Ο Οδυσσέας Ελύτης για την ποίηση: Η συνθετική και η αναλυτική άποψη του ποιήματος

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Odysseas Elytis on Poetry:
The Synthetic and the Analytical View
of the Poem

Introduction

Apart from his reflections on the status and the function of poetry, in many of the essays he published in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* and *Εν λευκώ* and in other of his commentaries, Odysseas Elytis referred extensively to poetic writing itself. These more "practically theoretical"[1] observations concern the relation of poetry as an artefact and work of art to the vision it presupposes and aspires to express, and the laws and rules of composition. The way he conceived of these two different aspects of poetry is manifest in his successive attempts to provide a conceptual image of the poem. These ideas are perhaps the highest accomplishment of his theoretical work on poetry, and the culmination of his arguments on poetics. Elytis expressed his views by referring, on the one hand, to the poem as a unity, and on the other, to its distinctive parts. His usual tendency to express his ideas through visual images so as to explain them as lucidly as possible, led him to conceive of certain illustrative images both for the poem and for its parts. These images are considered here as stages that lead to a conception of the poem which unifies Elytis' more theoretical concerns and his more practically theoretical quests.

The aim of this essay is to examine Elytis' endeavour to define the prerequisites for the production of the "ideal poem"[2]—a notion that in itself plainly portrays his determination to achieve poetic perfection—and also the features that constitute it. The factors he considered indispensable for poetic perfection are analysed by putting into perspective the evolution of his thought, in order to shed light on the stages that marked the emergence of his ideas on poetic writing in the period between 1944 to 1960. It is shown that the two central conceptions that unify and exemplify his ideas concern a synthetic and an analytical view of the poem. It is argued here that Elytis' ideas have been inspired by Surrealist thought (and poetic practice), but Gaston Bachelard's theories, based on an analysis of Surrealist (and other modernist) poetry, have been a major

influence on Elytis' thought, helping him to systematize his own ideas in relation to the Surrealist endeavour.

Section 1 focuses on the principle determining Elytis' theoretical undertaking, that is, his concern to connect content and form. Sections 2 and 3 refer respectively to his views of the poem as a totality, expressed in the images of the poem as universe and as solar system, and to the way he conceived of its parts, exemplified by his notion of "prismatic form". Section 4 draws together the concepts of the (poem as) solar system, "prismatic form" and "διαφάνεια" and reaches a conclusion focusing on the image of the crystal, which, although left rather implicit in his essays, is a central conception in Elytis' poetics, and one used by him to establish the originality of his poetic writing.

1 The Unity of Content and Form

Elytis' ideas on poetic writing revolved around the centre of his practically theoretical preoccupations, that is, the connection between form and content or, as he preferred to call them, "[τη] μορφολογία του ποιή-ματος" and "[το] ιδεολογικό του περιεχόμενο"[3]. Bachelard's ideas may have helped Elytis to find a way of connecting content and form. But this Romantic idea was not Bachelard's own and there could have been other sources for him to draw on. For instance, he could have followed Solomos[4]. There could also have been other influences; in the essay "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935", where Elytis first referred to Bachelard,[5] he also quoted the "law of Monod Herzen" which, in his view, explained "τις ειλικρινείς σχέσεις μορφής και ύλης"[6]. He may have regarded this "law" in this same context. Furthermore, in 1958 Elytis himself pointed out that he came to this realization through Surrealism[7].

Elytis was gradually led to the conclusion, which he expressed in " Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας" (1963), that the external characteristics of the poem, what he called "τεχνική" or "Αρχιτεκτονική"[8], should correspond to what was expressed in the poem; for this reason, he believed that the technique of a poem should be invented and not given. As he observes in his interview with Dimitri Analis, "Le poème idéal se doit, sous cet angle, d'être en conjonction parallèle au contenu; c'est là quelque chose d'incompatible avec les anciennes formes comme le sonnet ou la ballade, ou le Pantoum malais, etc... qui ne constituaient que des réceptacles prêts à recevoir le matériel le plus hétéroclite"[9]. His conception of "architectural inventions", which emerged while he was reflecting on the unwritten essay for *Empédocle*, that is, sometime between 1950 and 1963, referred to the development of the external "scaffolding" ("l'é-chafaudage")[10] of the poem, which ought to correspond to its interior, that is, the poem's content.

In 1963, he held that technique, the "scaffolding", should be developed for the expressive needs of a particular poem and for that only: "Η Αρχιτεχτονική, για μένα, δεν είχε τη σημασία μιας από τα πριν στημένης σκαλωσιάς"[11]. As he explained in his interview with Analis, the initial or central idea of the poem should lead to a special "tone" and this tone should dictate the appropriate "pattern". He pointed out that he found this solution in Pindar and in Romanos the Melodist:

> Ce sont deux grands esprits de la tradition grecque qui m'ont aidé à affronter ce problème. De l'époque classique Pindare, et de l'époque byzantine Romanos le Mélode. Et ce, dans le sens que chaque unité poétique de leur oeuvre trouvait, suivant la nature du contenu, son genre de versification. Dans les grandes compositions, cette sollicitude architecturale— avec l'alternance des mesures syllabiques, et leur rappel mathématique—s'est révélée être salutaire. Le *ton particulier* donnait naissance au *type particulier*[12]. (his emphasis)

In the essay on Romanos the Melodist (1975), Elytis claims that the two properties he regards as distinctive of Romanos' poetics, that is, his metrics and his language, constitute "factors of content"[13] and are not simply external characteristics of his poetry. He further maintains that the invention of new forms for the content of each poem is a characteristic of Greek poetry, and he stresses the high degree of originality that this method provides, since the invented form contributes, in its turn, to the development of the content:

> πολύ, μπορεί να πει κανείς, βαρύνει ο συντελεστής των αρχιτεκτονικών γνωρισμάτων σε μια ποίηση όπως αυτή, όπου το νόημα γεννιέται μαζί και μέσ' από το φραστικό σχήμα που μέλλει να πάρει. Επειδή για κάτι τέτοιο πρόκειται, κι ας μη συγχέουμε την έννοια της μορφής όπως τη συναντούμε εδώ και όπως την έχουμε διδαχθεί από τις ξένες γραμματολογίες.
> Είναι άλλο εντελώς πράγμα οι τρεις τέσσερις σταθεροί τύποι που χρησιμοποίησε η δυτική παράδοση επί αιώνες σαν απλά δοχεία, για να τα γεμίσει με το πιο ετερόκλητο υλικό, και άλλο οι πρωτότυποι κάθε φορά μετρικοί νόμοι που υποβάλλονται σ' έναν έλληνα ποιητή από την ίδια τη φύση των μηνυμάτων που σκοπεύει να μεταδώσει[14]. (his emphasis)

The Greekness that he attached to the method, and the characteristic choice of the Greek examples of Pindar and Romanos the Melodist are, in any case, ideologically determined, and also conditioned by his own selective criteria. Apart from them, what is striking in the above observation is the emphasis, simultaneously, on originality and the strictness of form. In fact, in both passages quoted above, Elytis referred to mathematical accuracy and to "laws". This combination of high formal

control with innovation is presupposed in Elytis' definitions of the poem, which emerged while the poet was attempting, on the one hand, to develop a theory of poetic writing, and on the other, to explain how this theory worked within his poetics.

2 *The Poem as Universe and as Solar System*

In order to define the poem, Elytis employed the metaphors of the universe and of the solar system; both conceptions emerged in the period broadly between 1944 and 1960, although the final formulation of his ideas on the poem as solar system appeared in 1963. Elytis defined his conception of the poem as solar system in the essay " Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας" (1963), where he also stated that he had been working on the idea of the poem as a complete and autonomous unit since 1944. It was at that time that, in his response to Konstandinos Tsatsos ("[Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη νέα μας ποίηση]"), he expressed his more general view of the poem as universe. In all, the later definition is not a remodelling of his earlier conception of the poem as universe, since this view is not cancelled out by the notion of the poem as solar system[15]. The latter is not even a further elaboration of the former idea. Elytis simply used a more powerful and more successful metaphor to express the same view of the poem he had "started to feel" in 1944, that is, the idea of the poem as an "autonomous unit"[16]. The new metaphor of the solar system, which may have been inspired by his ideas on "solar metaphysics", was probably conceived sometime between 1951 and 1963[17]. The conception of the poem as solar system prevailed over the notion of the poem as universe for two reasons: on the one hand, it depicted more vividly the emphasis on the central idea of the poem by focusing on the subordinate metaphor of the sun, which, in Elytis' theory of "solar metaphysics", had acquired a symbolic significance. On the other hand, this metaphorical depiction of the poem made possible a closer observation of it, since a solar system is closer to human perception (through the technical aid of a telescope) than a universe, which is, more or less, imagined rather than perceived, and therefore, more abstract.

It is explained in section 2.1 that the idea behind both of these conceptions of the poem is that of the poem as an "ideal unit", which refers to the Surrealist notion of the "sublime point". As is pointed out in section 2.2, Bachelard's theoretical work on Surrealist poetics and his own theories about "projective poetry" appear to have been the principal background for the elaboration of Elytis' ideas of the poem as an "ideal unit".

