

A DEFINITION OF ELYTIS' PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY

Prior to defining the term "personal mythology", it should be stated that Elytis' poetry may be divided into three periods, a fact noted by the poet himself¹ as well as all his critics.² The first period is made up of those works published between 1935, the year of his first appearance in Τα Νέα Γράμματα, and 1943 (i.e. Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλλος ο πρώτος); the second covers the years 1945-1960 ('Ασμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας, Η καλοσύνη στις λυκοπορεύς, Το 'Αξιον Εστί, and 'Εξη και μια τύφεις για τον ουρανό); and the third, the years between 1971 and 1985, the date of his last poetic collection.³

Such a division is thematically based; one might also formulate a slightly different one based on the apparent long gaps in Elytis' career, during which no major works were published (that is, 1948-1958, and 1961-1970). However this second division of Elytis' poetry based simply on the publication dates would, for example, imply grouping the

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1. In an interview with Ivar Ivarsk, 'Analogies of Light: The Greek Poet Odysseus Elytis', Books Abroad, Volume 49, Number 4, 1975, p. 639.
 2. For example, see Λ. Λυχνάρá, Η μεταλογική των πραγμάτων: Οδυσσέας Ελύτης, <<'Ικαρος>>, Athens, 1980, pp. 18, 118; S. Hamill, 'Afterword', in O. Broumas, What I Love: Selected Poems of Odysseas Elytis, Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend, 1986, p. 92; A. Decavalles, 'Maria Nefeli and the Changeful Sameness of Elytis: Variations on a Theme', The Charioteer, Numbers 24-5, 1982/3, pp. 25-6, 34; A. Τσοτσορού, 'Μεταφορές στο Ημερολόγιο ενός αθέατου Απριλίου', Χάρτης, Volumes 21-3, Athens, 1986, p. 385, n. 7.
 3. See Appendix A for a list of those works belonging to the third period, as well as details of publication dates of individual collections.
 4. Despite these periods of apparent poetic inactivity, Elytis says "... δε θυμάμαι ποτέ μου να σταμάτησα το γράψιμο και γενικά το ρύθμο της δουλειάς μου". (In an interview with Yiannis Flessas, 'Έχω δικαίωμα σαν Έλληνας ν' ανησυχώ για την ταυτότητά μου', Σημερινές απόψεις (ed. Γ. Φλέσσας), Εκδόσεις <<Γιάννης Β. Βασδέκης>>, Athens, 1980, p. 54).

work 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας (1945) with 'Ήλιος ο πρώτος (1943), instead of with Το 'Άξιον Εστί (1959), when the first and third are obviously thematically linked.

The significance of three separate periods in Elytis' poetry in terms of his "personal mythology" lies in the fact that the latter may also be divided into three different stages that correspond exactly to these periods. This division is again thematic: each stage provides a new focus, and new sources of imagery and expression. In the thesis these stages will be referred to as Elytis' personal mythology of the first, second and third periods.

However these three stages, and the change in focus between periods, constitute only one of the two aspects of the poet's personal mythology; the second is seen in the elements that remain constant between the three periods, and thus provide a framework.

Before proceeding to a more detailed examination of these two aspects, however, it is necessary to define what Elytis' personal mythology actually is. Many critics,⁵ and Elytis himself,⁶ have used the term, but without giving any precise definition.

An integral part of Elytis' poetry, it is essentially a system of theories that acts as a poetic creed, coupled with various

5. E.g. see Λυχνάρá, op.cit., pp. 8-17; M. Vitti, Οδυσσέας Ελύτης: Κριτική μελέτη, <<Ερμής>>, Athens, 1984, pp. 99, 248; E. Keeley and P. Sherrard, Six Poets of Modern Greece, Thames and Hudson, London, 1960, p. 28; E. Keeley and P. Sherrard, Odysseus Elytis: Selected Poems, Anvil Press Poetry, London, 1981, p. xiii; K. Friar, The Sovereign Sun, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1974, pp. 27, 28, 30; and Δ. Δημηρούλης, 'Το <<Άξιον>> της ιστορίας και το <<Εστί>> της ρητορικής', Χάρτης, Volumes 21-3, Athens, 1986, pp. 322, 326, 328.

6. See for example his interview, 'Η υπέρβαση και η γεωμέτρηση', in Η λέξη, Number 27, September 1983, pp. 755, 757.

recurring themes and motifs. Its importance lies in its function: it dictates the focus of each period - the content, imagery and expression. Certainly to classify Elytis' personal mythology as a kind of symbolism is a gross oversimplification, and detracts from its significance.

Furthermore, it is the poet's means of portraying the "true face of Greece".⁷ Elytis has often stated his objection to the Western European, post-Renaissance view of Greece, which emphasizes the country's Classical heritage and little else.⁸ Elytis felt that the role of his generation was to correct this view, to present the "true face of Greece"; he states that surrealism enabled his generation to achieve this.⁹ In his own case a personal mythology, coupled with surrealism, provided the answer. In this context it is perhaps significant that the subtitle of Embirikos' famous prose work Γραπτά is Προσωπική μυθολογία.¹⁰

As mentioned above, there are two aspects to Elytis' personal mythology. The first encompasses those elements whose expression is not confined to a single period, but permeates all of Elytis' poetry. This continuity gives his work cohesion, and provides a framework for the changing, second, aspect of his personal mythology.

This second aspect is represented by the three different stages which correspond to the three periods of Elytis' poetry. The emphasis here is not on any constant elements, but rather on the change in focus, imagery and expression that characterizes each stage. Furthermore the inspiration for the personal mythology of each period is different.

7. 'Analogies of Light', p. 631.

8. See 'Analogies of Light', loc.cit.; Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 23, 31, 321, 429; K. Friar, 'Odysseus Elytis', Accent, Summer 1954, p. 175.

9. 'Analogies of Light', loc.cit. Elytis' search for the "true face of Greece" and his use of surrealism is discussed in detail in P. Sherrard's article, 'Ο Οδυσσεύς Ελύτης και η ανακάλυψη της Ελλάδας', Χάρτης, Volumes 21-3, Athens, 1986, pp. 505-20.

10. Α. Εμπειρίκος, Γραπτά ή Προσωπική μυθολογία, Εκδόσεις <<Πλειάς>>, Athens, 1974.

Initially it appears that Elytis' personal mythology was essentially a replacement for or alternative to allusions to Classical mythology in his poetry. Elytis is opposed to Greek writers' frequent overreliance on references to Classical mythology as a means to convey concepts, viewing this as facile:

No doubt it is advantageous for a Greek poet to employ ancient myths, because he thus becomes more accessible to foreign readers. A Greek poet who speaks of Antigone, Oedipus, et cetera, moves in an area which is well-known; through these mythical concepts he can comment on contemporary events... I have reacted against this, often quite consciously, because I thought all this was a bit too facile, yes, even in the theatre.¹¹

It can be seen that this attitude is also closely related to his objection to the Western European perception of Greece, mentioned above.

In terms of his poetry, Elytis' reaction was to replace these usual allusions to Greek mythology with his own personal mythology; the latter retained the "mechanism of myth-making"¹² but avoided references to actual mythical figures. This personal mythology was instead based on the devices of personification and metamorphosis. It should be stressed therefore that despite his use of the term "mythology", Elytis' concept is in no way suggestive of Classical mythology, nor is it based on it; rather it is composed of two poetic devices which provide a means of presenting the true face of Greece, and an alternative to the conventional allusions to mythological figures.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the themes of personification and metamorphosis as a foundation for Elytis' personal mythology is only

11. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639. Elytis specifically mentions Seferis, Sikelianos and Ritsos in this context.

12. Loc.cit. Vitti (op.cit., p. 164) states that the concept of "μυθογένεση" is a surrealist one, quoting Aragon.

a feature of the poetry of his first period. Shortly it became evident that this provided too restrictive a framework within which to portray the true face of Greece, and Elytis was to widen the scope of his approach.

In his second period, in the poet's search for those elements which best represent the real Greece, his personal mythology focusses on the Greek cultural tradition - historical, literary, and religious.

His third period sees a further change in focus, and one that emphasizes more than ever before the "personal" element of Elytis' personal mythology: it embraces the poet's theory of "solar metaphysics" and his concept of Paradise. Greece is now portrayed in a wider context, in terms of its Eastern heritage.

As well as these changes in focus between periods, there is also a corresponding development in imagery and expression dictated by Elytis' personal mythology. This thesis will examine all these features in an attempt to show the important role that this concept plays in Elytis' poetry, and how an appreciation of it is essential to a full understanding of Elytis' work.

CHAPTER ONE

RECURRING ELEMENTS IN ELYTIS' POETRY (1935-85)

As stated earlier, Elytis' personal mythology may be divided into three stages, which correspond to the three periods of his poetry. Each stage provides a new focus, and new sources of imagery and expression for the poems of that period.

However, his personal mythology is not confined to these three different stages; it also encompasses a set of theories, whose expression permeates his work as a whole, and as such provides a constant background for the changes in emphasis between periods. Indeed the continuity of this aspect of Elytis' personal mythology can be said to form a kind of framework, and thus an examination of these repeated elements is a necessary prelude to any detailed discussion of the poet's personal mythology and its development.

There are five of these elements. Four - Elytis' concept of the union of opposites; the instantaneous impression; meteorism; and what he terms "the sanctity of the senses" - were defined by the poet himself in an interview.¹ As no critic has either formulated a similar list of repeated elements and theories in terms of Elytis' personal mythology, nor disagreed with the list formulated by the poet, it seems only reasonable to accept Elytis' judgement.

However, I believe a fifth theory, namely, the importance of a poem's architectural structure, and the related significance of the number seven, should be added to this list of theories that constitute the unchanging element in Elytis' personal mythology. As will be shown

1. "For the better understanding of certain of my poems, I would like to point out that there are elements which tend to be repeated and to return of their own volition in all three periods. These elements form a sort of framework like that which holds up a building." ('Analogies of Light', p. 640.)

below, throughout his work he has demonstrated his belief that the form of a poem is no less important than its content; moreover, the influence of the number seven on the structure of not only poems, but entire collections, can be detected in every single work published. Many critics have commented on this constant element in Elytis' poetry, and as such, it deserves to be included in the list of five theories that form a framework for his personal mythology, and give cohesion to his work as a whole.

Each of the five theories - the union of opposites; the instantaneous impression; meteorism; the structure of a poem, and the related influence of the number seven; and the sanctity of the senses - will be discussed below, with examples given from each of the three periods to show both the continuity, and development of these ideas throughout Elytis' work.

One of the most important, and tangible elements is Elytis' concept of the union of opposites,² which the poet explained as "... the concept that things, when carried to their extreme conclusion, will meet. If you intensify white, you will arrive at black; if you intensify black, you will arrive at white".³

Examples abound, especially in Elytis' later work; images may be classified into several categories. These are the portrayal of the sea as a second sky; the juxtaposition of the colours white and black; the union of two diametrically opposed personalities; and the union of abstract ideas.

One of the best expressions of the concept is found in the poem "Δήλος" of Το φωτόδεντρο, where a dive into the water becomes

2. This can be related to a characteristic feature of surrealism (and one which Elytis lists as having attracted him; see Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, 1982, p. 381), the juxtaposition of two or more unrelated objects.

3. 'Analogies of Light', pp. 640-1.

at the same time a plunge into the sun:

’Οπως βουτώντας άνοιγε τα μάτια κάτω απ’ το
νερό. . .
... Ολοΐσια μέσα στην καρδιά του ήλιου με την
ΐδια κίνηση περνούσε⁴

The same thing occurs in a later poem of the collection, "Ο κήπος του ευωχείρ": the poet dives into an underwater world and

με το μέτωπο καταμπροστά χτύπησα⁵
στον πυθμένα ’Οπου αναπήδησε ήλιος

This particular image is, in fact, part of a recurring motif that depicts the sea as a second sky: "αυτό που γύρευα ... βαθύ και αχάραγο σαν η άλλη όψη τ’ ουρανού", as Elytis says in Το 'Αξιον Εστί, on the creation of the sea.⁶ Elsewhere the concept is expressed less explicitly, in phrases such as "στα φύκια τ’ ουρανού",⁷ "των ουρανών δελφίνι",⁸ "στου γλαυκού βυθού τον ουρανό"⁹ or in more extended images that present this same juxtaposition of sea and sky:

... αγκάλιασε την πελώριαν άγκυρα που ηγεμονεύει
στους βυθούς. Σε λίγο θά ’ναι στα σύννεφα.¹⁰

The sea/sky association is only the first category in the expression of the concept of union of opposites. In Elytis' explanation

4. Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 15, lines 1-2, 5-6.
5. Ibid., p. 49, lines 1-2. Cf. Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 117, line 1.
6. Το 'Αξιον Εστί, p. 16, lines 5-7. Cf. Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 20, lines 8-10.
7. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 24, line 4; p. 25, line 26.
8. Τα ετεροθαλή, p. 54, line 7.
9. Η καλοσύνη στις λυκοποριές, Poem II. line 22.
10. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 102, lines 8-10. Cf. ibid., p. 132, lines 2, 4; p. 136, lines 13-4; 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 11, lines 2, 3, 6; p. 39, line 19; Το 'Αξιον Εστί, p. 41, line 1; Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 23, lines 4-5; Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 18, lines 1-3; and Ημερολόγιο ενός αθέατου Απριλίου, p. 48, lines 1-2.

of this concept, given above, he gave as an example the relationship between the colours white and black, and in fact this image of white and black as one occurs throughout his work.

το λευκό αναζήτησα ως την ύστατη ένταση
του μαύρου¹¹

Decavalles sees the girl's name Μαρία Νεφέλη (from the collection of the same title) also as an example of the union of opposites. He comments that as a rule, clouds in Elytis' poetry symbolise the dark side of life, and "one side of Nefeli is unquestionably dark". On the other side, the Christian name Maria obviously has connotations of the Virgin Mary, and thus "implies the girl's purer, angelic self..."¹²

In fact the work Μαρία Νεφέλη itself is based on this concept; the union of opposites is a theme central to the development of the poem, based as it is on the parallel monologues of two (apparently) diametrically opposed personalities. He is the mature poet, whose early imagery was based on the sunny Aegean; she is the modern girl, born of an urban environment. And yet, underneath their conflict and contradictions there is a harmony of spirit and "mutually complementary elements forming the axis round which (they turn)"¹³. As Karandonis says, Maria Nefeli is the poet's feminine alter-ego¹⁴ -

11. Το 'Αξιον Εστί, p. 20, lines 1-2. Cf. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 71, lines 24-5; Τα ετεροθαλή, p. 42, lines 12, 17; Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 30, line 16; Ημερολόγιο ενός αθέατου Απριλίου, p. 19, lines 1-4; p. 53, lines 5-6; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος p. 83, lines 16-7.

12. A. Decavalles 'Maria Nefeli and the Changeful Sameness of Elytis: Variations on a theme', The Charioteer, Numbers 24/25, 1982/3, p. 39. For a more general discussion of Maria Nefeli's two-sided nature, see Δ. Γαβαλάς, Η Εσωτερική Διαλεκτική στη <<Μαρία Νεφέλη>> του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, Εκδόσεις <<Κώδικας>>, Thessalonica, 1987, pp. 27-35.

13. Ibid., p. 41.

14. Α. Καραντώνης, Για τον Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, Παπαδήμας, Athens, 1980, p. 252.

this is implicit in the quotation "... Από την άλλη μεριά είμαι ο ίδιος".¹⁵

Parallelling the union of these two opposite characters is the union of abstract ideas; examples occur in the poetry of Elytis' second and third periods, notably in To 'Αξιλον Εστί.

. . . Την ελπίδα ως τα δάκρυα
Τη χαρά ως την άκρα απόγνωση¹⁶

- Τι το καλό; Τι το κακό; ¹⁷
- 'Ενα σημείο 'Ενα σημείο.

The absence of this motif of the union of abstract ideas from the early poetry might suggest that it is a development of Elytis' ideas about metamorphosis (a dominant theme in his personal mythology of the first period). However, it is more correct to speak of the concept of the

15. The quotation "Μάντεψε, κοπίασε, νιώσε: Από την άλλη μεριά είμαι ο ίδιος" (from Προσανατολισμοί, p. 122, lines 6-7), and a Biblical quotation are given on page 9 of Μαρία Νεφέλη, immediately following the title page.
16. To 'Αξιλον Εστί, p. 20, lines 2-3. The repeated phrase "ο κόσμος ο μικρός ο μέγας" which occurs at the end of every hymn except the first in "Η Γένεσις" is another example of this concept of union of opposites which finds best expression in To 'Αξιλον Εστί.
17. Loc.cit., lines 34-5. Cf. ibid., p. 79, line 19; p. 83, line 5; To φωτόδεντρο, p. 48, lines 15-6; p. 50, lines 10-1; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 57, lines 20-1.
Indeed, Elytis himself wrote in the notes that accompanied the first publication of sections of To 'Αξιλον Εστί in Επιθεώρηση Τέχνης (April, 1958) that "Το τρίτο στρώμα (of To 'Αξιλον Εστί) ... στηρίζεται πάντως σε μεταφυσικής υφής αντιλήψεις, όπως είναι π.χ. η θεωρία του συμφητισμού των καλών και των κακών δυνάμεων που βρίσκονται σε ίσο ποσοτό στον κόσμο ή στην αντίληψη ότι οι αντίθετες έννοιες, στην έσχατη συνέπειά τους, επικοινωνούν ...". Reprinted in Γ. Βαλέτας, 'Το <<'Αξιλον εστί>>, πολυάξιλο μεγαλυνάρι της Εθνικής Αντίστασης', Απολυκά Γράμματα, Volumes 43-4, January-April 1978, p. 162.

union of opposites in terms of a prelude to the poet's search for Paradise¹⁸ (which is emphasized in the poetry of his third period). This Paradise is a world "where all conciliation is conceivable, a world in which ... earth, air and sea are harmoniously associated".¹⁹

However there is a deeper, more philosophical side to Elytis' concept. In his portrayal of the union of opposites the poet is deliberately adapting Heraclitus' theory that the "way up" and "way down" are "one and the same", that they lead to the same destination, as Elytis stated quite clearly in the two letters written to Kimon Friar in March and May of 1954.²⁰ In both letters he discusses the events and ideas that led to the writing of 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας, but his comments apply equally to his other works.

... the sudden contrary turn given my habitual life began slowly to take on before my eyes the symbolic significance of those contraries which a poet undertakes, when he functions truly, in order to reach the one identical desired goal. Through the way up and the way down of Heraclitus, it was necessary for me to proceed towards that spear-point where life and death, light and darkness ceased to be contraries.²¹

Indeed Elytis refers a number of times to Heraclitus and his work

18. See Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 17: "Κι όμως, από το τι είναι στο τι μπορεί να είναι, περνάς μία γέφυρα που σε πάει ... από την Κόλαση στον Παράδεισο. Και το πιο παράξενο: έναν Παράδεισο φτιαγμένον από τα ίδια υλικά που είναι φτιαγμένη ακριβώς και η Κόλαση". For further details on the relationship between Elytis' concept of the union of opposites, and his search for Paradise, see Chapter 4, footnotes 33-5.
19. R. Jouanny, 'Aspects of Surrealism in the Works of Odysseus Elytis', Books Abroad, Volume 49, Number 4, 1975, p. 687. Jouanny notes that this is a constant theme of Éluard's poetry.
20. Translated into English and reproduced in K. Friar, 'Odysseus Elytis', pp. 174-9.
21. Ibid., p. 177.

in his poetry;²² Iakov suggests that his links with the pre-Socratic philosophers, especially Heraclitus, can be related to the belief that these writers exerted a considerable influence on the surrealist movement, and he quotes Breton's (and Elytis') statements on Heraclitus' "surrealist leanings".²³ Not surprisingly then, Elytis continues: "Surrealism ... had proclaimed the same thing to me through the mouth of André Breton".²⁴

A second element that is repeated throughout Elytis' poetry is instantaneity; he explains that by this he means

... an event which happens in a split second,
but which can be made to include much more;
the instant can be enlarged upon...
This action, which could be contained in a
single line, instead grows and forms the
rest of the poem. This is what I mean by
development of an instantaneous impression.²⁵

Such a concept is exemplified in "Ἀήλος",²⁶ mentioned above. The poem describes a dive, or more precisely, the range of sensations experienced during the actual moment of diving. Vitti states that the concept of an instantaneous impression is a general characteristic of the whole To φωτόδεντρο collection,²⁷ best illustrated in poems such as "Ἀρχέτυπον", "Ὅσο διαρκούσε το ἄστρο", and "Ἡ κόρη πού 'φερνε ο βοριάς".²⁸

22. Heraclitus' name is mentioned eight times in Elytis' poetry, and four times in his prose. There are also allusions to various fragments; for further information and details on the references see Δ. Ιακώβ, Ἡ αρχαιογνωσία του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, (2nd edition) Εκδόσεις <<Πολύτυπο>>, Athens, 1985, pp. 50-3.

