard, from references of the poets of the Generation of the 1930s to foreign poets and from Greek versions of European trends, such as Surrealism.

Although the prevailing ideology of the 1930s pointed to a return to tradition and Palamas, and was to a large extent hellenocentric, European poetry continued to be the area in which Greek poetry moved, and this appears to be a central affinity between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s, not only as far as European influences on them are concerned but also in their attitude towards poetic language, which they consider among other things to be a means of and a reflection of an international dialogue.

The second point of a broader affinity between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s concerns poetry as "the problematics of language".<sup>113</sup> This affinity was implied in Zissimos Lorentzatos's observation about the crisis of Greek poetry:

*η αληθινή στροφή της ελληνικής ποίησης δε γίνηκε  
με τη Στροφή, αλλά ο Σεφέρης σχετίζεται μαζί της,  
επειδή εκείνος είναι που έδωσε την πρώτη απάντηση,  
με τη συλλογή Μυθιστόρημα (1935), στην κρίση  
της ελληνικής ποίησης ή του ποιητικού parlar,  
όπως θα έλεγε ο Δάντης - που τη σημαδεύουνε,  
δέκα σχεδόν χρόνια πριν, τα Ελεγεία και Σάτιρες*

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<sup>113</sup> Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, p. 9.

(1927) του Καρυωτάκη.<sup>114</sup>

Lorentzatos's point of view opposes the point of view promoted by Karandonis who emphasizes the collision between the "Generation of the 1920s" and the Generation of the 1930s. As Massimo Peri has pointed out, Lorentzatos replaced Karandonis's idea of a collision between generations, defined by the years 1928 and 1935, by the idea of a continuity, since *Μυθιστόρημα* does not oppose the poetic crisis of *Ελεγεία και Σάτιρες* but responds to it.<sup>115</sup>

As has been discussed in Chapter 5, Lorentzatos observed the poetic crisis, to which he referred, in the undermining of the metrical structure of poetic language. The metrical structure, however, as is also the case with the syntactical and acoustic structures, is related to the semantic structure of poetic language. Therefore any phenomenon prevailing in the metrical, the acoustic or the syntactical structure usually enacts phenomena of the semantic structure of poetic language.

The recurrent themes of Post-Symbolist poetry revolve around a central problem, which is the relationship of poetic language to its subject-matter. Thus, Post-Symbolist poetry is characterized by self-referentiality, which differentiates it from the poetry of the Generation of the 1880s. While the poetry of the 1880s focusses on references to external reality, the Post-Symbolists shift this focus to a reference of poetry to itself.

This shift of focus can be seen as a transition from "orphic" to "hermetic"

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<sup>114</sup> Lorentzatos, p. 89.

<sup>115</sup> Peri, p. 12.

poetry according to the definitions of Gerald Bruns; a transition from the concept of language as "a medium for thought or feeling" to the concept of language as "a power of pure formation, in which words take on value as realities in their own right and not simply as signifiers in a structure of meaning".<sup>116</sup> It can also be viewed as a beginning of Modernism, if one "esteems Modernist literature as a liberation of the text, of the word".<sup>117</sup> According to Clive Scott the most fundamental achievement of the "Symbolist revolution" was that "it awakened an acute consciousness of language",<sup>118</sup> thereby marking a beginning of Modernism in literature.

Either as a transition from "orphism" to "hermeticism" or as a beginning of Modernism, the shift of focus from external reality to poetic language itself constitutes a radical turning-point in Greek poetry. This turning-point is conditioned by the historical, political and ideological context which has been examined elsewhere. As Dimitris Tziovas has pointed out, in Palamas's Generation the "conception of literary language outwardly orientated [is] accompanied by the illusion of an "accurate" description of "outside reality" and the transcription of ordinary speech".<sup>119</sup> Thus, the "orphic" concept of poetic language in the 1880s is connected with the aspiration of the poets, and particularly of Palamas, to depict the Greek national soul. The transition from "orphism" to "hermeticism" constitutes a part of the reaction of the Post-Symbolists against the poetics of Palamas.