2.1 *The Poem as an "Ideal Unit"*

In the essay addressed to Tsatsos (["Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη νέα μας ποίηση]", 1944), in order to stress the fact that it is very difficult to examine the individual components of a poem, that is, its underlying "-psychological currents",[18] and the "aesthetic functions" governing it, Elytis defines the poem as a "small and perfect universe":

> κάθε ποίημα (μιλώ για τα καλά ποιήματα) είναι ένα μικρό και τέλειο Σύμπαν και [...] κάθε Σύμπαν συναπαρτίζεται από ένα πλήθος ποικιλώνυμα και διαφορότροπα στοιχεία που δρούνε ταυτόχρονα και παράλληλα και που αμοιβαία και αέννα [sic] έλκονται ανάμεσά τους σε τρόπο που ν' αυτοεξαφανίζουν την ατομική τους υπόσταση μα κατά βάθος να συμβάλλουν υπεύθυνα στη διαμόρφωση της τελειωτικής εκείνης τρίτης κατάστασης που είναι η Λυρική πραγματικότητα[19].

In this essay, Elytis explains that his is a similar view to Solomos' "μεστή εκείνη και ωραία δημοκρατία των ιδεών οι οποίαις να παρασταίνουν ουσιαστικά τον εις ταις αίσθησες αόρατο Μονάρχη". It seems that his footnote at the end of the same essay is an attempt to comment on the way he conceived of Solomos' conception:

> Ένα είδος νοήματος είναι κι' αυτό που αρχίζω τώρα τελευταία να νοιώθω ότι πρέπει να παρουσιάζει κάθε ποίημα στο σύνολό του: Μιαν εικόνα ολοκληρωμένη που ν' απαρτίζεται από τις επί μέρους μικρότερες εικόνες του περιεχομένου του, εικόνα συνολική που νάναι συνάμα και πάντοτε *μια Ιδέα*[20]. (his emphasis)

Since the essay was addressed to Tsatsos in a concise and carefully presented attempt to bridge the gap between the Greek Surrealists and their opponents, Elytis did not really try to explain how an image can also be an idea; by adding his comment in a footnote, he obviously intended to bypass this important issue of the Surrealist endeavour as painlessly as posssible. All in all, whether Elytis thought that an idea or an image should control the subject-matter and the technique of the poem is no less significant than his emphasis on the importance of the existence of this controlling centre which ought to dominate and regulate the poem.

In the essay of 1963 ("Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας"), he states that twenty years earlier, that is, around 1944, he started conceiving of the poem "όχι σα μέρους μιας αέναης εξομολογητικής ροής, αλλά σα μιας μονάδας αυτόνομης, όπου όλα τα επιμέρους στοιχεία όφειλαν να συγκλίνουν προς κάποιο κέντρον"[21]. He explains that this was his conscious withdrawal from the poetic pursuits of his early poetry, in which he avoided subject-matter and tried to replace it with the "impersonal notion of Poetry". In his view, his early poems that "survived" were those that were controlled by a central idea, although this, he claims, was only accidental at that stage. As examples, he refers to "Επέτειος", "Μαρίνα

των βράχων", and "Μορφή της Βοιωτίας" that is, poems usually identified by critics with the more thoroughly reworked and successful poetic writing of Προσανατολισμοί. Interestingly, in 1940 Andreas Karandonis observed that "Επέτειος" was a perfect poem "με αξιοζήλευτη δεξιοτεχνία σύνθεσης γύρω από μια κεντρική συναισθηματική ιδέα"[22].

By March 1944, when he addressed Tsatsos, Elytis had a very clear idea how to unite subject-matter with technique: this, he thought, could be accomplished by developing a perfect and inclusive image (or an idea), which would consist of a series of images of lesser significance. This view had not changed much by 1963, when he held that all of the elements of the "autonomous unit" of the poem should be subordinate to a central element. In elaborately formulated prose, which seems to imitate what he wanted to communicate, Elytis provided a new definition of the poem. In this case, he used a more descriptive metaphor than the one of 1944, in order to outline his mental image of the poem:

> ζητούσα από το ιδανικό ποίημα ν' αποτελεί μικρογραφία ενός ηλια-
> κού συστήματος πλήρη, με την ίδια αταραξία και το ίδιο ύφος αιω-
> νιότητας στο σύνολο, την ίδια αέναη κίνηση στα επιμέρους συστατι-
> κά στοιχεία του. Έτσι αντιλαμβάνο[μ]αι και σήμερα την πυρηνική δια-
> μόρφωση του ποιήματος, σα μονάδας κλειστής, καθώς και την τελική
> αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωσή του, από την άποψη πάντοτε του νοήματος
> του συγκεκριμένου, που η έμπνευση κάθε φορά εντοπίζει, απομονώ-
> νει και φωτίζει. Με τη διαφορά ότι, για να λάβει σώμα και να υπο-
> δυθεί αποτελεσματικά τη θέση του ήλιου, καθώς και την απώτερη
> αποστολή του μέσα στο σύστημα των εικόνων και των εννοιών που
> συμπαρασύρει, το νόημα αυτό είναι ανάγκη να συναναπτύσσεται
> αδιάκοπα και παράλληλα με μια συμβολική μεταγραφή του σε ρυθ-
> μικής και στροφικής υφής γνωρίσματα, ανάλογα με εκείνα που καθι-
> στούν αισθητή στην ανθρώπινη νόηση την έννοια του χρόνου[23].

In this definition, the idea of the poem as a closed unit and the emphasis on the central or controlling image is maintained. What appears to be new, but in fact is not, as is pointed out in the next section, is Elytis' explanation of the dynamics of the centre of the poem, that is, its continuous evolution. In his view, this evolution ought to be transcribed into a system of rhythmical and stanzaic features that would make perceptible the passage of time. In other words, the nucleus of the poem should not be static, but reflected throughout the parts of the poem, in an "αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωση". Elytis' last observation seems to anticipate the idea of "prismatic form", which he formulated in his 1975 essay on Romanos the Melodist. In point of fact, as is explained in section 3, Elytis conceived of this idea, which is implicitly present in his essay on Kalvos, sometime before 1946.

Elytis' view that the poem is a dynamic entity in continuous evolution reappears in his later interview with Analis, in which he also suggests the process or the means by which this could be accomplished. As he observes, the unification of "transcendence" (which, according to him, refers to the function of the law of analogies) and "geometry " (which does not refer to composition but to "the way one conceives and uses one's materials" and to "the function of the soul")[24], with which he aspired to supersede the "old problem" of content and form, could be achieved through a kind of psychic automatism:

> quelque chose que l'on obtient non pas tellement par préméditation (telle quel'on pourrait l'imaginer et telle qu'elle se présente, par la force des choses, en théorie) mais à travers *un tressaillement instinctif, avec l'-abandon automatique de l'âme à une sorte de tournoiement*, et qui aurait les mêmes lois que le tournoiement de la matière de chaque corps. (my emphasis)[25]

Elytis' observation of course refers to Surrealist automatism; in his commentary on *To Ἄξιον Ἐστί*, he explicitly points out that he wrote the first draft of the poem with certain ideas in mind, but also "χωρίς άλλες έγνοιες μορφολογικές ή τεχνικές, κομμάτια ποιητικά που χωρίς να το θέλω, σα να 'μουν medium, έπαιρναν χαρακτήρα εκκλησιαστικών κομματιών"[26]. The kind of "tournoiement de l'âme" to which he refers in his interview with Analis evokes André Breton's ideas about visionary inspiration and automatism, and his consideration of mediumistic art[27]. Furthermore, although his comments in this interview, which confirm the conclusions we have reached elsewhere concerning his views on (Surrealist) automatism[28], refer to the creative process rather than the end-product, that is, the poem, their similarity with his observations on the manner determining the evolution of the nucleus of the poem as solar system is obvious. Yet, in the case of the poem, his explanations are oblique and obscure. By contrast, the ideas referring to the centre of the poem can be easily traced back to their Surrealist origins.

In the essay of 1944, where the idea of the poem as universe first appeared, Elytis gave very little evidence for the sources of his ideas, but stated that his conception did not refer to the poetic preoccupations of Paul Valéry[29]. However, this same observation indicates that there could have been at least one other source for his ideas. These ideas were conditioned by the Surrealist frame of mind and were formulated against the theoretical background of their quests.

What Elytis sought around 1944 was to use the achievements of the Surrealist endeavour in order to go further than it did[30]. Among other aspects he retained from Surrealism was the idea of the meeting of opposites, and the related notion of an "ideal unit". He stated that, at that

time, his main theoretical preoccupation concerned this ideal unit: "τον πρώτο λόγο είχε πάντοτε η ιδανική μονάδα η ικανή να περικλείνει τ' αντίθετα χωρίς άλλα ίχνη, έτσι όπως ακριβώς την έβρισκα στην έννοια "κορίτσι" ή στην έννοια "νησί"- θέλω να πω, με την ίδια αυτονομία και την ίδια σύμπτωση επί το αυτό ενός πλήθους από ετερόκλητα στοιχεία"[31]. What he was working on was probably the Surrealist conception of the "sublime point". The "sublime point", which may be regarded as "a search for the continuous"[32], is the example *par excellence* of the vertical conception of time, that is, of the instant which transforms the temporal disconnectedness of everyday life into a continuity. In Surrealism, the rhythmical motion of poetry involves the perpetual succession of opposites. Repetitive motion is accomplished in the resolution of opposites in a third stage, realized in the notion of the "sublime point" (see *L'Amour fou*)[33]. The dialectic involved in the infinite procedure leading to the "sublime point" refers to "the resolution of two opposing elements into a third, which then becomes the first element of another group, so that the mobility is constant"[34].