23. Ibid., pp. 49-50. See also M. Nadeau, Histoire du surréalisme Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1964, pp. 4, 104, 178.

24. Friar, 'Odysseus Elytis', p. 177.

25. 'Analogies of Light', p. 641.

26. In the collection To φωτόδεντρο.

27. M. Vitti, op.cit., p. 290.

28. Ibid., pp. 290, 298, 303.

The concept of the instantaneous impression is also a characteristic of another, earlier, collection, 'Εξη και μια τύφεις για τον ουρανό.²⁹ Elytis,³⁰ in order to illustrate the concept in an interview refers to a poem from this collection, "Καταγωγή του τοπίου ή το τέλος του ελέους", which begins and ends with the line

Μονομιάς, η σκιά της χελιδόνας θέρισε τα
βλέμματα των νοσταλγών της: Μεσημέρι.

Again, this one impression (of the swallow passing before the poet's eyes) forms the basis of the entire poem.

This device of beginning and ending with the same line(s) serves to emphasize that the content of a poem is a development of an initial single image or event; in the poetry of Elytis' first period this device is exhibited notably in the poems of 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος.³¹ One poem, for example, begins with the lines "Ο κήπος έμπαυε στη θάλασσα / Βαθύ γαρύφαλο ακρωτήρι";³² Elytis develops the idea of the fertility of the sea, inherent in the sea / garden association, to an address to an anonymous, sensual, feminine persona.³³ After the line "Για το δικό σου το χατίρι", a repetition of the first two lines brings the reader back to the initial image.

Many of the love poems of Προσανατολισμό,³⁴ may also be characterised as exhibiting this feature of instantaneity, as well the section "Αιθρίες".

29. Ibid., p. 268.

30. 'Analogies of Light', p. 641.

31. For example see poems VIII, X; also poem XVI.

32. Poem IX.

33. For a discussion on the portrayal of the sea as a second garden, and the feminine sexual nature of the sea, see Chapter 2, pp. 48-51

34. For example, many of the poems in the section "Η συναυλία των γυακίνθων", and pp. 34, 77.

A third element that is repeated throughout Elytis' work is the poet's concept of "meteorism": as Elytis said, "there are creatures who have a tendency to mount up into the sky, to rise towards the heights".³⁵

In his early poetry the "creature" may be a sailor boy,³⁶ Marina,³⁷ Love itself³⁸ or some element of Nature,³⁹ and there is no symbolic significance attached to this meteorism.

The element of meteorism takes on a more complex aspect in the poetry of Elytis' second period with the introduction of the related theme of resurrection, which reflects the poet's new interest in religion;⁴⁰ this theme is best represented by the hero of 'Ασμα

35. 'Analogies of Light', p. 641. See also Λ. Λυχνάρá, op.cit., p. 40: "Αν μελετήσει κανείς την κίνηση στην ποίηση του Ελύτη, θα βρει πως η κυρίαρχη κίνηση είναι ένα ανέβασμα του υλικού κόσμου και του ανθρώπου προς τον ουρανό". (She adds "καμιά κίνηση προς τα κάτω", although this is a simplification of Elytis' work.) See also Elytis' description of a dream in Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 164-6, and ibid., p. 32.
36. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 24, lines 3-4.
37. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 129, lines 4-5. See also the song on Marina in Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 13, lines 9-13.
38. In the seven part poem "Ωρίων", according to Decavalles in the article, 'Eros: His Power, Forms and Transformations in the Poetry of Odysseus Elytis', Books Abroad, Volume 49, Number 4, 1975, p. 663. Elytis also refers to feelings in general ascending (Προσανατολισμοί, p. 131, lines 7-9; p. 141, line 16), as well as pity (ibid., p. 138, line 12), purity (ibid., p. 93, line 6), and hope ('Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 30, lines 10-4, 24).
39. For example, fruit (Προσανατολισμοί, p. 35, lines 18-19; p. 96, line 3); fire (ibid., p. 55, line 7). Note also the many references to birds in Elytis' poetry; Petropoulos notes that 60% of the animals mentioned in Προσανατολισμοί are birds, mainly seabirds. (H. Πετρόπουλος, Ελύτης, Μόραλης, Τσαρούχης, 5th edition, Εκδόσεις <<Γράμματα>>, Athens, 1981, p. 39.)
40. This new interest in religion, or more specifically, the Orthodox tradition, is an element of Elytis' personal mythology in his second period. See the relevant section, Chapter 3.

ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the emphasis on resurrection does not preclude the continued use of imagery which portrays meteorism in a non-religious context.

με την πρώτη νεότητα ν' ανεβώ
στο γλαυκό τ' ουρανού - κι εκεί να εξουσιάσω!⁴²

Μικρά καράβια στου κάβου το γύρισμα
... προβαίνουν ψηλά μες στα νέφη
απ' την άλλη μεριά του βυθού.⁴³

The image of the boat rising into the sky is repeated in poems from the third period.⁴⁴ Here meteorism is not portrayed simply as an ascent or a resurrection, but as a flight towards the heights, "τα τρίτα ύψη" which represent Paradise.⁴⁵ The idea of trying to fly towards the heights is given fullest expression in Μαρία Νεφέλη: in the pair of poems "Ο προπατορικός Παράδεισος" and "Ο χαρταετός" both the Antiphonist and Maria express this desire to ascend to a paradise as each understands it:

Κι όμως ήμουν πλασμένη για χαρταετός.
Τα ύψη μου άρεσαν ακόμη και όταν
έμενα στο προσκέφαλό μου . . .
'Ενωθα το δωμάτιό μου ανέβαινε
δεν ονειρεύομουν - ανέβαινε.⁴⁶

41. The theme of resurrection is treated in greater detail in the section on religion, footnotes 12-8.
42. Το 'Αξιλον Εστί, p. 55, lines 31-2. See also ibid., p. 22, lines 20-1.
43. Ibid., p. 41, lines 6-9.
44. Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 29, lines 1-3; Ο ήλιος ο ηλιότορας, p. 29, lines 1-2; Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 17, lines 5-6.
45. For details on Elytis' concept of Paradise and "τα τρίτα ύψη" see Chapter 4, footnote 34-7.
46. Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 59, lines 1-7. See also p. 61, lines 11-2, 17; p. 63, line 3.

Of course Maria's name "Νεφέλη"⁴⁷ is also significant in its connotations with the sky - in one poem the poet refers to her as 'Ιρις Μαρία Νεφέλη⁴⁸ - and thus it is not surprising that she should often be portrayed as rising ("ανεβαίνεις εσύ μέσα στον 'Ερωτα").⁴⁹

Indeed there is a motif, prominent in Elytis' later poetry and his collages,⁵⁰ of the "girl-angel", the sensuous, often naked, young girl in flight, who frequently brings a message.⁵¹ Marina and Maria Nefeli have already been mentioned above as examples of meteorism, but there are other anonymous girls,⁵² as well as the famous Αρετή.⁵³

A fourth thread that runs throughout all of Elytis' poetry is his belief in the importance of a poem's structure. Although the complex architectural schema, exemplified in works such as Το 'Αξιον Εστί, Μαρία Νεφέλη and Το μονόγραμμα, is confined to the second and

47. Elytis speaks of the mythological connotations of both names of the Μαρία Νεφέλη title, but does not expand upon this statement. ('Analogies of Light', p. 640)
48. In the poem "'Υμνος στη Μαρία Νεφέλη", p. 41, lines 4, 9; p. 43, line 2. Cf. this association of a girl with a rainbow with the girl in "Παραλλαγές πάνω σε μιαν αχτίδα".
49. Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 23, line 14. See also ibid., p. 18, line 4.
50. See K. Friar, 'The Imagery and Collages of Odysseus Elytis', Books Abroad, Volume 49, Number 4, 1975, p. 708.
51. See also 'Analogies of Light', p. 641: "It may be strange, but in my poetry the spirit inevitably assumes the shape of a girl, a young woman who has wings and can fly. This occurs repeatedly".
52. See Η καλοσύνη στις λυκοποριές, Poem IV, line 15; 'Εξη και μια τύφεις για τον ουρανό, p. 23, lines 16-7; the girl in the poem, "Η κόρη που 'φερνε ο βοριάς" in Το φωτόδεντρο, pp. 13-4; Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 23, lines 13-8; Τρία ποιήματα, p. 13, lines 16-8; ibid., p. 28, lines 1-3; Ημερολόγιο ενός αθέατου Απριλίου, p. 50, line 1; ibid., p. 53, lines 5-7; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 84, lines 12-6; ibid., p. 89, lines 18-20; Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 21, 146-7.
53. 'Εξη και μια τύφεις για τον ουρανό, pp. 16-7. Elytis refers to this figure again in Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 93, lines 1-2. There is also a veiled allusion in Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 95, line 18.

third periods, one should not assume that these are the first or only examples of Elytis' interest in the structure of a poem. Elytis has had an "extraordinary passion for the order (sometimes hidden) of structure",⁵⁴ and this is evident from his early poetry, despite the surrealist influence.⁵⁵

Elytis claims that he has always been attracted to works of music, art and poetry that possess "μιαν αόρατη γεωμετρία".⁵⁶ Moreover he believes that the form of a poem should be inseparably bound with its content, and that the ideal poem would have a form analogous with its content.⁵⁷

There is also a further reason for Elytis' emphasis on the structure of a poem, and that is the challenge to express himself within a framework.

I am aware that the average reader is not interested in the design underlying a poem. I, however, set up difficulties expressly in order to be able to overcome them, in order to restrain myself, to make myself operate within set limits.⁵⁸

In Elytis' poetry of his first period this structural emphasis

54. J. Carson, 49 scholia on the poems of Odysseus Elytis, 'Υψιλον, Athens, 1983, p. 126.

55. Robinson notes however that "the poems chosen for publication in 1935 were among the most controlled and conservative examples of the material available", and perhaps not truly representative of Elytis' early attempts at surrealist poetry, which were based on the device of automatic writing. (C. Robinson, 'The Greekness of Modern Greek Surrealism', Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Volume 7, 1981, p. 132.)

56. "Η υπέρβαση και η γεωμέτρηση", p. 758.

57. Ibid., p. 759; 'Analogies of Light', p. 640; Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 322-3; 'Έχω δικάωμο σαν Έλληνας ν' ανησυχώ για την ταυτότητά μου'.

58. 'Analogies of Light', p. 640.

is mainly restricted to the arrangement of lines⁵⁹ and use of repetition⁶⁰ and parallelism,⁶¹ as the first poem of the collection Προσανατολισμοί indicates:

Ο έρωτας
Το αρχιπέλαγος
Κι η πλώρα των αφρών του
Κι οι γλάροι των ονείρων του
Στο πιο ψηλό κατάρτι του ο ναύτης ανεμίζει
Ένα τραγούδι

Ο έρωτας
Το τραγούδι του
Κι οι ορίζοντες του ταξιδιού του
Κι η ηχώ της νοσταλγίας του
Στον πιο βρεμένο βράχο της η αρραβωνιαστικιά προσμένει
Ένα καράβι

Ο έρωτας
Το καράβι του
Κι η αμεριμνησία των μελτεμιών του
Κι ο φλόκος της ελπίδας του
Στον πιο ελαφρό κυματισμό του ένα νησί λικνίζει
Τον ερχομό.

-
59. This may refer to the number of lines in, and shape of, the stanzas (see Προσανατολισμοί, pp. 13, 14, 20, 22-8, 46-8, 133, 136, 143-4, 145-6; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, pp. 11, 12, 17, 19, 21-2, 26, 37, 43) or to the length of lines and repeated patterns (see Προσανατολισμοί, pp. 13, 14, 15, 21, 78-9, 108-9, 114-5).
60. See for example Προσανατολισμοί, p. 13, lines 1, 7, 13; p. 17, lines 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12; pp. 46-8, lines 1, 3, 13, 16, 31, 46; p. 49, lines 14, 15-6, 17-8; p. 52, lines 11, 14-5; p. 53, lines 9-10, 12, 20-1; p. 102, lines 1, 8, 15; p. 110, lines 1-6, 11; p. 114, lines 1, 2, 4; p. 121, lines 4, 6, 9; pp. 125-6, lines 10-3, 30-1, 40-1; p. 127, lines 7-8, 12, 14; pp. 128-9, lines 1-2, 13-14, 20, 23, 35; p. 130, lines 20-1; p. 132, lines 16-9, 20-2; p. 133, lines 2, 4, 6-7, 13; p. 143-4, lines 1-3, 7, 13, 19, 27-30; pp. 145-6, lines 2-3, 6-7, 12-3, 16-8, 22, 24-5, 27, 31, 34, 39-40, 44, 48, 50. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 11, lines 1, 7, 8, 14; p. 28, lines 14-9, 21-3; p. 32, lines 12, 14-7, 18-9, 21-2.
61. See for example Προσανατολισμοί, p. 13; p. 17; p. 43, lines 9-11; p. 67, lines 23-4; p. 69, lines 12, 14; pp. 71-2, lines 1-2, 16-7, 33-4; p. 98, lines 5-6; p. 99, lines 5-6; p. 118, lines 6-13; pp. 130-1, lines 1-2, 14-5, 37-8; p. 133 Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 12, lines 10-2; p. 15, lines 1-4; p. 18, lines 13-4; p. 23, lines 10-2, 17-8, 19-21; p. 38, lines 1-2, 14-5, 18-20; p. 40, lines 4-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11, 13-5. There are countless other examples.

In the second period this also occurs in the early works, such as 'Ασμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας⁶² and Η καλοσύνη στις λυκοπορεύς.⁶³ In 1948 however, while in Paris, Elytis was persuaded by Char and Camus to write an article, "Pour un lyrisme d'inventions architecturales et de métaphysique solaire".⁶⁴ He did not employ the actual theory of solar metaphysics until the poetry of his third period (1971-85),⁶⁵ but his ideas on the "architecture" of a poem found immediate expression in the intricate structure of Το 'Αξιλον Εστί.⁶⁶

The new complexity, both thematic and linguistic, in Το 'Αξιλον Εστί required a far more elaborate and formal structure than any of Elytis' previous works, and Byzantine hymnography provided the framework.⁶⁷ The poem is divided into three parts; the first, "Η Γένεσις", is made up of seven hymns. The second, "Τα Πάθη", is the most complex: it is composed of three categories, Psalms,

62. See for instance Poems Δ' and Ε', and cf. passim.

63. See Poem II, lines 7, 13, 18; Poem III, lines 1, 14, 21; Poem IV, lines 3, 20, 22-3; Poem VII, lines 10-1, 17, 22.

64. Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 322. The article was to be for Empédocle, a journal dealing with "Mediterranean values" that was to be published by Albert Camus and René Char. In fact the article was never written, as the journal foundered, or so Elytis believed (loc.cit.). Vitti states however that Empédocle was first published in April 1949, and continued to be published regularly after that. (Op.cit., pp. 229, 271)

65. This theory is discussed in Chapter 4.

66. Argyriou calls Το 'Αξιλον Εστί "το πιο αυστηρά αρχιτεκτονημένο ... ποίημα" (Α. Αργυρίου, Διαδοχικές Αναγνώσεις Ελλήνων Υπερρεαλιστών, Εκδόσεις <<Γνώση>>, Athens, 1983, p. 77.)

67. In the notes that accompanied the first publication of sections of Το 'Αξιλον Εστί in Επιθεώρηση Τέχνης (April, 1958), Elytis wrote that the poem was based "επάνω στην αυστηρή αρχιτεκτονική μιας φανταστικής εκκλησιαστικής λειτουργίας..." (Βαλέτας, op.cit., p. 162). Lignadis also compares it with the form of an ancient tragedy, but this is misleading. (Γ. Λιγνάδης, Το 'Αξιλον Εστί του Ελύτη: Εισαγωγή, Σχολιασμός, Ανάλυση, 6th edition, Βιβλιοθήκη Σχολής Μωραΐτη, <<Ψυχικόν>>, Athens, 1982, p. 30.)

Odes, and Readings,⁶⁸ which are further grouped thematically into three sections, each following an identical pattern.⁶⁹ The third part, "Το Δοξαστικόν" is composed of three sections of similar structure.⁷⁰

In his third period Elytis continues to experiment with repetition, and verse structure;⁷¹ for example in Το φωτόδεντρο, he substitutes spaces for the normal marks of punctuation, but it is not until the love poem Το μονόγραμμα that the intricate structural pattern beloved of Το 'Αξιλον Εστί is repeated.⁷² As well as employing

68. Lignadis uses the term ἄσμα instead of ωδή (for his reasons, see ibid., p. 14), but as Elytis had referred to Psalms, Odes and Readings in his accompanying notes it seems pointless to change the terminology.
69. That is, Psalm, Psalm Ode, Reading, Ode, Psalm, Psalm, Ode, Reading, Ode, Psalm, Psalm. Thus there is a total of six Readings, twelve Odes, and eighteen Psalms in this second part of Το 'Αξιλον Εστί.
70. Further details may be obtained from K. Friar, The Sovereign Sun, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1974, pp. 27-8, or Γ. Σαββίδης, '<<'Αξιλον Εστί>> το ποίημα του Ελύτη', in Ο Ελύτης, Σύγχρονοι Ποιητές 2: Οδυσσέας Ελύτης Εκλογή 1935-1977, 4th edition, <<'Ακμων>>, Athens, 1979, p. 179. For information on the influence of the liturgical tradition on Το 'Αξιλον Εστί, see the section "The influence of the literary tradition of Greece" in Chapter 3.
71. For examples of Elytis' experiments with innovative poetic structures, see "Ψαλμός και Ψηφιδωτό για μιαν άνοιξη στην Αθήνα", in Τα ετεροθαλή, and the poems in Τρία ποιήματα; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, pp. 61, 64; and the collections Ο ήλιος ο ηλιότορας and Τα ρω του έρωτα, in which Elytis introduced a further aspect of his writing style, song composition.
72. Before the publication of Μαρία Νεφέλη, the third of Elytis' works with an intricate structure, Friar characterized Το μονόγραμμα as being "as highly schematized as Axion Esti" and as having the most complicated structural design. (The Sovereign Sun, p. 39.)

a complicated mathematical design,⁷³ Elytis introduces a new element: words and phrases from the line given in the preface

θα πενθῶ πάντα - μ' ακούς; - για σένα,
μόνος, στον Παράδεισο.

are repeated in each of the seven poems that make up the collection.⁷⁴

In Μαρία Νεφέλη, the intricate structure of Το 'Αξιον Εστί is also repeated; Elytis himself said that its structure is even more complex than that of the latter.⁷⁵ This is due to the fact that the "almost exclusively ... first-person lyrical poet"⁷⁶ has introduced for the first time a second speaker who is equally important. Maronitis, who has provided a study of the technical and thematic structuring of the poem, illustrates how this theme of twins or pairs is reflected in the content.⁷⁷

Το 'Αξιον Εστί, Το μονόγραμμα and Μαρία Νεφέλη all possess an intricate, almost mathematical pattern; this should not suggest, however, that Elytis' other works are not based on any planned structure. A major factor in the composition of all of his poetry is the continual return to the number seven, or multiples of it; details are given below in order to indicate the importance of this factor. Elytis has always tended to gravitate towards this number in his poetry, and it would seem to be endowed with a mystical significance, although critics are

73. For details on the mathematical structure of Το μονόγραμμα, see Friar, ibid., pp. 39-40.

74. That is, θα is repeated three times in Poem I; πενθῶ occurs three times in Poem II; πάντα, seven times in Poem III; "μ' ακούς;" occurs thirty-two times in Poem IV; "για σένα", eight times in Poem V; μόνος four times in Poem VI; and "στον Παράδεισο", twice in Poem VII.