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<sup>116</sup> Bruns, p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> *Modernism* 1890-1930, p. 206.

<sup>118</sup> Clive Scott, *Modernism* 1890-1930, p. 212.

<sup>119</sup> Tziovas, *The nationism*, p. 149.

The self-referentiality of poetic language is present in the poetry of the Generation of the 1930s. Although the writers of the 1930s emphasize their interest in external reality, the point of view which they adopt towards it is frequently characterized by self-referentiality. An example of this can be found in the poetry of Engonopoulos, where certain recurrent themes, such as the poet's isolation or the disastrous consequences of poetic creation, apart from presenting affinities with themes of Post-Symbolist poetry, also constitute references of the poetic language to itself.

Probably both because of the national aspirations related to the poetry of the 1930s and because of a new poetic language characterized by free verse and Surrealist elements, the Generation of the 1930s generally displays a confidence in poetic language which is absent from the poetry of the Post-Symbolists. This confidence is frequently present in the references of poetic language to itself, as for example in Embirikos's definition of poetry:

Η ποίησις είναι ανάπτυξις στίλβοντος ποδηλάτου.  
Μέσα της όλοι μεγαλώνουμε. Οι δρόμοι είναι  
λευκοί. Τ' άνθη μιλούν. Από τα πέταλά τους  
αναδύονται συχνά μικρούτσικες παιδίσκες. Η  
εκδρομή αυτή δεν έχει τέλος.<sup>120</sup>

It is also present in the creation of a different world, based for example on surreal associations, through poetry.

Thus, in the Generation of the 1930s, poetry is characterized both by the "orphic" and by the "hermetic" concept of poetic language, while references to poetic language present both similarities to and radical differences from references made by the Post-Symbolists. This dual concept reflects on the

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<sup>120</sup> Andreas Embirikos, *Ποιήματα*, [Ενδοχώρα], Athens, Galaxias, p. 163.



one hand affinities of the Generation of the 1930s with both Palamas and the Post-Symbolists, and on the other, the development of the "hermetic" concept of poetic language. That is, while for the Post-Symbolists this "hermetic" concept frequently constitutes a vicious circle, since poetic language is regarded as incapable of fulfilling its role, the confidence the Generation of the 1930s displays towards poetic language seems to be related to the synthesis of the "hermetic" with the "orphyic" concept, since the realization of the creative power of the poetic language leads to the creation of a poetic world and vice versa.

Therefore poetry as a "problematics of language" constitutes a central point of affinity between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s. The Generation of the 1930s develops and differentiates the "hermetic" concept of poetic language which prevails in Post-Symbolist poetry, and, moreover, it combines this concept with the "orphyic" concept of poetic language, thereby following European literary trends, such as Surrealism, while at the same time achieving a synthesis between the poetics of Palamas and the poetics of Post-Symbolism.

The poetic affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s concern both specific similarities or reactions between individual poets and two central points of poetics, that is, the transplantation of Greek poetry into the field of European poetry and the concept of poetry as a "problematics of language". Both the specific and the broader affinities are conditioned by the historical, political and ideological context on the one hand and by the cultural context, that is, by the readings of the Post-Symbolists

and the Generation of the 1930s, on the other.

Thus the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s presents two fundamental aspects. On the one hand the common historical and cultural context leads to poetic affinities, while on the other, the ideological differences and the political context condition an antithesis in major questions of poetics.