Three of the "theories" employed by Elytis, at least in *To Άξιον Εστί*, correspond to the theories underlying Breton's notion of the "sublime point". These are "the theory of the extreme opposites which communicate"[35], "the theory of the Void and of its filling with its opposite" or "the theory of Offsetting" ("του Συμψηφισμού"), and "the theory of the single Point" ("του ενός Σημείου"). All of these "theories" point to the Surrealists' elaboration of the idea on the meeting of opposites. The examples offered by Elytis to explain the first "theory", as, for instance, the line "το λευκό αναζήτησα ως την ύστατη ένταση / του μαύρου"[36], evoke the Surrealist game of "l'un dans l'autre". The game of "l'un dans l'autre" was defined by Breton in 1954. In this game, one element anticipates its opposite or stimulates the appearance of its opposite[37]. The second "theory", of "Συμψηφισμός", is based on the knowledge that positive things are really felt and appreciated in their absence or lack.[38] There is an obvious close affinity between these two "theories" of Elytis. D.N. Maronitis probably refers to both when drawing on what he calls the "principle of the twin" ("αρχή του διδύμου")[39], in order to explain the "antithetical balance" of *Μαρία Νεφέλη*. In Maronitis' view, the "principle of the twin" functions in this particular poem in two ways, that is, either by joining the opposites which complement each other or by dividing "a traditional unit" into two parts, so as to show the antithesis within it.

Elytis' definition of the third "theory" exactly matches Breton's definition of the "sublime point". As Breton explains in his interview with André Parinaud, "en [ce 'point'] sont appelées à se résoudre toutes les

antinomies qui nous rongent et nous désespèrent"[40]. In Elytis' view, this "Point" δεν πρέπει να συγχέεται με οποιαδήποτε έννοια 'μέσης οδού'. Είναι η απέραντη έκταση που αποκαλύπτεται όταν επιτυχείς να αρθείς πάνω από τη 'σύμβαση των αντιθέτων εννοιών' ισορροπώντας στο μεταίχμιό τους"[41]. From a technical viewpoint, Elytis' "theory" of "the single Point" perfectly explains his ideas on the unity of content and form. The "single Point" could occupy the centre, the nucleus of the poem, as a unifying and self-sufficient "meaning" (or image) surrounded by "ideas" (or images) which are subordinate to it, the way pairs of opposites are subordinate to the "sublime point". This conception appears to be the central idea in Elytis' notions of the poem as universe and as solar system.

However, Elytis' abstruse observations on the dynamics, the constant evolution or the "αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωση" of the centre of the poem, provided in his definition of the poem as solar system, cannot be explained satisfactorily by the concept of the "sublime point" or of the "single Point", which are both equally abstract. The implications of Elytis' ideas may become clearer if one draws on the theoretical basis that inspired them. As it appears, Bachelard's theories on the function of the poetic imagination and "projective poetry" contributed to Elytis' understanding of the function of the image and may have served as models to develop his own views on poetics.

2.2 Bachelard's Ideas on "Projective Poetry"

Elytis' notion of the poem as universe, which became more sophisticated in his reformulation of the poem as solar system, may have been inspired by Bachelard, who applied his scientific methodology to his theoretical approach to Surrealism[42]. This is highly probable, since the notion of the poem as universe directly points to Bachelard's use of science, and especially physics, in his literary studies, but also, to his theories about "projective poetry" ("poésie projective"), as is explained in this section. Elytis' response to Tsatsos, in which his definition of the poem as universe appears, was published only two months after Elytis' enthusiastic comments on Bachelard's *Lautréamont* in "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935" (1944). In the same footnote of this essay in which Elytis greeted Bachelard's book, he also added the following comment: "Η θεωρία του [Bachelard] για την επίπεδη και παραστατική ποίηση σχετικά με την Ευκλείδειο και μη Ευκλείδειο γεωμετρία πρόσθεσε μια σημαντικότατη σελίδα στην ιστορία της κριτικής ερμηνείας των Λυρικών φαινομένων"[43]. Bachelard reached his conclusions by studying Surrealist poetry. In this respect, his neat observations and reflections on "projective poetry" may have been precisely what Elytis was looking for at that time. By applying

the principles of projective geometry to poetry, Bachelard devised the "fundamental theorem of projective poetry", which is as follows: "quels sont les éléments d'une forme poétique qui peuvent être impunément déformés par une métaphore en laissant subsister une cohérence poétique? Autrement dit, quelles sont les limites de la causalité formelle?"[44]. He defined "projective poetry" as poetry in which certain images project themselves on to each other "with certainty and exactitude" so that they are one and the same image: "certaines images poétiques se *projettent* les unes sur les autres avec sûreté et exactitude, ce qui revient à dire qu'en *poésie projective* elles ne sont qu'une seule et même image" (his emphasis)[45]. He regarded the effect of this projection as a kind of "déformation des images", which "ought to designate, in a strictly mathematical manner, the group of metaphors" within a poem[46]. He observed that "parfois certaines métaphores sont manquées parce qu'elles ont été adjointes en dépit de la cohésion du groupe". In his view, one simply had to "determine the group of metaphors" in the poem by studying the "deformation of the images", in order to reveal the function of the poetic imagination[47].

The group of metaphors, as Bachelard described it, corresponds to the expressions "clusters of images" and "bunches of objects", used by Elytis in another text of 1944: the expressions "τσαμπιά εικόνων, αρμαθιές αντικειμένων" were offered by Elytis in "Τα κορίτσια" as examples of the manner in which poetry ought to reflect the metamorphoses of life[48]. In this essay, he claims that, apart from finding the proper position for a word in the poem so that the diachronic load borne by it was manifest, the combination of words ought, on the one hand, to be original, and on the other, portray the metamorphoses of life, that is, the psychological repercussions of the phenomena of life:

> μέσα στο μικρό σύμπαν του ποιήματος, [...] σύσσωμη η ικανότητα
> των πολυπλοκότερων συνδυασμών έπρεπε να γυμνάζεται πάνω στην
> επιδίωξη τούτη: να παρακολουθεί, να διαπιστώνει και, με το δικό της
> τρόπο, να ξαναδίνει *τις μεταμορφώσεις που παίζονται μέσα μας*
> *αέναα και που τις περισσότερες φορές στηρίζονται στην ανταλλαγή ή*
> *τη συγχώνευση εντυπώσεων οδηγημένων στα αισθητήριά μας από τη*
> *συγκίνηση.* (my emphasis)

This idea is central to Surrealist writing and was explained by Bachelard, who observed that, by studying the function of the poetic imagination in the group of metaphors of the poem, "On verra que les métaphores sont naturellement liées aux métamorphoses, et que, dans le règne de l'imagination, la métamorphose de l'être est déjà une adaptation au milieu imagé. On s'étonnera moins de l'importance en poésie du mythe des métamorphoses"[49]. In other words, Elytis held precisely what the

French Surrealists claimed and Bachelard clarified, that is, that metaphor is a product of the metamorphosing power of the imagination. In his comments on the imagination in the essay "Τα κορίτσια"[50], he stresses the impact that this realization had on him, and he points out that it led him to think of the possibility of an "ideal poetics"[51].

The principal idea in these definitions, as well as in the rest of Elytis' observations on the development and the function of the poem, seems to have emerged from, or at least to have been systematized through his consideration of Bachelard's theory about projective poetry and the assumptions involved in it. In the definition of the poem as universe, the emphasis is on the *projection* of one idea (or image) on to the other, described as a kind of *mutual attraction*, which diminishes the individual properties of each idea (or image), for the sake of the integrity of the poem. Elytis' reformulation of this idea when commenting on the continuous evolution of the nucleus of the poem in his definition of it as solar system shows his perfect understanding of the principle underlying Bachelard's theory. In both of Elytis' definitions, the poem itself is regarded as a stable unit (a universe or a solar system), composed of monads (the planets, that is, images) whose characteristic is instability. It should be mentioned here that Bachelard identified the poem with the condition of the stability of the universe, whose parts were in constant motion.

Elytis' attempt to affiliate his notion of the poem as universe with Solomos' conception of the poem as a "δημοκρατία [...] ιδεών" ruled by or centred around a single imperceptible "Monarch", that is, an idea, should probably be attributed to Elytis' wish to come to terms with the idealist philosopher Tsatsos rather than admit a real debt to Solomos. Elytis' emphasis on "one idea" in the footnote of the essay considered above further supports the presumption that Elytis used Solomos in order to confront Tsatsos. However, in spite of this attempt, Bachelard's theory of projective poetry is traceable in Elytis' comments, since he thought of this "one idea" as an image, consisting of other, less significant images. Even the example of "μια παραστατική εικόνα" of the actors or factors of the poem used by Elytis in that essay[52] can be considered as signalling the hidden or semi-revealed pre-text of Bachelard, since, in the footnote of the essay where he refers to Bachelard, quoted at the beginning of this section, Elytis translated the term "projective" as "παραστατική". It can be realized from Elytis' employment of the same term in the essay on Kalvos, which is considered in the next section, that he thought of it as expressive of the function of the imagination and, on a more practically theoretical level, that he considered it in connection with the production of the image.

In any case, the quest to unite content and form, as expressed in the notion of the poem as universe, may have appeared possible to Elytis both in the practical solution he found in Solomos and in the theoretical explanations of Bachelard. But, irrespective of the source and the type of influence, the conception of the poem as an "ideal unit" constitutes the first landmark in the theoretical evolution of Elytis' poetics. In his definition of the poem as solar system, the idea of the poem as a closed and self-sufficient unit is maintained, as is the emphasis on a central, nuclear "meaning". The employment of the metaphor of the sun for this nucleus, which attracts and controls the system of images and notions, is very successful, since it offers a view of the poem as a dynamic and powerful entity in full motion.