75. 'Analogies of Light', p. 640.

76. Decavalles, op.cit., p. 37.

77. Δ. Μαρωνίτης, 'Όροι του λυρισμού στον Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, 3rd edition, <<Κέδρος>>, Athens, 1982, pp. 95-8.

divided as to whether the poet's persistent attachment is simply a technique,⁷⁸ or an expression of a belief approaching that of a religious mysticism.⁷⁹

There are two methods that Elytis uses to introduce the symbolic number into his poetry, the first relating to the structure of the collections. Each collection is based on the number seven, or multiples of it, as the following list clearly indicates.

In Προσανατολισμοί there are five groups of seven poems each.⁸⁰ As well as this there are two groups, "Αιθρίες" and "Η συναυλία των γυαλίνθων",⁸¹ which are made up of twenty-one poems: in all, seven sets of poems. The section, "Η θητεία του καλοκαιριού", which includes such poems as "Η Μαρίνα των βράχων" and "Η Τρελλή Ροδιά", is a collection of fourteen separate poems. The work 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος is a collection of twenty eight poems,⁸² and the accompanying Παραλλαγές πάνω σε μιαν αχτίδα is made up of seven poems, representing the colours of the rainbow.⁸³

78. Vittti, op.cit., p. 29; Γ. Δανιήλ, 'Επτά παρά ένα <<Δελτία>> για τον Ελύτη', Χάρτης, Volumes 21-3, November 1986, p. 478; Σαββίδης, op.cit., p. 177.

79. Κ. Μητσάκης, Το <<Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας>> του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, Εκδόσεις <<Ελληνική Παιδεία>>, Athens, 1980, p. 13.

80. That is, "Επτά νυχτερινά επτάστιχα", "Παράθυρα προς την πέμπτη εποχή", "Ωρίων", "Διόνυσος" and "Οι κλεψύδρες του αγνώστου".

81. When "Αιθρίες" was first published, (Τα Νέα Γράμματα 3, December 1937, pp. 709-14), it was entitled Γήινα θρύμματα ευτυχίας, and consisted of fourteen poems. The original title of "Η συναυλία των γυαλίνθων" was Ευρητήριο της σωπής, and contained only seven poems in its first publication. (Ibid., pp. 715-7.)

82. Furthermore a few of the poems from this collection are made up of stanzas of seven lines (pp. 11, 12, 26).

83. Poem VII is composed of seven stanzas.

Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας consists of fourteen poems; Η καλοσύνη στις λυκοπορεύς is divided into seven parts. In Το Άξιον Εστί, the first part "Η Γένεσις" is divided into seven hymns, each representing a day in creation. However, the structural importance of the number seven in this instance is due more to the suggestion of the Biblical counterpart rather than Elytis' gravitation towards the number seven.⁸⁴ In Έξη και μια τύφελς για τον ουρανό even the title becomes part of Elytis' schema based on the number seven. The collection consists of seven poems (if "Ο ύπνος των γενναίων" and its parallel are considered to be one poem); the seventh is entitled "Εφτά μέρες για την αιωνιότητα", and is divided into seven days/parts.

This is also the case with the collection Το φωτόδεντρο. Its subtitle is και η δέκατη τέταρτη ομορφιά,⁸⁵ and it too has a poem with a parallel ("Τα δυο του κόσμου");⁸⁶ if these are considered to be one poem, then the work consists of twenty-one poems, with the title poem, "Το φωτόδεντρο" the fourteenth.⁸⁷ Another poem "Η Οδύσσεια" is divided into seven sections by the intervening nautical terms (πρόσω, πρόσω ήρεμα, όλο δεξιά etc.).⁸⁸ Ο ήλιος ο ηλιάτορας has a cast of seven "characters",⁸⁹ and there are twenty-one "speeches".

Το μονόγραμμα offers possibly the most extensive use of the number seven in Elytis' work, certainly up until this point. The

84. The influence of the Bible on Το Άξιον Εστί is discussed in the section on religion in Chapter 3.
85. The symbolic meaning of this phrase is discussed by Vittì, op.cit., pp. 309-10; Friar, 'The Sovereign Sun', p. 36; Καραντώνης, op.cit., pp. 209-10.
86. "Τα δυο του κόσμου" and its parallel contain fourteen and twenty-one stanzas respectively.
87. This poem is composed of three parts, each containing seven stanzas.
88. See also the poems "Γεγονός του Αυγούστου" (seven lines); "Αρχέτυπον" (seven stanzas); and "Θεοκτίστη" (fourteen stanzas).
89. Listed on p. 7 of the collection: αφηγητής, ο ήλιος, άνεμοι, κορίτσι, χόρος ανδρών, χόρος γυναικών, τραγουδιστές.

work is a collection of seven poems, each consisting of seven lines or multiples of that number: Poem I has seven lines; Poem II, twenty one; Poem III, thirty five; Poem IV, forty nine; Poem V, thirty five; Poem VI, twenty one; and Poem VII, seven. Further details on the stanzaic and metrical arrangement (which is also based on the number seven) are given by Friar.⁹⁰

Τα ρω του έρωτα consists of seven groups of songs, two of which are translations from Brecht and Lorca. Of Elytis' own work, the first four groups ("Μικρές κυκλάδες"; "Το θαλασσινό τριφύλλο"; "Η Παναγιά των κοιμητηριών"; and "Ο χαμαιλέων") each contain seven songs.⁹¹ The fifth group, "Τα ρω του έρωτα", consists of twenty eight songs. Τα ετεροθαλή is divided into two sections, each of which contain seven poems. Many of these poems have a further stanzaic pattern based on the number seven.⁹² In Μαρία Νεφέλη the two characters have a total of twenty one parallel monologues, three sets of seven. These three sets plus the four interconnecting pieces - the prologue, the songs of Maria and the Poet, and the epilogue - add up to seven.⁹³ Τρία ποιήματα 'με σημαία ευκαιρίας' contains three poems, each of which is made up of seven sections. Ημερολόγιο ενός αθέατου Απριλίου consists of forty nine poems, which cover a period of twenty eight days.

90. 'The Sovereign Sun', pp. 39-40.

91. The seventh song in each group is often significant. In the case of the groups "Η Παναγιά των κοιμητηριών" and "Ο χαμαιλέων", the seventh song takes its title from the title of the group; the seventh song of the group "Μικρές κυκλάδες" is "Ανάμεσα Σύρα και Τζιά".

92. The first poem of each section ("Ψαλμός και Ψηφιδωτό για μια ανουξη στην Αθήνα" and "Η Ελένη της Κρήτης") follows a pattern of three lines or stanzas, then a seven line refrain. The second poem of each section ("Δώδεκα Νήσων 'Αγγελος" and "Ο Φυλλομάντης") has seven stanzas of seven lines. "Της Σελήνης της Μυτιλήνης" contains two parts, both composed of seven stanzas; "Ελυτόνησος" follows a pattern of four lines and then a seven line refrain (cf. the pattern of the first poem of each section); and finally, "Απόστιχα μυστικά" contains fourteen three line stanzas.

93. For further details see Μαρωνίτης, op.cit., pp. 94-5; Γαβαλάς, op.cit., pp. 25-6.

The most recent of Elytis' poetical works is Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, and this is the only collection that approaches Το μονόγραμμα in terms of the emphasis given to the number seven in its structure. It consists of fourteen sections: seven of these (the sections entitled "Μυρίσαι το άριστον" and "Και με φως και με θάνατον") are each composed of seven parts (prose or poetry). Four of the remaining sections (entitled "Ο μικρός ναυτίλος") are each made up of seven "scenes", and the last of the other three sections (entitled "'Ότιω τις έραται") contains a list of thirty five "images".⁹⁴ There are further intricacies contained within individual poems.⁹⁵

The second method used by Elytis is simply to include the word seven in various phrases; although they occur several times,⁹⁶ references to the number are not as frequent, nor as impressive as the structural examples given above. Nevertheless, these references do seem to have a kind of mystical quality: "οι εφτά ουρανού";⁹⁷ "οι εφτά σοφοί του κόσμου".⁹⁸

94. The first fourteen refer to Greek islands; the next seven to various places outside Greece; the next seven to Greek islands; and the last seven are devoted to erotic portrayals of named girls.
95. For example see pp. 28, 31 (the list contains forty nine words), 57, 67.
96. A total of eighteen times: see Προσανατολισμοί, p. 22 (title); p. 120, line 6; p. 135, line 5; p. 145, line 21; 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 40, line 4; Το 'Αξιλον Εστί, p. 47, lines 3, 4; 'Εξη και μια τύψεις για τον ουρανό, p. 24 (title); Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 32, line 7; Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 15, line 1; p. 16, line 7; p. 61, line 4; Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 27, lines 6, 12; p. 34, line 18; p. 90, lines 9, 10.
97. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 40, line 4; Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 34, line 18.
98. Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 32, line 7. Elytis even changes fairytale tradition to fit his preoccupation with the number. In the song "Η Μάγια" (Τα ρω του έρωτα), the first and last stanzas ("Η Πούλια πόχει εφτά παιδιά / μεσ' απ' τους ουρανούς περνά") contradict the fact, as Meraklis points out, that the original fairytale specified that there were only six children. (M. Μερακλής, Δεκαπέντε ερμηνευτικές δοκιμές στον Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, Πατάκης, Athens, 1984, p. 21.)

A fifth element which is repeated throughout Elytis' poetry, and which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is the concept of "the sanctity of the senses".⁹⁹

Certainly the senses are very important in Elytis' poetry especially that of the first period. Rotolo notes that the most prominent feature of the content of Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος is "the vast range of sensations and notations with which the poet expresses his relationship with the outside world and with his own self".¹⁰⁰

The importance of the senses in this first period may be attributed to the influence of Surrealism; Elytis reveals that this was one of the movement's primary features that interested him,¹⁰¹ commenting later

Surrealism also stimulated us through the great importance it placed on the senses. Everything was perceived through the senses.¹⁰²

Robinson makes the point that the selection of Éluard's poems chosen by Elytis for translation (which appeared in Τα Νέα Γράμματα, 2 March 1936, pp. 232-6)¹⁰³ rather than emphasizing the surreal elements - which the accompanying article had discussed¹⁰⁴ - tended to focus on the way "Éluard's poems appeal to the senses in their imagery with

99. This term was used by Elytis in the interview 'Analogies of Light', pp. 631-2, 640.

100. V. Rotolo, 'The "Heroic and Elegiac Song for the Lost Second Lieutenant of the Albanian Campaign": The Transition from the Early to the Later Elytis', Books Abroad, Volume 49, Number 4, Autumn 1975, p. 690.

101. Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 381.

102. 'Analogies of Light', p. 631.

103. Elytis' translations of other Éluard poems also appeared in Τα Νέα Γράμματα, 2, Number 3, November 1936, pp. 854-60.

104. This article is reproduced in Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 450-4.

nature, especially sunlight, birds and stones..."¹⁰⁵

In Προσανατολισμοί, and to a lesser extent in 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, the emphasis is on the visual senses. There are appeals to the other senses - for instance, the plants that Elytis mentions are frequently highly scented¹⁰⁶ - but the imagery is primarily visual.¹⁰⁷ This is also conveyed in the frequency of the words μάτια / ματιά,¹⁰⁸ and in such phrases as

Είναι τα μάτια πια που κυριαρχούν¹⁰⁹

Η στιλπνή αίσθηση παίρνεται στα μάτια¹¹⁰

'Ό,τι κοιτάω με τη ματιά με θρέφει.¹¹¹

Elytis also stresses the importance of the appeal to the visual senses (over the acoustic) in the emphasis given to the word "σιωπή",¹¹² often in conjunction with an example of visual imagery:

105. C. Robinson, 'Elytis and French Poetry 1935-1945', Books Abroad, Volume 49, Number 4, Autumn 1975, p. 680.

106. For example, jasmine, roses, and various herbs. See Chapter 2, footnote 149.

107. This point has been stressed by many critics e.g. Λυχνάρá, op.cit., p. 22; K. Friar, 'The Imagery and Collages of Odysseus Elytis', Books Abroad, Volume 49, Number 4, Autumn 1975, p. 704. Elytis notes that "συνήθιστα να μεταφράζω πάντα κάθε μου εντύπωση οπτικά" (Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 103; his emphasis).

108. The words μάτι / μάτια occur thirty three times in Προσανατολισμοί, and twelve times in 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος. Ματιά occurs five and three times respectively.

109. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 68, line 10.

110. Ibid., p. 83, line 1.

111. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 41, line 5.

112. The word σιωπή occurs sixteen times in Προσανατολισμοί; "Η συναυλία των γυακίνθων" was initially entitled "Ευρετήριο της σιωπής" (see footnote 81), and the word occurs twice in the first poem.

Ευνοϊκές αστροφεγγιές έφεραν τη σιωπή¹¹³

Κι η καινούρια σιωπή της λάμπει αποκάλυψη¹¹⁴

Most references to the acoustic senses are not wholly favourable: "μια μελωδία παρείσαχτη";¹¹⁵ "Που σπάζει όλο τον ήχο του".¹¹⁶

In the second period the imagery is still primarily visual, but much less so than in Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος.¹¹⁷ The sound of words has become a significant element in Elytis' poetry, and in Το 'Αξιον Εστί, for instance, there are lists of plants, birds and sea creatures chosen not for any symbolic meaning but simply on the basis of the word's echo.¹¹⁸

In the third period this change in emphasis is even more marked; indeed one critic goes so far as to say that "δεν κυριαρχούν πια τα μάτια αλλά η ακοή".¹¹⁹ Elytis' interest in the sound of words (especially plants) is now augmented by an increasing interest in speech, and onomatopoeia.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, whether the emphasis is on the visual or acoustic senses, there is no doubt that Elytis relies heavily on an appeal to

113. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 23, line 1.

114. Ibid., p. 39, line 6. See also ibid., p. 29, lines 1-3.

115. Ibid., p. 23, line 2.

116. Ibid., p. 50, line 3.

117. "Στο 'Αξιον Εστί η ματιά είναι πάντα η πρώτη αίσθηση, μόνο που δεν αρκέει πια". (Λυχναρά, op.cit., p. 50.)

118. Το 'Αξιον Εστί, p. 15, line 28, ibid., p. 17, lines 11-4, 32-4; ibid., p. 18, lines 29-31; ibid., p. 19, lines 1-5.

119. Λυχναρά, op.cit., p. 113.

120. This aspect of Elytis' poetry of the third period is covered in Chapter 4.

the senses in all of his poetry. However, a simple appeal is not enough for Elytis: in his work, he wishes the senses to be "sacred":

I, too, have brought to poetry a method of apprehending the world through the senses. The ancient Greeks, of course, did the same, except that they did not have the notion of sanctity which only appeared with the arrival of Christianity. I have tried to harmonize these two terms; that is, whenever I speak of the most sensuous matters, I conceive of them as being in a state of purity and sanctity. I aim at the union of these two currents.¹²¹

It would be natural to assume that this juxtaposition of sensuousness/purity is best expressed in Elytis' erotic poems (notably from Προσανατολισμού), and in the oft-expressed belief that purity may be found in the sexual act and/or the sensuous body of a naked woman.¹²² What better example of Elytis' statement "... Christianity's idea of sanctification I ... adapt to the world of the senses",¹²³ than in the poem "Η κόρη που 'φερνε ο βοριάς", where the girl-angel, who appears to the poet beside the little chapel, is described in intensely sensual terms:

Πρόκλινα μια στιγμή να δω μεγαλωμένη τη
διχάλα των ποδιών κι όλο το μέσα μέρος
με το λίγο ακόμη σάλιο της θάλασσας 'Υστερα
μού 'ρθε η μυρωδιά της . όλο φρέσκο φωμί
κι άγρια βουνίσια γιάμπολη¹²⁴

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121. 'Analogies of Light', pp. 631-2. This juxtaposition of pagan and Christian elements, expressed here in Elytis' notion of the sanctity of the senses, is also reflected in his imagery, notably in his portrayal of the religious tradition of Greece. See Chapter 3.
122. For example, see Το 'Αξιόν Εστί, p. 20, lines 19-23; 'Εξη και μια τύψεις για τον ουρανό, p. 20, lines 1-7; Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 77, lines 19-22. The purity/sexual motif is another example of Elytis' theme of the union of opposites.
123. 'Analogies of Light', p. 632.
124. Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 14, lines 8-12.

Elytis stresses, however, that the element of sanctity is not confined to his erotic poetry. Rather "the senses do not necessarily possess erotic connotations for me, since they have an aura of sanctity; the senses are elevated to a level that is sacred".¹²⁵ This is confirmed in his letter to Friar about the writing of 'Ασμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας, a poem that one would not classify as erotic; Elytis wrote that he was aiming for a climax

the fusion of Platonic and Christian ideas up to a certain point - something extremely difficult for me since I did not wish to reach that point unless through the majestic road of feeling or intuition.¹²⁶

The importance of the senses, with the emphasis on the visual and acoustic, and their "sanctification" is then a fifth element of his poetry; thus does he refer, in his most recent poetical work to "τις κορυφές των αισθήσεων πριν απ' όλα".¹²⁷

This chapter has attempted to show that while Elytis' personal mythology may be divided into three separate stages, it also encompasses a set of theories whose expression is not restricted to just one period but permeates all three. By providing a constant background, this aspect of his personal mythology acts as a framework within which one can study the changes in emphasis between periods. This set of theories consists of five elements: Elytis' concept of the union of opposites; the instantaneous impression; meteorism; the structure of a poem, and the related significance of the number seven; and the sanctity of the senses.

125. 'Analogies of Light', p. 632.

126. K. Friar, 'Odysseus Elytis', p. 176 (my emphasis).

127. Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 118, lines 4-5.

The first, Elytis' concept of the union of opposites, was shown to be based on Heracleitus' theory of opposites and surrealist belief. (It is significant that the movement saw Heracleitus as having a considerable influence on surrealism.) Upon further examination, it was revealed that there are several strands to this concept of the union of opposites in Elytis' poetry, namely: the portrayal of the sea as a second sky; the image of the colours white and black as one; the union of two opposite personalities, exemplified in Μαρία Νεφέλη; and the union of abstract ideas, which is a recurrent motif in Το 'Αξιον Εστί in particular.

The second, the instantaneous impression, was described by the poet as where a single impression or action forms the basis of an entire poem. This element is developed notably in Elytis' work of his second and third periods; in his earlier poetry it is often expressed in the device of beginning and ending a poem with the same line(s).

Meteorism was also shown to be an extremely important element in Elytis' personal mythology. In the first period its expression does not have any symbolic meaning: it simply portrays a creature or object rising towards the heights. In the second period, however, meteorism reflects the poet's new interest in religion; hence there is a corresponding new emphasis on the related theme of resurrection, and this is exemplified in 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθυμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας. Finally, in the third period, meteorism is portrayed as a flight towards the heights - "τα τρίτα ύψη" - which represent Paradise, this notion being best illustrated in Μαρία Νεφέλη. Maria Nefeli herself was shown to be an expression of a recurrent motif in Elytis' poetry, namely, the "girl-angel" in flight, who often brings a message.