The attitude of the Post-Symbolists towards the Generation of the 1930s is conditioned by the position of Post-Symbolist poetry on the borders between two periods in the history of Greek literature. That is, Post-Symbolist poetry questions or undermines the poetic discourse which was prevalent before, but does not escape from its logic; hence the rejection of Surrealism, which proposes a different logic, while Seferis and Elytis are viewed positively as moving along the same lines as the Post-Symbolists. The attitude of the Generation of the 1930s towards the Post-Symbolists is ideologically conditioned. The Generation of the 1930s raises the issues of health and optimism versus pessimism and of Greekness versus Cosmopolitanism, and the debate between the Generation of the 1930s and the Post-Symbolists revolves chiefly around these issues. The nationalism of the Generation of the 1930s sometimes surfaces in the debate and is the real point at issue. The Generation of the 1930s returns to the ideology and values promoted by Palamas, Sikelianos and others, and rejects Post-Symbolism, because it does not fit into the tradition of poetry orientated

towards nationalism. As was also the case with the Generation of the 1880s and Sikelianos, the poetic aspirations of the 1930s are frequently aligned with the demands of the establishment. The Post-Symbolist proposal for poetry disengaged from nationalistic ideology is rejected.

The poetic affinities between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s, apart from a common historical and cultural context, suggest that Post-Symbolist poetics changed the orientation of Greek poetry and that the Generation of the 1930s continued to move along the same lines. Apart from specific affinities either in the form of similarities or of reactions between the Post-Symbolists and the Generation of the 1930s, the affinities which suggest this new orientation are the transplantation of Greek poetry into the field of European poetry and the concept of poetry as a "problematics of language".

Thus, the relationship between Post-Symbolism and the Generation of the 1930s reveals Post-Symbolism as a twofold experiment in poetics. From the point of view of poetics as ideology, this experiment was rejected because of the historical and socio-political context, while from the point of view of poetics as an attitude towards poetic language, this experiment permeated Greek poetry and changed its orientation.

## Conclusion

This thesis has examined the Post-Symbolist poetic system in terms of its historical existence and its internal structure. The former was explored through the historical, socio-political, ideological and cultural context of Post-Symbolism and the relationship between the Post-Symbolists and the preceding and succeeding literary generations. The latter was explored through the subject-matter of Post-Symbolist poetry and through the interaction between the syntactical and semantic, the acoustic and semantic and the metrical and semantic structures of Post-Symbolist poetic language. The Post-Symbolists' concepts of the role of poetry and the poet's place in society form a link between issues concerning the historical existence of the Post-Symbolist poetic system and issues related to its internal structure.

I have argued that Post-Symbolist poetry occupies a key position in the history of twentieth-century Greek literature and that it presents a consistent poetics which introduced radically new features into the broader system of Greek poetry. These new features revolve around two associated main concerns: the disengagement of poetry from nationalism and the concept of poetry as a "problematics of language". In connection with the first, the Post-Symbolists transpose Greek poetry into the area of European poetry; contrary to Palamas's generation who, although partly accepting foreign influences, focussed mainly on Greek tradition and on the formation of a Greek national soul, the Post-Symbolists focussed on an intra-European

poetic dialogue, viewing themselves as links in the chain of European as well as Greek poetic tradition. The disengagement of poetry from nationalism also includes the introduction of new subject-matter together with a new attitude towards poetic language; these form a link between the concern to disengage poetry from nationalism and the concept of poetry as a "problematics of language". The subject-matter introduced by the Post-Symbolists shifts the centre of gravity of poetry from its connections with history and the aspirations of the establishment, to its means of expression and to forces within the individual. This change in subject-matter is related to the Post-Symbolists' concepts both of the poet's place in society and of the role of poetry. The Post-Symbolist poet is no longer the poet-prophet producing poetry connected with nationalistic aspirations; instead, he is an alienated and uncreative penpusher, an outcast from society and an observer of reality. In observing reality, he defamiliarizes it through his connotative use of language. The role of poetry, as conceived by the Post-Symbolists, consists in exploring reality (and usually discovering its emptiness); producing music; expressing the feelings both of a collective soul and of the poet's, and creating correspondences between the reality depicted and the emotions evoked. Yet poetry, according to the Post-Symbolists, is incapable of fulfilling this role. The central concern, therefore, around which Post-Symbolist subject-matter revolves, is the interaction between the function of poetry and its ineffectiveness. While poetry functions as an act of memory, nostalgia, desire and escape from reality, it simultaneously prevents memory, nostalgia, desire and escape from being effective because its artificial character and its

impotence when confronted with reality do not permit it to create a viable reality of its own. At the same time poetry is an object of desire or nostalgia for the Post-Symbolists, but this self-referentiality is deceptive, since the poetic language to which they aspire is different from their own; it is, however, a poetic language that cannot be defined or attained through the medium of their own poetic language, which thus creates a vicious circle of desire and frustration.