However, Elytis' consideration of the relation between the subordinate images and the central one was not restricted to his synthetic view of the poem as (universe or) solar system, a view that referred to the subordination of secondary systems of images to the poem's nucleus. The parallel conception of "prismatic form" emerged synchronically with his ideas on the poem as (universe or) solar system. Although the notion of "prismatic form", which was the expression of his ideas on the independent function of the individual parts of the poem, appeared as late as 1975, the idea of "prismatic form" developed out of the same theoretical considerations as those supporting Elytis' early definitions of the poem.

3 The Concept of "Prismatic Form"

Apart from his ideas on the poem as a totality, Elytis also expressed a more analytical view of the poem, which concerned the function of its individual parts; this he did by coining the term "prismatic form" ("πρισματική μορφή") to refer to a certain manner of developing poetic expression, and which he distinguished from "flat expression" ("επίπεδη έκφραση"). It is shown in section 3.1 that the concept of prismatic form seems to have been a further elaboration of Bachelard's ideas about projective poetry. As has been already pointed out, in the footnote of "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935" (1944) in which Elytis referred to Bachelard, he mentioned the latter's conception of projective poetry, translating it as "παραστατική ποίηση" and by juxtaposing it with "επίπεδη ποίηση"[53]. This, and Elytis' comments on poetic expression, which appear in the early essay on Kalvos, show that, although his ideas on prismatic form were explained in the 1975 essay on Romanos the Melodist, they were not a later development in Elytis' thought; in point of fact, they appear to have emerged in the period between 1944 and 1960, while Elytis was still working on the problem of moulding his

subject-matter into the appropriate form. As is explained in section 3.2, the idea of prismatic form emerged while Elytis was considering the function of the poetic imagination.

3.1 *Prismatic Form*

In the essay "Ρωμανός ο Μελωδός" (1975), Elytis uses the term prismatic form to refer to a certain kind of "expressions"[54], that is, expressions in which "thought" has been successfully rendered into "images", "similes" or "apophthegms"[55]. While in his synthetic view of the poem he used the metaphor of the solar system to explain the function of the poem as a unity revolving around one centre, he devises the metaphor of the red corpuscles of the human blood for his analytical approach to the poem. He employs this latter metaphor to explain that, in poetry where prismatic form prevails, there is more than one functional centre or "nucleus" ("πυρήνες")[56], since each individual part functions in isolation as well as revolving around the centre of the poem[57]. In other words, just as the perfect function of each of the red corpuscles is of vital importance and all of them contribute to the health of the human blood and thus the health of the human body, so these poetic nuclei function independently and are at the same time vital for the success of the poem.

Casting a retrospective glance at Greek poetry, he maintains that these nuclei appear in Homer, since each book of his epics is organized around them, and the total depends on these "prominent" or "projecting" parts ("προεξοχές") that control the whole poem[58]. He holds that ancient Greek lyrical poetry, which followed Homer's tradition and evolved out of it, not only retained but further developed the technique involved in prismatic form; he claims that, in this case, the poems "οργανώνονται γύρω από πυρήνες που προεξέχουν και που, εκ των υστέρων, συγκρατούν το σύνολο"[59]. It is precisely this manner of developing poetic expression which, in Elytis' view, "δίνει μια καθαυτό πρισματική μορφή στο λόγο"[60]. As he observes, such poems:

> επενεργούν στον αναγνώστη όχι μόνο με το σύνολό τους αλλά και τμη-
> ματικά, κομματιαστά, χάρη σ' αυτές τις προεξοχές, σ' αυτούς τους
> κρυστάλλους όπου αποκορυφώνεται η οξύτητα του πνεύματος. Πρό-
> κειται για ρήσεις όπου τα μέταλλα της γλώσσας και των εικονιστικών
> στοιχείων συγχωνεύονται και όπου η διατύπωση μιας αλήθειας είναι
> και η διέγερση ενός κόσμου αφομοιώσιμου από την προσληπτικότητα
> της φαντασίας μας[61]. (my emphasis)

In his essay, Elytis also claims that prismatic form is a dense and very economical manner of expression: "Πρόκειται για μιαν όσο γίνεται πιο λακωνική διατύπωση, όπου όλοι του ποιητικού φαινομένου οι συντελε-στές έχουν εξαποστείλει 'επί το αυτό' τα βέλη τους"[62]. He further

explains that the nuclei or the crystals of prismatic form are neither spectacular nor striking but "mysteriously euphonic"[63], since all of the poetic factors, that is, "[ο] γλωσσικός, [ο] εικονιστικός, [ο] συλλογιστικός, [ο] ηχητικός", contribute to this effect. His statement is that the technique involved in prismatic form depends on the identification of content and form:

> Οι πυρήνες αυτοί δεν είναι κατ' ανάγκην "εικόνες"· είναι φραστικές μονάδες αυτοδύναμης ακτινοβολίας, όπου ο συνδυασμός ο ηχολογικός συμπίπτει με τον νοητικό σε τέτοιο σημείο, που δεν ξέρεις τελικά εάν η γοητεία προέρχεται απ' αυτό που λέει ο ποιητής ή από τον τρόπο που το λέει[64].

The terms employed by Elytis to develop his arguments on prismatic form are at the same time very descriptive and revealing. The diction he employs ("red corpuscles", "functional nuclei", "projecting nuclei", "crystals", "prismatic") points to two metaphors for the poem: the first, which has already been pointed out, refers to the human organism and the second to the crystal or the prism. Of the two, the organic metaphor of the red corpuscles seems to have served as an example to describe better the inorganic metaphor of the crystal or the prism. For this reason, Elytis' observations are here analysed by focusing on the metaphor of the crystal or the prism.

Reading Elytis' explanation of the concept of prismatic form, one may reach the following conclusions. The notions of the "prominent" and "projecting" nuclei allude to his definition of the poem as solar system in which the nucleus of the poem is considered as being projected throughout the poem. While in that definition Elytis' explanation referred to the nucleus of the poem, in his description of prismatic form he focuses on the component parts of the poem, which he regards as individual nuclei. Yet, in both cases, what is described is the same kind of projection, which is defined in similar terms, that is, either as a "τελική αυτοδύναμη εξακτίνωση" of the poem in the first case, or as the "projection" or protrusion of its parts, of the "πυρήνες που προεξέχουν" or of the "μονά-δες αυτοδύναμης ακτινοβολίας", in the second case. What further unites these two definitions is Elytis' care to stress that a poem in which prismatic form prevails functions both as a totality—which is the main precondition for the function of the poem as solar system—and in its component parts ("όχι μόνο με το σύνολό τους αλλά και τμηματικά, κομματιαστά"). Elytis' observation is repeated twice on the same page in which he culminates his explanation of prismatic form (as is explained in the next section), and seems to have been anticipated not only in his 1963 definition of the poem as solar system, but also in his 1944 definition of it as universe.

The second observation that can be made through an analysis of Elytis' description of prismatic form concerns his employment of two kinds of terms to explain the metaphor of the crystal or the prism. On the one hand, he used the words "διάσπαρτες φωτεινές εκλάμψεις"[65], "ακτινοβολούν"[66], "μετεωρίζονται", "ακτινοβολία"[67] to refer to the final effect of those parts of the poem which are written in prismatic form. On the other hand, terms used by him to explain the way the "prisms", that is, the individual nuclei of the poem, function ("προεξέχουν"[68], "συμπίπτει", "προεξοχές"[69]) seem to have been borrowed from the vocabulary employed by Bachelard when defining his notion of projective poetry. Especially the word "προεξοχές", which can be translated into English both as "prominent" and "projecting" elements, seems to allude to the principles underlying Bachelard's theories about projective poetry. It is apparent from his observations that Elytis broke the French term "projection" into its two meanings ("ακτονοβολία" and "προεξοχές") in order to explain his idea of the poem as crystal or prism.

As is explained in the next section, Elytis' ideas about prismatic form, which culminated in his exposition of the opposition between "prismatic" and "flat expression", are based on Bachelard's notion of projective poetry and on the latter's views about the function of the imagination, that is, on his ideas referring to the production of the image.

3.2 "Prismatic Expression" and the Function of the Poetic Imagination

In "Η αληθινή φυσιογνωμία και η λυρική τόλμη του Ανδρέα Κάλβου" (1946), Elytis maintains that because of the ways in which their respective imaginations functioned, the poetry of Kalvos was the opposite of that of C.P. Cavafy, whereas Solomos' poetry came in between[70]. In "Ρωμανός ο Μελωδός" (1975), he makes a similar classification, this time by juxtaposing Kalvos, Romanos the Melodist and Pindar with Yorgos Seferis (in his poetry after Στροφή) and Cavafy[71]. In this case, his argument did not refer to the function of the imagination but was based on the opposition between "flat expression" and "prismatic expression". By comparing Elytis' comments on the function of the imagination in the former essay with his arguments on prismatic form in the latter, one may realize that the notion of prismatic form emerged as a unifying principle in which Elytis' ideas on the originality of the image and the perfection of expression reached their elaborate systematization. For the idea behind them all is "the imagination as a function"[72], or the function of the poetic imagination, which again evokes Bachelard's theories of projective poetry. As has already been pointed out in section 3, in his essay "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935", Elytis referred to Bachelard's notion of "παραστατική ποίηση" by juxtaposing it with "επίπεδη ποίηση". In his essay on

Romanos the Melodist, Elytis juxtaposes "prismatic expression" ("πρισματική έκφραση"), that is, the manner of expression in which prismatic form prevails, with "flat expression" ("επίπεδη έκφραση"), which, in his view, is the dominant feature of poems that function only as a totality[73]. In other words, what distinguishes these two different poetic manners is that the former depends on or contains expressions that can function independently from the rest of the poem, which does not happen in the latter. As he claims, "ένα ποίημα που αναπτύσσεται, με σκοπό την εκπλήρωση της αποστολής του, όχι και με τα καθ' έκαστον μέρη του αλλά μόνον με το σύνολό του"[74] (his emphasis) is written in flat expression, which is a manner whose origins are primarily Anglo-Saxon[75], and one that is foreign to the Greek poetic tradition. Elytis' views on prismatic form may explain why he admired Solomos and Hölderlin for their stubborn rewriting of the same lines of the same poem[76]. They may also explain why he never reproached Solomos or Kalvos for the incompleteness or the fragmentation of their poetry, as did Seferis[77]. In fact, it is in his essay on Kalvos that Elytis' ideas on the opposition between prismatic expression and flat expression are implicitly put forward, since they can be evoked in his comments on the difference between the lyric and prose.