A fourth element was the emphasis given by Elytis to a poem's structure. This was revealed to be based on: his belief that a poem's form should be bound inseparably with its content; and his desire to overcome the challenge of expressing himself within a framework. This element is present in all three periods, although the

level of intricacy of poetic structure increases with the years.

For example, in the poetry of the first period, and the early works of the second, the emphasis is restricted to the arrangement of lines, and the use of repetition and parallelism. It is not until To 'Αξιλον Εστι - whose new thematic and linguistic complexity required a more elaborate structure than that previously employed - that the concept of a formal poetic framework (which was provided by Byzantine hymnography) occurs. However in the third period it is not until To μονόγραμμα and Μαρία Νεφέλη that the intricate mathematical pattern of To 'Αξιλον Εστι is repeated.

Elytis' use of the number seven was also revealed to be an important aspect, in terms of structure: examination of his work showed every single collection to be based on this number, and its influence may also be detected in individual poems.

A final element is Elytis' concept of the sanctity of the senses. The importance of the appeal to the senses in Elytis' poetry was shown to be due to two factors: firstly, the emphasis that the surrealist movement placed on the senses; and secondly, Elytis' own desire to portray the senses as "sacred".

Elytis relies heavily on an appeal to the senses in all three periods, but nevertheless a change in focus may be noted: in the first period the imagery is primarily visual, and this is also the case in the second period, although not to the same extent. However in the latter the sound of words has become more important, and this change is even more marked in the third period where the emphasis is on the acoustic senses.

As stated above these five elements - the union of opposites; the instantaneous impression; meteorism; the architecture of a poem; and the sanctity of the senses - act as a "control", and provide a constant background for the other aspect of Elytis' personal mythology, that is, the elements whose focus changes from period to period. Having

thus examined the framework, it is now appropriate to proceed to an analysis of his personal mythology in terms of its development and change in emphasis between periods, beginning with the poetry of the first period.

CHAPTER TWO

PART ONE: THE THEME OF PERSONIFICATION IN
ELYTIS' POETRY OF HIS FIRST PERIOD (1935-43)

In Elytis' poetry of his first period, allusions to the figures of Classical mythology are, to a great extent, replaced by a personal mythology which is based on the devices of personification and metamorphosis. This chapter deals with the former.

Describing the function of personification in the interview with Ivarsk, Elytis said:

This is the mechanism of personification which I employ here, myth-making, if you wish, but without evoking any mythical figures... this is the mechanism of personifying abstract ideas, yet without turning them into recognizable figures.¹

In Elytis' view, personification, or rather the principle underlying personification, is one that gave rise to ancient myth: ancient cultures, including Egyptian, Sumerian, Akkadian and Greek, as well as the Germanic and Indian races, personified Nature, expressing natural phenomena in human terms, so that they might better understand it.² This cosmogony, both associated with, and a function of, the nature gods,³ was probably Asiatic in origin,⁴ and this primitive form of mythology was carried, not surprisingly, to greater lengths in the Near-Eastern models than in the Greek.⁵ Nevertheless, the concept of nature gods persists in the later stages of Greek mythology in such elements as the personification of the storm winds, and in associations such as

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1. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639.
 2. This is the position taken by Thorkild Jacobsen, notably in reference to Sumerian myths and Mesopotamian mythology in general (quoted by G.S. Kirk, Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 89, 101, 114). Note Kirk's remarks on the similarities between the Greek and Mesopotamian mythologies (Ibid., pp. 223-6).
 3. Ibid., pp. 218, 224.
 4. Ibid., p. 253.
 5. Ibid., p. 203. The Sumerian culture was particularly interested in this nature-god feature of mythology. (Ibid., p. 90)

that of Zeus with thunder, and Hecate with the moon.⁶

These simplistic personifications of nature were, in time, replaced⁷ by more fully anthropomorphic deities whose functions parallel this development, becoming devoted to the organization of the human world, and the establishment of fertility.⁸ The resultant Olympic pantheon is evidence of the great complexity of Greek mythology; Kirk states that "no other mythology known to us - developed or primitive, ancient or modern - is marked by quite the same complexity and systemic quality as the Greek".⁹

The concept of anthropomorphic gods is certainly not exclusively Greek, but anthropomorphism is an important characteristic, a major theme, of Greek mythology. As well as nature and the more sophisticated deities, abstract concepts such as Death, Sleep, War and so on are personified.¹⁰ Moreover, there are many creatures that are half man, half animal: centaurs, satyrs, sirens and the Phoenix are a few examples.¹¹

Thus in its role as an important characteristic of Greek mythology, to Elytis personification is "the mechanism of myth-making", a means of portraying events that led to the form of Greek mythology

6. Ibid., p. 203. Kirk also gives the examples of the association of Poseidon with earthquakes, and Helios the sun-god. He suggests that "ideas connected with cosmogony and nature-gods, perhaps because of their strong Asiatic sanction, remain substantially unmodified". (Ibid., p. 253)
7. This replacement is portrayed in Hesiod's Theogony by means of what is known as the "Succession motif/myth", an element which has a distinct parallel in many Oriental mythologies. For a detailed discussion of this motif, see Kirk, op.cit., pp. 214-9; M.L. West's commentary on the Theogony (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1966, pp. 20-30).
8. Kirk, op.cit., p. 218.
9. Ibid., p. 205. See p. 248 however.
10. Cf. personification of abstract concepts in Elytis' poetry. See Footnotes 20, 21.
11. See Kirk, op.cit., pp. 152-62, for a discussion of these creatures as a primitive expression of the notion of the contrast between nature and culture.

which Homer and Hesiod were to reinforce (the latter concentrating on cosmogony and nature gods, as well as the background to the more fully anthropomorphic deities; the former emphasizing the ritualized portrayal of these deities).

Of course, Homer and Hesiod were not the first to systematize Greek beliefs about the gods, but were working with a long established tradition.¹² West argues that the contents of the Theogony go back to the Mycenaean Age,¹³ while Kirk suggests that a mythical tradition could date back beyond the Mycenaean to the Bronze Age or even further.¹⁴

This means that what Kirk terms "the genuine mythopoeic urge"¹⁵ and the subsequent creation of a Greek mythology should not be confused with any literary tradition.

In terms of Elytis' poetry it should always be borne in mind that his personal mythology is emphatically not concerned with the latter, and is not Homeric or even Hesiodic, despite similarities with Hesiod in the area of personifications of nature.¹⁶ Elytis rarely refers to the figures of mythology,¹⁷ for these are not the mythopoeic basis, but a further, highly ritualized and conceptualized development.

Rather, Elytis is looking for the sources of the neo-Hellenic world,¹⁸ and he finds this in the impulse that led men to portray natural events in human form i.e. personification. This is why he compares the two: "This is the mechanism of personification... myth-making, if you wish..."¹⁹

12. Ibid., p. 251; West, op.cit., p. 29. See also West's review of theogonic literature, both Greek and foreign. (Ibid., pp. 1-16)

13. Ibid., p. 14.

14. Kirk, op.cit., pp. 240-1, 247-9.

15. Ibid., p. 251.

16. For example, Gaea, Pontos, Oceanus. See Hamill, op.cit., p. 92 however.

17. Classical mythological allusions do occur in the poetry of his second period (see p. 116, n. 99), and even more frequently in the third period, however.

18. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639.

19. Loc.cit.

Elytis has taken this important theme of personification, and employed it in his work as an element of his personal mythology. There appear to be two different methods of personification used: the first involves personifying abstract ideas, and this device appears infrequently throughout Elytis' poetry, notably in 'Ασμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας²⁰ and 'Εξη και μια τύφελς για τον ουρανό,²¹ which are the transitional works between the first and second, and second and third periods respectively.

The second, and preferred, device is to personify elements of Nature by attributing human form and attributes to them. This technique appears throughout Elytis' poetry; however, since Nature, and its portrayal, predominates in the first period of Elytis' poetry,²² it follows that the theme of personification also has its greatest expression in the two works of that period, Προσανατολισμού and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος. It is this aspect that will be examined in the following pages; the personification of abstract ideas will not be discussed, as this chapter deals with Elytis' personal mythology of his first period only.

Aspects of nature personified by Elytis are many and varied; they include the four essential elements²³ - the sun, sea, earth and wind - as well as various trees and plants. These will all be examined in greater detail below.

20. For example, agony (Ibid., p. 9, lines 12-3); fear (p. 11, line 6); pity (p. 21, line 6); solitude (loc.cit., line 15); freedom (p. 22, line 8); goodness (p. 27, line 7); and modesty (p. 35, line 11). Mitsakis believes that these personifications become real characters in the drama, although this is probably overemphasizing their importance. (op.cit., p. 38)

21. Regret (Ibid., p. 13, line 14; p. 19, line 7); time (p. 13, line 11; p. 22, line 16; p. 23, line 2); virtue (p. 16, lines 17-20; p. 17, lines 1-3); and purity (p. 20, lines 19-20).

22. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639.

23. Robinson comments that the four elements are "very much to the fore" in Éluard's poetry. ('Elytis and French Poetry 1935-1945', p. 680).

If any one element of Nature characterizes Elytis' early poetry it is the sun and its dazzling brilliance.²⁴ The poet himself has stated that "... the sun has always had a central place in my poetry..."²⁵ but there is no doubt that it is best represented in the poetry of this first period.²⁶

Of course, Elytis is not the only Greek poet to have recourse to the sun as a symbol, to such a degree - Ritsos' Ρωμιοσύνη²⁷ and Kazantzakis' Οδύσσεια²⁸ are two works that exemplify this particular imagery; indeed, when discussing this aspect of Elytis' poetry, critics have cited the latter as a form of comparison.²⁹ Yet even

24. The second work of Elytis' first period is entitled 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος with the subtitle μαζί με τις παραλλαγές πάνω σε μιάν αχτίδα. The frontispiece to this work has the inscription, "Έτσι συχνά όταν μιλώ για τον ήλιο μπερδεύεται στη γλώσσα μου ένα μεγάλο τριαντάφυλλο κατακόκκινο αλλά δεν μου είναι βολετό να σπαάσω".
25. 'Analogies of Light', p. 640. In his third period Elytis returned to the sun as a basis for a poetical collection in Ο ήλιος ο ηλιότορας.
26. A third of all references to the words "ήλιος" and "φως" occur in the two early works: there are a total of 183 references to the sun in Elytis' work, and 38 of these come from Προσανατολισμοί, with 23 from 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος. Of a total of 101 allusions to light, 31 and 5 come from Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος respectively. (Source: N. Κεφαλίδης - Γ. Παπάζογλου, Πίνακας λέξεων <<Ποιημάτων>> του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, <<Βιβλιοδοτική Μέλισσα>>, Thessalonica, 1985).
27. For example, Poem I, lines 9-15; Poem III, lines 3-14; Poem IV, lines 47-8; Poem VI, lines 1-4, 35-6, and many others. Cf. also Vitti, op.cit., p. 103.
28. "... the entire poem is sunwashed and sundrenched in the brilliant light of Greece. The Sun itself is a personification in the poem; it talks, walks, and weeps with him on his (Odysseus') adventures." (K. Friar, The Spiritual Odyssey of Nikos Kazantzakis, The North Central Publishing Company, St. Paul, 1979, p. 12.) An address to the sun is a feature of both the Prologue and Epilogue, and Ραψωδία Ψ' (lines 1-37, 78-81, 89-95, 100-6, 658-62, 666-9).
29. For example, Carson op.cit., p. 74; M. Levitt, 'Odysseus Elytis and Modern Greek Poetry', The Charioteer, Number 19, 1977, p. 10; Friar, The Sovereign Sun, p. 11.

here a difference in treatment can be discerned: in the Οδύσσεια, the sun frequently takes on a destructive, terrifying aspect, whereas in Elytis' work it is always portrayed as a positive and life-giving force.

Such an approach is reminiscent of that in Rimbaud's poetry: "le soleil, puissance génératrice de la chaleur et de la lumière, anime la nature et y perpétue la vie."³⁰ The significance of the sun in Elytis' landscape and poetry overall can also be compared with this aspect in the work of another Symbolist poet, Paul Valéry:

La lumière n'est donc pas chez Valery un ornement ou un motif décoratif, mais la matière même de l'oeuvre; elle n'est pas artificiellement greffée à la substance poétique: elle en est la sève. Elle est le thème majeur, le principe dynamique, le ressort essentiel de la création.³¹

Elytis, in fact, has spoken of a Βαλερικό πνεύμα in his work,³² and the two may be compared in their perception of, and the significance

30. M. Eigeldinger, Rimbaud et le mythe solaire, Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1964, p. 19. The influence of Rimbaud - he is, along with Lautreamont, regarded as the fountainhead of the Surrealist movement (C. Chadwick, Symbolism, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1971, pp. 24, 55; M. Nadeau, Histoire du surréalisme, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1964, pp. 4, 10, 38) - on Elytis' early poetry is a subject beyond the confines of this thesis. Note, however, that it is Rimbaud's name and the quotation "Départ dans l'affection et le bruit neufs" that appear on the frontispiece of Προσανατολισμοί. (For other references to Rimbaud see Τρία Ποιήματα p. 13, line 10; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος p. 41, lines 17-8; Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά pp. 74, 99, 136, 249, 304, 320, 337, 363, 392, 443-6, 451, 453, 456; Αναφορά στον Ανδρέα Εμπειρίκο p. 34. Cf. also Elytis' translations of some of Rimbaud's poems in Δεύτερη Γραφή, Ίκαρος, Athens, 1980.)
31. J.L. Faivre, Paul Valéry et le thème de la lumière, Lettres Modernes, Paris, 1975, p. 12.
32. Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 103.

that they give to, midday.³³ It is significant that both Rimbaud and Valéry describe the sun in its Mediterranean/Eastern context, and as Carson points out, the French culture that Elytis loves - both paintings and poetry - is Mediterranean.³⁴ (His images have much in common with the paintings of Matisse: the flat perspective, clear colours and bright, blinding light.)³⁵

The blinding light of the sun, and the sun itself, permeate almost every poem of Προσανατολισμού and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος.³⁶ Their portrayal is aimed primarily at the senses³⁷ - the warmth, almost burning heat, and brightness are all emphasized. All creatures must yield to the sun's power, and there are many images that portray Nature

33. An important motif - Faivre calls it a theme (op.cit., p. 107) - in Valéry's work is that of "midi le juste", the moment when time stops and tranquillity and peace reign supreme (Ibid., p. 108), which is an image reminiscent of Elytis' early work. Nevertheless the influence should not be overstated (see Elytis' comment in Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 350); Elytis' influences have always been primarily Greek rather than French, especially in his second and third periods. This is despite the fact the original inspiration and technique were French, with particular emphasis on the influence of Éluard.

34. Carson, op.cit., p. 50.

35. This observation has been made by Carson (ibid., p. 16) and Friar (The Sovereign Sun, p. 8). Elytis has referred to this aspect of Matisse's paintings in Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά (pp. 222, 225, 327) as well as to the artist himself (Τα ετεροθαλή, p. 45, lines 11-12; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 42, lines 3-5; p. 57, lines 8-11; Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 294, 321, 366, 406, 426). It should be remembered, of course, that Elytis, as well as being a poet, is also an artist and art critic.

36. For the purposes of this thesis, the sun and light will be considered as one, as appears to be the case in Elytis' work, the word "φως" having all the (beneficial) attributes of the sun.

37. See the section on the "sanctity of the senses" in Chapter 1.

acknowledging the sun's superiority:

Τώρα ο ουρανός καίει απέραντος
 Τα φρούτα βάφουν το στόμα τους
 Της γης οι πόροι ανοίγουνται σιγά-σιγά
 Και πλάι απ' το νερό που στάζει συλλαβίζοντας
 Ένα πελώριο φυτό κοιτάει κατάματα τον ήλιο!³⁸

With its power, the sun could conceivably have been portrayed as possessing destructive force, but this not illustrated in Elytis' poetry. Even in the greatest heat it is always seen as a beneficial, positive force which has the ability to sustain life (much as in Rimbaud's poetry):³⁹

Τόποι που . . .
 . . . με του ήλιου τους χυμούς με θρέψατε!⁴⁰

Τι γύρευα όταν έφτασες βαμμένη απ' την ανατολή
 του ήλιου
 . . . με την υγεία του ήλιου στο κορμί . . .⁴¹

As well as generating life in this way, the sun is also an agent of sexuality,⁴² fertilizing Nature and making the youths

38. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 12, lines 3-7. See also ibid., p. 40 lines 1-3, 11; Προσανατολισμοί, p. 53, lines 3-4; ibid., p. 129, lines 7-8; ibid., p. 138, line 16; ibid., p. 140, line 22; p. 145, lines 21-2.

39. As mentioned above; see Footnote 30.

40. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 32, lines 4-5.

41. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 130, lines 12-15. (The phrase "υγεία του ήλιου" also occurs in Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 37, line 14.) For other examples illustrating this positive force of the sun, see Προσανατολισμοί, p. 113, lines 6-7; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 15, lines 1, 6-8; ibid., p. 27, line 16.

42. This treatment is also present in Rimbaud's portrayal of the sun, which is a source "... de l'énergie cosmique, de la sexualité des êtres et de la nature." (Eigeldinger, op.cit., p. 22.)

beneath its gaze aware of their own sexuality.⁴³

Λιγνό άγουρο αγόρι
 Ο ήλιος ανάμεσα στα σκέλια σου
 Να παίρνει μυρωδιά
 Και η κοπελίτσα στην αντικρινή στεριά
 Να σιγοκαίγεται. . .⁴⁴

Με χείλια μπρούντζινα κορμιά γυμνά
 ... Πέρα μεσ' στα χρυσά νταριά κοιμούνται αγοροκόριτσα
 Ο ύπνος του μυρίζει πυρκαγιά
 Στα δόντια του ο ήλιος σπαρταράει.⁴⁵

This benevolent aspect is further extended to the symbolic use of the sun as the Creator in the section, "Η Γένεσις" in Το 'Αξιλον Εστί, or as a sovereign watching over his lands in Ο ήλιος ο ηλιάτορας.⁴⁶ In these two examples from Elytis' later work, the human attributes in the sun's personification are emphasized even further, as is the male gender. In fact the poet identifies himself

43. "Man is affected in both his bodily sensations and his emotions by the same elemental force (Eros), whose outward agent is the sun..." (Robinson, 'Elytis and French Poetry 1935-1945', p. 683). The association between the sun and sexual love is stated directly in Elytis' poetry; see, for example, Προσανατολισμοί p. 54, lines 16-7; ibid., p. 72, line 11; p. 77, lines 3-5; 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος p. 17, lines 7-8; ibid., p. 38, line 11.

See also Eigeldinger's comment on the use of the sun symbol in Breton's work: "La femme et l'amour sont magnifiés par la projection des rayons solaires..." (M. Eigeldinger, Lumières du mythe, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1983, p. 194).

44. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 26, lines 17-21.

45. Ibid., p. 18, lines 5, 14-6. See also ibid., p. 40, lines 16-20.

46. Cf. the portrayal of the sun in Rimbaud's work - "Le soleil est un dieu créateur, le père de l'univers...", "... toujours <<soverain>>" (Eigeldinger, Rimbaud et le mythe solaire, pp. 23, 43.) - or the godlike figure of the sun in Kazantzakis' Οδύσσεια.

with the sun in "Ἡ Γένεσις".⁴⁷

However this device of personifying the sun as male dates back to the poetry of Elytis' early period, an example of "μυθογένεσις" as well as a continuation of a universal tradition.⁴⁸ The personification of the sun is seen in the attributing of human features and characteristics, as well as human reactions

Θυμώνει ο ἥλιος, ο ἴσκιος του αλυσοδεμένος
κυνηγάει τη θάλασσα ...⁴⁹

Ιδρώνει ο ἥλιος ...⁵⁰

Για να κυλήσει ο ἥλιος το κεφάλι του
Ν'ανάψει με τα χεῖλια του τις παπαρούνες.⁵¹

47. Ἦταν ο ἥλιος με τον ἄξονά του μέσα μου
πολύαχτιδος ὅλος που καλούσε και
αυτός ἀλήθεια που ἤμουνα

(To 'Αξιλον Εστί, p. 13, lines 18-20)

In this hymn the poet and sun are identified, with the sunrise representing the poet's own "genesis". A suggestion of this solar identification also occurs in Προσανατολισμοί.