Thus, poetry for the Post-Symbolists consists to a large extent in questions regarding the nature and possibilities of poetic language. These questions can be seen at work in the interaction between the semantic structure of the Post-Symbolist poetic language and its syntactic, acoustic and metrical structures. The prevailing negative, static and passive structures, the ambivalent or negative attitude towards metre and rhythm and the undermining of the semantic relationships between words by means of their acoustic structures point to an internal dissolution of the poetic language employed.

This is a major point of contrast between the Post-Symbolists and the preceding generation. The Post-Symbolists reject the poetic language of Palamas because of its connections with nationalist ideology and also because of the changes that had in the meantime taken place in Greek society. They also point to the impasses of their own poetic language which has inherited certain features (for example metrical forms) from the poetic language of the preceding generation, but not its ideological basis. Thus, by pointing out the impasses and suggesting certain new orientations (for

example the preoccupation of poetic language with itself, the use of words for their acoustic and connotative values), the Post-Symbolists mark the beginning of a new period in the history of Greek literature.

This new period came to be dominated by the Generation of the 1930s which adopted certain features of Post-Symbolist poetics (such as the self-referentiality of poetry), and developed others (such as the dissolution of traditional metrical verse), while rejecting the disengagement of poetry from nationalism. Thus, the Generation of the 1930s, through the exploration of a new poetic discourse, characterized for example, by free verse or by Surrealism, can be said to have responded to and to have found certain solutions to problems raised by the Post-Symbolists.

The true successors of the Post-Symbolists (apart from the immediate off-shoot of Karyotakismos) are the poets belonging to the Generation of the 1930s, while the predecessors with whom the Post-Symbolists present most affinities are the Greek Symbolists (Gryparis, Porfyra and Hatzopoulos). The Symbolists introduced certain new features into poetic language, such as the aspiration of poetry to music. They did not, however, introduce a new system of poetics that questioned and radically differed from the poetic system of Palamas. Apart from the Greek Symbolists, the other immediate predecessors of the Post-Symbolists are the French Symbolists. Nevertheless, the position of Greek Post-Symbolism in the history of Greek literature differs from the position of French Symbolism in the history of French literature since, as this thesis has argued, the Post-Symbolist system of poetics presents radical differences from the system of poetics of French

Symbolism, such as the different attitude towards poetic language. Unlike French Symbolism, a prevailing concept in Greek Post-Symbolism is that of the inadequacy of poetic language. Moreover the two poetic systems were differently received in their respective countries. Although French Symbolism was frequently criticized at the time for aesthetic reasons,<sup>1</sup> it was a broad movement including highly influential poets, some of whom were later recognized by the Surrealists themselves as well as by critics as being the predecessors of Surrealism.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the Greek Post-Symbolists were criticized mainly for ideological reasons, while their connections with the Surrealists or with other poets of the 1930s were played down.

A central difference between the Post-Symbolist poetic system on the one hand and the poetic systems of French and Greek Symbolism, of the Generation of the 1880s and of the 1930s on the other, is that, while the other poetic systems are characterized both by a certain degree of affirmation of their surrounding historical and socio-political reality and /or by self-affirmation, the Post-Symbolist poetic system chiefly foregrounds both a negative attitude towards its surrounding reality and a self-negation. This thesis has argued that through this negative and self-negating attitude, Post-Symbolism posed new questions concerning the nature and the role of poetic language, and through these questions it reorientated Greek poetry.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, René Wellek, "What is Symbolism?", in Balakian, *The Symbolist Movement*, p. 17 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Guy Michaud, *Message Poétique*, p. 644.



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