In the essay on Kalvos, Elytis proclaims that content is much less significant than the way it is expressed[78], and he holds that the difference between "true lyricism" and prose lies precisely in the special manner in which things are expressed and not in the things themselves[79]. He maintains that in Kalvos, diction "developed together and from within his imagination"[80], and he attributes to the imagination the originality of Kalvos' imagery. He uses the term "παραστάσεις" to refer to two categories of images in Kalvos: the "pictorial" ("ζωγραφικές")[81], and the "lyrical" ("λυρικές"). He defines the former as painterly, that is, as images which could be painted in "the traditional descriptive manner". He focuses on Kalvos' lyrical images, which he explicitly considers super-real for expressing the "superior reality "of the "υλική και πνευματική υπόσταση" of things[82]. Apart from stating that the presence of "εικόνες αντιφατικές"[83], which lead to an "αρετή πυκνότητας" in the poetry of Kalvos, Elytis makes the following observation regarding Kalvos' imagery:

> κλείνει παρατακτικά, και χωρίς μεσολάβηση στιχουργημένων, τις περισσότερες φορές, σκέψεων, μέσα σ' ένα και το ίδιο ποίημα, πολλές και ποικίλες, σύντομες και αυτόνομες, εικόνες που, σαν αστραπές, να φωτίζουν κάποιο θέαμα που να 'ναι συνάμα και ιδέα, πετυχαίνοντας έτσι ταυτόχρονα ένα εννιαίο και ισόρροπο σύνολο[84]. (my emphasis)

This passage seems to be Elytis' earliest attempt to explain the

principles of projective poetry or the requisites for projection, principles
that he had already considered while thinking of the poem as universe,
as was observed in section 2.2. The explanation provided by Elytis for
the processes of the lyrical or the "creative imagination" clarifies the way
he conceived of Bachelard's theory:

> Η συγκίνηση, προικίζοντας με ικανότητες ηθοποιίας τα στοιχεία της
> φύσης, με οργανικές ιδιότητες τα στοιχεία του ανόργανου κόσμου,
> βρίσκει μόνη της, και μέσα από μιαν αδιάκοπη κίνηση, το ανάλογον
> της ίδιας αλήθειας, φτάνοντας στο αποτέλεσμα μιας εικόνας, που αν
> ήθελε τυχόν εξετασθεί επιστημονικά (αδιάφορο αν στον ψυχικό χώρο
> του ποιητή ξεπήδησε αυτόματα και αναπόσπαστα με το κύμα της
> έμπνευσης), θα παρουσίαζε ένα ολόκληρο σύστημα πολλαπλής ανα-
> γωγής, γεμάτο από παρομοιώσεις, μεταφορές και μεταβολές, σύστη-
> μα που εκ των υστέρων έχει πετύχει την ανατροπή του φαινομενολο-
> γικού καθεστώτος, σε όφελος της βαθύτερης αλήθειας του ανθρωπί-
> νου πνεύματος[85]. (his emphasis)

The correspondence considered by Elytis as being discovered by the
poetic imagination cannot possibly be other than the "group of
metaphors", dominated by one central image or idea, and in which reality
is metamorphosed, to use Bachelard's words. The "determination", that
is, the identification of this group, as suggested by Bachelard (as has been
pointed out in section 2.2), or of the system included in an image, in
Elytis' view of the poem as universe, which is evoked in the passage
quoted above, involves specifying the "identifications" achieved through
the "method of identifications" ("Μέθοδος των ταυτίσεων")[86]. This
method was elaborated by Elytis prior to the publication of *Το Άξιον Εστί*
and *Έξη και μία τύψεις για τον ουρανό*. It is obvious that the "method of
identifications" referred to the production of metaphor and also, to other
"changes", that is, metamorphoses of reality taking place in poetry.

The method developed by 1946 by Elytis to conduct the sequence of
metamorphoses is that of "πολλαπλή αναγωγή", which also seems to
have been inspired by Bachelard's ideas about projective poetry. The
name of the method suggests that for Elytis this involved a process with
several stages in the development of the different poetic mechanisms. In
fact, the method may refer to the process that leads from a number of
images to the central image of the poem, that is, the "single Point". The
examples from Romanos show that the precondition for an expression to
be prismatic is that it should contain at least one pair of "distant realities"
(e.g. "βότρυς πικρίας")[87]. Alternatively, as the examples of Kalvos' poetry
show, it may refer to the production of images which are "εικόνες αντι-
φατικές" or images that are auxiliary to other, more prominent images,
that is, to the co-presence of many metaphorical nuclei which constitute

one and the same image. Elytis' brief examination of the "auditory imagination" in Kalvos was possibly an example of this method of "πολλαπλή αναγωγή" or of the way projective poetry functioned. As he observes, Kalvos' "auditory imagination" depended on imagery of the wind[88], which gave his poetry the quality of Greekness[89]. Elytis' argument is that the imagery of Greekness was to be found in the imagery of the wind, and the imagery of the wind was nothing other than the imagery of Greekness[90]. Although this appears to be a poorly developed argument about the imagery of Kalvos, since the examples chosen by Elytis do not prove that the imagery of the wind is the imagery of Greekness and vice versa, it is nevertheless an observation which proves that Elytis had Bachelard's ideas in mind. When he explained projective poetry in Lautréamont, Bachelard used the example of images of fire and life[91], which was similar to that employed by Elytis. Bachelard's aim was to explain two things: firstly, that certain images remain hidden unless "the deformed images" are "determined", that is, unless "the [whole] group of metaphors" is identified, and secondly, that projection involved a very simple, "primitive" "projective linkage" ("lien projectif ")[92], which could reveal a multiplicity of images within other images. This is precisely what Elytis seems to suggest in his observations on the auditory imagination of Kalvos. It becomes apparent from this that, just like Bachelard, Elytis was referring to the function of the poetic imagination. Bachelard's ideas on projection and on the projective linkage that makes projection possible may also have been what Elytis wanted to suggest in his essay on prismatic form. The examples chosen from Romanos the Melodist seem to share the same characteristics as those of Kalvos. They are prismatic, that is, multifaceted images which may be "complex metaphors" (otherwise known as "telescoped metaphors"). Thus, projection seems to be the common property shared between the expressions of Romanos the Melodist in prismatic form, such as "ο ηνιοχεύων την των κινουμένων πνοήν"[93], or "ετινάχθη ως αράχνη κονιορτού", and the example from Kalvos chosen by Elytis to support his argument on the production of powerful metaphors by the lyrical imagination:

> Ούτως από τον ήλιον,
> ωσάν πυρός σταλάγματα,
> πέφτουσιν εις την θάλασσαν
> των αιώνων, και χάνονται
>   διά πάντα η ώραι[94].

In his commentary on *To Άξιον Εστί*, Elytis refers to the method of "πολλαπλή αναγωγή", which he employed in the poem, as the "method of multiple correspondence" ("Μέθοδος της πολλαπλής αντιστοιχίας")[95].

The method seems to have been associated by Elytis with his ideas on transcendence and geometry or with his theory of analogies, since he holds that "Ο μηχανισμός αυτός πάει από το Φυσικό στο Αισθητικό και από [το] Αισθητικό στο Ηθικό"[96]. The examples offered to support his explanation of the method clarify the mechanism for the production of the symbol; the method itself, which "Είναι διάσπαρτη σε όλο το έργο", and may involve, for instance, "a triple correspondence", yet still retains the property of multiplicity presupposed in the arrangement of images, which are subordinate to a main one. The fact that, in his commentary, Elytis explains that the imagery of the line "Αρετή με τις τέσσερις ορθές γωνίες"[97] refers to ethics, the purity of deeds and the rigidity of the architectural style of the Greek islands[98] shows that in To Άξιον Εστί he was working on the idea of projection, using it in order to achieve the perfection of poetic expression.