Ο ἥλιος
Εγώ

(ibid., p. 88, lines 4-5)

See also Carson, op.cit., p. 70; and Eigeldinger, Lumières du mythe, p. 194, who discusses Breton's metaphor of "l'homme-soleil".

48. The world's mythologies have traditionally assigned a male gender to the sun, and this tends to be reflected in a culture's literature.
49. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 59, lines 1-2. This is one of the few instances when a harsher side to the sun ("Θυμώνει ο ἥλιος") is presented.
50. Ἦλιος ο πρώτος, p. 18, line 3.
51. Ibid., p. 14, lines 6-7. For other examples of the personification of the sun, see Προσανατολισμοί, p. 85, line 2; ibid., p. 146, line 24.

Foreshadowing its role in later works, as mentioned above, the sun is portrayed frequently as a benevolent master or sovereign, a Creator whose sole concern is to raise and help his people: "ο ήλιος / τον μαθαίνει ν'ανασαίνει".⁵²

In fact, the sun is, in many instances, clearly identified with Greece itself, notably her people. The Greeks are specifically under the sun's protection, "η φυλή που τραγουδάει στην αγκαλιά του ήλιου";⁵³ this association is expressed even more forcefully in poems from the collection 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος.

Ένα και δυό: τη μοίρα μας δεν θα την πει κανένας
Ένα και δυό: τη μοίρα του ήλιου θα την πούμ' εμείς.⁵⁴

Ω παιδιά που με νιώθετε - πατριωτάκια του ήλιου. . .
Ζεσταίνοντας στην αγκαλιά σας ένα φως απέραντο.
Από την άκρη τ'ουρανού ως το βάθος της καρδιάς
Με πείσμα πορφυρό - πατριωτάκια του ήλιου.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, this aspect of the sun - its identification with Greece - is not the most important one; more significant is its physical presence. To a certain extent this is due to the predominance of visual imagery in Elytis' early poetry; "το φως στον άσπιλο ουρανό" as he says in "Ελένη".⁵⁶ However, there are also appeals to the other senses (in references to its heat, for instance).

The portrayal of the sun in Elytis' poetry not only shows an awareness of an essential element of the Greek landscape, but also

52. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 46, lines 13-4.

53. Ibid., p. 126, line 15.

54. 'Ηλιος ο Πρώτος, p. 27, lines 17-8.

55. Ibid., p. 33, line 3, 7-9. Cf. "Στα χτήματα βαδίσαμε όλη μέρα / Με τις γυναίκες τους ήλιους τα σκυλιά μας" (ibid., p. 28, lines 1-2); "Θα παίξουμε τον ήλιο μας στα δάχτυλα" (Προσανατολισμοί, p. 141, line 25).

56. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 76, line 5. See also 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 33, line 7 "ένα φως απέραντο".

conveys a symbolic meaning. Its presence communicates a feeling of joy, and more importantly, a sense of justice and freedom from any form of oppression. As Elytis says, "I believe in the restitution of justice which I identify with light."⁵⁷

As a natural extension of this allegory, it follows that in Elytis' poetry an absence of sun and light signifies a period of oppression and grief. This idea is best illustrated in 'Ασμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό", where, upon the soldier's death, the narrator exclaims

Έτσι λοιπόν η μια στιγμή παράτησε την άλλη
κι ο ήλιος ο παντοτινός έτσι μεμιάς τον κόσμο!⁵⁸

The sun symbol of Elytis' first period forms the basis for his theory of "solar metaphysics"⁵⁹ in his later work, taking on a greater abstract significance. It is clear, however, from the examples given above from the poetry of Elytis' first period that even at this early

57. In the letter to Kimon Friar published in Accent, p. 176. Examples of this identification of justice and the sun occur in these two works of Elytis' first period, in phrases such as "η δόικαη του ήλιου υπόσταση" (Προσανατολισμοί, p. 84, lines 1-2); "... μέσα στη δικαιοσύνη του ήλιου" (ibid., p. 112, line 17). The motif of the sun and its identification with justice is a major element in the portrayal of the sun in the poetry of Elytis' second period. In Το 'Αξιον Εστί, the sun is seen as a guardian of justice:

ΤΗΣ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗΣ ήλιε νοητέ * και μυρσίνη συ δοξαστική
μη παρακαλώ σας μη * λησμονάτε τη χώρα μου!

(Το 'Αξιον Εστί, p. 46, lines 1-2).

See also Η καλοσύνη στις λυκοποριές, Poem VI, line 2; also Ο ήλιος ο ηλιότορας, p. 20, lines 7-8.
Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 64 ("κόρη νέα με ηλιάνθο στο χέρι που ζητά δικαιοσύνη")

58. 'Ασμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας, p. 15, lines 14-5. See also ibid., p. 23, lines 1-3.

59. This theory is examined in detail in Chapter 4.

stage - in fact, particularly at this early stage - the continual presence of the sun is essential to his work, and expresses the general optimistic tone.⁶⁰ As a result of the frequent references to it, the sun becomes a "protagonist" in the poetry, taking on the role of a god.

The next most significant element of Nature that is personified is the sea. Like the sun, this personification reaches the point of deification, a fact emphasized by Keeley.⁶¹

In contrast with the male gender of the sun(god), the sea is definitely personified as a female.⁶² This femininity is retained throughout Elytis' work, even when the device of personification has been replaced in his personal mythology by other themes and motifs, in his second, and third periods. An example of this occurs in Το φωτόδεντρο, in the poem "Μικρή πράσινη θάλασσα":

Μικρή πράσινη θάλασσα δεκατριώ χρονών
Για να σε κοιμηθώ παράνομα
Και να βρίσκω βαθιά στην αγκαλιά σου
Κομμάτια πέτρες τα λόγια των θεών...⁶³

60. For examples, see Προσανατολισμοί, p. 47, lines 11-12, 29; ibid., p. 54, lines 1-2; p. 68, lines 12-13; p. 75, lines 22-4; p. 87, lines 10-1; p. 93, lines 8-9; p. 141, lines 24-7; Ἡλιος ο πρώτος, p. 37, line 14.

61. "The sea and the sun are so consistently celebrated as to suggest a kind of pagan mysticism, a pantheism, a worship of the gods of water and light." (E. Keeley, Six Poets of Modern Greece (co-authored with P. Sherrard) p. 28; 'Elytis and the Greek Tradition', The Charioteer, Numbers 24/25, 1982/83, p. 81.) Nevertheless this comment should not suggest that the worship of the sea approaches the sovereign-like status of the sun.

62. Cf. Valéry's work, notably the poem "Naissance de Vénus", which makes use of the pun mer/mère. (For further details see A. Sonnenfeld, 'Eros and Paul Valéry', in M.A. Caws (ed.), About French Poetry from "Dada" to "Tel Quel": Text and Theory, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1974, pp. 146-7). This poem may be compared with Elytis' "Οδή στη Σαντορίνη".

63. Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 27, lines 19-22. Cf. Τρία ποιήματα, p. 37, line 18 "Φίλησέ με θάλασσα προτού σε χάσω".

However the most famous female personification of the sea occurs in Προσανατολισμοί, in the figure of Marina,⁶⁴ who, among other features, embodies the sea's essential tempestuousness.⁶⁵

Έχεις μια γεύση τρικυμίας στα χείλη - Μα πού γύριζες
Ολημερίς τη σκληρή ρέμβη της πέτρας και της θάλασσας.⁶⁶

The significance of this female personification is seen in the number of references to Marina in subsequent collections, where at times she is elevated to the status of a saint.⁶⁷ The poet himself calls her one of the "girls", of his personal mythology,⁶⁸ and one of the six

64. Graves gives "Marina" as one of the many names of the ancient pagan Sea-goddess, who was named Aphrodite by the Greeks. (R. Graves, The White Goddess, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1961, p. 395.)

Carson suggests however that "Η Μαρίνα των βράχων" "... είναι περισσότερο η λιτή, υποβλητική ενσάρκωση της Κόρης παρά μια προσωποποίηση της θάλασσας". (J. Carson, (trans. S. Pashalis), 'Μαρίνα', Χάρτης, volumes 21-3, Athens, November 1986, p. 440.)

65. Μερ ακλής, op.cit., p. 123.

66. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 128, lines 1-2.

67. There is a total of 18 references to Marina as well as "Η Μαρίνα των βράχων": see Το Άξιον Εστί, p. 22, line 7; ibid., p. 69, line 21; p. 80, line 13; p. 82, lines 8, 10, 11; Έξη και μια τύψεις, p. 25, line 11; Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 13, lines 13, 14, 15; ibid., p. 31, lines 6, 7; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 31; ibid., p. 33, line 9; p. 73; p. 103, line 10. See also Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 128, and the possible reference "τις λευκές Μαρτίες των κυμάτων" (Τα ετεροθαλή, p. 51, line 4.)

The name Marina also occurs in the anagram APIMNA (Το Άξιον Εστί, p. 18, line 23; Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 15, lines 8, 9, 12), and suggests a relationship between Marina and Maria Nefeli. (For details see Carson, ibid., p. 445; A. Decavalles, 'Maria Nefeli and the Changeful Sameness of Elytis: Variations on a Theme', The Charioteer, Numbers 24/25, 1982/3, pp. 43-4.)

68. Quoted in E. Keeley's and G. Savvidis' translation, The Axion Esti, Anvil Press Poetry, England, 1980, p. 101. The reference is to the list of girls ("Η Έρση, η Μυρτώ, η Μαρίνα / η Ελένη, η Ρωξάνη, η Φωτεινή / η Άννα, η Αλεξάνδρα, η Κύνθια) in Το Άξιον Εστί, p. 80, lines 13-5.

favourite motifs in his work.⁶⁹

Other examples of the femininity of the sea abound in Elytis' early work.⁷⁰ This femininity could be attributed simply to the grammatical gender of the word θάλασσα, but Elytis goes beyond this, introducing a sexual connotation which is an integral aspect of the personification of the sea. "In the world of Elytis, the sea is no less feminine and erotic than his young females."⁷¹ Elytis describes the sea as naked,⁷² or ready to give birth⁷³ (an epithet reflecting the etymologically close origin of the words κύμα and έγκυα, according to Meraklis⁷⁴); perhaps the most explicit phrase is contained in the play on words, "σε μια Μυρτώα θάλασσα".⁷⁵ Μυρτώ, as one discovers in later works, is "η μικρή πόρνη από τη Σύκιο",⁷⁶ and the sexual connotations inherent in her name, in its association with the plant myrtle, are obvious.⁷⁷

69. Keeley and Savvidis, *ibid.*, p. 95. The other five motifs, which also appear as anagrams, are Eros, Sea, Sun, Immortality and Elytis (Το 'Αξιλον Εστι, p. 18, lines 23-4).
70. For example, see Προσανατολισμοί, p. 130, lines 12-6; *ibid.*, p. 134, lines 5-7; 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 21, lines 3-4; *ibid.*, p. 42, line 1.
71. Decavalles, *op.cit.*, p. 47.
72. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 112, lines 2-3.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 146, line 6.
74. Μερakλής, *op.cit.*, p. 87.
75. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 32, line 3.
76. Το 'Αξιλον Εστι, p. 65, line 32. The association between Myrto and the sea is repeated *ibid.*, p. 75, line 17.
77. Myrtle was the emblem of the goddess of love Aphrodite, and a reference to it in Ancient Greek poetry could suggest a sexual connotation. [J. Henderson (The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1975, pp. 134-5) discusses the common usage of the word μύρτον as a slang term for the female genitals in Ancient Greek literature, giving several examples.] Elytis is obviously familiar with this usage as many of his references to myrtle have a sexual connotation e.g. 'Εξη και μια τύφεις, p. 20, lines 6-9; Μαρία Νεφέλη, p. 37, lines 13-4.

The identification of Eros with the sea is stated from the very beginning, in the first poem of "Του Αιγαίου",⁷⁸ and continues throughout Elytis' work, as is illustrated in the poem (of the third period), "Μικρή πράσινη θάλασσα".⁷⁹ In Το 'Αξιλον Εστί, the sexual act is described in terms of the sea, with fish representing the male sperm.⁸⁰

The significance of the sea to Elytis - who has said that water may well be his favourite element in his poetry⁸¹ - as well as to all Greeks, is a recurring theme in the poetry of his first period. In the semi-autobiographical "Επέτελος", which is prefaced by the Swinburne quotation "... even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to the sea!" Elytis writes

Έφερα τη ζωή μου ως εδώ
 Στο σημάδι ετούτο που παλεύει
 Πάντα κοντά στη θάλασσα
 ... Έφερα τη ζωή μου ως εδώ
 Πέτρα ταμένη στο υγρό στοιχείο
 Πιο πέρα απ' τα νησιά
 Πιο χαμηλά απ' το κύμα
 Γειτονιά στις άγκυρες.⁸²

78. Each of the three stanzas of "Του Αιγαίου" I begins with the word "Ο έρωτας", followed by a series of continual allusions to the sea. See also "Του Αιγαίου" III: "Φλοίσβος φιλή στη χαϊδεμένη του άμμο - Έρωτας".

79. For other examples from the poetry of Elytis' first period, see Προσανατολισμοί, p. 70, line 7; ibid., p. 112, lines 6-7; ibid., p. 127, lines 2-6; ibid., p. 131, lines 12-3; 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 19, lines 14-6.

Decavelles notes that in this early poetry, "... youth and erotic growth, erotic adolescence... involve a sea-journey". (A. Decavelles, 'Eros: His Power, Forms and Transformations in the Poetry of Odysseus Elytis', Books Abroad, Vol. 49, Number 4, 1975, p. 664.)

80. Το 'Αξιλον Εστί, p. 20, lines 22-8. A similar association between sex and the water can be found in Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 33, lines 5-13.

81. 'Analogies of Light', p. 641.

82. Προσανατολισμοί, pp. 46-7, lines 1-3, 46-50.

The association between Greece and the sea is expressed in such phrases as

... Την Ελλάδα που με σιγουριά πατάει στη θάλασσα⁸³

Φεύγουνε για να παν αλλού και βγαίνουνε στη θάλασσα.⁸⁴

According to Meraklis, "Όλοι οι δρόμοι εξάλλου οδηγούν τον Ελύτη στη θάλασσα... Είναι η θάλασσα το φτάσιμό του, το τέρμα που αναζητεί...".⁸⁵

For Elytis however, constant references to the sea are not enough; other elements of Nature must be seen in relation to it, by the use of similes, metaphors and juxtaposition. The association of the earth and the sea is an example, and Elytis himself indicated this in the interview with Ivarsk:

The sea is for us (the Greeks) something very familiar and not at all savage; it is like a second earth to be cultivated. You may have noticed that I have often referred to the sea as a garden. I do this because the sea is something as familiar as a garden...⁸⁶

The image of the sea as a garden recurs throughout the poet's work; it is illustrated in phrases from Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, such as "ο κήπος έμπαλνε στη θάλασσα",⁸⁷ "... το κύμα των φυτών...",⁸⁸

83. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 14, line 14.

84. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 65, line 25. See also ibid., p. 141, line 21; 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 25, lines 4-6.

85. Μερακλής, op.cit., p. 173.

86. 'Analogies of Light', p. 637.

87. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, pp. 21-2, lines 1, 29.

88. Ibid., p. 23, line 13.

and "θαλασσόχορτο".⁸⁹ Elsewhere the connection between vineyards and the sea is also stressed.

Ελαιώνες κι αμπέλια μακριά ως τη θάλασσα⁹⁰

Δρασκελίζοντας αμπέλια θάλασσες⁹¹

[In contrast to the sexual aspect of the sea, references to a drop of water, or simply the phrase "αγνό" or "γδυτό" νερό, evoke an image of purity and innocence.⁹² Although in Elytis' later poetry,

89. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 129, line 1. See also ibid., p. 71, line 26; p. 84, line 5; p. 134, lines 25-6; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 16, lines 3-4; p. 17, line 2; p. 29, line 6; p. 38, line 14. For the later portrayal of the sea as a second garden or earth, cf. also Το 'Αξιον Εστί, p. 18, lines 1-2; p. 49, line 12; p. 73, lines 15-6; p. 74, line 12; p. 77, line 1; p. 86, line 2; Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 18, line 1; p. 29, line 1; p. 35, lines 2-3; p. 45, line 5; Ο ήλιος ο ηλιάτορας, p. 22, line 4; Το μονόγραμμα, p. 18, lines 19-22; p. 25, lines 1-2; Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 27, lines 9-12; Τα ετεροθαλή, p. 26, lines 11-2; p. 28, line 1; p. 39, lines 5-6; p. 52, line 5; p. 54, lines 13-4; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 94, lines 9-11; p. 121, lines 5-9.

In this context it is not surprising that the creation of plants in Hymn 4 of "Η Γένεσις" in Το 'Αξιον Εστί should follow the creation of the sea (Hymn 3).

90. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 130, line 1. Meraklis claims that in this poem, "Ηλικία της γλαυκής θύμησης" everything is seen in terms of the sea. (op.cit., p. 173)

91. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 15, line 3. Cf. also Προσανατολισμοί, p. 32, lines 1-3; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 33, line 12; Άσμα ηρωικό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας, p. 29, line 7; Το 'Αξιον Εστί, p. 16, line 5-9; Τα ετεροθαλή, p. 16, lines 8-9; Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 121, lines 5-6, 9.

Cf. this portrayal of the sea as a second garden, earth and vineyard with the motif of the sea as a second sky, which is an element in Elytis' concept of the union of opposites. (Chapter 1)

92. Π. Θασίτης, 7 Δοκίμια για την ποίηση, <<Κέδρος>>, Thessalonica, 1979, p. 53.

the drop of water becomes associated with the figure of Αρετή,⁹³ and thus could be said to be personified, in Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, personification is restricted to the sea. Water, and in particular a drop of water, is simply a symbol of purity.^{94]}

The earth, after the sun and the sea, is the third of the four essential elements that dominate Elytis' personified Nature. Like the sea, it is feminine: in "Η Γένεσις" of Το 'Αξιόν Εστί, it is created "as women's naked body shaped in an erotic embrace".⁹⁵ The creation of the island of Santorini is also portrayed in feminine terms

Ρήγγισσα των παλμών και των φτερών του Αιγαίου
... Ω κόρη κορυφαίου θυμού
Γυμνή αναδυομένη.⁹⁶

The earth is portrayed as having the attributes of a woman,⁹⁷

93. This motif first appears in 'Εξη και μια τύφεις για τον ουρανό,

Μια σταγόνα καθαρού νερού, σθεναρή
Πάνω απ' τα βάραθρα, την είπανε Αρετή ...

(op.cit., p. 16, lines 16-7)

and recurs in Μαρία Νεφέλη in the poem "Η Νεροσταγόνα" and "Η ισόβια στιγμή".

94. For example, see 'Ασμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό, p. 9, line 9.

95. Decavalles, 'Eros: His Power, Forms and Transformations in the poetry of Odysseus Elytis', p. 667. In "Το Δοξαστικόν" a seashore is compared with a woman's body:

ο μυχός της Ελένης με το κυματάκι
τα φραγκόσουκα φέγγοντας μες στη μασχάλη

(p. 81, lines 6-7)

96. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 126, lines 3, 16-7. See also "Μορφή της Βουιωτίας", in which the personified land is addressed by the poet much as a lover.

97. Cf. Gaea, the personification of the earth in Hesiodic Greek mythology.

although her sexuality is not emphasized so much as in the feminine personification of the sea: Elytis mentions her face,⁹⁸ skin,⁹⁹ breasts¹⁰⁰ and nakedness,¹⁰¹ as well as her beauty.¹⁰² She is a "χορτοαρχόντισσα" with children,¹⁰³ and her meadow is "τη θηλυκή σου κοίτη",¹⁰⁴ for which she prepares sheets of amaranths, angels' buttons, bulbs and the sky's shadows.¹⁰⁵

The last of the four basic elements to be personified in Elytis' early work, is wind, or air, as stated by the poet:

Which would be my favourite of the four elements?
They must be air and water, since these
predominate in my poetry.¹⁰⁶

Iakov sees in the reference to the four elements a clear allusion to Empedocles,¹⁰⁷ although this would seem to be a somewhat tenuous

98. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 67, line 6.

99. Ibid., p. 41, line 3.

100. Ibid., p. 96, lines 6-9; p. 127, line 2.

101. Ibid., p. 136, lines 10-1; p. 141, line 14; 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 23, line 8.

102. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 95, line 7.

103. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 39, line 11.

104. Ibid., p. 17, line 18.

105. Ibid., p. 43, lines 12-4. Elsewhere, (Προσανατολισμοί, p. 54, lines 18-9) the earth's apron is mentioned. Another aspect of this feminine personification is in the identification of the earth with a beautiful girl; this element is discussed in the chapter on metamorphosis.

106. 'Analogies of Light', p. 641.

107. Ιακώβ, op.cit., p. 56.

connection; nevertheless, Elytis' statement indicates that significance should be attached to what has been an unconsidered element.¹⁰⁸

The most extended example of the personification of the wind occurs in Elytis' third period, in Ο ήλιος ο ηλιότορας, where the four winds become characters just like the sun, taking on the role of messengers.¹⁰⁹ Earlier, in the "Δοξαστικόν" section of Το 'Αξιον Εστί, in which various motifs¹¹⁰ of Elytis' poetry are listed and "glorified", the winds precede all the other motifs.¹¹¹

There appear to be some four strands to the portrayal of the wind in Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος. Firstly and foremost, the wind is a benevolent deity and is seen in a positive light, epithets such as "στοργικός",¹¹² "απιόητος",¹¹³ "καθάριος"¹¹⁴ and "τίμιος"¹¹⁵ conveying this concept at the most basic level. Then there are phrases which emphasize this concept of a benevolent wind even more forcefully:

108. Meraklis (*op.cit.*, p. 114) views the air/wind element in a wider context, connected with the light, but this viewpoint only serves to detract from the significance of the former, which should be considered an element in its own right.

109. See Merakis (*ibid.*, p. 181) on this role of the winds in Elytis' poetry as a whole. Cf. also Το 'Αξιον Εστί, where the winds are described as "οι Ερμήδες με το μυτερό σκιάδι / και του μαύρου καπνού το κηρύκειο" (p. 74, lines 3-4); also "... στο κήρυγμα του ανέμου" (Προσανατολισμοί, p. 126, line 23).

110. That is, the winds, islands, flowers, girls, boats, mountains, and trees.

111. Το 'Αξιον Εστί, pp. 73-4.

112. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 35, line 13. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 18, line 3.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 87, line 2.

114. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 32, line 14.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 19, line 20. Elytis also writes of the "καλού βοριά" (*ibid.*, p. 40, line 15). Cf. Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 19, lines 1-2.

στην εύνοια των ανέμων¹¹⁶

... στην φορά κάθε ανέμου που με αγάπη
σημαδεύει την καρδιά μας ...¹¹⁷

References to wind also have a connotation of freedom, and "eternal movement",¹¹⁸ whether implicit or not:

Θά 'χω ένα σχήμα λευτεριάς ανέμου που κλονίζει¹¹⁹

Και να φουσήξει από παντού η ελευθερία.¹²⁰

In "Η Τρελλή Ροδιά", a poem which best captures the optimistic tone of the whole collection, both these aspects are represented, with the wind forming the basis for the first of many extravagant metaphors.

Σ' αυτές τις κάτασπρες αυλές όπου φυσά ο νοτιάς
Σφυρίζοντας σε θολωτές καμάρες, πέστε μου, είναι
η τρελλή ροδιά
Που σκιρτάει στο φως σκορπίζοντας το καρποφόρο
γέλιο της
Με ανέμου πείσματα και φιθυρίσματα, πέστε μου,
είναι η τρελλή ροδιά ...;

The personification of the wind is contained in phrases that refer to human attributes such as lips and mouths,¹²¹ fingernails,¹²² and epithets such as "barefoot".¹²³

Elytis' comment that air and water are his two favourite elements¹²⁴

116. Προσανατολισμού, p. 69, line 7.

117. Ibid., p. 127, lines 24-5. Cf. also ibid., p. 136, lines 6-8 (this poem is entitled "Άνεμος της Παναγιάς"); 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 16, line 9. One particular group of images stressing the benevolence of the wind tends to associate it with the green leafiness of trees e.g. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 15, line 10; p. 16, line 2; p. 27, line 1.

118. Μερρακλής, op.cit., p. 208.

119. Προσανατολισμού, p. 131, line 11.

120. Ibid., p. 126, line 22.

121. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 40, line 15; ibid., p. 41, line 9.

122. Ibid., p. 12, line 23.

123. Ibid., p. 26, line 3.

124. 'Analogies of Light', p. 641.

seems reflected in the number of images that associate the wind with the sea, ranging from lines like "υγρός αέρας"¹²⁵ to more extended images, that emphasize the visual aspect of Elytis' imagery during this period:

Όπου άφριζε τα αισθήματά του ο άνεμος
 Άγνωστος και γλαυκός, χαράζοντας στα στήθια
 μου το πελαγίσιο του έμβλημα¹²⁶

Λύπες που γίνανε σεντόνια και χτυπούν στον
 άνεμο να στεγνώσουν, και ξαναχτυπούν στον
 άνεμο για να 'ναι οι γλάροι.¹²⁷

The latter passage is also an example of another association, the fourth strand, that of birds¹²⁸ with the wind. For instance, swallows are "τα μωρά του ανέμου"¹²⁹ and in "Η Μαρίνα των βράχων" Elytis speaks of an "αετοφόρος άνεμος"¹³⁰ It would appear that this association is an expression of the symbolic function of the wind, as an agent of ascension.¹³¹

This symbolism would explain Elytis' interest in the wind as an element of Nature; in the interview with Ivarsk he stated:

125. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 76, line 8. Cf. also ibid., p. 51, lines 3-4; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 17, line 12; ibid., p. 41, line 7.

126. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 130, lines 17-9.

127. Ibid., p. 66, lines 3-5.

128. Petropoulos calculates that 60% of the references to the animal kingdom mention birds, notably sea birds such as gulls. (Πετρόπουλος, op.cit., p. 39) Elytis uses the word γλάρος seven times in Προσανατολισμοί.

129. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 19, line 9.

130. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 128, line 3. Cf. also p. 142, lines 5-7: "Γέμισα κάτωπρα πουλιά τον άνεμο ...".

131. An alternative explanation could lie in their parallel roles as messengers (the wind in Elytis' poetry, and the birds in folksongs).

There is in my poetry a kind of meteorism;
there are creatures who have a tendency to
mount up into the sky to rise towards the
heights ...

Water consequently may well be my favourite
element. Yet air is significant too, since
there is always in my poetry that meteorism,
something which irresistibly wants to rise
higher.¹³²

In this context the wind, as the element of Nature that can achieve
such meteorism effortlessly, is extremely significant, embodying thus
a recurrent theme of Elytis' work.¹³³

As well as these four essential elements - the sun, the sea,
earth and wind - there are other aspects of Nature that are personified
in this early poetry; that is, various trees and plants.

As a rule, their primary function is a representation of
fertility,¹³⁴ a botanical equivalent of the human sexuality which
is emphasized throughout Elytis' work. Frequent images with sexual
associations are also used to convey this idea of fertility.

Ἄχνα βασιλικοῦ πάνω ἀπό το σγουρό εφηβαίο
Γεμάτο αστράκια καὶ πευκοβελόνες¹³⁵

Καὶ το κορίτσι που δεν μπόηκε ἀκόμη ολάκερο στον ἔρωτα
Μα κρατάει μεσ' στην ποδιά του ἓνα στυφό δασάκι
φρούτων.¹³⁶

Indeed trees and other plants tend to be associated with a woman,

132. 'Analogies of Light', p. 641.

133. See the section on meteorism in Chapter 1.

134. For example, Ἡλιος ο πρώτος, p. 15, line 11; Προσανατολισμοί,
p. 35, lines 1-3.

135. Ἡλιος ο πρώτος, p. 12, lines 19-20.

136. Ibid., p. 38, lines 4-5.

generally a young, beautiful sensuous girl¹³⁷ (an exception being the line "Στον ίσκιο της γαργιάς ελιάς ..."),¹³⁸ this association is achieved through juxtaposition as the following example indicates.

Επάνω στην αρχή του τραγουδιού των δέντρων
Ω τι ωραία που είσαι

... Ω τι ωραία που είσαι
... Ανάμεσά στα δίχτυα των ευκάλυπτων.¹³⁹

The gender implied in the actual personification of the trees is less clear. The trees have ears,¹⁴⁰ fingers,¹⁴¹ flesh,¹⁴² hair¹⁴³ and arms,¹⁴⁴ and are children,¹⁴⁵ but the only distinctly feminine note sounded is in the line "Τα φρούτα βάφουνε το στόμα τους".¹⁴⁶

As to the trees themselves, Petropoulos notes that in Elytis' early period the poet rarely refers to forest trees, preferring fruit trees and general allusions to branches and foliage.¹⁴⁷ Elytis also

137. For example, "... να γίνει αληθινή σα δέντρο η ωραία Μυρτώ..." (Έξη και μια τύψεις για τον ουρανό, p. 24, lines 1-2). Cf. also the discussion on the poems "Η Τρελλή Ροδιά" and "Η Πορτοκαλένια" in the following section on metamorphosis.

138. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 19, line 2; p. 20, line 2.

139. Προσανατολισμού, p. 143, lines 2-3, 13, 16.

140. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 27, line 9.

141. Loc.cit., line 7.

142. Προσανατολισμού, p. 99, line 1.

143. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 12, line 18.

144. Ibid., p. 23, line 4.

145. Προσανατολισμού, p. 98, line 2.

146. Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 12, line 4.

147. Πετρόπουλος, op.cit., p. 39. Elytis refers to the νεραντζιά (Προσανατολισμού, p. 35, line 2; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 25, line 5); λεμονιά (Προσανατολισμού, p. 35, line 2; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 15, line 11); μηλιά (Προσανατολισμού, p. 96, line 1); ελιά (Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 19, line 2; p. 20, line 2; p. 33, line 11); συκιά (ibid., p. 23, line 14; p. 33, line 11); αχλαδιά (ibid., p. 26, line 16); and κυδωνιά (ibid., p. 27, line 1), as well as the famous ροδιά.

tends to choose trees and plants which are highly aromatic¹⁴⁸ - "και στη μωσκοϋτιά!"¹⁴⁹

Greek poetry has a long tradition of employing the motif of the tree,¹⁵⁰ the apple tree;¹⁵¹ for example, recurs in Byzantine Romances,¹⁵² the demotic folk songs (especially those devoted to love and marriage,¹⁵³ and also the μωρολόγια),¹⁵⁴ and in the concept of "Η κόκκινη μυλιά".¹⁵⁵

148. Πετρόπουλος, loc.cit.

149. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 18, line 20. Other such plants include jasmine, roses, hyacinths, violets, myrtle, daphne, basil, carnations, mint, chamomile.

150. Of course, such a motif is not confined to Greek poetry. Trees play an important role in the writings of Nerval, being associated with beauty, youth, a sacred presence, and notions of love and memory. (J. Hiddelston, 'Trees and Divinities in Nerval', Myth and Legend in French Literature (edited by K. Aspley, D. Bellos, P. Sharrat), The Modern Humanities Research Association, London, 1982, pp. 173, 174.) The tree is also a recurring motif in Valéry's poetry (see the relevant chapter in Faivre, op.cit.).

151. Appletrees and apples, in all their symbolic meaning, occur in many stories and cultures. Obvious examples include the myth of the Judgement of Paris, the Garden of Eden; the Tree of Life; the Gilgamesh Epic. (Cf. also Graves' discussion on the symbolism in The White Goddess, pp. 254-8.)

152. See A.R. Littlewood, 'The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature', Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, 23, 1974, pp. 33-59.

153. The apple's symbolism is primarily erotic in modern Greek literature, as is the case for Classical Byzantine literature, a point that Littlewood makes. (Ibid., p. 34)

154. Cf. the image of the loaded apple tree (symbolizing life) which is harvested by Death.

155. "Η κόκκινη μυλιά" was an intrinsic part of the Μεγάλη Ιδέα, and represented the (mythical) place to which the Turks would be driven by the Greeks (led by the μαρμαρωμένος βασιλιάς) upon regaining Constantinople once more.

Modern Greek writers who have used the motif of the tree as a symbol or otherwise include Palamas (Η Φουλυκιά,¹⁵⁶ and the less famous Το Κυπαρίσσι¹⁵⁷); Mavilis (Η Ελιά¹⁵⁸); Paraschos (Η Δάφνη¹⁵⁹); Solomos;¹⁶⁰ and Ritsos.¹⁶¹

In selecting the pomegranate tree as a motif Elytis chose a plant with a long tradition in Greek literature, both classical and popular.¹⁶² In Greek mythology, the fruit played an essential part in the story of the Rape of Persephone,¹⁶³ and was the emblem of Hera, who was the goddess of marriage among other roles; the fruit was thus seen as a symbol of love and fruitfulness.¹⁶⁴

156. From the collection Η Ασάλευτη Ζωή.

157. Ibid.

158. From the collection Τα Έργα του Λορέντζου Μαβίλη, Alexandria, 1915.

159. From the collection Ποιήματα, Volume III, Athens, 1881.

160. Verse 3 of "Αγνώστου Ποιήματος Αποσπάσματα" (Άπαντα, Volume I (Ποιήματα), <<Ίκαρος>>, Athens, 1979, pp. 262-3). Cf. Vitti (op.cit., p. 296) for a comparison between this tree and Elytis' φωτόδεντρο.

161. "Ένα δέντρο", in the collection Μαρτυρίες (Σειρά πρώτη), <<Κέδρος>>, Athens, 1963.

162. The pomegranate is also a symbolic fruit in the Hebrew and Christian traditions. See A. de Vries, Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery, 2nd edition, North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1976, p. 37.

163. Persephone ate seven seeds of a pomegranate in Tartarus, which prevented her complete return to the upper world; in this context the pomegranate is a symbol of death and resurrection. [Cf. Elytis' interest in the theme of resurrection, discussed in the section on religion in Chapter 3.]

164. It was also the plant that grew from the blood of Dionysios. As will be discussed in the following section on metamorphosis, plants chosen by Elytis often have an association with the transformation of a divinity or other figure in Greek myth. Cf. Elytis' use of the motif of the hyacinth.

The theme of fertility runs throughout these myths, and this is indeed what the pomegranate has come to symbolize: fertility, fecundity, plenty, and what de Vries terms "the female principle".¹⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, the tree and its fruit are mentioned frequently in demotic love and marriage songs.

In the poem "Η Τρελλή Ροδιά" Elytis makes no reference to the classical tradition, and it is unlikely that he is encouraging the reader to remember the mythical connotations; any direct allusions would obviously be in conflict with the underlying principle of his "personal mythology". Rather, it is the element of fertility that is emphasized,¹⁶⁶ as well as a sense of joyous pulsating life that is symbolized in the red colour of its fruit, the "δροσερή φωτιά", and its "καρποφόρο γέλιο"

... είναι η τρελλή ροδιά
που σπαρταράει με φυλλωσιές νιογέννητες ...;

The pomegranate tree also symbolizes an optimism and a freedom from care: the antithesis of everything that Karyotakis¹⁶⁸ and his style of poetry stood for

Ποτέ θλιμμένη και ποτέ γρινιάρα, πέστε μου
είναι η τρελλή ροδιά
Που ξεφωνίζει την καινούρια ελπίδα που ανατέλλει;

-
165. De Vries, op.cit., p. 371. He adds that the pomegranate is the attribute of the fertile Virgin.
166. This sense of fertility, combined with allusions to sexuality, is an element common in almost all of Elytis' references to the tree and its fruit. Certainly this theme of fertility is exemplified in the poem "Η Τρελλή Ροδιά", and is repeated in later works. See for example, Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 32, lines 13-5; Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 57, lines 7-8; Τρία ποιήματα, p. 37, lines 22-3.
167. Προσανατολισμού, p. 145, lines 8-10.
168. Kostas Karyotakis (1896-1928) is the most representative of the generation of the twenties, whose "poésie maudite" expressed the ennui and decadence of the period between the two world wars. His suicide gave rise to the literary style of Karyotakism.
169. Προσανατολισμού, p. 146, lines 1-3.

Είναι η τρελλή ροδιά που μάχεται τη συννεφιά
του κόσμου;¹⁷⁰

The personification of the pomegranate tree is seen mainly through its actions - "Πέστε μου, αυτή που παίζει, αυτή που οργίζεται, αυτή που ξελογιάζει" - rather than its attributes. The association with "τα ολόγυμνα κορίτσια" and the phrase "σε μεσοφούστανα πρωταπρυλιάς" tend to suggest a feminine personification,¹⁷¹ which would be in agreement with the emphasis on fertility.¹⁷²

The association of trees, the pomegranate in particular, with girls is repeated in Elytis' imagery employing flowers and other plants

Ω μην ανθέξεις πια στα βλέφαρα¹⁷³
τα όνειρα των κοριτσιών
Που ευώδιασαν βασιλικό και δυόσμο!¹⁷⁴

Petropoulos comments that flowers make up half the plants in Elytis' early poetry, and that these are generally highly aromatic.¹⁷⁵ This use of smell as a factor in Elytis' choice of flora (e.g. jasmine, roses, violets) is replaced by a greater interest in the acoustic interest of a name in later poetry;¹⁷⁶ dialectal, "popular" names

170. *Ibid.*, p. 145, line 20. This notion of the pomegranate as a warrior in the fight against evil is repeated in *Το 'Αξιον Εστί*; the poet's weapons are "τον αγχέμαχο Ζέφυρο, το ερεβοκτόνο ρόδι / τα φλεγόμενα ωκύποδα φυλιά" (p. 17, lines 21-2; cf. *ibid.*, p. 27, lines 16-20).

171. Vitti discusses the feminine personification of the ροδιά in depth, giving the image "ξεθηλυκώνει τα μεταξωτά της μέρας" as further evidence. (*Κριτική μελέτη*, p. 95)

172. Cf. de Vries' comment on the "female principle" (*op.cit.*, p. 371).

173. *Προσανατολισμοί*, p. 77, line 11.

174. *Ibid.*, p. 134, lines 18-9. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 133, line 10.

175. Πετρόπουλος, *op.cit.*, p. 39. See footnote 149.

176. Previously mentioned in Chapter 1 (see footnotes 118-20), and covered in greater detail in Chapter 4.

become more common, noticeably in the work of his third period.¹⁷⁷

These elements of Nature - the sun, the sea, the earth, the wind, and various trees and plants - personified in Elytis' first period are so constantly celebrated that they overshadow man, who is at most an indistinct figure,¹⁷⁸ and whose actions are seen in terms of Nature. Notably, it is only in the sexual act that man can participate as part of Nature;¹⁷⁹ metaphors for sex reflect the importance and influence of Nature.¹⁸⁰

This section on personification, the first and probably more important, of the two devices that constitute Elytis' personal mythology in his poetry of the first period,¹⁸¹ has attempted to show a number of things.