The conception of prismatic form was not a late development in Elytis' theoretical considerations on the poem. It is alluded to in the observations that were expressed in his essays of 1944, and it is implicitly present in the essay on Kalvos. The notion was elaborated in the period between 1944 and 1960, although its final formulation appeared in the essay of 1975. Elytis' definition of prismatic form corresponds to Bachelard's notion of projective poetry, since it refers to those prominent or projecting parts of the poem where form, or expression, and what is expressed (content) coincide. These parts are autonomous poetic units which ought to involve at least one opposition of elements, that is, to consist of at least two subordinate images. The notion of prismatic form may be considered as a principle conditioning Elytis' poetic experiments from To Άξιον Εστί and Έξη και μία τύψεις για τον ουρανό onwards. It is a conception that complements his ideas on the poem as an autonomous and perfect unity, since it refers to the development of its individual parts as autonomous, complete and perfect units in themselves. The idea underlying the conception of prismatic form was also used by Elytis to support his assertions on Greekness. The explanation of prismatic form provided here shows that this was a poorly developed argument; complex metaphors are widely used in non-Greek poetry (e.g. French Surrealist poetry), including the Anglo-Saxon (e.g. Shakespeare), whereas the emphasis on the "peaks" or the nuclei of meaning is implicitly presupposed in the more general problematic on form in the modern lyric.

While the conception of prismatic form seems to have emerged out of Bachelard's theorem and theories about projective poetry, the evolution which led to the final formulation and articulation of Elytis' ideas may also have involved other theoretical considerations. Although Bachelard's

notion of projective poetry presupposes the transparency of images, Elytis'
metaphorical expression prismatic form has greater connotative power
than that of Bachelard. Prismatic form is associated with the standard
modernist metaphor of the poem as crystal or precious stone. In this
respect, it is linked with Elytis' ideas on translucence —"διαφάνεια"—
and purity, and with the principle of the transparency of the image.

4 "Διαφάνεια" and the Principle of Transparency in "Crystalline" Poetry
In his interview with Ivask, Elytis admits that there is a "kind of
transparency [that] [...] [he] attempted to achieve" in his poetry[99]. He
claims that "even the most irrational things can be *limpid*. *Limpidity* is
probably the one element which dominates my poetry at present"
(emphasis by Ivask). His definition of the notion of *διαφάνεια*[100]—
translated by Ivask as "limpidity " but referring both to the more
theoretical and abstract notion of translucence and to the practical or
technical quality of the transparency of a material or an object—is that
"behind a given thing something different can be seen and behind that
still something else, and so on and so on [sic]". He stresses that this
condition, which is to him "something essentially Greek", is irrelevant to
the clarity of reason: " The limpidity which exists in nature from the
physical point of view is transposed into poetry [...] that which is limpid
can at the same time be altogether irrational". This last comment, which
points to the rejection of reason by the French Surrealists and is
reminiscent of Stéphane Mallarmé's notions of "translucence" and "-
limpidité" also evokes Elytis' observations on the "clarity of emotion"
("διαύγεια του συναισθήματος")[101]. In fact, a more precise and self-
explanatory definition of translucence was formulated by Elytis sometime
before this interview—probably two years earlier[102]. The term used in this
case is indeed the word "διαύγεια"[103]; Elytis holds that "διαύγεια" is the
ability to perceive a stable and polyvalent metaphorical point, through a
kaleidoscopic, multi-layered reality: "η δυνατότητα να βλέπεις μέσ' απ'
το πρώτο και το δεύτερο και το τρίτο και το πολλοστό επίπεδο μιας
και μόνης πραγματικότητας το μονοδιάστατο και συνάμα πολύφθογγο
σημείο της μεταφορικής τους σημασιολογίας". It is apparent from this
definition that the conception of "διαφάνεια" (or "διαύγεια") emerged
out of the Surrealists' theories on analogies and the idea of the "sublime
point", and that it owes much to their concern with light and
translucence. It is also clearly associated by Elytis with the view of the
nuclear organization of the poem as a solar system, and the idea of the
"single Point" and with the transparency of the image.
    Mallarmé used the image of precious stones to explain his idea of
incantatory art, which he preferred to evocative art. He claimed that the

aim of art should be to produce precious stones and not simply use those already available: "L'enfantillage de la littérature jusqu'ici a été de croire, par exemple, que de choisir un certain nombre de pierres précieuses et en mettre les noms sur le papier, [...] c'était *faire* des pierres précieuses. Eh bien! non!"[104] (his emphasis). He held that what matters is not the perceived object but its function as symbol: "La poésie consistant à *créer*, il faut prendre dans l'âme humaine des états, des lueurs d'une pureté si absolue que, bien chantés et bien mis en lumière, cela constitue en effet les joyaux de l'homme: là, il y a symbole, il y a création". Mallarmé laid the emphasis on the structure of the crystal, that is, of the image or of the poem. The perfection of the poem depended on the elaboration of language, its construction[105], its shaping. The perfect shape revealed the absolute purity of the crystal in its radiance and its limpidity. Elytis' ideas about poetic expression sound similar to the views that Mallarmé expressed about incantatory art.

In 1939, Seferis referred to the "striking crystal" of Gerald Manley Hopkins, that is, his care for the perfection of expression, in order to explain that "difficult" art should be identified not with vagueness and obscurity but with precision and translucence[106]. While he mentioned Valéry and Mallarmé among the poets who elaborated this kind of art, he dismissed Surrealism as "facile poetry "[107]. Elytis' idea of "διαφάνεια", which presupposes the function of the Surrealist analogy, may have been a response to Seferis' views: apart from the translucence of the poetic vision, Elytis' conception of "διαφάνεια", may also refer to the transparency of the image or of poetic expressions, that is, of the perfection (in Seferis' sense of the term) of prismatic form.

Breton used the image of the crystal to refer to the poem and to the life conduct of the poet: "L'oeuvre d'art, au même titre d'ailleurs que tel fragment de la vie humaine considérée dans sa signification la plus grave, me paraît dénuée de valeur si elle ne présente pas la dureté, la rigidité, la régularité, le lustre sur toutes ses faces extérieures, intérieures, du cristal" (*L'Amour fou*)[108]. He regarded the individual entity, whether this be the poem or the poet, as a "'figure'—in the Hegelian sense of the material mechanism of individuality ".

Breton's points may clarify why Elytis related the concept of the poem as a crystal or prism with the function of the imagination. He quotes the first of the above passages from Breton in "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935" (1944), where he extensively refers to the notion of the crystal as a metaphor for the poem which is most appropriate to his visual imagination[109]. He reveals that, although initially he used to identify this metaphor with the poetic ideas of Valéry, his discovery of Breton's observation proved to him that the different roads of the quest for art's

"essential meaning" meet. While he simply observes that Valéry's poetic method, his crystal, was the result of intellectual effort, he enthusiastically takes Breton's side because, in his view, the Surrealist poet "άφησε να λει-τουργήσουνε οι νόμοι της ζωής και στην τέχνη"[110] (his emphasis). His reason for admiring Breton's concept of the crystal was precisely that this involved both the product and the producer: Breton's crystal stood for the poem and the poet. In other words, in his case, the aesthetic point of view presupposed a moral disposition, and vice versa; aesthetics was identified with ethics, a central idea determining Elytis' poetic quests[111]. Thus, Breton's crystal appears to have been associated by Elytis with translucence, that is, the principle or the "rule" of purity[112].

However, Breton's crystal also presupposed the Surrealists' simultaneous promotion and questioning of the visual. In Breton's poem "Nœud des miroirs" (in Le Revolver à cheveux blancs)[113], the eye perceives the crystal as one and many: "un seul cristal [...]/ Un diamant divisible en autant de diamants"[114]. The prism of the diamond is made of many other such prisms. This idea seems to be involved in Elytis' conception of the poem as a solar system whose individual parts form a prismatic configuration: around the nucleus of the diamond or crystal, other nuclei-crystals combine and form the structure of the crystal or the "crystal lattice"[115]. The same idea links the above definition of the poem and Elytis' conception of prismatic form, since, in his view, prismatic form concerns both the individual "prisms" of the poem and the poem as a totality[116]. In this case, the concept of the crystal functions as a model for the creation of the poem, since the crystal itself is used as a natural model, while the poetic imagination imitates the creative processes of nature. As nature produces crystals, the poet produces poems; as the crystal is made of crystals, the poem's images (or prismatic expressions) revolve around one central image. Breton's diamond, divisible into many diamonds, may have been a model for Elytis' ideas on the production of the image and the poem: Elytis aspired to attain the transparency of the crystal and also the transparency of the many crystals composing its structure, that is, the crystal lattice, or prismatic form. The technical meaning of the notion of "διαφάνεια" refers precisely to the principle of transparency, in this case, a practical "rule", which combines with the theoretical rule of translucence or purity to produce "crystalline" poetry.

Conclusion

In Elytis' metaphor of the poem as solar system, the central image is seen as the sun, that is, a source of light; the radiance of the poem is considered as originating from this nucleus. In other words, Elytis seems to conceive of the poem as a configuration with a centre, the "sun", which

projects itself on to other figures (the rest of the images, conceived as planets). The conception of prismatic form, which presupposes the existence of more than one radiant, translucent nucleus, combines with Elytis' definition of the poem as solar system to offer a complete image of the poem and a theoretical explanation of the poetic process. The poem is conceived as a planetary system where glittering crystals are set in orbit around a luminous central crystal. All of these crystals shine and project their light on to the rest of the crystals, but also reflect and refract the light they receive from all of the rest of the crystals, including the central crystal. As Bachelard observes, the association between stars and crystals is very common in poetry: "Les gemmes sont les étoiles de la terre. Les étoiles sont les diamants du ciel. Il y a une terre au firmament; il y a un ciel dans la terre"[117]. This figurative depiction of the poem not only appears in Elytis' poetry, but also provides a detailed explanation of the poetic principles of its production.