177. E.g. βερβένα, βιενλαβιέλα, γκιουλ-μπρισίμι; see also Chapter 4, footnotes 55-60.

Even in this first period, Elytis "... φάλλει κυρίως τα λαϊκά λουλούδια του κήπου και της γλάστρας, καθώς και τα αυτοφυή των γηλόφων και των λιβαδιών". (Πετρόπουλος, *op.cit.*, p. 39)

178. Rotolo, *op.cit.*, p. 690. Cf. also Λυχναρά, *op.cit.*, p. 56; H. Hilty, 'Odysseus Elytis: A Contemporary Greek Poet', *Books Abroad*, Volume 49, Number 4, Autumn 1975, p. 676.

179. Rotolo, *loc.cit.*

180. The association of the sexual act with the sea and the sexual power of the sun have already been mentioned. In "Η συναυλία των γυακίνθων" II, which is devoted to the memory of a sexual act, Elytis employs the imagery of birds:

Μεγάλα κι αμφίβολα πουλιά σχίζαν τις παρθενιές
των κόσμων σου. Σ' ένα σεντόνι απλωμένο έβλεπαν
οι κύκνοι τα μελλοντικά τους άσματα...

(*Προσανατολισμοί*, p. 103, lines 3-5)

Elytis goes on to refer to water, forests and lakes. Cf. also 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 38, lines 4-11; p. 39, lines 17-9.

181. The second, the device of metamorphosis, is discussed in the following section.

Firstly, it has examined the background to the poet's choice of the device of personification. Elytis viewed the principle underlying personification as that which gave rise to ancient myth: that is, ancient cultures portrayed natural elements and phenomena in human form so that they might better understand them, and the resultant primitive cosmogony was to form the basis for a more ritualized mythology. It is for this reason that Elytis refers to personification as the "mechanism of ... myth-making".¹⁸²

He did not wish to emphasize, through the usual allusions to Greek mythical figures, the later ritualized mythological development which characterized the Homeric epics, for example; rather, in his search for the sources of the neo-Hellenic world, his interest lay in that mythopoeic urge that was tied to personification. Thus if he wished to replace Classical mythology with his own personal mythology, the latter might be based on the device of personification.

Secondly, it has been shown that although Elytis uses two methods of personification in his work, the first being the personification of abstract ideas, his preferred method is to personify elements of Nature (as did the ancient cultures).

Thirdly, this device of personifying Nature, while appearing throughout Elytis' poetry, was shown to have its greatest expression in the two collections of his first period, Προσανατολισμού and 'Ἡλιος ο πρώτος. This may be attributed to two factors: that although personification is a major element in Elytis' personal mythology in his first period, this is not the case in the later two periods, where the poet embraces new themes and ideas;¹⁸³ and due to the predominance

182. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639.

183. In the second period, for example, Elytis' personal mythology focusses on the influence of various traditions (historical, literary and religious). In the third period, Elytis' theory of "solar metaphysics" and the search for Paradise are emphasized.

of nature in the first period, a fact stated by the poet himself¹⁸⁴ and obvious from the imagery.

Lastly, this section has examined those elements of Nature that are personified in Elytis' poetry, with especial reference to Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ἥλιος ο πρώτος. Significantly these include the four elements - the sun, the sea, the earth and the wind - as well as various trees and plants.

It was shown that the sun is the most important of all of these elements, and is perhaps deified rather than merely personified. The sun retains its central position throughout all of Elytis' work, but is nevertheless best represented in the poetry of his first period. Here the most important aspect of its portrayal is the emphasis on its physical presence, its warmth and brightness. Upon further examination of the personification of the sun, other features were also revealed: its male gender; its power, although it is always portrayed as a positive force; the attributing of human characteristics and actions to the sun; its association with Greece and her people; its representation as a benevolent master, sovereign and Creator; and its association with justice. These last two aspects take on a greater importance in the second period, and hence foreshadow the symbolic role of the sun in later poetry.

The second most important element, and one which can also said to be deified, was shown to be the sea. Unlike the sun, the sea is a feminine personification, and this aspect of its portrayal is continued throughout Elytis' work; it is best exemplified in the figure of Marina, who appears in many poems from all three periods. Furthermore, the sea's femininity is emphasized through a sexual connotation which is an integral part of the personification of the sea. Secondary aspects in its portrayal include its importance to Elytis, and all Greeks in general, and its association with Greece; and the representation of the sea as a second garden.

184. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639.

The earth is also a feminine personification, although the sexual aspect seen in the portrayal of the sea is not a significant feature. Of all the four elements, this is the least important.

Elytis states the wind to be one of his favourite elements,¹⁸⁵ and it is mentioned fairly frequently in the poetry of his first period; this may, in part, be attributed to Elytis' related interest in the concept of meteorism.¹⁸⁶ It was shown that there are four strands to the personification of the wind: like the sun, it is a benevolent figure; references to the wind have a connotation of freedom; images portray an association with the sea; and a second association with birds. Although the wind is attributed with some human features, this anthropomorphism does not become pronounced until later works of the second and third periods.

As well as these four elements, this section examined the personification of various trees and flowers. Their primary function is a representation of fertility, and this is emphasized in their association with young sensuous women. This device is best exemplified in Elytis' symbolic motif, the pomegranate tree; its portrayal emphasizes its fertility and femininity, and symbolizes the general tone of optimism that characterizes Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ἡλιος ο πρώτος.

As mentioned above, this device of personification is only the first of the two elements that constitute Elytis' personal mythology in the poetry of his first period. The second is that of metamorphosis, and it is examined in detail in the following section.

185. Ibid., p. 641.

186. See Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of this concept.

CHAPTER TWO

PART TWO: THE THEME OF METAMORPHOSIS IN
ELYTIS' POETRY OF HIS FIRST PERIOD (1935-43)

Another equally important device in Elytis' personal mythology of the first period is that of metamorphosis and transformation. Like personification, the device of metamorphosis is an extremely ancient one, and is particularly common in Greek mythology.¹

There are numerous transformations achieved by the gods, notably Zeus,² in order to seduce an unwilling or chaste nymph; there are also youths and maidens who are turned into plants.³ One of the latter category, Hyacinthus, is in fact a significant motif in Elytis' early poetry.

In classical Greek mythology this theme of metamorphosis can take on a rather fantastic aspect: the sex-change of Teiresias is a case in point, although admittedly this is an uncommon variation.⁴

1. Kirk, op.cit., p. 187. Kirk includes it in a list of the four most common themes in Greek (mainly heroic) myths. The others are (i) tricks, riddles, and ingenious solutions to dilemmas; (ii) the accidental killing of a relative, lover or friend; and (iii) giants, monsters and snakes. He gives these as evidence of the "thematic simplicity, almost shallowness, of most Greek myths". (Ibid., pp. 187-8)
2. Some of the more famous examples include Zeus transforming himself into a swan to possess Leda (Hyginus Fabula 77; Euripides, Helen, 17ff.) and into a bull in order to abduct, and then seduce, Europa (Hyginus, Fab., 178; Apollodorus, III, 1, 1; Ovid, Metamorphoses, II, 836ff.).
3. For example, Daphne (Pausanias, X, 7, 8; Hyginus, Fab., 203; Ovid, Metam. I, 452ff.; Apollodorus I, 7, 9) or Kyparissos (Nonn. Dion. XI, 364; Ovid, Metam. X, 106ff.).
4. Kirk categorises the sex-change theme as one of eight "special, unusual or bizarre themes" (op.cit., pp. 194-6), commenting that it is an uncommon one, "virtually restricted among earlier myths to the cases of Teiresias and Caenis", (ibid., p. 201). The theme is also discussed in W. Burkett, Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual, University of California Press, California, 1979, pp. 29-30.

As a general rule Nature is involved in all of these transformations,⁵ although there are some exceptions: to possess Danae, for example, Zeus changed himself into a shower of gold.⁶

Of course metamorphosis as a theme is not restricted to Greek mythology;⁷ however it is the Greek treatment of this theme that provided Elytis' inspiration. Elytis has taken this ancient theme of transformation, which is an integral part of Classical myth (as is personification), and discarding some of the more fantastic elements, has employed the basic mechanism as an essential aspect in his personal mythology of the first period.

In this respect he is also employing one of the important principles of surrealism, namely the significance of the principle of metamorphosis; Breton's work in particular is an expression of this belief. Breton saw a parallel between the creative act of poetry, and the alchemic transmutations of the fourteenth century:⁸ both were

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5. In the categories given in the section on Transformation in Stith Thompson's Index, examples from Greek mythology occur most often in the transformation of a man or god into an animal, and a man into a plant; those involving an inanimate object are rare, in contrast with other mythologies. (S. Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk Literature, Volume 2, Rosenkilde and Bagger, Copenhagen, 1956.)
 6. Hyginus, Fabula 63; Apollodorus, II, 4, 1; Sophocles, Antigone, 944ff.
Other examples of metamorphoses not involving nature include gods and goddesses taking the guise of mortals (examples abound in the Iliad and the Odyssey).
 7. See Thompson's Index for the many variations on the theme of metamorphosis in various mythologies and cultures. (Volume 2, D10-699)
 8. Breton, Manifestes du surréalisme, quoted in Eigeldinger, Lumières du mythe, p. 188, and M. Carrouges, André Breton et les données fondamentales du surréalisme, Éditions Gallimard, France, 1971, p. 84. Carrouges also says "Ainsi l'alchimie est poésie au sens le plus fort du terme et le surréalisme est vraiment une transmutation alchimique. Par la transmutation de la matière, minérale ou verbale, l'un comme l'autre ont pour but la métamorphose de l'homme et du cosmos". (Ibid., p. 76). Eigeldinger notes that many of the terms in Breton's work, both poetical and critical, allude to alchemy e.g. "pierre philosophale". (Ibid., p. 190). For a general discussion on the analogy between alchemic transmutations and poetical metamorphoses, see Eigeldinger, ibid., pp. 175-95 and Carrouges, ibid., pp. 73-87.

concerned with a search or quest for purity, a purity of language and metals respectively.

This association between poetry and alchemy was not a new idea: Baudelaire,⁹ Mallarmé,¹⁰ Nerval¹¹ and Rimbaud¹² had all developed it, and it was Rimbaud's concept of "l'alchimie du verbe" that particularly influenced Breton.¹³ However the latter went beyond Rimbaud, the precursor of surrealism, commenting:

<<Alchimie du verbe>>: on peut également
regretter que le mot <<verbe>> soit pris ici
dans un sens un peu restrictif ...¹⁴

and substituting "une véritable chimie"¹⁵ for Rimbaud's concept. In this new model, poetry was subject to the universal law of metamorphosis:¹⁶

Tout est délivré, tout poétiquement est sauvé
par la remise en vigueur d'un principe généralisé
de mutation, de métamorphose.¹⁷

Certainly the myth of the metamorphosis of man, by means of a transmutation analogous to that employed by the alchemists, inspires most of the basic themes of surrealism;¹⁸ in Breton's work this myth

9. See the chapter, "Baudelaire et l'alchimie verbale", in M. Eigeldinger, Poésie et métamorphoses, Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1973.
10. Eigeldinger, Lumières du mythe, pp. 176, 188; Chadwick, op.cit., pp. 38-9.
11. Eigeldinger, Poésie et métamorphoses, p. 221.
12. Carrouges, op.cit., pp. 82-3; Eigeldinger, Poésie et métamorphoses, pp. 221-4; Eigeldinger, Lumières du mythe, pp. 176-7, 188; Chadwick, op.cit., pp. 31-2.
13. Lumières du mythe, pp. 176-7.
14. Breton, Manifestes du surréalisme, quoted in Lumières du mythe, p. 177, and Carrouges, op.cit., p. 82.
15. Lumières du mythe, p. 178.
16. Ibid., p. 182.
17. Breton, quoted in Lumières du mythe, loc.cit.
18. Carrouges, op.cit., p. 86.

finds frequent expressions in the symbol of the butterfly.¹⁹

Moreover, the act of metamorphosis, in the transformation of one object into another, was an expression of the most important surrealist belief: that surrealism was designed to free the imagination from any rational constraints. Improbable metamorphoses, and the union of complete opposites, a recurrent motif in Elytis' work,²⁰ were an excellent example of a "liberated" imagination.

As well as this, metamorphosis (for example, Breton's image of the butterfly) symbolized a kind of resurrection and rebirth, which the surrealist movement represented.²¹

In short, the basic beliefs of surrealism are interwoven with the theme of metamorphosis. As Eigeldinger comments, the theme is certainly not restricted to surrealism, but this was the movement that granted it "une véritable résurrection".²²

Unie existentiellement au principe de la métamorphose,
l'image surréaliste ne peut être que motrice
et dynamique.²³

Thus the device of metamorphosis, as it appears in Elytis' work, chiefly his early poetry,²⁴ is inspired by two quite separate traditions:

19. See the chapter, 'La mythologie du papillon chez André Breton' in Poésie et métamorphoses.

20. Ibid., p. 14; Lumières du mythe, pp. 191-2; Carrouges, op.cit., pp. 86, 96. See Chapter 1 on this motif in Elytis' work. Eigeldinger notes that "la récurrence de la confrontation noir/blanc est frappante chez Breton". (Lumières du mythe, p. 190)

21. Ibid., pp. 179, 182, 191, 207; Poésie et métamorphoses, pp. 209-10, 214.

22. Poésie et métamorphoses, p. 26.

23. Ibid., p. 15.

24. Elytis has said, "In my first period nature and metamorphoses predominate (stimulated by surrealism, which always believed in the metamorphosis of things)". ('Analogies of Light', p. 639)

that of classical Greek mythology, in which metamorphosis was an important theme; and that of surrealism, whose basic theories are rooted in the significance of metamorphosis.²⁵ This must be borne in mind throughout this section; to suggest that Elytis is merely employing metamorphosis in much the same way as Ovid, for instance, or any of the exponents of the Hellenistic genre of metamorphosis poetry,²⁶ is incorrect, as it ignores the significant influence of surrealism.

Indeed, Elytis rarely refers to any of the figures traditionally associated with the theme of metamorphosis in Graeco-Roman mythology in general; his borrowings are mainly restricted to the motif of the hyacinth, from the story of Hyacinthus.

Instead, the influence of classical mythology is revealed in the important role played by Nature in Elytis' metamorphoses. The theme of metamorphosis in Elytis' poetry of the first period is concerned with the interrelationship between man and nature - that is, the transformation of man into nature, and nature into man - and there are also secondary metamorphoses involving nature and abstract ideas.

The first category of metamorphoses in Elytis' work involves the transformation of people (generally girls) into plants and other elements of Nature; this metamorphosis is exemplified in the motif of Hyacinthus, who when he died was transformed into the flower that bears his name.²⁷

25. Elytis repeatedly stresses the connection between surrealism and metamorphosis; see preceding footnote, and Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 368, 388.

26. This genre, which provided one of the sources of inspiration for Ovid, is discussed briefly in G.K. Galinsky, Ovid's "Metamorphoses", University of California Press, California, 1975, p. 2.

27. Pausanias, III, 19, 4-5; Apollodorus, I, 3, 3; Ovid, Metam., X, 162ff.

Elytis never refers to the myth itself: his allusions are restricted to the actual flower, and it is not surprising to find that the hyacinth, a flower that symbolizes the theme of transformation in Ancient Greek mythology, is mentioned frequently in Elytis' work. Four of these references occur in the group of love poems, "Η συναυλία των γυακίνθων".²⁸ However, its use is not restricted to Προσανατολισμού²⁹ and it is also one of the flowers glorified in "Το Δοξαστικόν" of Το Άξιον Εστί.³⁰

One may compare Elytis' interest in Hyacinthus with Valéry's fascination with the mythological figure of Narcissus,³¹ which was

28. Προσανατολισμού, p. 106, line 4; p. 113, line 1; p. 116, line 3; p. 118, line 7. Other references in this work are p. 50 line 14; p. 128, line 23.

29. There are references to hyacinths in later works, but these are not as frequent as in Elytis' first period, reflecting the fact that metamorphosis is not an important device in the second and third periods. See Το Άξιον Εστί, p. 18, line 25; Το φωτόδεντρο, p. 24, line 13. The word also appears in a 5½ page list of motifs and favourite words in Ο μικρός ναυτίλος, p. 72.

30. Το Άξιον Εστί, p. 79, line 6.

31. Valéry himself commented:

Quoi qu'il en soit, ce mythe si simple m'a séduit -
et je l'ai repris à diverses reprises en 1889, 1891,
1919 et finalement 1938. C'est toute une carrière ...
C'est un LEIT MOTIV.

(in Volume II of the Narcisse cycle ("La Cantate du Narcisse" and "Conférence sur les Narcisse"), p. 127, quoted by K. Anderson in "Valéry and Narcissus: Reflections on Auditive Consciousness", in Myth and Legend in French Literature, (ed. K. Aspley et al.). The Modern Humanities Research Association, London, 1982, p. 185).

The significance of Valéry's use of the myth of Narcissus lies in the fact that both Narcissus and Hyacinthus appear to have been the names of a Cretan flower hero. Elytis himself refers to Valéry as "the poet of Narcissus". (Το έργο του Πωλ Βαλερύ, Αιολικά Γράμματα, Volumes 43-4, January-April 1978, p. 21.)

the theme for three pieces.³² Elytis also refers to the flower narcissus in Προσανατολισμοί,³³ and "echo" (a possible allusion to Echo, the other protagonist in the Narcissus myth) is a key word in his poetry.³⁴

The motif of Hyacinthus is repeated in the identification of girls with flowers,³⁵ and in the number of plant names chosen on the basis of an association with the transformation of a divinity or other figure in Greek myth³⁶ e.g. anemones,³⁷ and daphne.³⁸

Girls are also transformed into fruit, the most quoted example being "Η Πορτοκαλένια":

Τόσο πολύ τη μέθυσε ο χυμός του ήλιου
Που έγείρε το κεφάλι της και δέχτηκε να γύνει
Σιγά-σιγά: η μικρή Πορτοκαλένια 39

This metamorphosis is repeated in a subsequent work, 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας, in the

32. Two poems "Narcisse parle" (1891) and "Fragments du Narcisse" (1919), and the "Cantate du Narcisse" (1938), which is to be considered as completely distinct from the first two poems. (Anderson, *ibid.*, p. 186)

33. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 68, line 2.

34. Hilty, *op.cit.*, p. 676.

35. See the previous section on personification, footnotes 137-9.

36. "Plants or flowers which grow from the spilled blood of a god or hero represent the mystic union between man and plant and the birth of life from death, life flowing from one state to another ..." (J.C. Cooper, An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols, Thames and Hudson, London, 1978, p. 133). This statement should be borne in mind in light of Elytis' interest in the theme of resurrection (see section on religion in following chapter).

37. Red anemones sprang up from the drops of blood of Adonis; other stories give the flower as a red rose. (Apollodorus, III, 182-5; Hyginus, Fab. 58; Ovid, Metam., X, 298ff.).

38. See footnote 3,

39. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 40, lines 1-3.