Notes

This paper is part of my doctoral dissertation entitled *The Emergence and Crystallization of the Poetics of Odysseas Elytis* (Oxford University 1997).

[1] Here I use an expression devised by Georgios Babiniotis, but with a different meaning from his; Elytis was practically theoretical because in his essays and other commentaries he referred not only to his philosophical, aesthetic and poetic ideas, but also to the more practical aspects of poetic composition. Babiniotis employs the expression "practically theoretical" to refer to the theoretical observations about poetry that appear in Elytis' poetry (see his essay "Ποιητική μεταγλώσσα και μεταγλωσσική ποίηση", *Η Λέξη* 106 (Nov.-Dec. 1991), p. 738.

[2] See Odysseas Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, Ikaros, Athens 1987, p. 454.

[3] Ibid., p. 449.

[4] Elytis is not the first Greek poet after Solomos to abolish the distinction be-

tween content and form (the opposite view is expressed by Christos Papazoglou; see his essay "Οδυσσέας Ελύτης", in *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης, Σύγχρονοι ποιητές* 2, Akmon, Athens 1979, p. 184). Around the same time as Elytis, Seferis makes similar observations (see Yorgos Seferis, *Δοκιμές*, vol. 1, Ikaros, Athens 1984, pp. 201, 288-290). The two poets may have drawn on the example either of Solomos or Kalvos (see the views that Kostis Palamas expresses about Kalvos' versification in his essay "Κάλβος ο Ζακύνθιος"; in *Πρώτα κριτικά*, Fexis, Athens 1913, p. 37) or, most probably, Kostas Karyotakis (on the identification of content and form in the poetry of Karyotakis see Tellos Agras, "Ο Καρυωτάκης και οι Σάτιρες", in *Κ.Γ.*

Καρυωτάκης. Ποιήματα και πεζά, ed. G.P. Savidis, Estia, Athens 1998, pp. 198, 209).

5 See Odysseas Elytis, "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935", *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* 1 (Jan. 1944), p. 27, n. 2. This footnote is omitted in the reprinted version of the essay in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*. As a general observation regarding his essays, it can be mentioned here that, on several occasions, in the versions reprinted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, Elytis omitted or modified passages from the original versions of his published texts. The most characteristic example is the omission of the footnotes to the original versions of his essays, some of which can provide significicant information about his ideas (for more on this subject see Elena Koutrianou, "Τα *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά* και τα κλειστά περιοδικά. Για τη μεθοδολογία προσέγγισης του δοκιμιαχού έργου του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη", *Ο Πολίτης* 62 [Mar. 1999], pp. 59-62). In this essay, the original version is cited whenever such omissions or modifications have taken place; otherwise, references are made to the standard, "definitive" edition of 1987, or else both passages are referred to in case both present an equal interest.

6 See Elytis, "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. Τ.Τ.Τ. 1935", op. cit., p. 23. Elytis quoted the text from *Science et esthétique* in French: "Les rapports de la forme et de la matière sont donc les mêmes que la matière soit mise en oeuvre par le jeu de forces naturelles où mise en oeuvre par l'homme. Lorsque une même operation est appliquée à des matières diverses, les transcriptions resultants obeissent [sic] à la même norme, que le facteur

operant [sic] soit l'Artiste où la Nature" (ibid., pp. 23-24, n. 1).

7 See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 638.

8 Ibid., p. 449.

9 See Odysseus Elytis, "Cartes sur table avec Odysseus Elytis", interview with Dimitri T. Analis, Repères 5 (Spring 1983), p. 100. A similar observation is made in Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit. p. 449.

10 See Elytis, "Cartes sur table avec Odysseus Elytis", op. cit., p. 100.

11 See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 449.

12 See Elytis, "Cartes sur table avec Odysseus Elytis", op. cit., p. 100.

13 See. Odysseas Elytis, *Εν λευκώ*, Ikaros, Athens 1992, p. 41.

14 Ibid., p. 38.

15 This is indicated by the fact that in that part of the essay " Τα χορίτσια " which was written in 1972 (that is, the part of the essay which is not placed within inverted commas), Elytis still reflected on the notion of the poem as " ένα μικρό και τέλειο Σύμπαν " (see Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 181).

16 See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 419.

17 Just before giving his definition of the poem as solar system, Elytis referred to the time when Albert Camus and René Char asked for his contribution in *Empédocle* (see Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 449). It may have been after 1951 and before 1963 that Elytis replaced the notion of the poem as universe with that of the poem as solar system, since that was the time when he may have conceived of his ideas on "solar metaphysics".

18 See Odysseas Elytis, ["Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη νέα μας ποίηση"],

Τα Νέα Γράμματα 2 (Mar. 1944), p. 97.

[19] Ibid.; also in Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., pp. 483-484 (slightly modified in this version).

[20] See Elytis, ["Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη νέα μας ποίηση"], op. cit., p. 100, n. 1. The footnote is omitted in *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*.

[21] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 419.

[22] See Andreas Karandonis, "Η ποίηση του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη", *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* 1 (Spring 1940), p. 75.

[23] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 450.

[24] See Elytis, "Cartes sur table avec Odysseus Elytis", op. cit., p. 100.

[25] Ibid., p. 98.

[26] See Odysseas Elytis, "[Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", in Yorgos Kechayoglou (ed.), "Ένα ανέκδοτο υπόμνημα του Ελύτη για *Το Άξιον Εστί*", *Ποίηση* 5 (Spring 1995), p. 36. Elytis' "commentary" on *Το Άξιον Εστί*, which the poet himself never published, is reported to have been written "for private use" (see Edmund Keeley and George Savidis, "Preface", in *Οδυσσέα Ελύτη. Το Άξιον Εστί—Odysseus Elytis. The Axion Esti*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh 1974, p. xv); Keeley and Savidis were the first to use it in their translation of the poem into English. Although the publication of the commentary by Kechayoglou in 1995 provoked a reaction from the poet, it is a rich source of metadiscursive information, which has been used by other critics too (see, for instance, Mario Vitti, *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Κριτική μελέτη*, Ermis, Athens 1984, pp. 234, 237, 271-272).

[27] Blake's visionary automatism was also an example for the Surrealists. On Breton and mediumistic art see Roger Cardinal, "André Breton and the Automatic Message", in Ramona Fotiade (ed.), *André Breton: The Power of Language*, Proceedings of the International Surrealist Conference "André Breton: The Power of Language—Speech and Silence*", 21-23 Sept. 1996, Glasgow University, Elm Bank, Exeter (forthcoming).

[28] See Elena Koutrianou, "Odysseas Elytis and the Censoring of Automatism in Greek Surrealism", in Ramona Fotiade (ed.), *André Breton: The Power of Language*, op. cit. (forthcoming).

[29] See Elytis, "[Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη νέα μας ποίηση]", op. cit., p. 97.

[30] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., pp. 419-420.

[31] Ibid., p. 162.

[32] See Mary-Ann Caws, *The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1970, p. 34.

[33] See André Breton, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Marguerite Bonnet in collaboration with Philippe Bernier, Etienne-Alain Hubert, and José Pierre, vol. 2, Gallimard, Paris 1992, p. 780.

[34] See Caws, *The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism*, op. cit., p. 16.

[35] See Elytis, "[Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", op. cit., p. 46.

[36] See Odysseas Elytis, *Το Άξιον Εστί*, Ikaros, Athens 1980 (13th ed.; 1st ed. 1959), p. [20], and Elytis, "[Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", op. cit., p. 47.

[37] See André Breton, *L'Un dans l'autre*, Eric Losfeld, Paris 1970 (1st pub. 1954).

[38] See Elytis, [Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", op. cit., p. 48.

[39] See D.N. Maronitis, Όροι του λυρισμού στον Οδυσσέα Ελύτη, Kedros, Athens 1984 (4th ed.; 1st ed. 1980), p. 95.

[40] See André Breton, Entretiens (1913-1952), Gallimard, Paris 1969 (1st pub. 1952), p. 151.

[41] See Elytis, "[Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", op. cit., p. 48.

[42] See Claude Abastado, Introduction au surréalisme, Bordas, Paris 1986, p. 37.

[43] See Elytis, "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935", op. cit., p. 27, n. 2. The footnote appears in the original essay and is omitted in Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. It has passed unnoticed by Ioannou, who assumes that Elytis could have been influenced by Bachelard but does not pursue himself a detailed examination of this influence (see Yannis I. Ioannou, Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Από τις καταβολές του Υπερρεαλισμού στις εκβολές του μύθου, Kastaniotis, Athens 1991, pp. 90-91, 94).

[44] See Gaston Bachelard, Lautréamont, Librairie José Corti, Paris 1939, p. 70.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., p. 71.

[47] Ibid., p. 72.

[48] See Elytis, Ανοιχτά χαρτιά, op. cit., p. 180. These expressions belong to the original text of 1944, as quoted in the final version of 1972.

[49] See Bachelard, Lautréamont, op. cit., p. 72.

[50] See Elytis, Ανοιχτά χαρτιά, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

[51] Elytis points out that, "Πολύ προτού ανατείλει μέσα [του] το ιδανικό μιας Ποιητικής που θα κατάφερνε να παρακολουθήσει ως και τις παραμικρότερες μεταμορφωτικές ιδιοτροπίες της συγκίνησης", he was only marvelling at the power of the imagination to reveal Surreality (ibid., pp. 167-168; my emphasis).

[52] The word "παραστατική" is italicized both in the original essay of 1944 (see Elytis, "[Νόημα και αλληλουχία στη νέα μας ποίηση]", op. cit., p. 97) and in the final version of it published in Ανοιχτά χαρτιά (op. cit., p. 484).