"νεραντζοκόριτσα".⁴⁰ Indeed the orange or orange tree, in association with a sensual girl, is a recurring motif in Elytis' poetry.⁴¹

A second element in the theme of transformation in Greek myth, repeated in Elytis' poetry, is that of people who are turned into stone.⁴² In his early work, the best expression of this theme occurs in the well-known poem, "Η Μαρίνα των βράχων":⁴³

Στυλωμένη στους βράχους δίχως χτες και αύριο
Στους κινδύνους των βράχων με τη χτενισιά
της θύελλας⁴⁴

This identification is portrayed in other poems as well, although not as so extended an allegory: "Σώμα του βράχου";⁴⁵ "θαλασσοξυπνημένη, αγέρωχη / 'Ορθωσες ένα στήθος βράχου".⁴⁶

40. "Τυς νύχτες αγγαλιά με τα νεραντζοκόριτσα" (p. 18, line 17).
41. See Τα ρω του έρωτα, p. 23, lines 2-6; ibid., p. 31, line 2; Τα ετεροθαλή, p. 23, lines 3-4.
42. For example, Niobe. (Hyginus, Fab. 9; Sophocles, Antigone, 822-38; Sophocles, Electra, 150-2; Apollodorus, III, 5-6.) In more modern times there is the popular "myth" of "Ο μαρμαρωμένος βασιλιάς". (See K. Ρωμαίου, Κοντά στις ρίζες, <<Εστίας>>, Athens, 1980, p. 138; for other modern Greek traditions of petrification see ibid., pp. 256-9.)
43. G. Sarandaris, a good friend of Elytis' before his untimely death (see Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 251-3, 284-5), also wrote a similarly titled poem, "Η ωραία Κυρία των βράχων", which was published in 1940. Friar comments that Sarandaris "who had discovered the young university student, was to influence Elytis in images of light and colour and in the deification of girls, the mistresses of rocks ..." (The Sovereign Sun, p. 9)
44. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 129, lines 17-8.
45. 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, p. 12, line 17. Cf. also p. 23, line 25.
46. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 125, lines 7-8. Cf. also p. 105, lines 2-3; p. 115, lines 5-7. Petrification also appears to be a recurrent motif in 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας (see pp. 10, line 1; p. 14, line 8; p. 18, line 15; p. 26, line 6) and similar images also occur in another poem of the period, Η καλοσύνη στις λυκοποριές (Part II, lines 28, 33).

Elytis also portrays the metamorphosis of a girl into the Greek landscape; the love poems that show this aspect of metamorphosis are from the collections "Παράθυρα προς την πέμπτη εποχή", "Η συναυλία των γυακίνθων" and "Η θητεία του καλοκαιριού".

Δυό χέρια περιμένουνε. Στον αγκώνα τους στηρίζεται
ολόκληρη γη.
... Στο διάφανο στήριγμα της κορμοστασιάς σου τα
δέντρα θα βρουν τη μακροχρόνια εκπλήρωση ...⁴⁷

In the poem "Ελένη" a beautiful woman is transformed into the Greek landscape, in terms of the influence she has exerted on popular imagination: "Τώρα που κλείσανε τα βλέφαρά σου απάνω στα τοπία μας."⁴⁸

All the above metamorphoses illustrate the transformation of man into nature - that is, flowers and plants, fruits, rocks and the landscape itself. However Elytis believes in a reciprocal relationship between the two,⁴⁹ and this is portrayed in not only the transformation of man into nature, but also the metamorphosis of nature into man. As Carson says, "Elytis, the protomythologer transforms, through his vision, nature, so that nature ... can transform us".⁵⁰

An example of this second category of metamorphoses, that of nature into man, occurs in the poem, "Μορφή της Βουωτίας". Here the

47. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 35, lines 5-6, 19-20. Cf. also p. 110, lines 1-3; p. 118, lines 14-5; p. 122, lines 1-4; p. 136, line 5; p. 140, line 7; p. 141, line 4; Ήλιος ο πρώτος, p. 41, line 9.

48. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 75, lines 10-1. Carson, 49 scholia on the poems of Odysseus Elytis, p. 102) comments that "nature is the landscape of the divine mind...".

49. Levitt, (op.cit., p. 12) comments on the "intimate, tense, even dangerous inter-relationship between nature and man". But see Λυχνάρá, op.cit., p. 20:

Ο άνθρωπος που ζει σ' ένα τέτοιο τοπίο
είναι <<καλός>>. Η σχέση του με τον
φυσικό κόσμο, μια σχέση τρυφερής
επικοινωνίας.

50. Carson, 49 scholia on the poems of Odysseus Elytis, p. 44. The notion of Elytis' "protomythological" poetry is also mentioned ibid., p. 60.

initial references to the natural landscape

Εδώ πού η έρημη ματιά φυσάει τις πέτρες
και τ' αθάνατα⁵¹

change gradually to an address to a woman, ending in a complete metamorphosis

Στις γραμμές της παλάμης σου του πεπρωμένου

Τι ξέρεις ν' αντικρύξεις και τι ξέρεις να φορείς⁵²
Ντυμένη από τη μουσική των χόρτων και πώς προχωρείς

In "Οδή στη Σαντορίνη", it is the island, or rather its formation through a volcanic eruption, that is equated with the birth of a beautiful woman (the goddess Aphrodite,⁵³ although her name is never mentioned - the reference is contained in the epithet "αναδουόμενη").⁵⁴ A series of lyrical metaphors carry this identification through a succession of everchanging transformations: the island becomes the woman, the woman becomes the island and so on. In the context of these repeated transformations, it is significant that the last four words are "το αρμόνιο της Δημουργίας".⁵⁵

The metamorphosis of island to woman also occurs in the poem "Ηλικία της γλαυκής θύμησης", where the initial description of an island gives way to a passionate address to a woman who seems to have

51. Προσανατολισμόι, p. 138, lines 1-2.

52. Ibid., p. 139, lines 4-6.

53. The association between Aphrodite and Santorini is not coincidental; although most legends give Cyprus as the goddess' birthplace, another version gives Santorini.

Another reason for the choice of Santorini may lie in Elytis' apparent affinity with the island (see Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, pp. 144-5).

54. Cf. Sikelianos' poem "Αναδουόμενη".

55. Προσανατολισμόι, p. 126, line 26. This entire poem is an example of what Carson calls "the evocation of a setting made sacred, wherein the divine presence may be born" (op.cit., p. 68); cf. the later poem "Δήλος", from Το φωτόδεντρο, in which the obvious reference is to Apollo, who is nevertheless not mentioned directly.

much in common with Marina:⁵⁶ certainly many of the images relating to her transformation allude to the sea and the islands.

Κι εκείνο το κοχύλι σου όπου θ' αντηχεί το Αιγαίο.⁵⁷

All of the above metamorphoses involve a woman or female figure; however, one of the most frequently quoted examples of Elytis' use of the device of transformation in his early work, "Σώμα του καλοκαιριού", portrays the metamorphosis of a Greek summer into the naked body of a young man:

Ποιος είναι αυτός που κείται στις πάνω αμμουδιές
Ανάσκελα φουμέροντας ασημοκαπνισμένα ελιόφυλλα
Τα τριτζίκια ζεσταίνονται στ' αυτιά του
Τα μυρμήγκια δουλεύουνε στο στήθος του⁵⁸
Σαύρες γλιστρούν στη χλόη της μασχάλης

In this poem not only summer itself, but all the sensations associated with it are conveyed in that naked body and his surroundings, and this introduces a third aspect of Elytis' use of metamorphosis in his poetry: the transformation of abstract ideas into elements of nature.

Elytis prefers the concrete to the abstract, as can be seen in his personification of abstract ideas in 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας'.⁵⁹ In his first period where, as he himself says, nature and metamorphoses predominate, it is not surprising that abstract ideas are transformed into elements of nature.

This is in fact the case with the very first poem of Προσανατολισμοί, "Του Αιγαίου" I, where love is made tangible within an Aegean seascape

56. Indeed some critics have compared "Ηλικία της γλαυκής θύμησης" with "Η Μαρίνα των βράχων". See Μερακλής, op.cit., p. 199; Καραντιώνης, op.cit., p. 78; Vitti, op.cit., p. 88.

57. Προσανατολισμοί, p. 131, line 13.

58. 'Ήλιος ο πρώτος', p. 12, lines 8-12.

59. See footnote 20 in the section on personification.

Ο έρωτας
 Το αρχιπέλαγος
 Κι η πλώρα των αφρών του
 Κι οι γλάροι των ονείρων του
 Στο πιο ψηλό κατάρτι του ο ναύτης ανεμίζει
 Ένα τραγούδι⁶⁰

In the second poem of the following three-part "Κλίμα της απουσίας", the abstract notion of absence (a concept common in Valéry's work)⁶¹ is given a more intelligible form, that of calm within an Aegean landscape.⁶² It is transformed into an "αμύλητο δέντρο", "ακίνητη όψη", "ανένδοτο στόμα".

However, the most flamboyant example occurs in the last poem of Προσανατολισμού, "Η Τρελλή Ροδιά". Here a girl's early morning mood ("Πρωινό ερωτηματικό κέφι à perdre haleine"), joyous, capricious, and optimistic, is transformed into a mad pomegranate tree.

In all of these metamorphoses - man into nature, nature into man, and abstract ideas into nature - there is a suggestion of the element inherent in the transformations in the writings of the French surrealists; namely, that Nature has a hidden, deeper meaning, and that the world's second presence is "explained" through metamorphosis.⁶³

Elytis terms this his theory of "analogies",⁶⁴ and while a

60. Προσανατολισμού, p. 13, lines 1-6.

61. M. Vitti, Η Γενιά του Τριάντα: Ιδεολογία και Μορφή, <<Ερμής>>, Athens, 1979, p. 160.

62. Robinson, 'The Greekness of Modern Greek Surrealism', p. 132.

63. Eigeldinger, Lumières du mythe, p. 187. Elytis also makes this point in the interview, 'Η Υπέρβαση και η Γεωμέτρηση', p. 756, indicating that it was a factor that attracted him to surrealism.

64. Elytis has discussed this theory in Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά (pp. 239-43, 434) and in interviews ('Η Υπέρβαση και η Γεωμέτρηση', p. 754; 'Analogies of Light', pp. 632, 637). See also Carson, 49 scholia on the poems of Odysseus Elytis, pp. 12, 54, 116; Λυχναρά, op.cit., p. 39; Decavalles, 'Maria Nefeli and the Changeful Sameness of Elytis', p. 48; Θασύτης, op.cit., p. 53; Robinson, 'The Greekness of Modern Greek Surrealism', p. 130. Nevertheless, Elytis is obviously not the first to formulate such a theory; Baudelaire, for instance, outlined his idea of "correspondences" in his sonnet of the same name. (For details, see Chadwick, op.cit., pp. 8-16.)

detailed discussion of this theory is outside the scope of this thesis, it should be mentioned briefly in terms of the importance of the device of metamorphosis in Elytis' early work.

In both interviews and Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά Elytis has stressed the association between this theory of analogies - that is, an awareness of the correspondence between the material and spiritual world - and the device of metamorphosis. In a recent interview, discussing his use of nature imagery, he said

Αυτό που έβλεπα δεν ήταν με κανένα τρόπο απλώς <<τοπίο>>. Ήταν ένα αλφάβητο από φυσικά στοιχεία που αργότερα θα ζητούσα να βρω την ηθική τους αντιστοιχία στο πνεύμα ... έτσι που η μεταμόρφωση του ψυχικού ν' αποδίδει τη μεταμόρφωση του φυσικού κόσμου ...⁶⁵

Thus it can be seen that Elytis' use of the device of metamorphosis is not solely an allusion to the importance of the theme of transformation in Ancient Greek mythology, nor is it simply an expression of surrealist theory; it is also a means to portray the poet's theory of analogies, and express the spiritual values inherent in the elements of Nature, and the world's meaning.

This section has attempted to show that the device of metamorphosis is a highly important aspect of Elytis' poetry, notably that of his first period. Although the device does appear infrequently in his later periods, like personification, its significance as an element in his personal mythology is confined to the works Προσανατολισμοί and 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος.

More specifically, it is in the section "Η θητεία του καλοκαιριού" of Προσανατολισμοί, and in 'Ηλιος ο πρώτος, where "man and his

65. 'Η Υπέρβαση και η Γεωμέτρηση', p. 757. See also Ανοιχτά Χαρτιά, p. 136.

environment are no longer divisible, either physically or (spiritually)"⁶⁶ that the poet's use of the device of metamorphosis is most successful.

The poet's choice of this device as the second element in his personal mythology of this period was shown to be inspired by two quite separate traditions. The first, as in the case of personification, was that of classical Greek mythology, in which transformation is both an extremely ancient and common theme. Significantly, Nature is involved in almost all of these metamorphoses in Greek mythology.

The second was that of surrealism, a movement which gave great importance to the principle of metamorphosis; certainly the myth of the transformation of man inspires most of the basic themes of surrealism. This importance may be attributed to three surrealist beliefs: namely, that there is a parallel between the creative act of poetry, and alchemic transmutations; that metamorphosis symbolizes a kind of resurrection, which the movement itself represented; and that the act of transformation was an example of surrealism's aim to break the constraints of reason over art, poetry, and the imagination in general.

Furthermore, it was suggested that Elytis' use of the device of metamorphosis is also a means to portray his theory of analogies (namely that Nature has a hidden, deeper meaning): that one may "explain" this world's second meaning through metamorphoses.

Although Elytis was partly inspired by the Greek mythological treatment of the theme of transformation, it was shown that he does not refer to mythical figures in his own use of the device; his borrowings are restricted mainly to the motif of the hyacinth, which is mentioned throughout his work, but especially in his poetry of the first period.

66. Robinson, 'Elytis and French Poetry 1935-1945', p. 683. See also Λυχναρά, op.cit., pp. 30-1; Μητσάκης, op.cit., p. 45, n. 3; Levitt, op.cit., p. 12.

The influence of classical myth was shown to be in the important role played by Nature in Elytis' metamorphoses, of which there are three types.

The first category involves the transformation of man (generally a girl) into an element of Nature. Upon further examination of this category, it was demonstrated to include the metamorphoses of: youths into flowers (exemplified in the hyacinth); girls into fruit, the Πορτοκαλένια being a recurrent motif; people into stone; and girls into the Greek landscape.

The second, revealing Elytis' belief in the reciprocal relationship between the two, reversed the above transformation of a man into Nature, and portrayed the metamorphosis of nature into man. This theme is mainly confined to the metamorphosis of the Greek landscape, generally an island, into a woman; an exception was seen in the example of the transformation of a Greek summer into the naked body of a young man.

The third category, demonstrating Elytis' preference for the concrete over the abstract, showed the metamorphosis of abstract ideas into elements of Nature, and included such examples as the transformation of: love into an Aegean seascape; absence into calm within an Aegean landscape; and a girl's early morning mood into a pomegranate tree.

These three types of metamorphosis - the transformations of man into nature, nature into man, or abstract ideas into nature - are the expression of the device of metamorphosis employed by Elytis as a second element in his personal mythology of the first period.

Thasitis⁶⁷ wrote that there are, in fact, two metamorphoses in Elytis' work, the first being the actual device discussed above, and

67. Θασίτης, op.cit., pp. 53-4.

the second that of the poet himself. The latter referred to the change in Elytis and his situation that was to lead to a new focus in his personal mythology; this "transformation" to an emphasis on Greece's tradition in the poetry of his second period is discussed in the following chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER THREE

THE TRANSITION BETWEEN ELYTIS' FIRST AND SECOND PERIODS

In the poetry of Elytis' second, or middle period, the focus of his work underwent a fairly dramatic change. That is, the themes of personification and metamorphosis, combined with the poet's ecstatic descriptions of the beauties of the Aegean, and of love and youth, no longer formed the basis of his poetry and personal mythology; instead, Elytis exhibits a greater awareness of his fellow countrymen,¹ and, more importantly, (in terms of his personal mythology), of his country's history and tradition.²

This new approach, which necessitated a reevaluation of the "poet of the Aegean" tag, confounded many of Elytis' admirers and critics, and his departure was even considered a betrayal by some.³ This attitude was particularly noticeable in relation to To 'Αξιον Εστί, and Elytis himself comments that it took the critics at least four years to understand what is now generally considered to be his masterpiece.⁴

Yet, underneath the new focus, the motifs of his early verse are still apparent: Elytis had not ceased to describe the Greek landscape.⁵ Even the devices of personification and metamorphosis still persist, although they do not have the same importance and significance

1. Rotolo, op.cit., p. 691.

2. In 'Analogies of Light', Elytis speaks of a "greater historic and moral awareness" in the poetry of his second period. (Ibid., p. 639)

3. Rotolo, op.cit., p. 690.

4. 'Analogies of Light', p. 640. Elytis also notes that there was a similar lack of understanding in regard to his work To φωτόδεντρο. Keeley speaks of an "ambivalent response" by both Greek and English readers of To 'Αξιον Εστί, in 'The Voices of Elytis' The Axion Esti, Books Abroad, Volume 49, No. 4, 1975, p. 695.

5. Λυχναρά, op.cit., p. 50 "... δεν είναι ο κόσμος που αλλάζει, αλλά η συνείδηση του ποιητή ...". See also Μητσάκης, op.cit., pp. 30-1. Rotolo (op.cit., p. 691) however disagrees, pointing out that in 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας the Aegean seascape has been replaced by a scenery dominated by mountains.

that they possessed in Elytis' first period.⁶ Rather, the poet has changed his approach, and his personal mythology has expanded to encompass new themes.

In my second period ... there is a greater historic and moral awareness, yet without the loss of vision of the world which marks my first period. The world has remained for me the same down to the present day.⁷

Most critics simply attribute this change in Elytis' poetry to his war experience⁸ (he served as a second lieutenant in the Albanian Campaign of 1940-1, and lived in Athens during the German Occupation), and one critic divides Elytis' poems into those written before and after his war experiences.⁹ However this is a misleading simplification: 'Ἥλιος ο πρώτος' was written in 1941-2,¹⁰ after his return from the front, and published in 1943,¹¹ and yet it belongs quite definitely to his

6. Note also that the device of personification is not restricted to Nature, as in the poetry of the first period; in Elytis' second period there are many examples of the personification of abstract ideas. See the section on personification in Chapter 1, footnotes 20-1.

7. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639.

8. E.g. Λυχναρά, *op.cit.*, p. 41; Α. Αργυρίου, Διαδοχικές αναγνώσεις Ελλήνων υπερρεαλιστών, Εκδόσεις <<Γνώση>>, Athens, 1983, pp. 51, 76; Μαρωνίτης, *op.cit.*, p. 69; E. Keeley and P. Sherrard, Odysseus Elytis: Selected Poems, p. xii; Α. Πολύτης, Θέματα της λογοτεχνίας μας, Μελέτη 12, 2nd series, Εκδόσεις <<Κωνσταντινίδη>> Thessalonica, 1947, pp. 215-6; Κ. Μπαλάσκας, Νεοελληνική ποίηση: Κείμενα, Ερμηνεία, Θεωρία, <<Επικαιρότητα>>, Athens, 1980, p. 104. Vitti (Κριτική μελέτη, p. 184) also lists such factors as the political situation in Greece following the Occupation as also contributing to the poet's "metamorphosis".

9. Λυχναρά, *loc.cit.*

10. Δ. Δασκαλόπουλος, 'Χρονολόγιο Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, 1911- 1986' Χάρτης, Volumes 21-3, November 1986, p. 266.

11. Individual poems, however, were published earlier. For details see M. Vitti, Οδυσσέας Ελύτης: Βιβλιογραφία 1935-1971, <<Ίκαρος>>, Athens, 1977, p. 18.

first period, along with Προσανατολισμοί. The first work of this second period, and the first to exhibit this change in focus, is 'Άσμα ηρωϊκό και πένθιμο για τον χαμένο ανθυπολοχαγό της Αλβανίας, published in 1945.

Admittedly Elytis' experiences in the war did contribute to the change in his poetry, but this is only a part of an explanation. The poet himself, continuing on from the quotation above, indicated that a desire for change was also an important factor:

I do try to change my expression, however. I do not want to write continually in the same way, because I have the feeling then of repeating myself. I want to find new forms, new ways of expression.¹²

Doubtless this desire is a reason for further changes that occur in the poetry of Elytis' third period.

However, to return to the second period: that which gives unity and depth to the works of this period is a maturity, and a new awareness of Greece's cultural tradition, and its history. This new approach required Elytis to go beyond the nature imagery of his first period, to the sources of the Greek cultural tradition - historical, literary and linguistic, and religious - and these form the basis of the personal mythology of his second period.

12. 'Analogies of Light', p. 639.