[53] See Elytis, "Ανοιχτά χαρτιά. T.T.T. 1935", op. cit., p. 27, n. 2.

[54] See Elytis, Εν λευκώ, op. cit., p. 48.

[55] Ibid., p. 47.

[56] Ibid., p. 49.

[57] Ibid., p. 50.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[60] Ibid., p. 50.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., p. 49.

[63] Ibid., p. 48.

[64] Ibid., p. 50.

[65] Ibid., p. 46.

[66] Ibid., p. 48.

[67] Ibid., p. 50.

[68] Ibid., p. 49.

[69] Ibid., p. 50.

[70] See Elytis, Ανοιχτά χαρτιά, op. cit., p. 91. It has passed unnoticed by criticism and therefore has to be stressed here that this distinction is not Elytis' own idea but an elaboration of Seferis' views on this subject (cf. the original essay on Kalvos, in Odysseas Elytis, "Η αληθινή φυσιογνωμία και η λυρική τόλμη του Ανδρέα Κάλβου", Νέα Εστία 467 [Christmas 1946], p. 99, and Yorgos Seferis, "Απορίες διαβάζοντας τον Κάλβο", in Δοκιμές, op. cit., p. 63 and "Κ.Π. Καβάφης, Θ.Σ. Έλιοτ· παράλληλοι", in Δοκιμές, op. cit., p. 346).

[71] See Elytis, Εν λευκώ, op. cit., pp. 45, 50-51.

[72] See Elytis, Ανοιχτά χαρτιά, op. cit.,

p. 91. Although Elytis' essay was read at the "Κύκλος Παλαμά" in 1942, it was first published in 1946; in the meantime, Elytis could have inserted fresh observations, based on his reading of Bachelard's theories, sometime before 1944. Therefore, one cannot use this essay as evidence to conclude with certainty that Elytis knew Bachelard's *Lautréamont* even before 1942.

[73] See Elytis, *Εν λευκώ*, op. cit., p. 50. In his 1986 essay "'Πρισματική' και 'επίπεδη' ποίηση", Dimou juxtaposes "prismatic poetry " with "flat poetry " rather arbitrarily, since he does not offer a satisfactory explanation for making the generalization which Elytis himself avoided (see Nikos Dimou, *Δοκίμια 1. Οδυσσέας Ελύτης*, Nefeli, Athens 1992, pp. 105ff.). Dimou's terms are adopted by Katsakos, who argues that Elytis' own poetry is "prismatic" (see Zacharias Katsakos, *Poésie prismatique: une approche de la poétique et de la poésie d'Odysseus Elytis*. Mémoire de D.E.A., Paris IV—Sorbonne 1988, pp. 26-28), and by Connolly, who comments on his own translations of Elytis' "prismatic poetry " (see David Connolly, "Μεταφράζοντας πρισματική ποίηση: Οδυσσέας Ελύτης και 'Τα ελεγεία της Οξώπετρας'", *Εντευκτήριο* 23-24 [Summer-Winter 1993], pp. 115ff.).

[74] See Elytis, *Εν λευκώ*, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

[75] Ibid., p. 50. By mentioning the "Anglo-Saxon" origins of flat expression, Elytis was apparently alluding to Eliot's influence on Seferis, since he observed that the latter wrote poetry in which flat expression prevailed after *Στροφή*, that is, after he had discovered Eliot's poetry.

[76] Ibid., pp. 409, 411.

[77] See Seferis, *Δοκιμές*, op. cit., p. 61. This observation is made by Kostas Georgousopoulos, in "Ο Κρυσταλλογράφος", *Καθημερινή-Επτά Ημέρες*, (25 Sept. 1994), p. 11.

[78] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 81.

[79] Ibid., p. 84.

[80] Ibid., p. 81.

[81] Ibid., p. 83.

[82] Ibid., p. 84.

[83] Ibid., p. 88.

[84] Ibid. Cf. Karandonis" observations on Elytis' imagery, which he compares with Kalvos' imagery (see Karandonis, "Η ποίηση του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη", op. cit., pp. 67-68).

[85] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 85.

[86] See Elytis, "[Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", op. cit., p. 46.

[87] See Elytis, *Εν λευκώ*, op. cit., p. 52.

[88] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 86.

[89] Ibid., p. 87.

[90] Ibid., pp. 86-88.

[91] See Bachelard, *Lautréamont*, op. cit., p. 70-71.

[92] Ibid., p. 71.

[93] See Elytis, *Εν λευκώ*, op. cit., p. 52.

[94] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 85.

[95] See Elytis, "[Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", op. cit., p. 46.

[96] Ibid., p. 50.

[97] See Elytis, *Το Άξιον Εστί*, op. cit., p. 15.

[98] See Elytis, "[Το Άξιον Εστί. Συνοπτικό διάγραμμα]", op. cit., p. 50.

[99] See Odysseus Elytis, "Odysseus Elytis on his Poetry ", interview with Ivar Ivask, *Books Abroad* 49.4 (Autumn 1975), p. 642.

[100] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 45, and elsewhere.

[101] Ibid., p. 470.

[102] The essay "Σχέδιο για μιαν εισαγωγή στο χώρο του Αιγαίου", where this definition appears was first published in 1973.

[103] See Elytis, *Εν λευκώ*, op. cit., p. 23.

[104] See Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry, Gallimard, Paris 1945, p. 870.

[105] See Claude Abastado, *Expérience et théorie de la création chez Mallarmé*, Minard, Paris 1970, p. 41.

[106] See Yorgos Seferis and Konstandinos Tsatsos, *Ένας διάλογος για την ποίηση*, ed. Loukas Kousoulas, Ermis, Athens 1975, pp. 93-94.

[107] Ibid., p. 94, n. 1.

[108] See Breton, *Oeuvres complètes*, op. cit., p. 681.

[109] See Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

[110] Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[111] See above and also Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, op. cit., p. 37.

[112] See Elytis, "Cartes sur table avec Odysseus Elytis", op. cit., pp. 96-97.

[113] Elytis mentions Breton's collection in " Το χρονικό μιας δεκαετίας" (see Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, *op. cit., p. 229).*

[114] See Breton, *Oeuvres complètes*, op. cit., p. 87.

[115] In crystallography, the crystal lattice refers to the periodic arrangement of atoms, ions, or molecules in a crystal (see Will Kleber, *An Introduction to Crystallography*, VEB Verlag Technik, Berlin 1970, pp. 22-23). For an analytical description of a lattice it is necessary to define a base system of coordinates on the lattice. Such a system of axes is necessary for building up the whole lattice (see Kleber, in ibid., pp. 24-25).

[116] By drawing on the science of crystallography, Georgousopoulos offers a vivid explanation of Elytis' ideas about prismatic expression, when he observes that " Το ποίημα γι' αυτή την ποιητική πολώνεται γύρω από τον αρχικό κρύσταλλο, την ποιητική μονάδα και συμμετρικά, επαναλαμβάνοντας ποικιλοτρόπως το μοτίβο της αρχής, αναπτύσσεται" (see Georgousopoulos, "Ο Κρυσταλλογράφος", op. cit., p. 11). A similar view about Elytis' poetic method is expressed by Paschalis, although he disregards Elytis' metaphors for the poem and devises his own. Thus, he names "method of the 'mosaic'" (see Stratis Paschalis, "Ο Ελύτης ως 'Φυλλομάντης'", *Χάρτης* 21-23 [Nov. 1986], p. 461) the method "της συνένωσης γύρω από έναν αρκετά αφηρημένο ως προς το νόημα πυρήνα πυκνών και αυθύπαρκτων ποιητικών ψηφίδων" (see Paschalis, in ibid, p. 462).

[117] See Gaston Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté*, Librairie José Corti, Paris 1973 (1st pub. 1948), p. 291.

Περίληψη

Ελένα Κουτριανου: *Ο Οδυσσέας Ελύτης για την ποίηση: Η συνθετική και η αναλυτική άποψη του ποιήματος*

Ο σκοπός της μελέτης αυτής είναι να εξετάσει τις σκέψεις που εξέφραζε ο Οδυσσέας Ελύτης για το ποίημα ως όλον και για τα μέρη που το συνιστούν, ανιχνεύοντας τη θεωρητική προέλευσή τους (οι απόψεις του στηρίζονται τόσο στις θεωρίες του Γκαστόν Μπασελάρ για την «προβολική ποίηση» όσο και σε υπερρεαλιστικές ιδέες), και εξετάζοντας την επεξεργασία τους από τον ποιητή στις δεκαετίες του 1940 και του 1950. Όπως επισημαίνεται στη μελέτη μας, οι ιδέες του Ελύτη αφορούν στον ορισμό του ποιήματος ως (σύμπαντος και) ηλιακού συστήματος και στον προσδιορισμό της έκφρασης, με βάση και κανόνα αυτό που όρισε ως «πρισματική μορφή». Το συμπέρασμά μας είναι πως οι απόψεις αυτές οδήγησαν τον Ελύτη στη σύλληψη του ποιήματος ως κρυστάλλου ή πρίσματος, μία κεντρική μεταφορά που ενοποιεί τις ιδέες του για τη δημιουργική διαδικασία και που ο ίδιος χρησιμοποίησε με τις συνεχείς του αναφορές στην έννοια της «διαφάνειας», που προέρχεται από τη μεταφορά του κρυστάλλου, για να προσδιορίσει τους στόχους και τους όρους της τέχνης του.